

Identifying and Describing the Structures of Textiles

Part 1 – simple weaves - Programme

Sessions will start at 10 am prompt, but participants are welcome to arrive from 9.30. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided. A lunch break will be fitted in where convenient and we shall finish about 5.30. Participants are welcome to bring lunch or there are sandwich shops and cafes nearby. There is a possibility of working at the Loft in the evenings if accommodation is not suitable.

The order of this programme may be altered and can be adapted to suit participants' questions and enthusiasms.

Sample – something we shall be able to hand out to each student

Example – something which shows the technique but which we cannot cut up.

Demonstration – a technique which will be demonstrated by a tutor.

Day 1. Monday

Welcome and housekeeping. Introductions

Very briefly, the three basic weaves: tabby, twill and satin. Other essential terminology.

Examining samples of plain tabby of different character. Learning to identify the warp.

Thinking about the likely loom type, whether wide or narrow, and the contribution of different fibres and yarns and of finishing techniques.

Trying out variants of tabby weave on individual simplified small looms.

Using light - natural or artificial - and a hand lens to examine textiles.

The importance of trying to identify the textile's intended and/or actual use.

Day 2. Tuesday

Examining samples of plain twill and plain satin and their variants. Trying these out.

Introduction to recording forms/data bases. Recording weaves as diagrams (description) and drafts (instructions): the various conventions and their advantages.

Quick and effective ways of photographing textiles for research purposes.

Day 3. Wednesday

Non-woven structures and weaving before heddles. The relationship between basketry and these techniques. Poor archaeological evidence due to the non-existence or non-identification of tools.

Linking and looping (including needle looping as a decorative technique), knotted netting, sprang. Warp-twining, weft-twining, and finger-looping as an element in a larger textile.

Examining examples of these and trying the techniques.

Day 4. Thursday

Braiding, tablet weaving and using a rigid heddle. Demonstrations. Examining samples and examples and trying the techniques. Visiting tutor: Celia Elliott-Minty.

Day 5. Friday

Patterns using shafts a): herringbone, broken lozenge and diamond twills; block and striped damask in twill and satin.

Patterns using shafts b): patterns made by warp/weft floats, such as huckaback. Samples and examples of these.

Patterns using shafts c): double and triple cloths.

Demonstrations of some of these on looms set up ready.

Saturday- Sunday. Break. You may wish to visit one or two local museums only open at weekends.

Day 6. Monday

Review of previous week's topics.

Patterns made with supplementary weft but no figure harness; brocading and eccentric brocading.

Weft pile techniques including carpets looped and knotted, uncut and cut.

Examining samples and examples of these and trying out the techniques.

Day 7. Tuesday

A visit to Calderdale Industrial Museum, Halifax, is planned.

On return to Slaithwaite: Self-bands and self-stripes. Colour effects: contrasting bands and stripes, combinations of these including colour-and -weave effects and tartan, ikat and warp-printing. Examining samples and examples of these.

Day 8. Wednesday

Tapestry weave and its very varied use in the past, soumak as a variant of tapestry.

Examining examples and samples. Trying out tapestry. Visiting tutor.

A brief look at different methods of warping and creating sheds, and how these affect the fabric. How evidence within the textile can be used to help identify the loom type.

Day 9. Thursday

Patterns made with a supplementary warp but no figure harness (including a flushing warp).

Warp pile – plain velvet and towelling. Deflected warps – gauze.

Examining samples and examples of these.

Very brief introduction to the scientific tests possible on archaeological and historical textiles, including fibre identification, dye analysis and Carbon 14 dating.

Day 10. Friday

Selvedges, starting borders and finishing borders; how these relate to the technology and to the textile's intended use. Weaving to shape. Examination of examples of this.

Review of the topics covered. Mystery objects for analysis.

Books and articles for follow-up work.