



Weaving and Family Go Hand in Hand

Weaving has always been a central part of my life and the heart of my home. When planning a weaving project, I almost always think about items that will work in a room—table pieces, curtains, pillows, towels—there are so many ways to use handwoven fabrics! I've made the occasional garment, but for the most part, textiles for the house are what I weave on my looms. I am proud to be called a crafts-person and weaver of functional art.

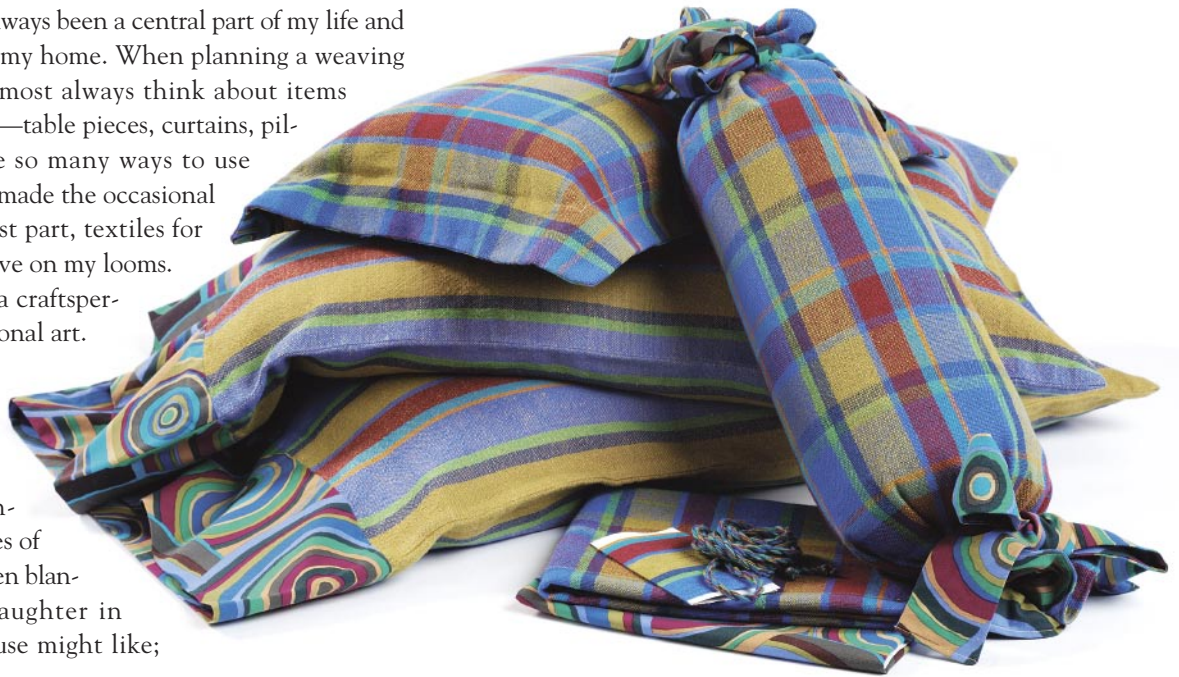
I've woven tablecloths for wedding gifts; baby blankets for nieces, nephews, and my own babies; dozens of linen-damask napkins and miles of linen table runners; woolen blankets for my son and daughter in colors that a future spouse might like; and more.

I keep a little journal next to my loom, and as I'm weaving each item, I jot down the events that are going on—a lost tooth, a skinned knee, learning to drive, first date. This sounds corny, but I do it anyway.

I have been building little trousseaus for both my daughter and my son. So far, I have put away linen and cotton towels, runners, napkins, and pillow slips. My daughter was seven when I wove the lovely linen pillow slips that are embroidered with her initials. When she peered at the loom, she announced that these were not her favorite colors—purple and turquoise! I assured her that it would be okay because I was weaving these for her wedding trousseau. “Married, ew!” she squealed as she ran off to play.

This year, besides being a weaver I became an orchestra-booster-club volunteer, college-search organizer, and theater mom! What a blast I had applying what I've learned about fabric and color to sets and costumes for the Class of 2008's musical production of the *Wizard of Oz*! When the students had to go off and study for finals, the volunteer parents were left with some pretty major projects, one of which was to create the *Wizard of Oz* himself. I raised my hand and said, “I can do that!” For three weeks, I had a papier-mâché mess in my kitchen and my looms sat silent. When it was all finished, the *Wizard* was twenty-feet high, and my son, the Tinman, was nominated for a 2008 Tommy Tune Award!

I am inspired by color trends, nature, fine art, and just about everything I see! In the case of the fabrics shown here, inspiration came while I was browsing the aisles of my favorite fabric store, and the delicious stacks of “fat quarters” designed for quilters caught my eye. The narrow lengths of fabric made me




DeeDee's pillow slips, bolster covers, and runners are designed to coordinate with a fabric that she found in a fat quarter bundle designed for quilters.

think of pillowcases. I selected a fabric called Targets, designed by Kaffe Fassett for Rowan, which is appealing both in its pattern of concentric circles and in its colors.

To design handwoven fabrics to coordinate with this bold print, I worked out the color and stripe ratios using a yarn wrap. There are twelve colors in the fabric, but I narrowed the ones I used down to seven.

I chose cottolin (50% linen, 50% cotton) for the warp and a singles linen for the weft. The result is a predominantly linen fabric that softens with use and laundering. For some of the pieces, I used a single color in the weft (fast weaving with only one shuttle). For others, I followed the same color sequence for the weft as in the warp to make a bold plaid. Browse the aisles of your local fabric store for patterns and colors that will inspire new ideas for your handwovens!

This particular project will be put away for my son. The stories woven between the threads are that of a senior who has had a fantastic year and a mother who has supported him through it all. What is next? Fabric for a wedding dress—my daughter introduced us to her fiancé this winter! 

DEEDEE WOODBURY of Houston, Texas, has been an active member of the Contemporary Handweavers of Houston for over twenty years. She enjoys exploring traditional techniques for household textiles—everything from waulking the wool to weaving with fine linen. She has contributed several projects to Handwoven.