

# Bag of the Month

## December: small retro bag in warp rep

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Remember the disco era of the late 1970s and early 1980s? A time of shiny fabrics in bright pink and lime green? Well, guess what—those colors are back! Not only are they used in clothing, but you'll find rubber gloves, garden boots, mixing bowls, and plastic cutting boards in them, too. Weave this fancy evening bag in the colors shown here or choose your own retro-disco colors from the wide range available in this shiny rayon yarn—and go dancing!

**D**uring the early 1980s, I wove little shiny rayon purses I called Disco Bags.

For them, I used a variation of warp rep that I discovered during a 1974 workshop with Malin Selander.

In the workshop, I had become intrigued with the effect created by alternating blocks of floats with blocks of plain weave and began experimenting with ways to increase float length. For days I tried different effects and remember vividly Malin Selander passing by my loom, stopping, strumming the warp floats, and saying “too long!”

After much testing, I finally came up with a formula that creates rows of dimensional cells outlined with shiny floats. To create each cell row, I threw a thick pick, three thin picks, a thick pick, and then a final thin pick to tie down the floats. It turns out that what I had “invented” was a warp-faced version of honeycomb!

The floats strongly emphasize the color and texture of the warp threads. Rayon provides a wonderful contrast between the shiny floats and the matte plain weave.



*Rosalie Neilson of Milwaukie, Oregon, has been experimenting with warp rep since 1974 and kumihimo since 1980 and specializing in both.*



### Constructing the bag

Cut lining fabric and 1 piece heavyweight nonfusible interfacing 8" × 24". Stitch to wrong side of lining fabric  $\frac{3}{8}$ " from all edges. Fold bag fabric at doubled-rib fold lines. Turn under and press hems on flap and front. Blind-stitch side seams by hand, enclosing and stitching through bag handle at the same time (with tassels hanging from bottom for kumihimo cord, stitched securely just above knots with knots trimmed off for plied cord).

Right sides together, fold and sew side seams of lining with  $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam allowances. Fold under and press lining hems to fit bag. Slip the lining inside the bag, fold edges under at flap and front, and handstitch to flap, front, and along both side seams.

### Making the cord handle

To make a 54" long 8-element hollow braid as for this bag (see Resources for directions), use Susi rayon floss for each element as follows: four elements of 12 strands Navy (144 yd), two elements of 2 strands Deep Purple (12 yd), and two elements of 2 strands Supreme Red (12 yd); leave  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " tails to use as tassels.

For a 54" plied cord, tie to a stationary object 2 strands rayon satin rattail cord 2 yd long each. Twist the strands independently in the same direction until they start to kink. Then twist them together in the opposite direction and tie both ends in an overhand knot; trim tails.

### Resources

Berlin, Shirley, and Carol Goodwin. *Sixty Sensational Samples: a Kumihimo Collection*. United Kingdom: Shirley Berlin and Carol Goodwin, 2004. Chapter 8, Samples 55–60; [www.shirleyberlin.com](http://www.shirleyberlin.com).  
Carey, Jacqui. *Creative Kumihimo*. United Kingdom: Carey Company, 1994. [www.careycompany.com](http://www.careycompany.com).  
Neilson, Rosalie and Derek. *Braid Runner* (computer software program). Milwaukie, Oregon: Rosalie and Derek Neilson, 1997; [www.rosalieneilson.com](http://www.rosalieneilson.com).



