



Dear Weaver,

Thank you for signing up to be part of our collaborative weaving project, *Open Weave*. I hope you have as much fun participating as I have had in preparing for it! Let's go through some steps to help you on your way.

## Step 1 Check the contents

- mini-loom
- weaving needle x 2
- yarn
- Museum address label
- postage stamp (if requested)

Check the contents of your *Open Weave* pack, and let us know if anything is missing by email to: [events@gairlochmuseum.org](mailto:events@gairlochmuseum.org). Please keep the envelope to return your finished tapestry to us.

Your pack should contain a **warped up mini-loom** and two plastic weaving needles. On the back of the mini-loom is your number, which we're using for tracking the looms. There are two holes at the top, which are for hanging up the finished tapestry. The first pass has been woven with a tail of warp yarn; using a fork or your fingers push this down as far as it will go.



Front view

Some woollen weft yarn. There are four different colours in your pack (all are the same length) and enough to weave your tapestry. Note that we have different colour themes so the four colours in your pack may be different from the next person's. Try to work with your colour pack,

## INSTRUCTIONS - NON-BEGINNER

please. You may notice that the white yarn is thicker than the other colours, this is because our supplier has temporarily run out of the thin white.

If you are going to be mailing your finished tapestry back to us (as opposed to dropping it off at Gairloch Museum), there will be a return address label, which you can stick on top of the current address label. If you have opted for prepaid postage (as opposed to paying the return postage yourself), there will also be a postage stamp.

### TOP TIPS

- Keep needles and small objects away from young children.
- Keep the envelope and use it to return the woven tapestry to us.
- Do not cut any of the warp ends – we will tidy that up for you afterwards.

### Step 2 Remind yourself of the basics

These instructions assume that you have some knowledge of tapestry weaving or are happy to use on-line resources to familiarise yourself of the basics. Note that the loom that you'll see in the on-line information will most likely be different to your mini-loom, but the weaving principles will be the same. See TOP TIPS below for the websites.

The string that's running up and down the mini-loom is called a **warp** and during the process of weaving this will get covered with the **weft** yarn. (The definition of Tapestry is a weft-faced woven item.) Use your fingers or a fork to push the weft downwards to cover the warp. For best results I suggest threading your weaving needle with two strands of yarn; this will be your weft bundle.

Take a minute to look at what's called the shed. This is the gap between the front and back warps, and is widest at the top of the mini-loom. When you are weaving you will be bringing the front and back warps together so that they become a flat surface.

Getting the right tension is the key to a successful tapestry with straight edges:



Weft is being pulled too tight.



Tension is correct.

And to get the tension right there are two things to focus on:

1. Allow for some extra yarn on each pass to create a little "hill", and use a fork or your fingers to push it down into place;
2. Do not pull your weft bundle too tightly when you turn to weave in the opposite direction.

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### TOP TIPS:

- Weave from the front of the mini-loom, starting at the bottom hem, and leave any tails of weft yarn at the back.
- To make sure that you don't run out of yarn, "float" the weft behind the tapestry rather than cutting and restarting it again later.
- Do not weave around the frame, keep your weaving within the frame.
- Make sure that you weave all the warps – the ones at the side may be quite bunched up to begin with.
- Pay attention to the tension in your weaving.
- It will get more difficult to weave as you get close to the top of the warp, because there's less room for the needle and it's getting tighter. You may want to weave each warp one by one... as if you were stitching through a piece of fabric.
- Finish on a closed shed (i.e. the weft yarn is going behind the back warp) to trap the weft in place.
- Do some practice weaving and unpick before you start thinking about your design.
- Take your time and unpick if you go wrong, don't try and cut out your mistakes... it will end in tears.
- Links to on-line instruction
  - [weaversbazaar Knowledge Zone](#)
  - [Weaving for Beginners on Youtube by Creativebug Studios \(YouTube\)](#)
  - [Four Things to Remember for New Tapestry Weavers by R Mezoff \(YouTube\)](#)
  - [Why Tapestry? by Mirrix Looms \(YouTube\)](#)
  - [Questions from the Art of Tapestry Weaving by R Mezoff \(blog\)](#)

## Step 3 Design Guidelines

*Open Weave* is about understanding the woven structure and how patterns can be created, so while we don't want to be too prescriptive about what you weave, we do have some guidelines. We would like to see stripes and geometric shapes, rather than figurative designs.

There are some interesting woven blankets and coverlets in the Museum's collection that can be a source of inspiration, as can any woven items that you may have in your home, or you may have developed your own ideas as you were practising.

The images below may help:



Detail of blanket in the Museum's collection.

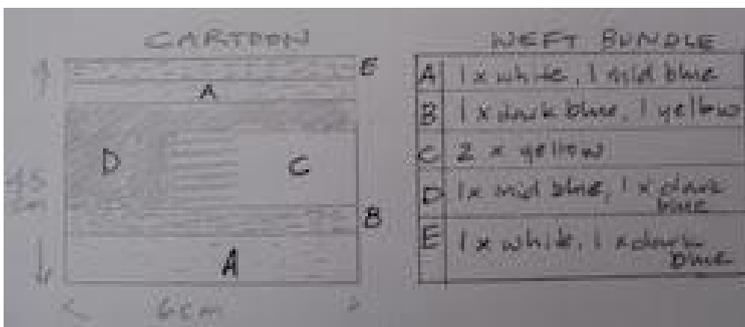


Hatching technique creates a third colour between black and white



Horizontal colour blending

You can make a drawing of what you would like to weave (this is called a cartoon) and do some colour-coding so that you have a plan of what you hope to weave. This will help you to "budget" your yarn.



Or, you may just want to let inspiration come to you as you weave and not bother with a cartoon.

### TOP TIPS

- You can get some ideas from Pinterest, where you can check out a folder called [Open Weave 2021](#).
- Make notes or take photos if you are trying out some ideas before finalising your design.
- The design stage is a challenge for many tapestry weavers, but if you're really struggling, contact us at [events@gairlochmuseum.org](mailto:events@gairlochmuseum.org) and we'll arrange for a short phone call.
- Try out weaving techniques such as hatching (where your second needle will come in handy) and colour blending.

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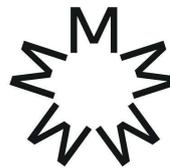
### Step 4 Send us your work.

Return your completed mini-loom and needles to:

- Gairloch Museum's post box at the entrance to the Museum OR
- Post it to Gairloch Museum re-using the envelope.  
(Gairloch Museum, Gairloch, Ross-shire, IV21 2BH). If you are paying for the 96p postage yourself, thank you

If you would like your tapestry returned to you, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope, we will return it later in 2021 after any public exhibitions held.

The project is made possible thanks to our project supporters:



Art Fund\_  
Museum of  
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