

Frida Hansen's Open Warp Wool Transparency Technique

Dear Friends,

I look forward to our class in Philadelphia next month!

Looms for Class

A variety of tapestry looms can be used for weaving in Frida Hansen's wool open warp transparency technique - a Mirrix, a Baby Wolf, or a copper pipe loom, as examples. The only type of tapestry loom I would NOT recommend is a simple frame with no tensioning. Whatever loom that is used *should* have a tensioning device. Having a shedding device will speed up the weaving process but is not imperative, especially for the smaller pieces we are weaving in class.

I have woven successfully on these four looms: a simple copper pipe frame, a Glimakra table tapestry loom, a Glimakra full upright tapestry loom, and a Baby Wolf. Although a Baby Wolf works well for weaving (and I have a handout on hints for using a floor loom for the technique), a portable tapestry should be used for the workshop.



Yarn for Frida Hansen's Open Warp Wool Tapestry: Warp

I'm often asked, "How do the woven areas stay in place? Do you make knots along the edge?" No, knots are not used in this technique. It's the magic of wool weft and wool warp; with the right materials the yarns stay in place nicely - all those tiny scales of wool fibers clinging to each other.

I have woven pieces using Rauma åklegarn for the warp, a Norwegian yarn spun from the wool of spelsau sheep. Because I know it works well at 8 ends per inch, that is the yarn I prefer to use for the samples/small pieces in the workshop. We will also discuss my experience with other warp yarn and look at many samples.

Should I warp my loom ahead of time?

You can do so if you would like. Most students in the previous workshop came with warped looms. You don't *have* to warp ahead of time. Most tapestry looms don't take long to warp, and I will bring several skeins of Rauma aklegarn. I have enough gold, peachy orange, tan, a couple of greens, a blue, and white to warp for small projects.



The partial skein with a yellowish cast is actually off-white.

It's partly a chicken and egg question, warping first or deciding on a design first. We talk a lot about design right off the bat, and I have a number of patterns,

details from Frida Hansen transparencies that you can use or modify, and choose your size. It's a fun part of the process. It's also super fun when there are a number of warp colors chosen, to see the difference it makes.

Odds are that you will not finish your sample. Only one person has in the past three workshops. It's not a race!

If you would like to warp first, you can purchase aklegarn from Blue Heron Knittery ahead of time, (<https://www.blueheronknittery.com>) and warp for a sample at 8 epi. You could weave a rose at 5.5 x 7.5", or 6.5 x 8.5", as I have done on my small pipe loom.

Suggested size: Choose a width anywhere from 9 - 12", and plan for a corresponding pleasing height.

Weft yarn

In the Norwegian yarn world, Rauma prydvavgarn and Frid yarn are fingerling weight yarns that work great. I think it is the closest to the old pieces, and they are generally what I use, interchangeably. Both have a wooly “stickiness,” and in combination with the aklegarn warp, sit nicely in place. But that’s not the only sort of yarn used in historical pieces from Frida Hansen’s studio and in pieces woven by her followers. As I wrote in a post after examining a mermaid tapestry, “a major take-away from my close study was that the weft varied a great deal, and she used thinner and thicker yarns within the same piece.” <https://robbielafleur.com/2019/05/30/frida-hansen-transparency-in-the-stavanger-library/> Yarn was both single or plied, and metallic yarns were used in some pieces. In general, though, weft yarn for the open warp technique should have some wooly bite in order to remain in place.



Many in the tapestry weaving world love to use bundles of yarn in their weaving. We’ll talk about this. In general, using a plied yarn works better for staying in place than using bundled yarn, which doesn’t lie quite as nicely when turning a corner.

Suggestion: Bring a bag of wool yarn in colors you like. I will bring a selection of weft yarn, too.

Rauma prydvavgarn is available from Blue Heron Knittery in Decorah. (<https://www.blueheronknittery.com>). Frid yarn is available from Norsk Fjord Fiber. (<https://norskfjordfiber.com>)

Materials Cost

\$15 for handouts. I will figure out further materials costs, depending on whether I am supplying the warp and weft for projects. Students can expect to pay between \$25-\$50 on yarn. That’s a ballpark. With tapestry, so much depends on stash. People might have plenty of weft yarn at hand.

Materials to Bring

Drawing and design tools. Paper (8-½ x 11 or larger), tracing paper, pencil, tape, markers or colored pencils. (Those adept with watercolor may want to bring those — that’s how Frida Hansen made her designs!)

Inspirational photos or designs. Frida Hansen used flowers and trees and birds in her designs. Do you have a flower or bird or sort of vegetation you find inspirational? We'll work on adapting a design to work well in the open warp transparency technique. I will have some designs you could use or adapt, too.

Laptop?

It's not absolutely necessary to bring a laptop these days, with the ability to take photos and do so much on your phone. I have Photoshop Elements on my laptop and am happy to help people when needed.

Flexibility and fun and learning are my goals for our time together!

I've been posting about weaving in this technique for quite a while. You might want to scroll through my Instagram feed, [robbie_lafleur](#).

Subscribe to my blog too. These are some recent posts about previous classes that I hope will make you excited for our experiments together next month. And there are tons more on the blog, about my pieces and those by others.

<https://robbielafleur.com/2024/03/18/frida-hansen-inspiration-and-student-samples/>

<https://robbielafleur.com/2023/11/20/report-from-the-san-diego-workshop-milky-way-inspiration/>

<https://robbielafleur.com/2023/11/18/report-from-the-vesterheim-workshop-green-roses-complete/>

<https://robbielafleur.com/2023/11/08/frida-hansen-workshop-in-san-diego-part-two/>

<https://robbielafleur.com/2023/11/07/frida-hansen-workshop-in-san-diego-part-one/>

<https://robbielafleur.com/2023/09/25/frida-hansen-class-in-decorah-part-two/>

<https://robbielafleur.com/2023/09/22/frida-hansen-class-in-decorah-part-one/>

I'd love to know what type of loom you will be bringing. Need a loom? I have a pipe loom that is free.

I know our time together will be fun and productive. See you soon, Robbie

