

Using Painted Warps

By Heather Hubbard

Painted warps can produce quite dramatic finished textiles. Warp dyed with a variety of colors can be exciting to look at. There are a number of ways to use a painted warp in weaving. The following are a few ideas.

A single painted warp can be used as the only warp yarn in the textile. This can make a very nice textile by itself. However, when winding the warp onto the loom, sections of the warp can be passed over varying heights of a frame to cause a classic Ikat shifted motif, for example a chevron, to form in the painted warp.

A warp can be wound into multiple warp chains before they are simultaneously painted. These separately wound warps can be reversed and threaded in stripes for the textile. This will give subtly defined edges to the striped effect. See below for stronger edge definition.

Multiple warp chains can be painted in different color ways. These different color ways can be threaded as interleaving stripes. Many books contain suggestions for stripe sizes.

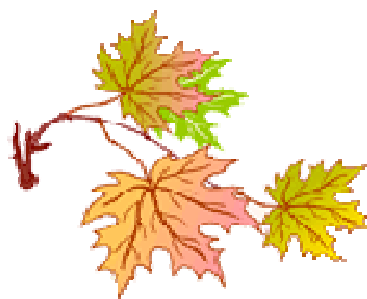
Additional single or double yarns of contrasting color (navy or black are commonly used) can be added to the outside edges of warp painted stripes to create emphases or definition of stripe edges. And/or add numerous yarns to create solid colored stripes between the painted warp stripes. An entire contrasting warp can be threaded with the painted warp as double weave or other structural threadings.

Be forewarned: you should preshrink any additional yarns to match the shrinkage which the dyed yarns have experienced. Cotton and rayon yarns will have experienced the equivalent of cold water wash. Wool and silk yarns will have experienced the equivalent of hot water soak (don't agitate these yarns, and with silk don't get the water overly hot or risk damage to the silk).

When specific weave structures are applied to a painted warp visual changes can occur. A damask satin or twill structure, for example can cause the warp colors to appear and disappear alternating with the weft.

Wefts of contrasting or blending colors can cause the edges of the warp faced blocks to appear and disappear in the textile, creating visual hard or soft edges to the blocks. For example, if there is red in the painted warp, using a red weft will cause the red in the warp to recede or seemingly "disappear", whereas a navy or black weft will cause the red in the warp to show more or come forward.

However you use them, painted warps always have great impact for the finished cloth.



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