

In the arts, no matter what level of experience, it is important to take workshops, seminars, and master classes to continue learning new techniques, find inspiration, and sometimes, just to study another's teaching style.

There are many craft schools throughout the country, conferences in every field, and local organizations, like weaving guilds to help create these opportunities to try new skills and expand creativity. Though I have taught at all of them, I can and should also participate as a student.

Over the years, I've taken many classes with other teachers, especially in weaving, there is a lifetime of concepts, skills, and techniques to learn, and even though I have spent a lifetime teaching and developing a large body of work, I still often feel as though I have just scratched the surface. Each of us finds that niche that allows us to bloom, to thrive, and to nurture that passion. Mine was handwoven clothing. But there is always something to learn from another instructor.

This group of work represents the results of some of the workshops I've taken over the years. Studying a rug weaving technique called Krokbragd with *Tom Knisely* left me with a gorgeous sampler, too small for a rug, but too bulky for something wearable. I created this tote bag which has become my favorite travel bag.

The summer top was a workshop with *Rosalie Neilson*, in huck lace and block design. I wove the fabric, intended for dishtowels, of which I have too many, and so I carefully planned from the samples I had, this lacy cotton summer top in pastel colors.

I studied 'Bubble Cloth' with *Karen Donde*, and wove a narrow length of cloth, from Merino and Tencel®. When aggressively washed, the Merino shrunk, and the Tencel® did not, creating a differential shrinkage and hence, "bubbles". I had a couple of yards of this narrow cloth and decided it would make excellent trim on a vest with wool Melton I had in my stash.

The Crimp Cloth Vest is from a class with *Dianne Totten*, in a workshop of the same name. By using a synthetic weft thread and weaving a heavy contrasting sewing thread across in a specific pattern, once the cloth came off the loom, the contrasting sewing thread was pulled tight across the cloth gathering or crimping the cloth very tight. The resulting bundle was steamed, and the synthetic weft held the memory of that position permanently, creating a crimped cloth once the pull threads were removed. It was a painstaking process, but fun to explore, and I created this lovely vest which molds to the body.

The Turned Taqueté vest was woven in a workshop with *Kathrin Weber*, who creates hand painted warps, and teaches how to integrate them using structure to generate gorgeous block designs. Once the cloth was woven, I created this zippered vest, trimmed with linen, using one of the patterns from my pattern collection.

The doubleweave Jacket was an extreme labor of love. I took a class with *Jennifer Moore*, who is known for her use of doubleweave. In doubleweave, two or more layers are woven simultaneously, and depending on the block structure, the layers can change places throughout the cloth. That means that each face of the cloth, the front side and the reverse side look completely different. Once the class was over, I still had probably three yards of warp left on the loom to weave off. Unfortunately, I fell and seriously broke my left shoulder in two places, taking me out of commission for over a year. That didn't stop me from figuring out how to keep going, creating, and weaving off the rest of the warp. With only one functioning arm I managed to weave about 6" a day and felt like I had conquered the world.

I struggled with a way to show off both sides of the cloth at the same time. Because garments are my first choice of how to best use a handwoven fabric, I came upon the idea that I could surround each doublewoven sample with windows creating a completely reversible jacket, each face completely different in appearance. Each of the windows is carefully hand stitched in a reverse appliqué technique. I sat for hours on the sofa, again with only one really usable arm, but could prop the work on pillows and keep stitching.

It has always been important to me to find a way to keep working, stay creative, and keep learning and trying new things. Even when injury, illness, family trauma and loss of equipment happen, and they will, no one can take away my ability to think and create.

-Daryl Lancaster