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Molly Elkind Handwovens

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Testing, testing: Weaving Tech Checks in Tapestry

I. **PowerPoint:**

- A. "Sampling" vs. "a sampler." A broad approach to sampling.
- B. What are some aspects of your tapestry you can sample for?

1. **Value and Color**

Yarn wraps
Woven color samples
Weft blends—laid straight or twisted
Value check with camera

2. **Techniques**

Hatching
Pick and pick
Outlining
Wedge weave
Inclusion of found objects, surface embellishment
Any technique that is new to you

3. **Direction of weaving**

Steep slanted vertical lines in your design may mean you should weave from the side.

4. **Warp sett (epi) + yarn weights**

Match the scale of the piece to the warp sett and the size of your loom.

2-warp rule: the smallest detail on your cartoon should span at least two warps, to avoid single-warp wrapping.

1:1:1: The thickness of the warp=the thickness of the weft=space between the warp
Weft bundles should be approximately equal in size for consistent woven surface.

5. **Fibers and unusual materials**

Any yarn fiber or materials new to you

6. **Design**

Tricky bits in your cartoon such as faces, lettering, complex shapes—whatever you're not sure about.

- II. **Practice** sampling. The list below looks like a sequential, linear process, but it's more like a circle or spiral in practice
- A. Sketch: Study your chosen inspiration image carefully, thinking about what elements you want to emphasize and which ones to de-emphasize or leave out. Use a pencil and paper (plain or graph paper) and sketch the *main lines and shapes*. It's OK to make a bunch of small thumbnail sketches to start with. Try several different arrangements, formats, and compositions.
 - B. Once you have a design you like, scale it up to a size you can work with, if needed, and make several photocopies or tracings. Use colored pencils to try out different color palettes. Refine and edit your design as you go, thinking about how you could weave each part.
 - C. Make notes on your copy or tracing about colors, weft yarns, direction of weaving, sett, and techniques and how you will sample for these.
 - D. Make yarn wraps to try out actual yarns from your stash.
 - E. Weave one or more samples that tests colors, fibers, warp yarn and sett, weft thickness, direction of weaving, specific techniques
- III. **Is your sample a finished piece?** Can you finish the edges, mount it, and display it? If you think you might want to, keep this in mind as you warp your loom and decide how to handle your warp ends and hems.

SUPPLIES:

Inspirational photo, collage, rough sketch or idea to work with

Paper: several sheets blank or graph paper, whatever you're used to; at least 8.5 x 11"

Ruler

Tracing Paper

Graphite pencil

Color Pencils

Optional:

For value checks: smartphone camera

For photocopies: copier

For yarn wraps: folded index card or cardstock strips or matboard strips; yarns; scotch tape

For woven samples: small loom, warp and weft yarns, your usual tools

Resources:

Mezoff, Rebecca, *The Art of Tapestry Weaving*, North Adams, MA: Storey Publishing, 2020

Scanlin, Tommye McClure, *Tapestry Design Basics and Beyond*, Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2021

<https://www.textileartist.org/sampling-creative-super-power>