

INTERVIEW WITH ANNIE MACHALE FOR WEVEN

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If you are interested in inkle weaving, you will certainly find the website by Annie MacHale. Annie MacHale is an inkle weaver from Albuquerque, New Mexico, who specializes in color combinations for plain weave bands. She has an extensive blog (spinnerweaver.com) and has published a book "In Celebration of plain weave", which focuses on the use of color. Reason enough for WEVEN to do an interview with her.



Annie MacHale

When did you start inkle weaving? And how did you get in touch with it?

When I was a girl of 17 years, I saw a woman at a fair weaving on an inkle loom. I bought one of her belts and was so fascinated to watch her. At that moment, I decided that I wanted to try this craft. With the help of my father and a book borrowed from the library, I was able to build a loom. Then, I asked her for help in setting it up and showing me how to weave. This was my introduction to weaving. Although I have tried other forms of weaving, it is the inkle loom that I love.

You are mastering plain weave, but you are not trying many other techniques. What is it that plain weave is so fascinating to you?

The challenge for me with plain weave is to always experiment and discover new and beautiful combinations. Patterns can be simple or extraordinary depending how color is used. What the different elements of the pattern really do is allow the combining of colors in different ways and proportions and my experiments have led to many great discoveries. Also, plain weave goes very quickly for me, allowing me to keep moving on to the next new idea.

What motivated you to write the book, "In Celebration of Plain Weave"?

It's great to be a part of the online community of bandweavers. I see so many new weavers struggling to learn difficult techniques, thinking that this is where they want to start. But, I feel that it's very important to start simply, with plain weave and then move on to more complicated techniques. When I looked at the books about inkle weaving, I found that most of them gave good how-to information about weaving, but very few really encouraged the artistry of design. I felt that there was something missing and really wanted to share my enthusiasm. It's possible to create extraordinary bands in plain weave and there are endless combinations!

Can you describe in short the process of writing this book?

Because I have no formal training in art, I began by studying color theory.



Color Labb



The Lanyard Project

This helped me to better explain things about the interactions between colors, things which I had learned for myself by weaving hundreds of bands. Then I began adding examples and photos to illustrate these ideas and explain how weavers could approach creating their own designs. I also planned to include a section of plain weave patterns which weavers could copy if they weren't ready to design their own. While I was working on the written part, I got very lucky. I received a message from someone in France who had just created a computer program for drawing pattern charts, the Bandweaving Pattern Editor. This online tool was exactly what I needed to create the charts for the book and the maker graciously agreed to allow me to use it in this way. A friend offered to help me with the book's layout and I am very grateful to her for putting my ideas on the page and creating such a color-filled book. Even friends who don't weave have told me that they enjoy the colorful designs and pictures, which makes me very happy!



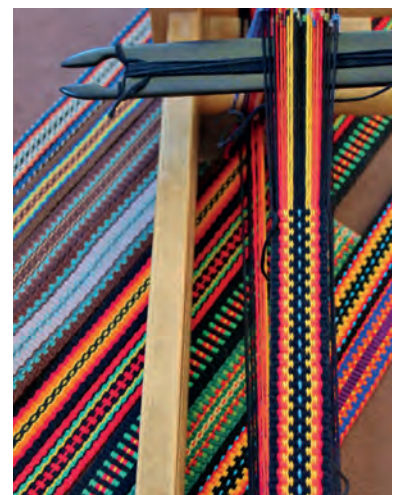
Inspired by nature

What is your favorite color combination?

I really like to use bright colors in my weaving. Along with them, I use a lot of black because I think it helps the other colors stand out more. My very favorite combinations use a gradient from dark to light and then a bit of something which provides a contrast or "pop".

You were invited to the White House. How did you get in touch? How did you get invited? And can you tell us something about your experiences?

Last summer, I was very surprised to receive a phone call inviting me to the White House. At first, I thought that it must be some kind of prank. But, the White House staff member explained to me about the event that they would like me to attend. The goal of the "Made in America Product Showcase", she said, was to proudly demonstrate all of the great things that are made here in our country. They were inviting one company from each of the 50 states. Although I never did learn how they selected me to represent my state of New Mexico, I was grateful for the opportunity. It's an honor to receive such



Loom with Straps



Camouflage

an invitation and I couldn't refuse, although I knew that it would be an expensive trip for us. My husband accompanied me and we were both very excited to be able to take part in this event and to walk inside the halls and rooms of this very significant historic building. Many of the other companies that were invited were larger and well-known in the U.S. and beyond, which made it even more exciting that my little handweaving business would be included! We had to pass a security check before the trip and we were required to send our things ahead so that they could be screened. On the morning of the event, we arrived early to the White House to set up a display table. I took many things for the display, including a very lovely hand-built guitar to show off my guitar straps. The event was not open to the public, but was attended by many of those who worked in government offices and, of course, the press. The vice president came through the exhibit hall, stopping to look at all of the displays and visit with us. After several hours, we were escorted outside to sit on the lawn where the president spoke to us. He had much to say about the manufacturing of goods in the U.S. He spoke proudly about how this is on the increase, an item of concern for many of us. For me personally, it is also a matter of pride to produce and sell the items created with my own hands to customers around the world.



White House