

Linda Ligon: To Weave or Not to Weave

I don't hoard yarn any more. When we moved to a new home five years ago, I divested myself of thirty-some years' accumulation of odd lots of yarn. What I have now is a long rod stretching across the width of my all-purpose work/weave/write room opposite the comfy couch where I often sit with a cup of tea. On the rod hang a few lots of really lovely, interesting skeins of yarn, and as I sit, I wait for inspiration to strike.

I acquired these yarns because they were so wonderful in themselves and because I wanted to look at them and maybe touch them every day, not because I needed ingredients for a particular project I had in mind.

One lot consists of seven 200-yard skeins of singles spun from Navajo Churro fleece and dyed in a rainbow of natural colors: orange, scarlet, reddish purple, purple, blue, greenish blue, and deep forest green (at the right in the photo below). The grist is about twelve wraps per inch, and while it's softly spun, it's too scratchy to wear next to the skin.

Another lot has a completely opposite texture. These skeins are 30/2 spun silk in rich colors ranging from rust through deep red browns through red violets to deep purple (at the left in the photo). A stupendous amount of yardage in a color range that makes me deeply happy!

I have a few other yarns up there, too: several skeins of indigo-dyed wool in various weights and shades given to me by a good friend and some skeins of fine woolen two-ply that I dyed at a cochineal party with friends and co-workers (these are deep reds and reddish browns). Mmm, mmm, mmm.

I spend a fair bit of time looking at my lovely skeins. They not only evoke possibilities, they bring back memories. The Navajo wool, for instance, dates back to a long-past Convergence, a time rich in meeting old friends. It recalls a trip to the Navajo reservation in 1998, where I had an inspiring visit with a woman who keeps a splendid Churro flock. The mill where the

yarn was carded and spun—didn't I do a story on that about twenty years ago? The indigo skeins are intextricably linked in my mind with a blazing hot summer day, helping a dear friend clean out her stash (Deborah Chandler, for those of you who remember her old "Your Weaving Teacher" column from the early days of this magazine.) Sweltering sun, airless storage shed, bittersweet goodbyes. Yarns = memories!

So back to the question: To weave or not to weave? How often have you fallen in love with yarn and had it transmogrify into something sad and lifeless when you wove with it? Am I better off to keep these yarn lots as wall décor, or should I allow myself the pleasure of weaving them into something? Here's where you come in, dear reader.

Give me your thoughts. Tell me what kind of weaving you believe would best honor these gorgeous yarns. What would help them keep their life and character? What would be fun and not too arduous to weave on four to eight shafts?

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I'll pick one of your ideas (assuming they are not all terrible) and weave it up for inclusion in a future issue of *Handwoven*. It will be a test of your visualization abilities and my weaving abilities. You will have a moment of fame, and I will have a clear spot on my rod to hang a new batch of yarn when I find one that speaks to me. E-mail your ideas to me at lligon@interweave.com and put "What you should weave" on the subject line. I can hardly wait. 



PHOTO BY ANN SWANSON