

# the handweavers studio & gallery



## the handweavers diploma 2019 - 2021

a two-year course for weavers who want  
to take their weaving to another level

the handweavers diploma will provide you with an excellent grounding if you want to pursue a career as a designer-maker or a teacher of handweaving, or simply for your own satisfaction with no particular career plans to use it professionally

- ★ ten-day initial summer school
- ★ project-based learning
- ★ quarterly teaching weekends
- ★ regular tutor contact  
helping you to
- ★ gain an intermediate to advanced knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of weave structures
- ★ develop your weaving skills to an expert level
- ★ build your creative skills and confidence to be innovative in your weaving

We all know that excellence in weaving is about more than straight selvages! A good weaver should:

- ★ be able to design an attractive product
- ★ have the technical knowledge to translate that design functionally
- ★ have the craft skills to produce a finished item to a high standard

The Handweavers Diploma addresses all of these areas.

## Who is it for?

This is not a course for complete beginners. As a minimum, you should have made, beamed and woven off five or six warps independently and be able to read a straightforward draft. If you're not certain whether you are at the right level to apply, just phone or email us to arrange a time for us to talk it through with you.

The most important qualification is a strong desire to improve your weaving, coupled with the willingness to make a clear commitment to spending two years doing so. We will want to be sure we understand what everyone who applies is aiming for, so we will be in touch to arrange to meet, talk through your experience to date, and discuss the weaving you have been doing so far. It's important to us that we put together a cohort of students who will gel as a group, pushing each other and learning from each other.

Diploma places are limited to 12, to ensure students will gain the maximum from the course.

## How many hours a week will it take?

There isn't a fixed number of hours students will be required to put in, other than attending the summer school and the quarterly contact weekends. Circumstances vary - some students have full-time day jobs, some have flexible work arrangements, others have commitments in the home. As a rough guideline, if the Diploma were delivered in an academic institution it would be a reasonably intensive one-year full-time course.

## What equipment will I need?

You will need access at home to a (minimum) eight-shaft loom. A table loom is preferred for its greater creative flexibility, but a floor loom or dobby loom would be acceptable.

## What sort of level will I reach?

The overall level of core weaving knowledge attained by most students will be somewhat beyond the Certificate of Achievement (overseen by the Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers) and the erstwhile Bradford Certificate in Woven Textile Design. It will be focused clearly on shaft-weaving on handlooms - it will not be covering tapestry weaving or, industrial weave design, nor the non-weave components one would expect in a BA.

## Who are the tutors?

Dawn Willey is the course tutor. She has experience of teaching weave at many levels, including teaching the Handweavers Introduction to Weaving courses for the past 6 years; her personal weaving practice spans the range from rigid heddle to computerized hand jacquard.

In addition to the summer school and contact weekends, she will set time aside on a regular basis for Diploma students to keep in touch and talk through problems.

There will also be a number of specialist tutors involved in some sessions in the summer school and at some of the contact weekends. They vary from one Diploma course to the next, but are all professional weavers with national or international reputations. In this way you will be able to experience a wide range of approaches to all sorts of aspects of weaving and will be better placed to develop your own individual style and adopt the practices that suit you best personally.



## How does the course work?

The Diploma consists of seven modules, each with a period of tuition, individual feedback sessions, and a weaving project. The course starts with a ten-day summer school during which you will:

- ★ review the basics as a firm foundation for future work
- ★ be introduced to design concepts and practices that will be useful throughout the course and beyond
- ★ receive instruction and practical experience in selected weave structures
- ★ be introduced to the first project

You will then return every three months for a contact weekend with this typical timetable:

Friday - presentations and group crit of the project you have just completed

Saturday - a full teaching day, with either a visiting tutor or the course tutor

Sunday - exploring new weave structures on the workshop looms and receiving individual tutorial sessions

Some weave structures will be taught during the summer school and contact weekends, but students will be encouraged and expected to explore others independently, with guidance as necessary from the course tutor.

## What happens in the summer school?

The summer school is an intensive kick-start to the course - expect to have your head spinning by the end! The programme will cover:

- ★ technical knowledge
- ★ design theory and practice
- ★ working practices
- ★ presentation techniques
- ★ a range of weave structures
- ★ practical sampling and exploration

## What are the projects?

The projects lie at the heart of the Diploma. Every module, with the exception of the very last one, has a new project, and students will design, weave and present a swatch collection for each one. Some will be typical of commissions that handweavers may expect to receive as designer-makers; others will be based on a design studio's approach to collection development, for example using trend forecasts with directional colours, visual inspirations and moods of the moment.

Over the course of all the modules, students can expect - and will be expected - to produce work in a range of weights for a variety of functions, from lightweight for scarves and clothing, through to heavyweight for interiors, including optionally rugs, and to work in a variety of materials.

## What will the modules cover?

Each module will start with a teaching day at the contact weekend, and the workshop looms will be set up with related warps. Topics will typically include block weaves, twills of all kinds, distorted wefts and lace weaves, network drafting, multi-layer cloth, collapse and other 3D techniques, and various tied weaves. Students may choose to use those weaves in their project for that module, but there's no restriction on the structures that may be used.

## How much design work will I have to do?

You will be introduced to aspects of design theory and to various design techniques to help you design the kind of cloth you want to weave, but this is not a design course per se. You will be advised on how to mount and present your project swatches in a professional way compatible with long-term re-usability. For your final project, though, you may want to devise a more creative presentation.

## How will my work be assessed?

Feedback and informal assessment will be given on a module-by-module basis by the course tutor throughout the course.

At the end of each year students will compile a portfolio from the work they have done through the year (reworked or augmented if they wish) to be formally assessed by at least two external assessors. The assessment will take technical proficiency, appropriateness of design, and understanding and use of weave structures into equal consideration.

The external assessors will be highly reputed individuals drawn from the community of professional weavers, weave teachers, and weave design professionals.

## Is the Diploma affiliated to any awarding body?

No. We want to be free of the constraints imposed by the various awarding bodies so that we can concentrate on offering what our students want to learn. Our external assessors are however expected to be rigorous in ensuring the standards are high!

## What will it cost?

Fees are payable annually, but we need you to make a firm commitment to both years. The fees for the first year include the ten-day summer school.

Year 1: £1,950

Year 2: £1,600

Fees include all teaching, and sampling yarns used during teaching weekends and the summer school. They do not include project yarns.

Fees are inclusive of VAT.

## What are the dates?

Summer school

Fri 30 August - Sun 8 September 2019

Contact weekends

Fri 22 - Sun 24 November 2019

Fri 13 - Sun 15 March 2020

Fri 12 - Sun 14 June 2020

Fri 4 - Sun 6 September 2020

Fri 20 - Sun 22 November 2020

Fri 15 - Sun 17 February 2021

Final presentation

Fri 18 - Sun 20 June 2021

Diploma Show: Private View reception Sun 20 June

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