

Claudia's Studio Tour:

Claudia Gibson, here. Long ago, my husband and I built a little house (24 feet square, and three stories high) along the Connecticut River, on the New Hampshire side. If I look out my western windows, all I see is Vermont. I chose to join the Vermont Weavers Guild because I like the drive to Randolph.

I took up weaving first by taking a beginner course at Harrisville and then spent several years acquiring looms and tools, but I didn't find the time to devote to weaving until I retired in 2015. I had purged all my former equipment, tools, and fiber, so I started up again from scratch. I'd long been interested in Swedish weave structures, and Scandinavian style looms. After a couple of week-long courses at Vavstuga, I bought a 100 cm. Lilla (Oxaback) – a Swedish loom – that I'd enjoyed using while there.

My husband is sharing our first-story workshop with me (so the alert viewer will see a vise on my work-table). This houses the loom and our washer/dryer; I have just enough room to walk around it. I use shelving in the next-door guest room and linen closet to wind my bobbins and store fiber and tools. My warping reel is on the third floor, where it can sit on a counter at a nice height for me.

Why weaving? I've always been a knitter – my favorite projects are intricate Fair Isle designs with multiple colors. It's so much easier to do that on a loom (no tangles)! While I love tapestries, wall hangings, and sculptured pieces (so ingenious, what people can do) I much prefer the functional. Linens, blankets, pillow covers, upholstery fabric, and towel after towel. I like hem-stitching; I dislike fringe. I KNIT shawls all the time but rarely wear them; they become gifts. I love inter-layed blocks of color, as in doubleweave or deflected doubleweave. I bought an 8-harness loom so I could make double-wide blankets in twill – I've successfully made a few. (I've yet to try doubleweave overshot but that ought to be possible).

I enjoy all phases of the weaving process – planning, warping, weaving-off and even finishing. I like that I can warp or weave when I have the time and inclination. It's neither a portable nor 'social' craft – but if I were engaged in a conversation while weaving, I would make too many mistakes! It gives me a focus that is flexible and meditative.

I've recently bought a small 'starter' loom for my niece (she's the crafty one) and she's started on her own journey. It's selfish of me because I can see myself 'down-sizing' this larger loom to her when the time comes. She's not had an opportunity to meet with a guild or take a workshop during the pandemic year and that makes me sad. It is so inspiring to see others' work; we always come away from a meeting with grandiose plans. My participation in the Vermont Weavers Guild is a great joy. I look forward to a time when we can be together "in 3-D."

The pictures are of my warping-reel; the warp-chain on my work-table; my loom; and weaving the current project (a hanging "quilt" to hide a creosote stain on our chimney).







