

iki Edreva
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Installation/Participation

Rug





Detail pics + loom view



Over the course of this semester, I wove a small, wool rug. I began by building a 30' x 48" simple frame loom from cedar planks and nails. I strung the vertical warp in cotton twine and used exclusively wool yarns for the horizontal weft. My intention from the beginning was to let the rug develop and grow as it wished rather than creating it with a specific image or plan in mind. Each section of the rug is a direct result of the sections preceding it. Weaving doesn't entail any knots or other permanent forms of binding, and thus the rug is not permanent in that it is able to be taken apart at any moment. Each yarn relies on all the others, and so I wanted each visual element of the rug to emerge from the previous ones.

I was originally inspired by the work of Ricky Bearghost, a weaver who incorporates beads, shells, branches and flowers, and found objects into his weavings (images below). Drawing on his multimedia approach to weaving, I intended to incorporate a number of different textiles and objects into my weaving: clay beads, calligraphy on scraps of paper, fabric onto which I had printed images, etc. His work was most influential to the formulation of my project.

Since this is my first ever weaving project, I began from the basics and intended to add these multimedia components on as I progressed. When I started to weave, I began to look to traditional Bulgarian rug weaving for inspiration (images below). There is a longstanding tradition of rug making in Bulgaria, with pockets of artisan weavers in multiple cities and towns across the country, each with a distinctive style. I looked primarily towards the rug making in the town of Chiprovtsi, and at the work of Siika Tacheva, the master rug artisan in Chiprovtsi¹. The large human figure in the foreground of my piece is one of the most common motifs of Chiprovtsi rugs, and the two white flowers on the left side are another Chiprovtsi motif. Incorporating these traditional motifs pulled me away from my multimedia vision as I grew attached to a more traditional weaving style. I also drew inspiration from the rugs of Angie Wilson, particularly one in which a curving line bisects the horizontal stripe pattern (image below). This curving line found its way into my piece in the form of the red stream that comes down from the mountain on the left side.

The final rug tells a story of living in the mountains. As I leaned more into traditional weaving, and spurred by my research into the motifs of Bulgarian rugs, I became more and more interested

¹ I found really good YouTube documentaries about these rugs. Ask me for the links :)

in the storytelling capability of a woven object. The rug tells of a person who lives near the fertile soil of a river, in their house which is visible in the background, whose gardens are visible just beyond that. The mountains stretch up behind them and a bright red sun shines in the sky. I hope it is a prophecy of a future for my family and I in Bulgaria.

The participatory element of this project is in my interaction with it. (Unfortunately, the rug is currently still on the loom, so I can't show it in action, but the image above shows its final form just before removal). I intend for the rug to have a ceremonial function, akin to a prayer rug. This was my original intention for the use of the rug, but it is particularly special in light of the future story that emerged in my weaving. The size of the rug is just large enough to fit my body curled up or kneeling, and the bright red sun is intended as a resting place for my head.

I learned an incredible amount about weaving over the course of this project. As is often the case with long-term projects, the progress of my weaving skill is evident in the change in style as you read the rug from bottom to top. My interweaving of color and shape became increasingly complex over the course of the rug: originally I intended to carry horizontal stripes through most of the rug, and I ended up creating a sort of painting. I also learned to latch-hook, an alternate rug making style that resulted in the tufted section of the red sun.

Art references



Left and right,
weavings by Ricky
Bearghost



Bottom,
rug by Angie Wilson



Art references

Bulgarian Chiprovtsi rugs

