

Finishing Four Sides of Tapestries

Pat Dozier

Although "I Love Lucy" may appear to be a four-selvedge tapestry, it actually has a woven selvedge. Because I learned to weave on a Navajo style loom and for a time wove four selvedge tapestries, I grew to prefer flat edges without hems. The woven selvedge described in Peter Collingwood, and known as Swedish tapestry edge, approximates the look of four-selvedge tapestry.

A woven edge secures the warp and the remaining ends can then be either: braided; covered with tape; woven back into the fabric of the tapestry; or cut off. The disadvantage of weaving the warp ends into the tapestry is that it pulls the body of the piece inward. It also takes considerable time. The ends are still often visible as specks on the back, thus prohibiting it from being a two-sided piece. I've accepted a one-sided approach to tapestry and so I prefer to cut the warp ends (after the Swedish tapestry edge) to about one inch. Because I work with a wool warp, a subsequent heavy steaming slightly felts the woven edging. This secures the warp ends, and, because they are fairly short, I cover them with one-inch twill tape. The twill tape also provides a surface to attach a hanging device.

The warp in "I Love Lucy" is black and therefore the selvedge blends into the predominantly black background. Dying the warp to blend with the edge color in the tapestry makes the woven edge unobtrusive, but you must consider the warp color's effect on the weft. For example, a black warp will slightly grey any white areas.

While weaving I also try to make my weft ends disappear by fraying the beginning and ending of each weft strand. On small woven sections I catch the frayed end around a warp and double it back on the shot. Since it's frayed the shot looks approximately the same thickness as a single weft shot. In areas where working the frayed end is difficult, for example on a point or at the end of a color section, I needle weave the weft end down the warp. Then when I steam the tapestry after it is completed, I cut off any bits of weft ends. Finishing the weft ends as I weave shortens the finishing time after the piece is off the loom.



I Love Lucy
27" x 27"