

Handspun Art Yarn, the New Wave

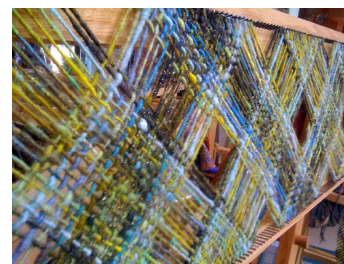
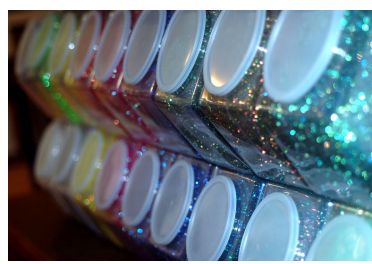
Some of the new spinning books remind me of retro 1960's chunky yarns with a twist -- more stuff added to the yarns to make truly art yarn. Missouri spinner David Gentsch of Ozark Handspun works with designers in New York and California creating art fashion with his fluffy and chunky tail and lock spun yarns. Definitely a new fashion statement. See Pluckyfluff and Intertwined (\$29.99) by Lexi Boeger, and Creative Spinning (\$14.95) by Daykin & Dean.

Along this theme, Stephanie Gorin has created a successful cottage industry called Loop Fiber Studio, preparing outrageous batts of fibers for handspinners to create funky art yarn. She has been known to even add shredded money to some batts! She successfully markets these on Etsy. I asked her to write an article after she attended a Continuous Strand Weaving workshop in search of a loom which would accommodate her art yarn. Our Spriggs Adjustable Tri-looms, Squares and Rectangles work perfectly! We visited her carding and spinning mill in lower New York after the Rhinebeck Sheep and Wool Festival this fall. Fascinating!!! See her pictures in color on our web site: <http://www.hillcreekfiberstudio.com/newsletter09-2.html>.

Stephanie's article:

I started Loop about four years ago and it has grown from a part-time hobby into a full-time fiber business. When people ask how I got into spinning and fiber, I always feel a bit ashamed to admit it. I started spinning before I knew how to purl and I started carding before I was a proficient spinner. I basically fell under a spell. I became fascinated with fiber as a creative medium. Making a batt is like developing a photo in a darkroom but better. As I card the different colors onto the drum, the batt appears to me slowly, like a photograph. But the real hook for me is three-dimensional. I love texture and am fascinated with the variety of textures found in different animal and plant fibers. Carding is an endless experiment in combining color and texture and I'm inspired by each discovery.

A few months ago, I moved Loop from my fiber-packed living room to a 2500 square foot studio in a pre-Civil War textile mill turned arts center in New York's Lower Hudson Valley. The new studio is like a fiber candy store. Visitors can hand pick their favorite color and fiber combinations from the rows of bins and jars lining the shelves. They can blend these ingredients on a drum carder themselves, or have me feed them into my new mini mill carding machine to make custom clouds or roving. The studio is a perfect setting for fiber gatherings and classes- from carding to spinning and felting to weaving. Most recently I co-taught a creative carding and art yarn spinning workshop with Lexi Boeger of Pluckyfluff. I hope that Loop will evolve into a learning and teaching fiber arts community and plan to bring in the most talented instructors- perhaps Carol Leigh herself. I know first hand what an amazing teacher she is.



I started my search for a loom about a year ago. I'd been spinning some super chunky, dense, almost dreadlock-like art yarn and wondered if I could weave with it. A local weaving shop agreed that none of the looms they carried would work with such thick and dense yarn, but they suggested I check out tri-loom weaving, since yarn of any thickness can be used. About a month later, my siblings chipped in to get me the best birthday present ever- the adjustable rectangle loom from Hillcreek Fiber Studio. In April, I went out to Missouri for the continuous strand weaving workshop with Carol Leigh and it was really incredible. While I was there I wove my first project- a scarf made with five of my handspun yarns. I wanted to try something different with the design and Carol Leigh helped me figure out how to do it. I love the results!

Loop spinning batts have appeared on the cover of Spin Off Magazine (Winter 2007), and have been featured on the pages of Spin Off, Craft Magazine, Knittyspin, DIY City Mag, and numerous spinning websites, blogs, and forums. Loop batts, roving, clouds, and handspun yarn can be purchased at www.loopfiberstudio.com. Steph Gorin can be contacted at loopfiberstudio@gmail.com.