I have had a TC-1 in my own workshop since 2004, and many Textile Forum readers will surely agree that it is a great motivating factor to be able to investigate, to try out something one has never done before, to do things a bit differently. This investigative method is bound to entail a number of abortive attempts, but will also result in samples that may come in useful years later, sometimes in a different context. For weavers it really is a godsend that so much new yarn material has become available during the past 20 years, and the same applies to the many new digital tools.

In the “Women’s Millennium” series, materials became increasingly coarser and more conspicuous. None of the weavings on the photographs have more than six warps per centimetre. As a rule I dye the materials myself – one should not underestimate the freedom one derives from being able to produce the exact shades of colour required for a project.

“Tapestry for the Women’s Millennium – the Digitized and Photoshopped Man” from 2007 consists of six colours in both the warp and weft. The obverse and reverse have been woven in complementary colours. As in traditional damask weaving, both sides are used to create the pattern, and both sides can be presented.

In “Immersed in the Women’s Millennium” from 2009 the set-up is the same, but here the threads make up six light, coloured, overlapping nets through which you can delve deeper. I attempted to use the threads to draw pictures, like crayons.

In 2010 Tronrud Engineering – who, incidentally, produce the TC-1 loom – extended their premises, Grethe Sørensen and myself were invited to submit suggestions for interior decoration.

To me this was an opportunity to investigate and try out new approaches. Eight TC-1 elements were installed next to each other on the big rug loom, providing ample scope for the 2.7 metres required for the height of the weaving. On a 10-metre-long warp of Norwegian rug yarn, we began weaving in the six weft yarns, each consisting of four Swedish 16/2 flax threads. Anette Bendixen, with whom I have had many joint projects throughout the years, helped me out. We stood side by side at the loom and threw the weft shuttle right through the shed in the same order, over and over again, in the manner of an industrial loom. In areas with a large number of intersections we simply added more weft yarn. As in traditional tapestry weaving, the length of the weft yarn was manually adjusted depending on the number of threads to be covered.

After five weeks at the loom, the nearly seven-metre-long weaving was finished. On the loom remained a rather long warp which I used to weave the “Tulips” wall hanging, now using Finnish paper in the weft. The paper was delivered in big white spools, and I dyed it the same way I would dye any other cellulose material. In addition to black and white, four different colours were required.

“Women’s Millennium” was followed by “Impossible Puzzle” in 2012. Here the warp is black and white, with a thin grey thread, whereas the weft is paper lamellae. The result is a powerful irregular texture. Because of the unusual differences I had to vary the inwoven weft to a considerable extent. I have sent this weaving to the exhibition of the 14th International Textile Triennale in Lodz.

At the same time I also began to take a keen interest in transparency – an area in which I see many unexplored possibilities for the TC-1. The weaving “Transparency” shown on page 33 was woven in hard, inflexible paper threads in six different colours. The weave consists of two layers held together by a thin, irregular grey polyester thread.

Various types of funding (regional government as well as private) enabled the Kolding School of Design to acquire a TC-1 as early as 1998. They also obtained an extra set of heddles with very big eyes. The intention was, and still is, to make the loom available to external weavers for five months of the year. Applications for use of the loom should reach me at least six months prior to the period in question.

On 26th and 27th October 2013, Grethe Sørensen and myself will give an introductory course in the use of the TC-1 loom at the Kolding School of Design. The course is open to all interested parties, the only requirement being basic practical weaving skills. Knowledge of photoshop will also be useful. We charge a fee of 100 DKK to cover materials and will work on the “first come, first served” principle.

About the author
Lise Frølund is a Danish weaver and a member of the Danish Crafts organisation and the Fine Arts Association. She was one of the first participants in the 1997 Artpartment exhibition where she presented a Jacquard wall hanging. The exhibit will be on show again at the Museum of Central Finland in Jyväskylä from 9 June to 25 August 2013. Contact: lise_frolund@mail.tele.dk; http://www.lisefrolund.dk
Lise Frolund: "Transparency", detail, 2012; Jacquard woven with paper yarn

Lise Frolund at her loom with 8 TC1 elements installed

"Impossible Puzzle", 2012; 6,20 x 1,20 m; woven for the 2013 Lodz Triennial
FROM WEAVING DESIGN TO DIGITAL JACQUARD 'TAPESTRY'
Grethe Sørensen

I have been working exclusively with digitally controlled weaving since 2000. Digitalisation has opened a completely new world of expressions and techniques that has meant a turning point in my production of one-off pieces and designs for the textile industry.

In 2004 Lisa Frølund and I jointly bought a TC1 loom, and a few years later we acquired a second one because we both needed access to the equipment all the time. However, my needs were not fully met by the TC1, so I have found a way to use the TC1 for sample weaving and to have the final products woven on an industrial jacquard loom — a solution that has proved to be a very good way for executing large projects, leaving more time for creative work.

My first experiments on an industrial jacquard loom were woven in 2006 at the TextielLab of the Dutch Textiel Museum, a playground where all kinds of digital equipment for textile production is at the disposal of artists and designers. Since then I have executed more projects on various themes and commissions for site-specific decorative work and upholstery. I have also had the chance to weave in other jacquard mills, such as the Oriole Mill in North Carolina. This is where Bethanne Knudson runs a production facility for luxury interior textiles, and she was open to experiments.

In 2010 I realised my first commission, woven on an industrial loom — three large pieces measuring 300 x 600 cm for Tronrud Engineering, Norway. It was a great honour to weave a commission for the company who developed the TC1, which has been decisive in changing my work to up-to-date, digitally controlled weaving. On the same occasion I produced a prototype of a furnishing fabric for the upholstery of the company’s chairs.

In February 2012 I completed a major exhibition project, ‘Traces of Light’, which had been five years in the making. It has been a long process during which I developed and refined motifs and techniques to achieve the right contrast between darkness, colour and light. Nineteen large tapestries measuring 160 x 300 cm were exhibited next to three video projections in ‘The Round Tower’ exhibition hall in Copenhagen — a tourist magnet that attracts 35,000 people per month. It proved to be a good combination — the atmosphere of light, the videos and the textile textures caught many people’s attention, and I met with an interest in my woven work that I never saw before. Where else in the world does a textile exhibition attract an audience as large as this? After the end of the exhibition the works were shown at Galerie Maria Wettergren in Paris, which also displayed them at the PAD fair in London and Design Miami in Basel.

I received a further three commissions for site-specific decorative pieces — the first for a hospital in Denmark, completed last year, and two more for the Smidsred Healthcare Center and the Kristiansand Town Hall in Norway, which are currently at the planning and sample weaving stage. Comprehensive projects of this kind cannot be produced on a handloom within a reasonable time, so for me the industrial jacquard loom has been the way forward. I create weave files for the production process, starting from samples woven on the TC1. The final one-off pieces are woven in Tilburg/NL.

This production method has been enabled by digital control of the looms, where a digital file replaces the endless numbers of punched cards. It is a new option that gives textile artists and designers the chance to play with machinery that is usually only used for industrial production.

About the author
Grethe Sørensen is a weaving and textile designer and a member of the Danish Artist Society (Kunstnersamfundet). Contact: gett@textiledesigner.dk; www.grethesorenensen.dk
She will be represented at the third Artapetry exhibition scheduled at the Museum of Central Finland in Jyväskylä from 8th June to 25th August 2013. A review of her "Traces of Light" exhibition by Bolette Vestby, the inventor of the TC-1, was published in TF 2/2012, pages 8–9.
Above: View at the exhibition "Traces of Light", 2012 at the Round Tower in Copenhagen

Furniture fabrics for Tronrud Engineering in Norway
Tao Hua, Co-curator; Raymond Au, professor; Wen-Ying Huang, Taiwan, Lia Cook/USA, Louise Lemieux-Berube/CDN, Philippa Brock/UK, Liz Williamson/AUS, Angelina Yuen, Vize president; Harry Lee, director of Tal Apparel; John H. Xin, Head/textile/clothing Inst.; Kinor Jiang, fashion and textile expert

This Hong Kong exhibition was held at the Fashion Gallery of the Institute of Textile and Clothing (ITC), Hung Hom, Kowloon, from 25th February to 26th April 2013.

It featured work by six well-known artists, Jun'ichi Arai, Louise Lemieux Bérubé, Philippa Brock, Lia Cook, Wen-Ying Huang and Liz Williamson, all of them passionate about the latest developments in their art.

Jun'ichi Arai was born in Kiryu, Japan. He began handweaving at his family's weaving workshop at a very early age. During the Seventies and Eighties he worked on innovative fabrics for fashion designers such as Issey Miyake and Rei Kawakubo. In those days he experimented with jacquard fabrics, combining utility with art and the dyer's craft with modern chemistry and new techniques. He calls himself a textile creator. His work can be found in many important museums.

Louise Lemieux Bérubé is a textile artist and author of a jacquard weaving handbook entitled "Le tissage créateur". She studied art history at the Université de Quebec in Montreal and jacquard weaving at the Rhode Island School of Design. In 1989 she established the Montreal Centre for Contemporary Textiles, which she managed until 2012. She took part in numerous important textile art exhibitions worldwide.

Philippa Brock is a textile designer and the Pathway Leader for Woven Textiles at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, London. She studied textiles at Goldsmiths College and the Royal College of Art in London. Experienced in weaving CAD/CAM jacquard fabrics, her design signature includes 3-D effects. Philippa Brock is a member of the "Textile Futures Research Centre" at the University of the Arts, London, and the author of "The Weave Shed", a website for professional weavers (www.theweaveshed.org).

Right: Philippa Brock/UK with her work "X-Form 3", 2012 56 x 220 cm, fluorescent and elastomeric yarns

Right: Jun'ichi Arai/J. "Flower", 2001, 54 x 52 cm, double-faced jacquard weaving. Photo: Sunny Yan

Below: Louise Lemieux-Bérubé/CDN in front of her work "Nudes at Norteles", 2011; 216 x 159 cm
Lin Cook, a weaving artist, was appointed Professor of Art at the California College of Arts in Oakland, USA, in 1976. She studied political sciences and painting at the University of California in Berkeley where she was a student of Ed Rossbach. During the Eighties she acquired an old jacquard loom and later pioneered the use of the electronic jacquard pattern loom. Looking back on over 90 solo exhibitions and participations in worldwide group exhibitions since 2000, she is one of the most well-known weaving artists.

Wen-Ying Huang is an artist and a professor of jacquard weaving at Tainan University of Taiwan. She graduated from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, USA, in 1993 and has won many distinctions. For instance, she participated in the 2011 Rijswijk Textile Biennial and the Kaunas Biennial of Lithuania. In the past three years she had several solo exhibitions in her home country.

Liz Williamson is a textile designer and head of the School of Design Studies at the University of New South Wales, Australia. She began weaving in the late Seventies, designing for the textile industry and producing her own one-off pieces in a workshop context, in particular handwoven scarves and wraps. She has been running her own workshop since 1985 where she works with some of the oldest craft techniques, combining them with electronic processes. Her pieces can be found in the most important Australian galleries and museums.
THE ART OF NOT MAKING

A NEW BOOK PUBLISHED IN LONDON

Elitist fine art is becoming the fashion again, ideologically primed by fine art academies and museum directors.

The author of this book, published in 2011, is a US installation artist who has been living in London since 1981. The US and London are the current strongholds of our materialistic ideology.

The author, Michael Petry, is a doctor of fine art, the Director of the London Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) and a co-founder of the London Museum of Installation. Born in El Paso, Texas, in 1960, he belonged to the post-Sixties generation known as the counterculture generation in the Netherlands during his student days. By then, the fashion of improving the world had dulled for young people, who favoured success and a luxury lifestyle.

The introduction to the book should be read with care. It raises legitimate questions such as: “What does it mean for the nature of art if the artist does not make his/her own work? How can we distinguish art from craft? Do we need to? What indeed is the art work?”

Michael Petry goes on to make a number of useful observations. He mentions the “conceptualism of the mid-1960s as well as the consequent ‘deskilling’ of art education and ‘dematerializing’ of practice,” a movement that has had its day.

He then delves into art history to illustrate his point, recalling the Renaissance during which a distinction was drawn between the liberal arts and the manual arts—a period when art was appreciated for its artistic intention, and when social, moral or educational rules did not apply. In this context Petry points out a gender-specific hierarchy whereby women were assigned the discipline of arts and crafts. Next he discusses the reformers: Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), with his found objects, and the Dadaists who propagated anti-art, claiming that in the past art had been dominated by a corrupt materialistic society which had caused World War I. Jean Arp (1886–1966) made use of coincidences, producing unpredicated “chance collages” and employing glassmaker Egidio Constantini as the fabricator of his objects. The fact that Arp’s studio contributed to enhancing artists’ status is a contradiction that is barely mentioned by the author.

Other attempts at declaring art or artists to be dead, or at redefining them, are referenced by a quote by the glass artist Kosuth: “The expression was in the idea, not the form—the forms were only a device in the service of the idea.” Eventually Petry resorts to the French philosopher, Roland Barthes, who in 1967 claimed that “the death of the author” to convey that no author or artist ever creates anything new or unique. Michael Petry concludes that “Art lies not in the making of an object, but in the naming of it as art.”

His reasoning is entirely meaningless as it fails to expound the problems inherent in the phenomenon of developing and imposing a monopoly of opinion. The interviews printed in the book, for instance the discussion with Anthony Harris relating to artists’ training (see p. 192, paperback edition), blatantly expose the author’s inability to answer any of the questions posed in the beginning:

“It doesn’t matter who made it. Do you like it, will you buy it, how much do you want to pay for it? That’s it. The creative process is complete: idea, object, sale!”

Following his discussion of these pearls of wisdom, the author proceeds to name artists who serve as examples for the disciplines (crafts) of glass, metal, stone, textiles, etc. Although the textile section lists 21 artists and their work, it does not in fact include a single textile artist as the author apparently does not know any, or categorises them among the unnamed craftspersons.

Usually publications of this kind might be ignored, except that they reflect the perception of the people working in the contemporary fine arts. Beatriz Sckra

Note


Digital Jacquard Design, a textbook on Jacquard weaving, will be released in October 2013.

Many artists, designers and educators who work with the Jacquard medium have taught at the Listo Foundation in Florence, Italy. Whether accomplished artist or undergraduate facing a Jacquard loom for the first time, many have asked “What textbook do you recommend?” and that has been a difficult question to answer. In the end, with a wealth of illustrative material at hand in the Listo school archives, and the generous contribution of works of artists, designers and collectors, I wrote a textbook for those who work with the Jacquard medium today.

One hundred and thirty wonderful textiles appear on the pages of Digital Jacquard Design, accompanied by multi-colored drafts and technical data that illustrate the objectives and processes of figured weaving. Historical, decorative, or works of art; all embody lessons in how image, weave and materials produce the surface contrasts that are the language of Jacquard weaving.

‘When cloth is woven, one of two things occurs: warp ends are raised or remain stationary as the weft traverses the loom. In a weave-patterned textile, the number of points of interlacement generated by the warp’s movements relative to the weft is enormous. For thousands of years, the elaboration and transmission of this data, the warp’s action, remained a complex and time-consuming process.

The advent of digital technology has radically changed the means and processes of figured weaving. Digital systems enable one skilled designer/technician to control the entire cycle from first sketch to finished cloth, be it woven on a high-speed industrial equipment, or with a loom from the new generation of digital looms found in artists’ studios and university art departments.

For the first time Jacquard weaving has become directly accessible to artists, enabling them to develop artwork with textile software, assign weaves, produce test samples, and then weave a finished work on a digital handle without the mediation of technician or mill. ‘Accessible’ is not however synonymous with ‘simple’; mastery of the Jacquard medium requires an understanding of how woven structure and materials interact. Those who are willing to overcome the challenges posed by the complexity of figured weaving are able to take advantage of the many new opportunities the digital era has brought to fiber art.
In the past, the time and labor required to transmit pattern information to the loom inhibited experimentation. Today, the artist who weaves by hand enjoys an extraordinary liberty to add in the extra wefts and delicate materials that enriched the truly great textiles of the past, when figured weaves rambled painting and sculpture as works of art. For artists whose research focuses on intelligent or technical textiles, the single-end control and gentler motion of a digital handloom allow for experimentation with materials unable to support the stresses of high-speed industrial weaving. For those artists who create tapestries, Jacquard weaving offers the possibility to modulate texture and color through weave construction, or to produce two distinct images on face and reverse of a single cloth. In the end, it is the artist rather than the industrial weaver who benefits most from the ‘digital textile revolution’.

Whether an artist’s research is based on content, materials or technique, the steps from sketch to finished textile remain those employed by Belgium artist/wever Lut Verrelst to create Lumi.

Over the years, Verrelst has attended three courses at Licio, worked as a workshop assistant and returned as a resident artist. Parallel to her research in the Jacquard medium, she has developed a deep attachment to the mountainous Lunigiana area on the northwestern coast of Tuscany, where she spends long periods each year. The prehistoric stele of this region, together with logs, cut and stacked for firewood, supplied the imagery for the figured textile she wove on a digital handloom at Licio, using one warp and two weft series that interlaced as single and compound weaves.

As Verrelst wove, a moon-like figure appeared at the front of the loom, between the beater and warp beam. Textured or smooth, high or low contrast, figurative or abstract, as the single threads of the warp interface with the weft to form a Jacquard textile, we experience excitement and wonder. May the pages of the forthcoming book convey some of this wonder, and inspire artists and designers who weave Jacquard textiles.

Notes:
2 Manuel Fransisco’s Palimpsest and Palindrome is a Jacquard tapestry woven at Flanders Tapestries in Belgium, in which two distinct, but related faces create a single work. Fransisco’s tapestry was part of the exhibition Penelope’s Labour: Weaving Images and Words held at the Cini Foundation during the 2011 Venice Biennale.
3 Lumi does not appear in Digital Jacquard Design. Photographs and drafts shown at the top are the exclusive property of the author. Photographs at the centre left are the exclusive property of Bhakti Ziek. The images to the right above are the exclusive property of Lut Verrelst.