

## Colours in Tapestries



Figure 1 "Sunlight clasps the Earth". Based on the poem "Love's philosophy " by PB Shelly. Designed and woven by Michael Crompton

I read with much interest in the September 2017 edition of the "weaversbazaar", the question on the numbers of different colours used by tapestry weavers. Having been a weaver since the early 1960's my approach to colour has changed considerably from using a small number of colours, textures and fibres to the present where I incorporate around 80 or ninety. In the early days it was not easy to acquire such a range that exists today. I was unable, and unwilling to enter the realms of the dyer. With space and time at a premium I chose to concentrate on the weaving process and hence scoured the yarn supplier's samples. Initially I would design a textile and source the yarns. It was often the case that it took me a time to purchase the range and variety I

sought. With my ideas racing ahead I had to create a different strategy. I wanted a more direct and almost instant availability of a colour palette.

My solution was both simple and very effective. I created my own yarn store. Having found a range of colours and suitable fibre and count I started collecting. I bought, and still buy, for colour and not for a particular tapestry. Slowly and steadily my stocks grew, storage was paramount. As a tapestry weaver I require many, many different colours in small quantities and even the tiniest amount can make a contribution. At first I put similar colours together but gradually over the years prefer now to have them mixed. This gave me the opportunity to access contrasting and harmonious tones next to each other. Thus giving my colour

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appreciation a boost. It is interesting that when searching for a particular colour I am often confronted with a different hue which I can add to the colour palette for a tapestry. I am now in a position to go to my yarn store, a dry airy garage and make my selection and also perhaps reject certain colours. This is very positive for me and I cannot think how I can cope with just acquiring the colours I need from a yarn supplier. Just as the artist can mix and create so many tones and hues from his paints this solution works well for me. When I look back the expense and effort in collecting yarns has proved invaluable.

Find yarns that you are happy with and make the investment. Start collecting and storing and build a personal resource, one which give you added impetus and immediacy to your weaving.

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