## **Canvas Weave**

## **Emery Classification**

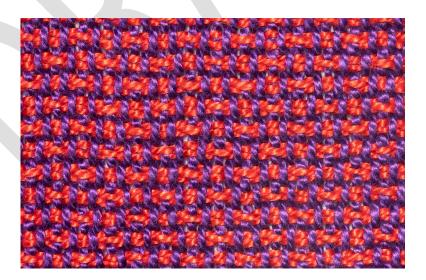
Simple Weave: two elements (one warp, one weft). Rectangular Float Weave Derived from Plain Weave.

# **Weaving Category**

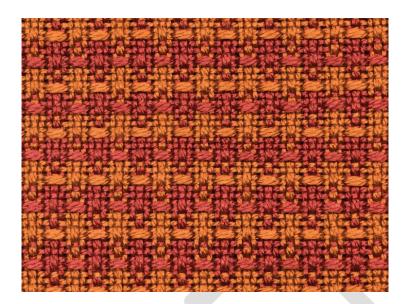
Canvas is a family of weaves, all **grouped warp and weft threads**, but with some different characteristics. The threading can appear to be a twill but, as always, the fabric determines the structure.

### **Fabric Characteristics**

In *A Handweaver's Pattern Book*, Marguerite Davison devotes an entire chapter to canvas weaves. I like to roughly divide them into those that have small blocks, as in the fabric sample below; they are derived directly from plain weave, allowing it to be woven across and down the side of the fabric.



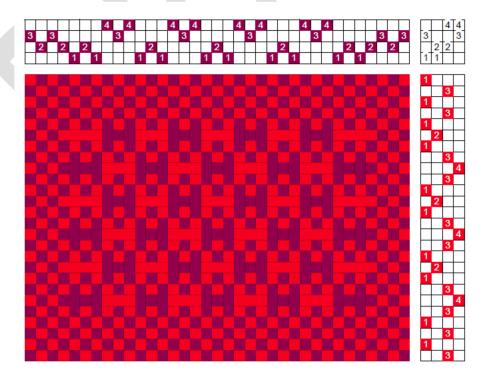
Other canvas weaves extend the blocks by repeating threads on shafts and treadling steps, as in the next sample.



Ena Marston in an old issue of *Shuttle Spindle & Dyepot* (#8, Fall 1971, page 14) confirms what we may suspect: canvas weave fabrics are indeed used as canvas for embroidery.

# Drawdown

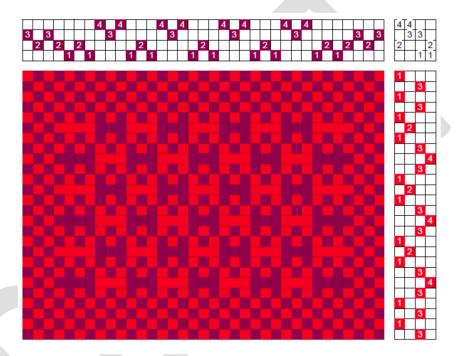
The drawdown below (sinking shed) was used to weave the first sample on page 1.



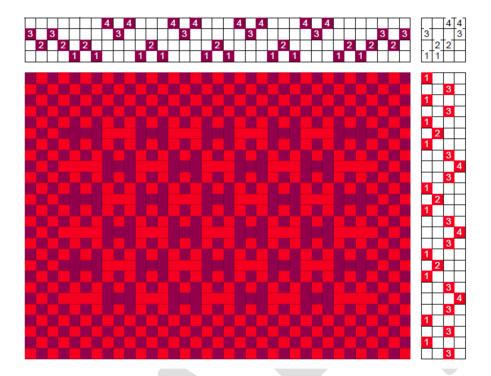
2 Canvas Weave

Plain weave can be woven across and down the length of the fabric, obviating the need for floating selvages. The square blocks alternate between warp and weft floats; being square, they are ideal for cross stitching. This draft was derived from the article by Ena Marston mentioned above.

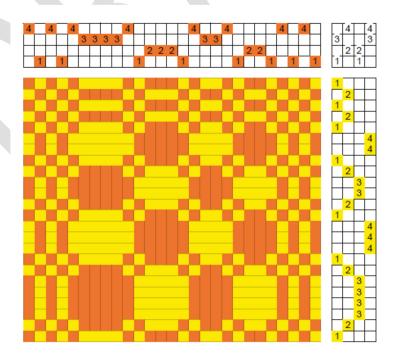
Below is the *rising shed* drawdown, which weaves the identical organization of the sinking shed drawdown in the previous page, that is, the first block in the right hand corner are both weft floats. The tie-up has been changed with the usual tying what is untied and untying what is tied.



In this case, however, the two sides of the fabric are identical, with blocks off set, as can be seen from the *rising shed* drawdown below, which shows the other side of the fabric from the original sinking shed drawdown.



In contrast, the *sinking shed* drawdown below shows larger blocks, resulting from repeating the threading on shafts and the treadling steps. This example has blocks with different numbers of repeats. As in the previous example, the blocks alternate between warp floats and weft floats.



4 Canvas Weave

Because of the repeats, plain weave cannot be woven in either direction. A pseudo basket weave results instead.

### **Function**

Although the structure has been traditionally used as a canvas for embroidery, I have woven canvas weave mats successfully.

#### Sett

The sett depends on the length of the floats. The first fabric sample used a sett appropriate for plain weave and made a study fabric. The second one was sett as for a twill and draped nicely.

#### Width of the block

As discussed above, some canvas weave have fixed blocks based on a pointed twill. Some have variable blocks that can be increased or decreased by repeating the threading on some shafts.

### Number of blocks available

On four shafts there are two blocks available, which is how traditionally it has been used. There doesn't seem to be any reason to expand the structure to more shafts for its intended purpose.

#### References

Emery, Irene. *The Primary Structure of Fabrics*. Washington, D.C.: The Textile Museum, 1980.

Davison, Marguerite Porter, *A Handweaver's Pattern Book*. Marguerite P. Davison, Publisher, Swarthmore, PA, 1994.

Marston, Edna. Canvas Weave Shuttle Spindle & Dyepot #8, Fall 1971, page 14.