



TIM GRESHAM

The process of designing my tapestries is somewhat unusual compared to most tapestry weavers, who usually work from a fairly finished design, be it a painting, drawing or perhaps a photograph. The designs for my recent work are drawn very quickly and loosely. I work through the idea in a sketch book and once I've realised the approach, draw the design or cartoon to the scale of the tapestry. It takes about 10 to 15 minutes. This is a swift contrast to the weaving process, which can take months depending on the size.

The cartoon is then placed behind the warp (vertical threads) on the loom and the outline is then inked on to the warps; this is used as a guide for the basic shapes of the tapestry. The process of putting on the warp varies depending on the size of the finished work and type of loom. I am using a very simple loom made from scaffolding and fencing materials which is warped up by winding a continuous thread around the top and bottom beams. This creates a space called a shed, which separates the warps into two planes—front and back. A strong 'floor' is woven across the bottom which draws the front and back warps together and provides a solid base to weave on. The back warps are looped by leashes that when pulled in small groups bring a few of them forward. Simply put, the weaving process is over one and under one. Using leashes speeds up the weaving, enabling groups of warps to be picked up in one movement rather than picking them up individually.

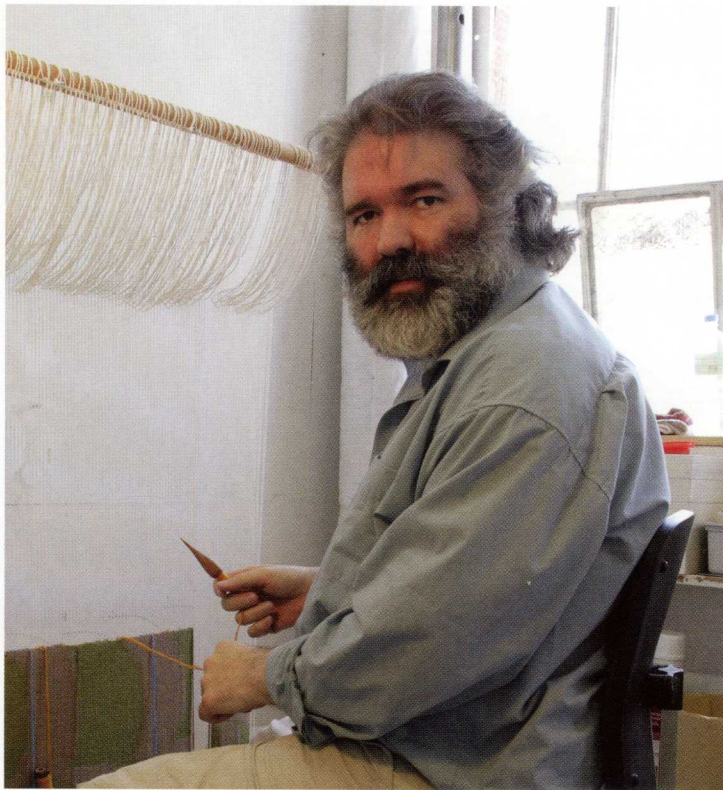
During weaving, the tapestry normally grows in shapes, a little like building blocks, but sometimes the shapes are all interlocked using a technique called hatching; this means that it

grew in an almost level line right across. Tapestry is a weft-faced weave, which means the weft completely covers the warp and in so doing creates the image or design of the tapestry. Not only does the process create an image, it also creates the fabric and structure of the object. Although it is a two-dimensional form, it is also somewhat sculptural in its construction.

When weaving is complete, it is cut from the loom (a cause for celebration) and finished off. Finishing involves plating the warp ends so that they then fold to the back. They are then stitched down and trimmed. Strips of Velcro are sewn across the top of back of the tapestry and this is what it hangs from. Depending on the size of the tapestry, I either have it framed in a box frame, which means sewing more Velcro down the sides, or if it is large enough it can hang unframed. In this case, an aluminium batten is cut just a little shorter than the width of the tapestry and to this the other side (hook) of the Velcro is stuck and riveted. ■

Born 1965 in Brisbane, Tim Gresham lives and works in Melbourne. He is represented by Gallery 101, Melbourne.
www.101collins.com.au

EXHIBITION
14 – 31 October 2009
Gallery 101, 101 Collins Street, Melbourne



01



02

01 Rhythm Variations II, 2004, 40 x 40cm
02 Silver Shadow, 2003, 90 x 60cm