

Weaving Challenge 2021 ANWG Conference: Noh Coat

We invite weavers to join us in weaving cloth for, and making, American designer Bonnie Cashin's Noh coat as it appears in *Threads Magazine* Oct/Nov 1990 No. 31.



The coat is very simple and is especially suitable for handweavers who do not sew often. The coat is unlined, does not have set-in sleeves, and has binding for the edge. This means that the coat is all about the quality of the cloth. We have seen this design on all sizes and shapes of women. Our idea is that anyone interested will weave the coat in time for the ANWG conference in Salem in 2021. The more the merrier. It would be a spectacular expression of handwoven cloth. This is not a juried event, but we will have some event, perhaps a Happy Hour, to show off our coats at the Conference. Let's fill a room with Noh coats!

We hope you can join us. Here are the rules:

- The version of the Noh coat is the one mentioned above, no other. Cashin designed several coats she named Noh and you can find many pictures of them on the internet. But the one we will all be making is the one on the cover of *Threads Magazine* Oct/Nov 1990 (issue 31). This issue complete with pattern will be available on the ANWG 2020 Conference website.
- The design can be tweaked for sizing but the character of the coat in all its fullness must not be erased. No adding of collars, cuffs, hoods, or darts, for example. Keep it pure.
- You do not have to bind the seams or opening edge with leather as Cashin did. A bias binding makes a simple edge and can also be handwoven by weaving a

tube and cutting it open like a straw. See *Weaver's Craft*, Winter 2001, Vol 2, No. 4, p. 12, "Tube for Bias Strips".

- Treat the seams any way you like.
- You may line any part of the coat to make it easier to slip on.
- The identifying feature of the Noh coat is its volume of cloth. Take this into consideration when designing your fabric, so that it does not become too heavy.
- Drape is a crucial element in this cloth. Be sure to sample and adjust your sett and beat accordingly. At the same time, be aware that if you have too open a sett, the fabric may drape well, but it may also stretch out. But if the sett is too close, you will end up with a dense Bog Jacket. Sample, sample, sample.

Most of us will have to seam the coat down the back. We have figured a warp of 31" wide in the reed and 7 yards long, which includes a sample, but it is probably advisable to add more length for more sampling. However, it is always best to do your own calculations to suit your own sizing and loom requirements. The important measurement is from the back of your neck down to the wrist, over the shoulder. This will give you half the width of the coat and will give you the *finished* width of your warp.

We are very grateful to *Threads* magazine for giving us permission to use the photo of the Noh coat on the front cover of the above issue, and for permission to use the pattern they developed for the coat. They have very generously supplied us with a PDF for sharing with all interested weavers.

For more information, contact Toby Smith at tobysmith@hotmail.com or Isabelle Fusey at ifusey@telus.net.

We plan to communicate through a Groups.io email group. To join the group, contact Isabelle at ifusey@telus.net.

PRESENTATION: For anyone wanting more inspiration, Dr. Susan Torntore, retired professor of textile history, museum curator and author, is available to give an illustrated presentation on the work of Bonnie Cashin, focusing on her two iconic garments—the Noh Coat and the poncho—and the innovative and colourful handwoven textiles used to make these in the 1950s through 1970s. For more information, contact Dr. Torntore at sjtorntore@gmail.com.

ANWG Challenge Kick-Off presentation, Greater Vancouver Weaver's and Spinners Guild, October 26, 2019, 11 am, Vancouver BC