

Crafts, professions of excellence

TEXTILE CRAFTS AND WEAVING

Related professional – Alicja Kochanowska **Workshop: Folk weaving workshop**

Weaving is one of the oldest crafts cultivated by man, it is a branch of the textile industry and its essence is the production and finishing of fabrics. The double-warp fabric is characteristic of the folk weaving of north-eastern Poland. These are patterned fabrics composed of two interpenetrating layers. They are made with the use of two warps (each in a different color) and two wefts (in the colors of the warps). One side of the fabric is the color opposite of the other. The carpets are woven on 4-harness hand looms in a plain weave. The technique imposes the geometrization of patterns. The oldest we know from Poland are Masurian carpets from the vicinity of Elk and Olecko, dated at the end of the 18th century. The ability to make carpets was not common. In the second half of the nineteenth and first twentieth centuries, they were made by some small-town craft workshops and a few rural specialists.



(Alicja Kochanowska Photo Chamber of Double Warp Weaving in Janów)

What are the skills and expertise of professionals in this profession?

Working as a weaver requires high sensorimotor skills, technical skills, as well as patience and concentration skills. In this profession, various tasks are performed, which include in particular: preparing the raw material for the weaving process, preparing weaving machines for work, operating and supervising the work of weaving machines, verifying the quality and documenting the production environment, and above all towards the principal and owner of the entrusted weapons, ammunition and accessories.



(Work by Alicja Kochanowska - Double warp weaving, Photo Kuyavian-Pomeranian Cultural Center in Bydgoszcz)

What materials are used in this craft? Are they local materials

The material used in double warp weaving is sheep's wool, due to the weaving technique it is required to use wool in two shades. Unlike other weaving materials, wool is a material of animal origin. Sourcing wool in Poland is easy due to its availability. It is a genuine renewable product, sourced every year. Wool products can be recycled and composted.



(Alicja Kochanowska in her workshop, Photo Podlaski Instytut Kultury w Białymstoku)

What markets are related to this profession?

Polish weaving is still a living craft and has great potential. The double-warp fabric is appreciated in countries that value traditional craftsmanship, including Japan and the Scandinavian countries. Weaving is connected with the art market, with the fashion industry, with design and interior decoration. If a craftsman has great skills, he can find himself in many creative industries.

Where to learn this profession in Europe?

Poland, weaving can be learned in private arts and crafts schools, workshops run by people who work in this profession, and courses run by studios and workshops. There are many such places in Poland, it all depends on the specific technique that interests us. When it comes to double warp fabric, the largest number of workshops offering training in this field is located in Podlasie.