

# Combining Yarns, Collage and Chalk

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Color decisions happen at the same time as the design process. I generally create a collage using photographs, paintings, prints etc., so it is when putting the collage together that I make the color choices. They either have a strong contrast or, more often, they have a similar color used throughout. Once designs are resolved, the actual colors may be too bright so I fade or darken them slightly to get the effect I wish to achieve, more often altering the intensity rather than the color choice. I tend to use muted shades in my work.



*The Crossing: Windows of the Soul Series, 30" x 39"*

Besides the photographs/paintings in the collage design, I use chalk pastels and the mixing of yarns to determine the color pallet. I find that chalk pastels give the grainy effect I wish to use in my work. Looking at the shades of pastels and colors layered on top of one another can determine how the combination of yarns will react together on the bobbin and when woven. Because I rarely use bold hues and my images usually represent an ethereal theme, the more smudged the colors appear the better effect I get. Quite often a dark color forms the base and I fleck the paler color through that dark one to convey mist or transparency.

When shading I use multiple strands of color on the bobbin, moving from dark to light; light to dark; shade to shade. I also use the hatching process to graduate the colors even further. They could be analogous or even complementary but frequently the change is gradual. A sharp division of color or intensity can give impact to the design when it is needed. When shading from one color to another, I use the black/white scale and run the yarn across it to get the appropriate shade which will not "glare" at you through the transition. I usually follow the rules of nature – all colors can blend together.

I rely on my instincts and, yes, I do experiment with the combinations of yarns together – I like to make groups of different shades of yarns on the bobbin, then weave them as a strip or band warped separately at one side on the loom. It allows me to test various combinations as I weave. I would usually weave about an inch of each sample. The bands could be solid blocks of color to see how they work side by side, but mainly I use this method to experiment with color blending on the bobbin. They are generally about 2 inches wide or if wider, I can experiment with the selection in the hatching process to create a transition both vertically and horizontally.