



Weaving with Trees

Revitalising Traditional Crafts and Nature Bonds

Tatiana Kravtsov

In this project, the craft of band weaving is approached as a creative practice to foreground reconnection with nature and traditional knowledge. Through meditative weaving with trees and the design of one's own tools, band weaving becomes a place-based and embodied practice. This practice frames revitalisation as the living continuation of tradition through engagement with natural materials, collaboration, and contemporary technologies.

Band weaving is an ancient craft tradition widespread across the world. Different techniques, including tablet weaving, rigid heddle (pick-up), and backstrap weaving, developed locally, yet share common roots in the skilled handling of warp and weft threads to create durable, patterned narrow bands. Historically, woven bands held both practical and symbolic significance. They were used as belts, ties, headbands, and decorative clothes' edgings, and often played a role in gift-giving traditions, such as bridal dowries, where they carried meanings of protection, identity, and care. In Finland, the craft of band weaving has deep historical roots and remained common until the early 19th century (Schvindt, 2015; Merisalo, 1978). Although it is no



▲ **FIGURE 2.** Weaving a band with woollen yarns in colours inspired by the pine tree. Photographs: Tatiana Kravtsov, 2024.

◀ **FIGURE 1.** Woollen yarns in colours inspired by the birch tree; a woven band displayed against a birch tree. Photographs: Tatiana Kravtsov, 2024.



▲ **FIGURE 3.** A participant weaving a band with threads attached to a pine tree during the *Meditative Weaving with Trees* workshop, held as part of the *Rooted–Wool–Being* workshop in Muonio. Photographs: Minna Kovero, 2024.



longer commonly practiced, there is a growing interest in band weaving. Various courses are offered across Finland, among them, a band weaving course held at Taito Lappi in Rovaniemi inspired Kravtsov and Kovero to deepen their engagement with this traditional craft.

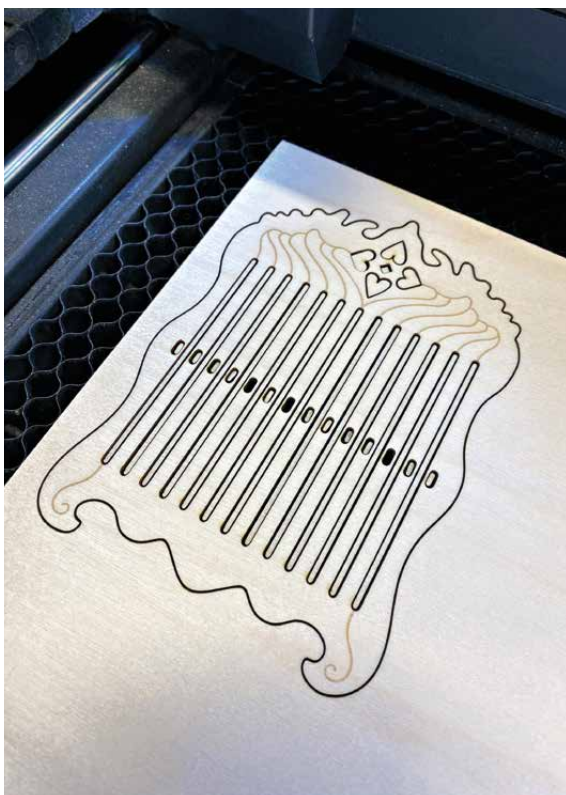
While exploring the technique of band weaving with a rigid heddle, Kravtsov experimented with different colour combinations in dialogue with local trees, such as birch and pine. This process encouraged slow and attentive observation of bark textures and colours (Figures 1–2). It also led to the idea of weaving in outdoor settings rather than indoors, approaching the forest as both collaborator and a site of learning, recalling the feeling of the close

relationship our ancestors had with it. Craft was an essential part of life in nature-related cultures, where making was closely intertwined with seasonal rhythms, available materials, and cultural meanings. Objects were not only functional but also embedded with symbolism, reflecting relationships between humans, materials, and the surrounding environment. They carried stories and messages that are no longer deeply understood in many modern contexts (Karisto & Pasanen, 2013). However, revitalising the practice might bring new perspectives and meanings within contemporary context (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020).

During the *Rooted–Wool–Being* co-creative workshop organised in Muonio by the VillaInno



FIGURE 4.
Tatiana Kravtsov
and Minna Kovero
looking at the first
heddle prototypes.
Photograph: Elina
Luiro, 2025.



▲ **FIGURE 5.** Laser cutting of the rigid heddle designed by Minna Kovero. Photograph: Elina Luiro, 2025.

team, Kravtsov facilitated a creative practice titled *meditative weaving with trees*. Participants were invited to experience weaving with Finnish wool by attaching the warp directly to a tree. The act of weaving became a shared gesture, a quiet ritual of presence, connection, and creation. By bringing together a traditional craft practice, culturally rooted materials, and embodied engagement with living trees, the workshop sought to strengthen bonds between humans and the natural world (Figure 3).

The workshop in Muonio led to the co-development of the weaving tools in collaboration among Tatiana Kravtsov, Minna Kovero, and Elina Luiro. Both Kravtsov and Kovero designed a rigid heddle with a weaving shuttle, getting inspiration from the natural forms and decorative language of Finnish wooden distaffs. Luiro, an expert in laser cutting, then redrew the sketches as vectors and laser-cut the tools from birch plywood (Figures 4–6). While such tools were traditionally carved by hand, the integration of contemporary technologies brings an aspect of innovation, highlighting that traditions can evolve and continue as living practices in response to present-day contexts.

Designed for *weaving with trees*, these tools foreground band weaving as a place-based practice emerging through material engagement with the natural environment. Here, revitalisation is not understood as the preservation of historical forms, but as the renewal of tradition through embodied practice, bridging between past and present, and reconnecting heritage with contemporary ways of making. These outdoor weaving encounters, using wooden heddles and wool fibres, highlight the interconnectedness between people and the living world, revealing how traditional practice can foster new forms of attention, reciprocity, and responsibility, grounded in a place-based perspective.



▲ **FIGURE 6.** Rigid heddles and weaving shuttles with Finnish wool in natural shades displayed by a birch and a rowan trees. Photographs: Tatiana Kravtsov, 2026.



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