

2015 MAFA Conference Fellow: Valerie DeVries

Dear MAFA Fellowship Committee,

I have been interested in Ikat for many years and have collected several Ikat garments, all with traditional Ikat patterns. Then I was introduced to Polly Barton's work and it opened up a whole new area of Ikat that really excites me. I was very gratified to be granted a fellowship to attend Polly's workshop – Expanding Your Weaving Repertoire with Ikat. Polly is a wonderful instructor. She presented ideas clearly and gave lots of individual attention. She is also open to students' ideas and supportive of their endeavors. We learned how to tie the “quick release” type of Ikat knot which can be used with plastic tape or string ties and makes the tedious part of Ikat – the tying and untying – much faster. We also learned how to use freezer paper to design a knot pattern which helps with exact placement of knots. We used Japanese natural dyes that were new to me as well as others that I'm familiar with to dye our warps. Then we learned how to go beyond the basics. We cut and tied wefts to do weft and double Ikat patterns. I worked really hard but enjoyed every minute of it.

I took lots of photos and to fulfil my fellowship outreach requirement I made a photobook that followed our progress in class. On Wednesday, September 9, I presented the book to the Weavers Guild of Buffalo. I am in the process of planning my next Ikat project.

I hope this report is satisfactory. Please let me know if you need anything else. Thanks again for this wonderful opportunity.