

Held in Light

A Sustainable Textile Dialogue
Between Nature, Time and Light

Held in Light is a handwoven textile piece inspired by sustainability and the natural spectrum of color.

The project began with a series of natural dye experiments using traditional Chinese medicinal herbs and plant materials. I explored around ten different natural dye sources, including ones like Gardenia fruit, Pomegranate peel, Phellodendron bark, and Black soybean skin. Together, they created a wide range of colors found in nature. I wanted to encourage people to appreciate the colors that nature produces and to accept the way they change over time. Rather than seeing fading as a flaw, I see it as part of the beauty of natural materials. Undyed cotton yarn is woven alongside naturally dyed yarns to celebrate both naturally derived color and the original color of cotton itself.

The semi-transparent quality of the textile was intentionally designed. By carefully calculating the thickness and spacing of the weft yarns, I created a balance between visibility and concealment. As people move behind the fabric, their silhouettes gradually appear and disappear through the woven surface. This interaction brings a human presence into the work and creates a quiet connection between the viewer, the material, and the surrounding space. A very small amount of 0.2 mm silver-colored copper wire is incorporated as a subtle visual detail.

Through natural dyeing and handweaving, Held in Light reflects on slower ways of making and invites people to build a closer relationship with natural materials and the changing colors of the natural world.



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Inspiration

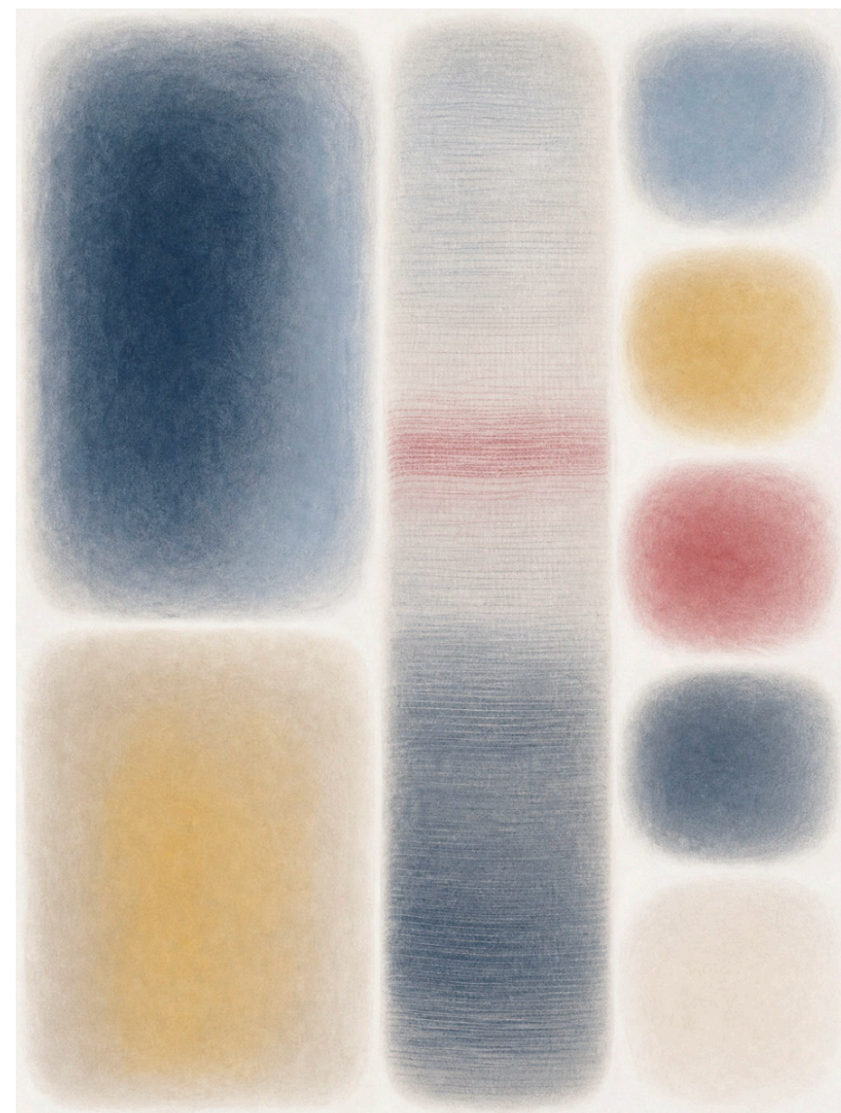
Inspired by the spectrum of natural colors and the philosophy of sustainability, this project celebrates the beauty of imperfection, impermanence, and harmony with the environment



Color Studies

This section explores different aspects of color in transition, including variations in gradient speed, color combinations, and the contrast between warm and cool tones.

It also examines multi-color gradients and how colors shift and interact across a continuous spectrum.



Effects of color blending



Spectrum of Natural Colors

Natural Dye

All yarns are hand-dyed using environmentally friendly natural dyes, including plant-based materials and traditional Chinese medical herbs.

Gardenia Fruit



Phellodentron Bark



Pomegranate Peel



Black Soybean Skin



Material	Resulting Color	Material	Resulting Color
靛蓝 (Indigo)	Deep blue / Indigo blue	莲子壳 (Lotus seed shell)	Light brown / Warm beige
苏木 (Sappanwood)	Warm red / Soft crimson	石榴皮 (Pomegranate peel)	Orange brown / Rust orange
五倍子 (Galls)	Greyish black / Deep charcoal	黑豆衣 (Black soybean skin)	Deep grey / Smoky purple-black
黄柏 (Phellodendron bark)	Soft yellow / Golden beige	鸡血藤 (Spatholobus stem)	Reddish brown / Earth red
艾草 (Mugwort)	Muted green / Yellow-green	绿色套染 (Layered green dyeing)*	Soft natural green / Olive green



Materials and Color Interaction

To examine how material and structure influence color perception, cotton yarn and copper wire are used as primary materials, creating a contrast between softness and reflectivity.

Variations in yarn thickness, denting, and weft density affect how color is distributed and perceived within the textile.

Weaving structures also play an important role in translucency, as different constructions allow light to pass through the fabric in varying degrees, further altering the appearance of color.



Weaving Specification

Fabric Structure

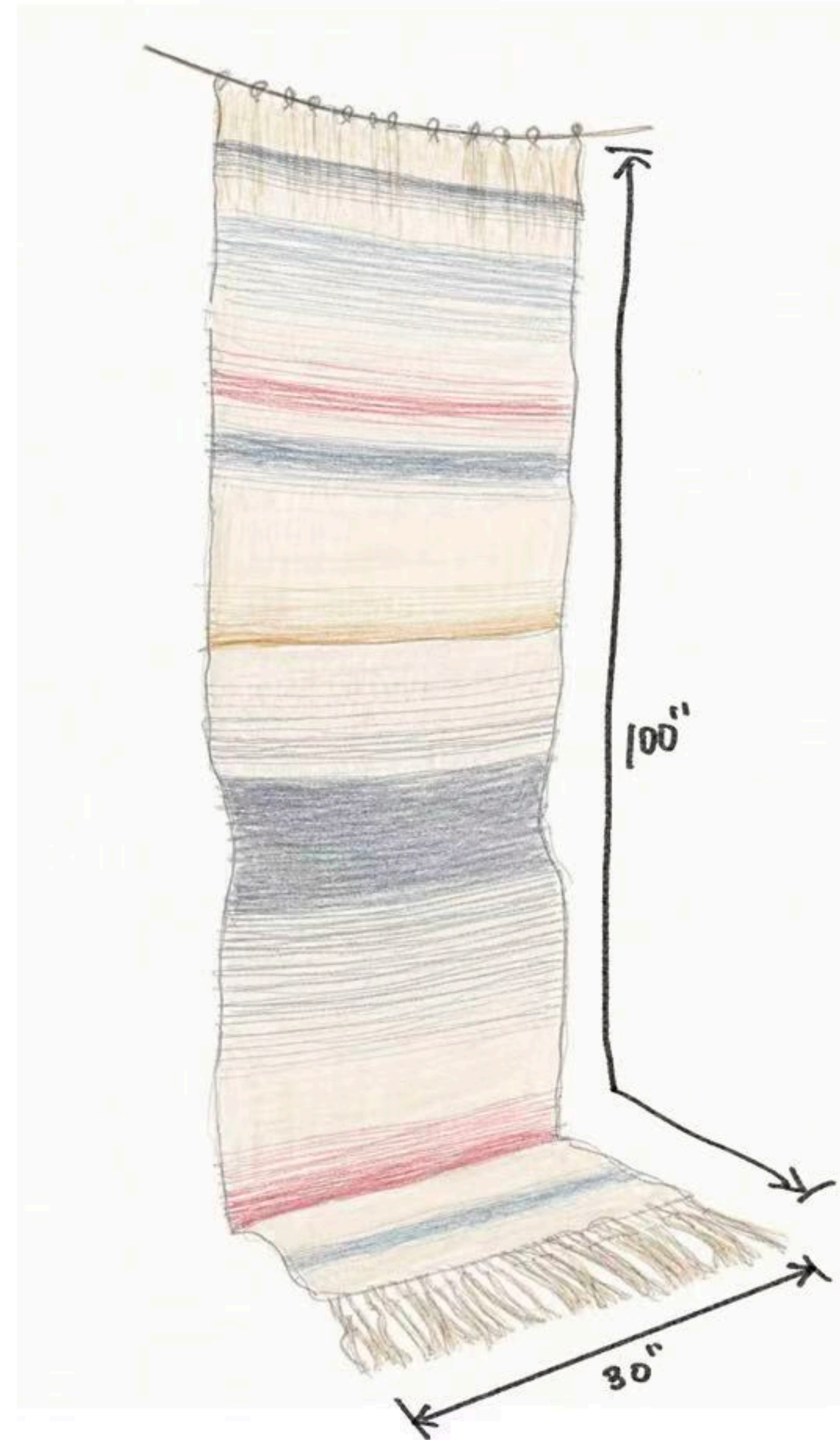
- Handwoven textile (plain weave structure)
- Designed for semi-transparency and light interaction
- Warp-controlled openness for silhouette visibility

Warp

- Material: 1 mm cotton yarn
- Composition: naturally dyed cotton yarn + undyed cotton yarn
- Width: 30 inches (approx. 76 cm)
- Sett: 8–10 dents per inch (DPI)
- Total warp ends: approx. 240–300 ends
- Warp length: approx. 1.6–1.8 m (including loom waste)

Weft

- Material: cotton yarn (matching warp system)
- Natural dye sources used (approx. 10 types), including:
 - Gardenia fruit
 - Pomegranate peel
 - Phellodendron bark
 - Black soybean skin
 - Indigo
 - other plant-based dyes



Light & Interaction

The textile responds to light and movement. When people pass behind it, their silhouettes appear as soft, layered shadows within the woven surface.

Material Strategy

Naturally dyed and undyed cotton yarn are combined to create a soft colour spectrum. Colour is allowed to shift with light, time, and use. A very small amount of 0.2 mm copper wire is used only as a visual accent in limited areas.



Held in Light
Cotton yarn, copper wire
Weaving
30" x 100"
2026

