

Fiber Fair Goals:

Provide guild members with an opportunity to showcase and sell quality work
Provide increased visibility and income for the Weavers Guild of Minnesota.

Fiber Fair Merchandise—Quality and Price

Quality

The Guild seeks to have Fiber Fair items reflect the level of craftsmanship and design that we teach and encourage in our classes. Though this is not a juried sale, we encourage members to enter items of that quality. Your pieces should be well designed and have quality construction. One unique and artistic item is better than two that have been hastily designed and made. Quality items command a better price and profit and reflect better on you the weaver, and the Guild.

Fiber Fair is a wonderful vehicle for guild visibility. Our Fiber Fair advertising brings the guild before the public. We recruit new weavers and members by giving WGM class information to all our shoppers. What we sell should be our best examples of what weaving can be and what our customers could learn if they choose to join us and become weavers.

Pricing

Pricing is a perpetual challenge. In general, it is best to keep sale prices predictable and consistent. In particular, pricing your items too low creates problems for you, the guild, and your fellow weavers. How?

Some range of prices is appropriate to reflect differences in materials or complexity of design, but similar items should be priced similarly. Your fellow guild members create beautiful work and hope to make money from it. While modesty in its place can be charming, when you price your items too low you undercut your fellow guild members and hurt their sale opportunities, which is unfair. It is a good thing to be proud of your fiber creations. The price you set tells the value you place on your talent, your time, and the arts of weaving, spinning, and dyeing.

In addition, a wide range of prices is confusing for the shoppers. Unique and quality handcrafted items are understood to command a good price for the artisan. Lower prices are associated with lower quality, cheaper materials, or easy production. Too low a price tells the customer that they are getting the same thing at Fiber Fair that they could buy at local stores. (If they don't sell items like yours at Target, they shouldn't be priced like a Target item. If they do, re-think your entries.) And, of course, low prices reduce the profit, and thus the success of the sale. Items sold for less than they should be deprive both the weaver and the Guild of income. Please make it worth the effort of putting on this large event.

Fiber Fair wisdom compiled from WGM instructors and other experienced weavers:

Rugs

Preparation: Choose quality materials. Warp must be appropriate for rugs. (100% cotton warp should not be used for warp emphasis rugs as the warp will abrade and break.) Rag wefts should be prewashed and dried. Dark warps should be tested for color fastness before weaving if weft will be light colored. Rag strips should be joined in a durable manner.

Weaving: Rugs should be woven on a rug loom and beaten firmly. No daylight should show through the weft picks. (Exception: Log cabin rugs are almost impossible to beat really snugly.) Aim for a rug that can stand on end when rolled. Durability is essential as some rugs get very hard wear and repeated washings. Selvages should be even and neat. Rugs should be consistent width and lay flat with no ripples or bumps. Headers are required; no warp knots right next to first fabric pick.

Finishing: Warp ends should be finished in a lasting manner, knotted, braided twisted or hemmed. Hems should be firm and secure. Because 100% cotton warp wears quickly, these fringes should be braided or hemmed. Label with fiber content and care instructions.

Towels

Planning: Length of a towel should be about 1 ½ times its width. Avoid structures with long floats that may catch on rings or utensils. Edges should be straight with minimal draw-in. Hems should be securely and neatly stitched with matching thread. Towel and hems should lay flat. Towel should be washed and ironed before selling. Label with fiber content.

Runners

Planning: Choose fiber type and weight, sett, and beat that will create a fabric with integrity with a weight that will be flat and lay well on a table. Good design and thoughtful color selection is important in home décor items.

Weaving and finishing: Selvages should be even with no extending loops or excessive draw-in. Warp ends should be neatly hemmed or given a durable braid or twisted fringe treatment that holds up in repeated washings. Wash as indicated on care label and press well, particularly with cotton and linen.

Scarves

Scarves should have up-to-date colors, and be long enough to give wearer a variety of options for wrapping or tying. Fabric should be soft with good drape, not too flimsy or too stiff. Edges should be even and straight. Fringes must be made to last without raveling. Scarf should be washed as label suggests and pressed if appropriate for fiber type. Label with fiber content and care instructions.