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Illustrated Instruction Series #12

Instruction Series #12 in Japanese

Serene, recipe no. 66, page 437
"A lace vice of three colours"

from
Natura Exenterata, 1655, British Library, E. 1560.778.c.3

By Joy Boutrup

Citing the text as written:
"*lace vice of three colours*"
"Take six bowes white and four black and two departed, that one side black and the other yellow. Then set three white upon B, C, D right and two black on B, D left and one departed upon C left. And also do thy fellow, save that thy left hand shall be like to his right hand, and his left hand to thy right hand. And then reverse thy bowes right and take with A right through B, C, D right the bowe C left and also do thy fellow. And afterward low your bowes left and take then with B left his bow on A right and he shall take with B left thy bow A right and look that it be under all the bowes; And then begin againe and this lace shall be a vice. When you have made a coupen this manner, work then with your left hand as you did with your right till when you have another coupen and then shall you have a faire vice"

The colour distribution is in mirror image on the hands. Both workers work in the same direction even though the colours are mirrored, not in mirrored movements as usual else.
I have interpreted the word "coupen" as the French word ÅgCouponÅh meaning a section or repeat, here defined by the recurrence of the same colour distribution. Each section is thus braided until the colour distribution is the same as in the beginning, which is 6 cycles.
I have interpreted the text in such a way, that the direction is reversed after one set of 6 cycles. The colour distribution seems to indicate such a shift in directions. The text could also be interpreted as giving the possibility of continuing in the same direction all the time, but I think this less likely.
There is no exchange of loops between the two workers, but one loop is passed between the two joining hands and between the two outer hands. This last loop has to be passed under all loops. These passages form a round and hollow braid consisting of sections where the loops are moving respectively in Z and S direction.

The braid is braided in oblique twining in sections, first with the two right index fingers taking each through the loops on this hand one loop from the respective left hand. The loops on the right hands are given a half twist between the passages and stay on these fingers, while the loops on the left hands are shifted after each passage and pulled through one by one. This is repeated 6 times.
After this are the loops on the left hands given a half twist and left index fingers each taking a loop from the right hand through the loops on the left hand. This is also repeated 6 times while the loops on the right hands are shifting now.
The instruction calls for 12 loops, 6 for each person. Six loops of white, four of black and two loops each with a black and a yellow shank.

Set the loops as follows:

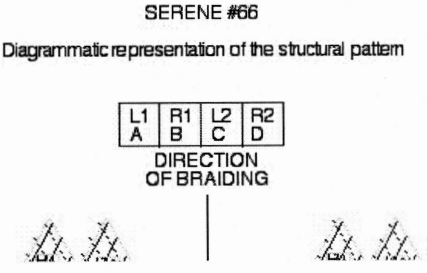
L1				R1				L2				R2			
a	b	c	d	d	c	b	a	a	b	c	d	d	c	b	a
	Black	Black, Yellow	Black	White	White	White			White	White	White	Black	Black, Yellow	Black	

1a. Give the loops on R1 and R2 a half twist
2a. Put R1a through R1b, c, d and take L1d and simultaneously put R2a through R2b, c, d and take L2d
3a. Move the loops down on L1 and L2
4a. With L2b take R1a and with L1b take under all the loops the loop on R2a
Beat well
Repeat 1a - 4a six times or until the colour distribution is as at the beginning

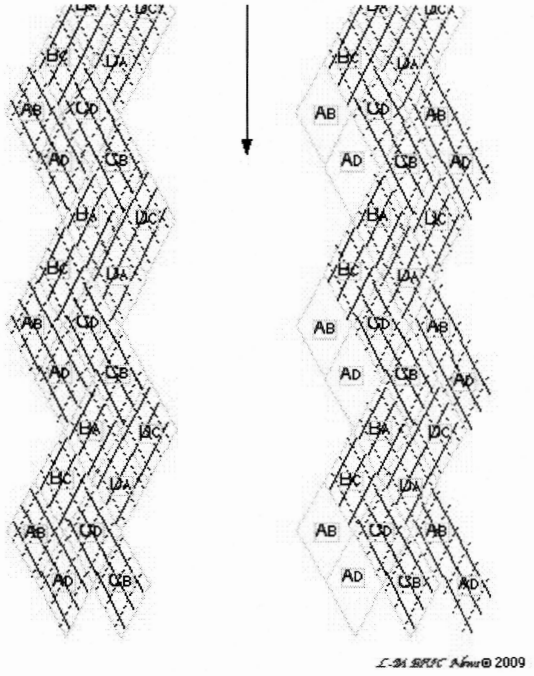
1b. Give the loops on L1 and L2 a half twist
2b. Put L1a through L1b, c, d and take R1d and simultaneously put L2a through L2b, c, d and take R2d
3b. Move the loops down on R1 and R2
4b. With R1b take L2a and with R2b take under all the loops the loop on L1a
Beat well
Repeat 1b - 4b six times or until the colour distribution is as at the beginning
This is one cycle
(End of Boutrup's instruction)

(EditorÅfs note)
* When taking a two-color loop or passing it to the other braider, pay attention that the loop does not reverse.
* The direction of reversing the loops for the latter half of the recipe may be the same or the opposite of the former half, as long as done consistently.

Although the instruction by boutrup is very clear, the following illustrations may help visualize the construction of the braid.



The two diagrams (Diag. 1 and Diag. 2) show the color pattern of Serene #66 when it is cut-open along its zigzag pattern line and laid flat. They form a montage of diamond-shaped tiles (coupen), with each of the tile representing the area of the braid covered by one three-repeat section of the recipe.



In the diagram, I take for conveniences sakes the three loops held initially on one hand of each braider as a block and call it, A, B, C, D, from left to right. The black-and-yellow two-color loops are represented by black single-color loops. The dark lines on each diamond-shaped tile represent the oblique twining (OT) elements that cover the surface, which is indicated by large font alphabets on each tile. The light-colored lines represent binders that are indicated in small-font alphabets. (BA, DC, etc.)
In the left diagram, you see only one zigzag column (in black lines). The zigzag column with blue lines has been broken into small sections and they hang on to the two sides of the black column. This is because I mounted the tiles to illustrate the distribution pattern of the loops to correspond to the working pattern of the loops on the hands. In the remounted diagram on the right, you see the two parallel zigzag columns. These two diagrams represent the same braid. In the right diagram, the dark lines represent loops that cover the surface whereas the light lines the binder loops. As a whole the dark lines show the flow direction of the surface patterns.
According to the recipe, the first 6 repeats produce the surface patterns of the oblique twining area formed by the loops on the braiders' right hands (blocks B and D), and the latter 6 repeats those formed by the loops of the left hands (blocks A and C).
As you braid by repeating 6 repeats each of the former and the latter halves of the procedure, you'll see that these 8 tiles begin connected as illustrated and a tubular braid #66, an oblique twining braid with saw-teeth pattern, start building up.
The braid and photo by J. Boutrup © 2005. Serene #66 The photo shows the two sides, lighter and darker halves of the braid.

About the two-person connecting method of the Zigzag-color-design Braid with an Oblique Twining Pattern.

Braiding in cooperation of plural number of braiders may produce a wider braid than one a single worker can make. Three connection methods have been reported as found in the 15th c. English documents, such as "The Tollemache Book of Secrets: Treatise for making laces," as well as from observations of field studies. The three methods, tentetively called here "combined," "Semultaneous" and "successive", are all that have been found so far used in the l-m braiding technique. Keiko Kusakabe touches on the subjects in the main section of this issue. They will also be discussed in detail in the forthcoming book, EUROPEAN LOOP BRAIDING, by N. Speiser and J. Boutrup. I don't know, however, at this date (June, 2009) whether or not the method used in Serene #66, which is different from all other three, will be discussed in it.

In Serene #66, a two-braider braiding, the two braids produced by the two braiders are connected to make them into one. The connection method used here, however, is different from any of the three that we have known of so far used in the l-m braiding. We don't know, however, who ceated this unique method.

In the known three connection methods, a braider passes to the next braider the loop

mounted on the index finger of the 'inner hand' (the hand closer to the next braider), which is the finger closest to the next braider. By passing loops between the two cooperating braiders, the braids, each produced by one of them, are connected at selvages and become a braid twice as wide.

With #66 braid, however, the loops are passed in one direction only for the etire six repeats of the procdure. The loop on left braider's 'inner hand' passes through the inside of the loops on the 'inner hand' of the right braider and to his 'outer hand.' Then the right braider gives his outermost loop on the 'outer hand' to the left braiders 'outer hand.' In this way, the loop distribution for both braiders is kept stationary and a tubular braid is constructed. In sum, #66 braid, a tubular braid wth a zigzag patterns, is produced by passing all active loops in the right direction 6 times and then in the opposite direction 6 times.