

# Web Site Spotlight



## Textile Mill Recreates Period Fabrics *Philip Gust\**

*A small textile mill in upper New York recreates period fabrics for Hollywood costume designers, museums and the public.*

Thistle Hill Weavers has been recreating period 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> century fabrics, carpets, and trims for over 20 years. Located in upstate New York, about an hour west of Albany, this small textile mill recreates accurate historic reproductions,

working from surviving examples, period weaver's drafts, and documented patterns.

Although they are small, Thistle Hill's clientele includes costume designers for big-budget Hollywood movies who require extremely accurate period fabrics for their historical costumes.

Under the direction of owner/designer Rabbit Goody, they have worked on a number of movie and TV productions such as "[Master and Commander](#)", "[Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull](#)", "[Leatherheads](#)", "[The Curious Case of Benjamin Button](#)", and "[The Prestige](#)".

Thistle Hill got their start in the film industry over 15 years ago when Goody was approached to work on "[The Scarlet Letter](#)", and their clientele has grown steadily since then.

According to Goody, "Working with the movies is always a process. It often happens very quickly – a designer may want to move from an idea to an actual fabric in as little as a week – but there are many phone calls, emails, and sometimes visits back and forth as

adjustments are made to get each fabric exactly right. During the process, we try to remember that Oscars are awarded for costume and set design!"

In addition to creating material, they provide advice on accurately portraying textiles in movies. For example, a set designer on a [biopic](#) about John Adams asked for guidance about how to make an actress look convincingly like she's weaving on an 18<sup>th</sup> century loom.

The company also recreates historical fabrics, carpets, trims, carpets, and bed hangings for museums and historical sites, including Washington's [Mount Vernon](#), Jefferson's [Monticello](#), Van Buren's [Lindenwald](#), and Lincoln's [birthplace](#).

Their web site describes their ability to produce custom short runs of as little as 18 yards as setting them apart from other textile manufactures. They say that the historic finishes they use to produce an authentic period look are unmatched by commercially manufactured material.

A recently acquired Jacquard loom enables them to weave worsted damask, silk, and Figured Ingrain Carpet.





**Historic Figured Ingrain Carpet made on their new Jacquard Loom (photo courtesy Thistle Hill Weavers)**

Thistle Hill also offers custom historical carpet, drapery, upholstery, bedding, and trims for “special” homes. They can do anything from simply weaving custom fabric, to constructing an entire installation, complete with trim and functioning bed curtains.



**Venetian curved pie stair runner (photo courtesy Thistle Hill Weavers)**

Goody offers consulting services to interior designers, and museums and historical sites. She has an encyclopedic

knowledge of historical material, and maintains an extensive research library.

The web site features galleries that present the different types of fabrics they can make, and includes close-ups that show the incredible details of their workmanship.



**Close-up of Thomas Jackson Diamonds diaper dimity in white cotton (photo courtesy Thistle Hill Weavers)**

The “New At Thistle Hill” page offers accessories and finished goods made by the company, including historic weave silk scarves, and carpet mats made of historic carpet patterns in period colorways.



**Historic carpet mat (photo courtesy Thistle Hill Weavers)**

Historical costumers should check out their “Limited Time Specials” page, which features overruns of fabrics, including those from movies. They are currently offering a selection of wools that can be used as blankets, window treatments, bed hangings, upholstery, runners, or area rugs. Although not inexpensive, they are a unique chance to acquire small quantities of period fabrics.



**Mustard and ginger silk worsted drapery or upholstery fabric (photo courtesy Thistle Hill Weavers)**

Thistle Hill’s work with the film industry was recently featured in a [Smithsonian.com](http://Smithsonian.com) article.

To learn more about Thistle Hill Weavers, their fabrics, and their custom services for historical costumers, visit their [web site](http://web site).

*Philip Gust enjoys sci-fi and fantasy costuming, and has particular interests in props, special effects, and prosthetic makeup. He also costumes in historical periods, including Regency, Victorian, and early 20th C.*