The polychrome effect is created by using 3 different pattern wefts, along with a tabby weft. Herrick's structure was defined by using a light weft, a bright weft and dark weft. While these relationships remain constant throughout the piece, the actual hues that she used do not, resulting in a very expressive and visually compelling piece. The profile and full drafts included here indicate the sequence Herrick followed, but they do not attempt to show the color shifts that she made. Our suspicion when analyzing the piece was that, while the structure was necessarily planned out in advance, her color choices were most likely made as she progressed. This combination of structure and creative freedom has limitless possibilities.

Another exciting characteristic of a summer and winter polychrome piece, especially one with a block structure as complex as this one, is the mystery of the back of the piece. The technique produces a reverse of the color combination on the back of the cloth, which might be even more interesting than the version on the front of the cloth. In fact, when we were analyzing the piece included here, there was some discussion of which side Herrick would have woven as the front, and which was really the most interesting.

Text and draft by Kristin Pesola, Curatorial Intern. Special thanks to: Ann and Jon Sinclair and pixeLoom®. Photos by Dan Kvitka.