



Today's post is brought to you by Christa Giles, designer of the striking Pinion cardigan. Christa is no stranger here at Twist- she has designed a number of patterns you see in our pages, including [Asher](#), [Corinth](#), and [Lallans](#). You can also find this post on [her blog](#). She shares about her inspiration, innovative techniques, and her own version- what a difference gauge can make! Check it out below.



This is Pinion, a cardigan I designed for Twist Collective's [Winter 2012 issue](#). See it [here](#).

The inspiration came directly from TC's mood boards, a collection of pictures that they send out to

designers as part of their Call for Submissions for each issue. This mood board included several photos of birds and feathers, and that was the primary image floating around in my head as I was imagining possible designs to swatch and submit.



I love how well this sweater fits the model, with the waist shaping in exactly the right place! This doesn't always happen, as I am knitting up a general size rather than to a specific model's measurements, so I am always pleased when it turns out perfectly! Pinion's structure-a top-down sweater with radiating motifs spreading from the collar onto the yoke- is similar to a design that I had already knit up. That one is destined for self-publishing later this year and has a very simple box motif suitable for first-time stranded knitters, but knowing that I was designing for Twist Collective's readers let me throw in a few tweaks that would happily challenge more experienced knitters.



Most colourwork designs are made up of pixels, each little box being a single knit stitch worked in colour A or colour B. When I was thinking about feathers, I wanted swooping curves and flowing lines, not boxes and jagged edges, so I started combining colourwork with cabling, and a swatch was born!

My submission was accepted, and the [Halcyon yarn](#) arrived shortly after. This is the same yarn I was given for [Thornia](#), and I think it is perfect for steeked projects: nice and grippy, with great blockability! I think Pinion was actually the easiest start-to-finish knit that I've done for Twist Collective ([Boundless](#), [Lara](#) and [Candlewick](#) are in competition for the hardest) so the finished sample sweater flew off my needles with enough time left over for me to make a variation for myself!

This is my version of Pinion:



It was somewhat influenced by the sweaters knit by the Cowichan people of Vancouver Island, as I wanted a big, chunky sweater but didn't want to use their traditional imagery or motif layout as I am not of First Nations descent. I really liked the feathers of Pinion, so after working a swatch consisting of two strands of Cascade 220 and one strand of Drops Alpaca (YUM!), I crunched the numbers and figured that the instructions for the smallest size would work with my gauge to make me an oversized knitted coat to wear through the winter, layered over a lightweight hoodie. A cozy hood and generous pockets were also part of my modifications, and I'm super happy with how they turned out.



I had also been looking at a lot of watercolour paintings of bird plumage, and planned to use an undyed cream yarn for my contrast colour, so the feathers would eventually be painted with acid dyes!



It worked.. right up to the point where I had to admit that I have very little experience dyeing wool, and had no idea why my colours were going on as I had imagined but disappearing overnight to leave me with weirdly tinted feathers the next morning.



After working on it for about three days, I finally achieved a result I could live with, and steam-set the whole thing using a giant canning pot on my stove. There must have been another level of failure in my skills, as the sweater acquired a rusty orange blotch across the right pocket (you can see its edge on the front buttonband trim) but I am still happy wearing it out and about.





You can also see some additional ideas about styling Pinion on the Twist Collective blog [here](#).

Need help with the embroidery for the feather shafts? I made a [tutorial video](#)!