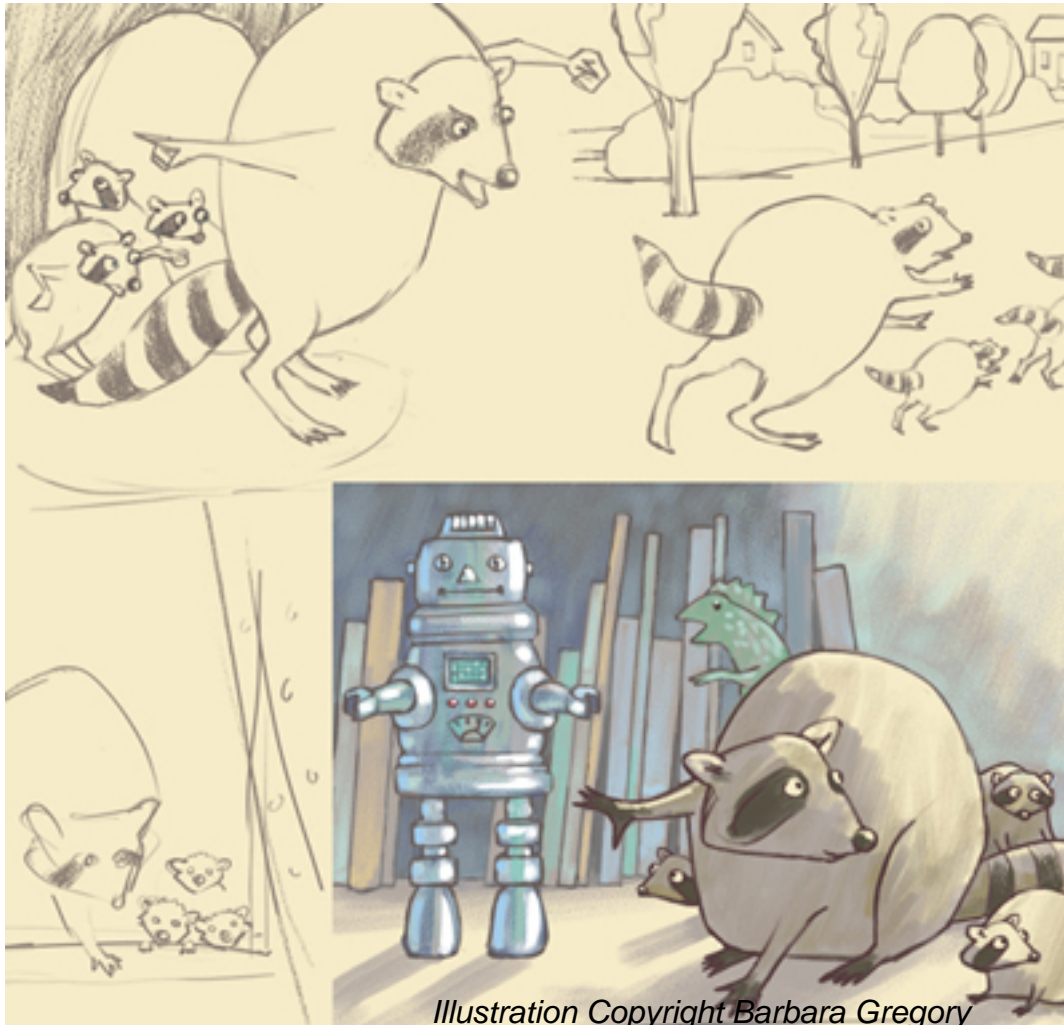




Barbara Gregory, designer of [Mimico](#) and [Ormolu](#), which both feature compelling and intricate slip stitch colorwork, has a brand new colorwork design for Twist Collective called [Ringo & Elwood](#). Today, Barbara shares a little about her design process in making these charming mittens. Find out more about Barbara at her [website](#).

Two activities were the impetus for this design. The first was a personal project which involved drawing a family of raccoons. I looked at lots of pictures of raccoons and was immersed in my drawings, postponing other activities. Then life interrupted in the form of an illness in the family; a deadline sailed by and the drawings were put aside unfinished.



Around the same time, I was designing and knitting a pair of colorwork mittens for women. I found them an appealing project, small enough that a detailed chart didn't seem too daunting to knit. Mittens seemed a perfect small canvas for colorwork and image. (I remember idly wondering what cute image might be good for a pair of little boy's mittens—because there's never enough cute stuff for little boys.)

But for me, colorwork mittens presented a minor design problem when it came to the thumbs. I didn't want a completely plain thumb, but having happily stranded two colors throughout the hand sections of the women's mittens, I found I was reluctant to do so for the finicky little tube that makes a thumb. My solution for that design was to knit a plain thumb and then embellish it with a bit of duplicate stitch.

Apparently the thumb issue was still there in the back of my brain. It sat quietly until one day it collided with the raccoon from my drawings and produced one of those 'Aha' moments: the thumb! will be striped!



I was off and running. I measured a young neighbor's hand and immediately sat down to start working out a chart. I wanted my raccoons to look friendly and happy, so it didn't seem right that a child looking down at his two hands would see the raccoons facing away from each other. With the position of the tail a given, my solution was to pose the raccoon looking up over his shoulder so each one would have his head turned toward his twin. And for the back? The back! From that point I couldn't rest until I had acquired suitable yarn—this was an idea that I couldn't *not* knit.



When Kate Gilbert suggested doing a beaver as well I couldn't resist playing with the chart. I soon realized the beaver would be brown on a gray ground, the reverse of the raccoon, and liked the positive/negative look of the two different mittens. I thought the beaver was a good way to add value to the pattern and might be welcomed by a knitter with second mitten syndrome. Knitting up the beaver mittens also gave me an opportunity to test the smaller size.



Some designs start as a vague concept, and have to be coaxed and prodded through much trial and error to a successful conclusion. This one arrived in a flash of inspiration which propelled me through to the finished product.



Find out more about Ringo & Elwood [here](#).