



# Visual Art, Social Studies, Science

## Textile Art

2-6

Lesson by Virginia Catherall

This lesson may be adjusted to fit whatever timeline you need. It can be the focus for one day, or worked on for an hour a day over a week or more.

### Objectives

- Learn about textile art
- Get inspiration from nature for art
- Weave a piece of art using yarn or natural fibers

### Background

Textile art uses fibers to create art. The art can be practical and useful like a rug or clothing, or it can be decorative like a wall hanging or sculpture. Fibers include plant, animal, or synthetic fibers usually spun into yarn but fiber can be unspun as well. Many fiber artists then take yarn and process them into works of art through weaving, knitting, crocheting, knotting, or even gluing. Textile artist Virginia Catherall creates usable objects of clothing called “wearable art” through knitting. Her work also finds meaning in nature and landscape and translates that into these wearable art pieces.

Some Native Utah artists also use textiles to create their own unique art. Many rugs woven by Diné (Navajo) artists have designs that have roots in tradition and nature. The knowledge and artistic heritage are passed down through artists over many generations. Rug designs such as *Two Gray Hills* and *Storm* not only have roots in nature, they have individual symbolism in shapes, colors, and lines that convey deep spiritual meaning.

### Materials

- A piece of cardboard approximately 6”x10”
- A ruler
- A pencil
- Scissors
- Yarn or twine

### Learning Activity

Show examples of textile art inspired by nature. Examples include Navajo Rugs by Diné artists and knitted wearable art by Virginia Catherall. Have a discussion about what students see.



Virginia Catherall, *Tundra Swan Shawl*, 2017, hand-knit



Irene Warren, *Rug Pictorial*, 1994, fiber

### Images from the Museum Permanent Collection

- Irene Warren, *Rug Pictorial*, 1994, fiber

### Images from the In Sight, Out of Mind Exhibition:

- Virginia Catherall, *Tundra Swan Shawl*, 2017, hand-knit

### Utah Core Standards

#### Visual Arts:

2.V.CO.2 Discuss the way art has been used in different cultures and times.

6.V.R.1 Identify and interpret works of art that reveal how people live around the world and what they value.

6.V.CO.2 Analyze how art reflects changing times, traditions, resources, and cultural uses.

#### Social Studies:

2.S.1 Recognize and describe how people within their community, state, and nation are both similar and different.

3.S.2 Understand cultural factors that shape a community.

4.S.2 Understand how Utah’s history has been shaped by many diverse people, events, and ideas.

#### Science:

Standard 2.3.1 Plan and carry out an investigation to classify different kinds of materials based on patterns in their observable properties. Examples could include sorting materials based on similar properties such as strength, color, flexibility, hardness, texture, or whether the materials are solids or liquids. (PS1.A)

Standard 2.3.2 Construct an explanation showing how the properties of materials influence their intended use and function. Examples could include using wood as a building material because it is lightweight and strong or the use of concrete, steel, or cotton due to their unique properties. (PS1.A)

#### Science

Standard 3.1.2 Obtain and communicate information to describe climate patterns in different regions of the world. Emphasize how climate patterns can be used to predict typical weather conditions. Examples of climate patterns could be average seasonal temperature and average seasonal precipitation. (ESS2.D)



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### Suggested questions for class discussion:

- How do these artworks convey the natural world?
- What elements of natural world inspiration were left out of each piece?
- How do you think they were constructed?
- Although both are works of art, they are also useful objects. How are each work of art meant to be used?

We are going to create our own piece of textile art inspired by nature. We will be weaving using a loom we make with cardboard. As you prepare to weave think about what elements of nature you want to translate into a textile:

- Will it be the color of a sunset or forest or something else?
- Will you want to work with yarn that has a certain texture: rough or smooth?
- What type of lines will you create with your weaving, thick like the trunk of a tree, or think like a faraway horizon?

### Extension

Make a weaving with items you can find at home. What materials will you use today? Wool, cotton, or acrylic yarn is the most common to find today, but if you don't have yarn, you can use string or twine with natural materials you find like grasses and vines or even flowers.

## Let's Weave

### Making your cardboard loom

You can make a weaving loom with just a few supplies from home.

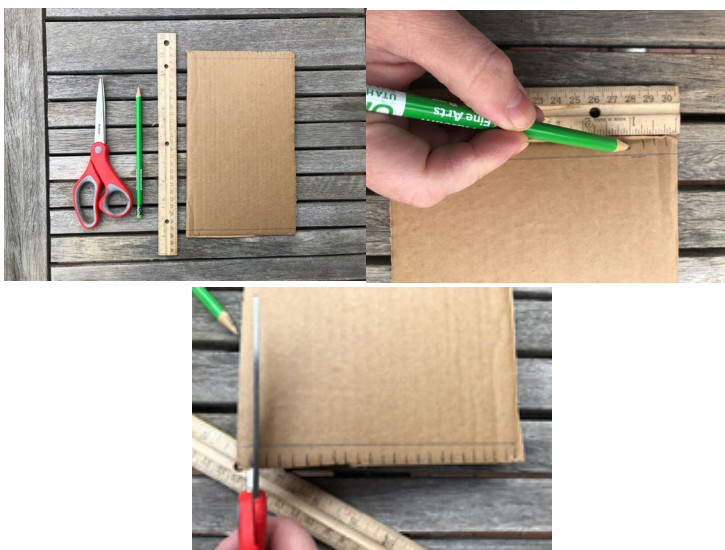
### Directions:

Measure along the short side of the cardboard and mark with a pencil every 1/4". Do the same on the opposite short side. Then cut a small 1/4" slit at each pencil mark. This is your loom!



### Warping your cardboard loom

The warp is the set of strings that run vertical or up and down on the loom. To set up your loom with a warp is called warping.







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*Warped Loom Front*



*Warped Loom Back*

## Weaving with your cardboard loom

Now we can weave! Weaving involves moving the yarn or weft alternating over and under each warp string. Each row of weft changes which yarn it goes over- if the weft went under then over then under then over, the next row will have the weft go over then under across the warp.

You will need yarn or twine and a large blunt yarn needle or a cardboard shuttle you can make. If you want you can try to weave with tall grass or vines or flowers.



## Directions:

1. Cut about 1-2 yards of yarn and thread on your needle. If you don't have a needle, a piece of wire bent in half would work.

2. You can also make a cardboard shuttle. Take a piece of cardboard about 6" x 2" and cut a square notch in each of end. This is used to wind the yarn around.



## Directions:

Begin in the upper left corner of the loom and slide the end of the yarn in the first slit. Leave about a 3" tail so it doesn't slip out. Lay the yarn down the loom to the slit on the opposite side of the loom and slide it in to secure the yarn. Bring the yarn behind the back of the loom and up the next slit on the bottom. Bring the yarn back up to the top of the loom and insert it in the second slit by the beginning end. Then again take it behind the top of the loom and slide it in the third slit at the top. Keep going until you have warped all the slits at the top and bottom of the loom.



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4. Now take your needle and begin weaving it back the other way. If your first row of weft went under last warp string, you will start weaving over that string. If the last row ended going over the last warp string, you will begin by going under. Continue weaving all the way to the end and draw your yarn through. Don't pull too tight, you don't want your edges to draw in. With your fingers tamp down the yarn so it is snug to the row below. This is the second row of weft and should have "locked" in the first row because it is going over and under the opposite threads on the warp.

5. Keep weaving in this way until your work is as long as you want it to be.

6. To take it off the loom you can cut the warp strings at the top and bottom then tie every two together to secure the warp from unraveling. The warp strings can be cut shorter or kept as longer tassels.



### Assessment

Students should have a basic understanding of weaving. Older students have attempted to incorporate elements of nature into their project. Students should now be familiar with the historical context of weaving with looms and make connections between their work and Diné (Navajo) rugs and textiles.







Irene Warren, *Rug Pictorial*, 1994, fiber





Virginia Catherall, *Tundra Swan Shawl*, 2017, hand-knit