

Wire Art Quilt

A decorative, sculptural interpretation of the Friendship Quilt

(art + history)

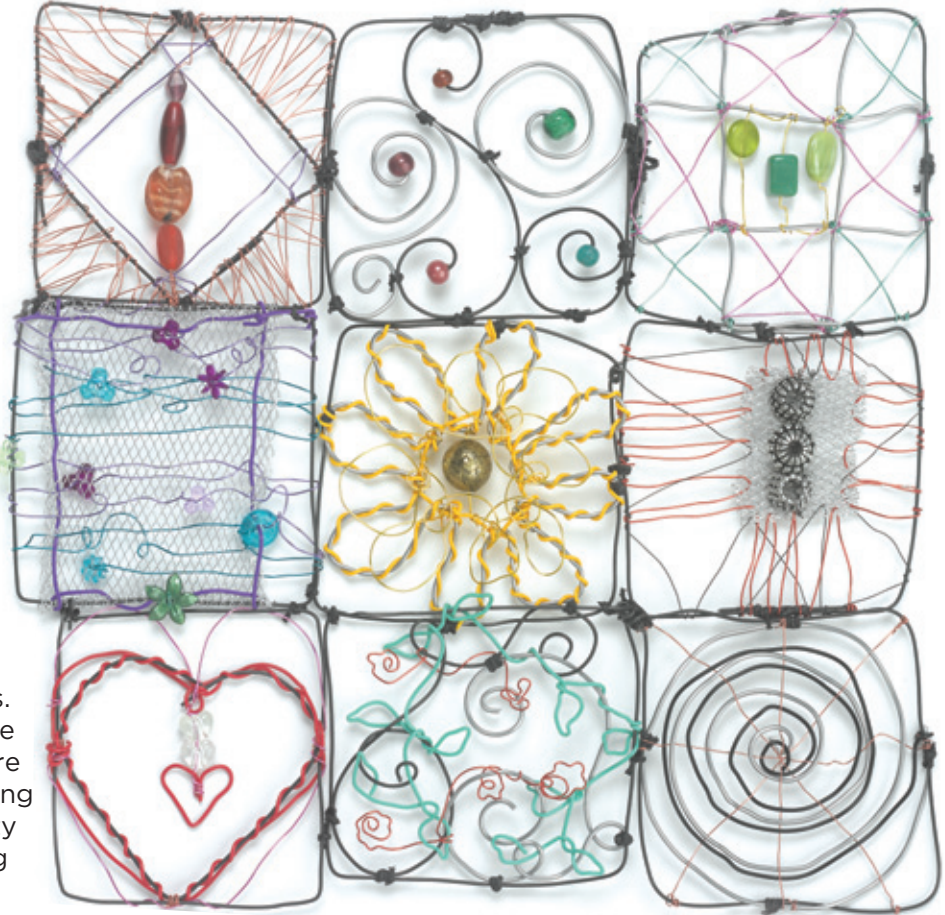
When compared to today's highly social environment, it's difficult to imagine the separation and isolation that women in pioneer times may have experienced. As Western expansion occurred, great distances separated families and friends. "Friendship" quilts were made as useful and practical going-away gifts that also served as a reminder of time spent together. Each square was personally designed with a pattern, signature, and stitchery from a loved one's hands.

A modern and expressive way to make a quilt is to incorporate wire, string, and beads. Created in a group or as a personal piece, the quilt is designed of individual squares that are bound together for display. Wire is an amazing art medium — it can be bent to form a variety of lines, shapes, letters, and images, outlining patterns in the way that individual pieces of fabric make up each square in a traditional quilt. Elementary-age students can work easily with chenille stems and colorful plastic-coated wire while older students will create art with soft steel, aluminum, and copper wire.

GRADES 3-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Cut annealed wire into 18" pieces for 4-1/4" quilt squares and 26" for 6" squares.



Materials (required)

Dark Annealed Wire, 18-gauge, 50-ft coil (33403-1050); share one across class

Laguna® Ceramic Bisque Tile, 4-1/4" x 4-1/4" (32916-1043) or 6" x 6" (32916-1001); one per student

Waxed Thread, Black, 4 oz, 150 yd spool (63012-2024); share across class

An assortment of wires, recommend:

Blick® Armature and Sculpture Wire, 14-gauge, 350 ft spool, (33400-1435)

Silver Plated Copper Wire, set of six colors, 24-gauge (60687-1249)

Blick® Copper Wire, 18-gauge, 25 ft spool (33415-1018)

Twisteez®, 30", package of 50 (33407-1050)

Economy Glass Bead Assortment, 1 lb (61536-1001); share one across class

Fiskars® Performance Softgrip® Titanium Scissors, 5" (57612-1005); one pair per student

Mini Long-Nose Pliers, 5" (33083-1010); share 3-4 among class

Optional Materials

Amaco® Wireform Mesh, assorted colors and styles (33408-)

Creativity Street® Stems, 12", pkg of 100 assorted (60923-1012)

Mini Wire Cutters, 5" (33083-1020)

Process

1. To form the quilt block outline, wrap the annealed wire around a ceramic tile, wood block, canvas, or other square item. To close the square, wrap waxed thread around the overlapping ends of the wire.
2. Create a design inside the wire outline. Take caution not to pull too tightly and distort the shape of the square. Recommendations:
 - Use a variety of wires in different colors and gauges.
 - Ends of wires may be wrapped around the annealed wire frame, and wire shapes may be secured to the frame edges with more waxed thread.
 - Incorporate beads or wire mesh to add color and interest.
 - Use mini pliers to create bends or tightly secure loose ends of wires.
3. If quilt blocks are to be displayed as a group, use waxed thread to secure them together. If each will be displayed individually, design a hanger at the top of the square.

Options

- Younger ages who may have difficulty bending wire may use craft stems and Twisteez plastic-coated wires.



Step 1: Bend annealed wire around a ceramic tile or wood block to make a square shape.



Step 2: Create a design inside the square with a variety of colors and gauges of wire.



National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.

K-4 • Students use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories.

5-8 • Students select media, techniques, and processes; analyze what makes them effective or not effective in communicating ideas; and reflect upon the effectiveness of their choices.

9-12 • Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes they use.

Content Standard #3 — Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.

K-4 • Students explore and understand prospective content for works of art.

5-8 • Students integrate visual, spatial, and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks.

9-12 • Students reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture.



Step 3: Bind quilt block squares together as a group or create a hanger for individual designs.