Wire Weave

Students construct a metal wire and mesh woven relief sculpture. The plan provides a big challenge to assemble the art piece without glue. Students assemble the project by weaving and bending the metal to attach the images to the background. Cut, tie, bend and sew with a piece of wire using its end as a needle. A unique approach to weaving, this lesson is highly impressionistic in creating color by overlapping the mesh to alter a vision of the ordinary. This exercise is extremely valuable to foster a student's critical thinking. The relief construction is a necessary part of problem solving. This is a prickly process but worth the effort..

Grade Levels 9-12

Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Process

1. Select a piece of matboard. Think about abstract free form weaving. Talk to students and discuss contemporary fabric in sweaters, hats and scarves. Start the design by choosing pieces of mesh that will stand out on top of the matboard and create color. Trim into shapes using scissors. Select various other wires and metals.

   NOTE: For safety, always use new wire. Used wire may have rusty areas and dirt that may be impossible to clean.
2. Attach pieces together by bending, folding and weaving. Some mesh or wire can be placed over others to trap them into place. As connections are made between the different materials, the artwork is secure and the metal woven in a free style. Be sure to bend in sharp edges. Working on top of the background will allow a perspective of what is happening with the weaving in color and design.
3. After establishing a few areas of weaving, introduce a variety of other materials. Continue to keep the wire and metal mesh dominant but work in opposition pieces of interest. Suggestions include string, ribbon, plastic, leather, old photos, paper items, computer chips.
4. Attach to matboard backing – no glue! The weaving process will work for that

Materials

Crescent® Matboard, assorted colors (13007-) 20″ x 32″ cut to 10″ x 10″ pieces, need one piece per student

Amaco® Wireform Mesh 16″ x 20″ sheet, Contour Mesh (33408-2260) or Impression Mesh (33408-1006), need 1/4 sheet per student

Craft Pliers (33064-1069), share five 5-tool sets across classroom

Snippy Scissors (57040-2009), package of 12, need one per student

Assorted Wires for Weaving, recommend:

Aluminum Wire, 9-gauge (33402-1050), 50-ft rolls

Galvanized Wire 18-gauge (33405-1018) and 20-gauge (33405-1020), 100-ft rolls

Blick Natural Copper Wire 18-gauge (33415-1018), 25-ft rolls

Brass Wire 28-gauge (33416-1028), 75-ft roll

Colorfoil Economy Metal, Brass (60506-8410) or Coppertone (60506-8110) 4-1/2″ x 20-ft rolls

Optional Materials for Embellishment

Natural Feather Assortment (61432-1005), 1/2-oz bag

Process, continued

also. Use wire to sew through holes punched into the backing or fold foil over the sides and crimp to secure.

Options

- Combine fabric and wire for more texture.
- Change shapes and work more 3D in construction.

  - The concepts in this lesson plan, symmetrical, asymmetrical, positive and negative shapes can be divided into other lesson plans rich in principles and elements of design.

National Standards

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

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 #2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions

9-12 Students create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems

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

9-12 Students apply subjects, symbols, and ideas in their artworks and use the skills gained to solve problems in daily life