

Paper Weaving Techniques

Lesson plan prepared by Aiden Gillis, Indigenous Arts Programmer, at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Suggested Grade/Age Levels

Suggested age to work independently: grades 2+

Subject Areas

- Visual Arts: Elements and principals of design, drawing, colouring
- Math: Rulers, shapes, balance, pattern
- Social Studies: Personal interests, local history

Introduction

Aiden Gillis, the Indigenous Arts Programmer at the Gallery, shows you fun and simple weaving techniques used in weaving Mi'kmaw baskets!



Margaret Johnson

Wisqoqe'k jikijjk, 1997. Black ash splints, sweetgrass, and steel. 127.0 x 127.0 cm. Purchased with funds provided by the Art Sales and Rental Society, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1997

Set Up:

- Large flat surface area
- Materials near by

Materials:

- construction paper (we used 9 x 12 inch sheets but any paper will work)
- glue stick
- ruler
- scissors
- pencil

Process:

1. To prepare for our weaving, we'll need to create our own strips.
2. In basket weaving, the strips need to be the same thickness from top to bottom.
3. To do this, measure and mark 1 inch apart on both ends of the paper and draw a line across the paper to connect them.
4. After all of the lines are drawn, cut them with scissors. In the end, you should have:
 - 14 strips (1 x 8.5-inches, approx.)
 - 4 strips (0.5 x 8.5-inches, approx.)
 - 2 - 3 strips (0.4 x 8.5-inches, approx.)
5. Lay down your first row of vertical strips on a horizontal strip, side by side at a 90° angle; you'll want the short end to meet the edge so that everything lines up and we keep our pieces straight. Alternate between placing them on the top of the strip and the bottom, with no gaps in between.
6. Glue your first row of strips together, this will build a stronger foundation for when you're weaving. Otherwise, all of your pieces will slide around while you're trying to work. Wait for this to dry before continuing with the next step.
7. Continue by weaving a horizontal strip throughout the vertical strips you just glued down.
8. To weave, you'll want to start on the top, then go below, and then come back up through the top again. Continue this pattern until you reach the end of your row.
9. For the third row, you'll do the same technique in the opposite way, starting below and then coming up through the top, and then going below once again. You don't need to glue where the inside pieces cross over each other.

10. At the end, you'll want to glue down all the edge pieces to secure your weave.
 11. Cut off any excess pieces of paper that are sticking out of the sides.
 12. To create another dimension, I add thinner strips on top of the thicker strips by sliding them in place.
 13. To finish off your edges, we're going to create a border.
 14. Take one of your 0.5-inch strips and bend it in half lengthwise by placing the middle on the long edge of your ruler. Pinch the end of the paper down and create a crease by pinching it as you go along and smoothen it out at the end.
 15. Slide your square into the crease and cut the border to fit.
 16. Put glue on the inside of the border, and secure it in place, pinching it as you go along.
 17. Do the last two steps another 3 times to finish off your edges.
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