

Whatcom Museum Curriculum Packet for the exhibition
Reaching Beyond: Northwest Designer Craftsman at 60
September 14, 2014 - January 4, 2015

Crafting with Imagination: Ordinary Wire to Extraordinary Sculpture



Danielle Bodine, *Red Dot Galaxy*, Linen sculptures installed on 6" hatpins

Crafting the Future

Why does craftsmanship continue to flourish in the digital age? What skills are needed by the artist/designers who create the objects or environments that shape our everyday lives?

Reaching Beyond, Northwest Designer Craftsman at 60 celebrates the variety of production, creative problem-solving, and outstanding level of workmanship of 90 Northwest artists.

The exhibition and accompanying school programs reveal the ways that artists and designers transform the world around us, using both traditional and cutting-edge creative processes and materials.

The Whatcom Museum Art FUNdamentals school program includes a pre-tour visit to your classroom, an interactive gallery tour and studio experience. Students learn about featured artists, art styles and techniques as they gain experience in problem-solving and visual thinking. The program is adaptable to most ages. For more information contact Mary Jo Maute at mmaute@cob.org.



Eva Funderburgh, *Dirona*, Plastic fencing, chicken wire, fabric.

Themes: How today's designers and craft artists:

- Use ordinary materials to craft extraordinary functional art and sculpture.
- Maintain the scientific attitude of experimentation, inventing new ways to solve problems.
- Combine creativity and imagination with technique and technology.
- Visualize, design and build functional, one-of-a-kind artworks.

Outcomes

Students will:

1. See and respond to original contemporary artwork in a museum setting.
2. Practice Visual Thinking Strategies in the classroom, gallery and studio.
3. Design and construct a unique expressive sculpture from wire and mixed media.
4. Gain skills in problem solving, design, and construction with line and form.
5. Appreciate how craft and design has evolved over time.

Art FUNDamentals Wire Challenge Workshop



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Tools: (to be shared at tables) scissors, wire cutters, pencils, and templates

Materials: wire (twisteez, phone wire, floral wire, chenille stems), foam for bases, hooks for hanging, beads, buttons, ribbon, yarn, tissue and other scrap paper, glue sticks, scratch paper

Prompts: images and samples of wire sculpture

Lesson: Students are challenged to design and build a sculpture from wire and found materials. Suggested subjects include animals, the human figure in motion, a mode of transportation, plants, or abstract designs.

1. Practice or review wire techniques (see page 4)
2. Plan your sculpture by sketching ideas or use a template to get started
3. Select materials best suited to your idea
4. Begin construction
5. Consider how you will manipulate the wire for strength and stability
6. Be sure to connect each new piece or element
7. Figure out the best way to present your sculpture (hanging, free-standing, or mounted on foam)
8. Clean up☺

Reflection and Assessment:

1. What did you like the most about this project?
2. What was your biggest challenge? How did you solve the problem?
3. Tell us why you chose the wire or materials you did for your sculpture.
4. If you made another wire sculpture, what would you do differently?

A note about safety: Choose wire suitable to the age and experience of the students. Work with short (12") lengths of wire.

Three Wire Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to introduce students to the feel of wire and to show them how many different and innovative things can be done with a limited number of strands. Before class begins, prepare quantities of 12-inch lengths of soft wire. Twisteez, chenille wire, or telephone wire works well. Working with different-color strands helps the student see what is going on, and where each wire leads within a sculpture.

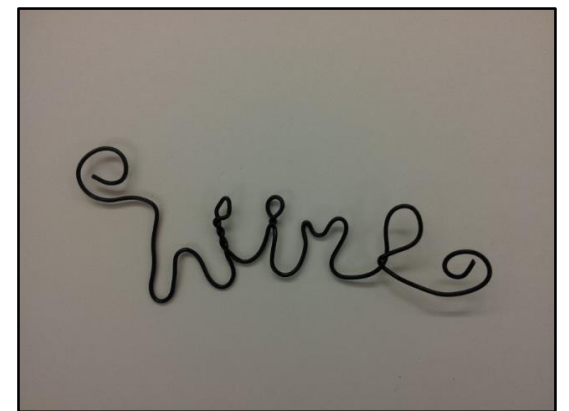


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Directions:

Practice the techniques of working with wire and then see what you can create with just three 12 inch strands of wire.

Try writing a word in wire or making cartoon figures.



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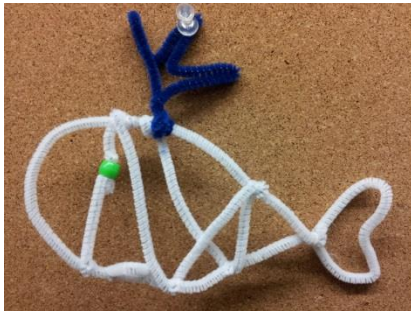
Wire Sculpture Animals



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A Horse: 4 chenille stems, scissors

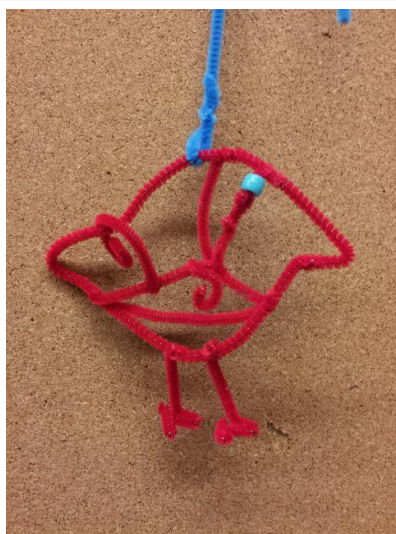
1. Bend wire to shape body.
2. Wrap legs around body tight to stand.
3. Add more detail and volume
4. Add wires for details such as tail, belly, or head details.



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A Whale: 4 chenille stems, 1 bead, scissors

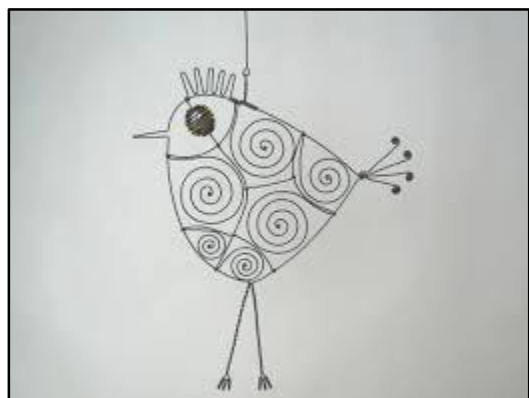
- 1) Form one chenille stem into a pear shape.
- 2) Cut another stem into thirds (two big, one small). Take one big piece and make it into a heart shape; attach it to the smaller end of the pear shape.
- 3) Take the other big piece and attach it to the other end of your shape. Thread your bead onto it for the eye and attach the loose end of the wire to your shape.
- 4) Use the small piece to make a fin and attach it to the side of your whale.
- 5) Fold a different color stem into a spout of water and attach it to the top of your shape.
- 6) Take the last chenille stem to make lines through the whale's body. Be sure to wrap the wire around the outline to keep it from slipping.



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A Bird: 3 chenille stems or wire, 1 bead, scissors

- 1) Use one wire stem to form the outline of a bird. Connect the ends of the wire near the beak to help hide the twist.
- 2) Cut a second stem in $\frac{1}{2}$, and make a half circle from the middle of your birds head to right below its beak. Wrap the wire around the outline of your bird at least once to keep it from slipping.
- 3) Use the other $\frac{1}{2}$ wire to make a few straight lines on your bird body. Make sure to leave about two inches at the end of the stem to make a line through the half circle to right above the beak. Take your bead and tread it onto the wire before attaching it to the bird body for its eye.
- 4) Cut the 3rd stem into four pieces. Two pieces are for the bird legs and two for extra filler in the bird body. Attach wire swirls and lines to your bird body in whatever way you think is cool.

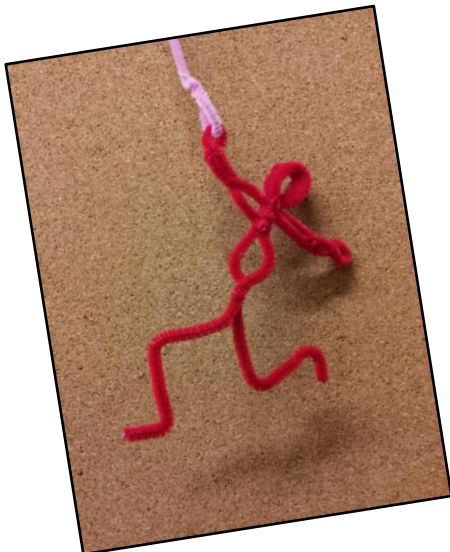


Examples of wire birds found on Google images



A Snail: 3 chenille stems, 2 beads, scissors

- 1) Form one wire stem into a skinny, lopsided heart shape to form the outline of the snail body.
- 2) Attach another stem to your outline for the snail shell. Bend it into a circle, using only half of the wire, then attach the middle to the snail's back. Bend the remaining wire into a spiral in the center of the circle.
- 3) Cut two, two-inch pieces of your last chenille stem.
- 4) Attach one end to the snail's head. Thread a bead on and bend the wire over it to make an eye. Repeat with the other two-inch piece and bead to make another eye.
- 5) Use the remaining wire stem to add pieces to your snail.

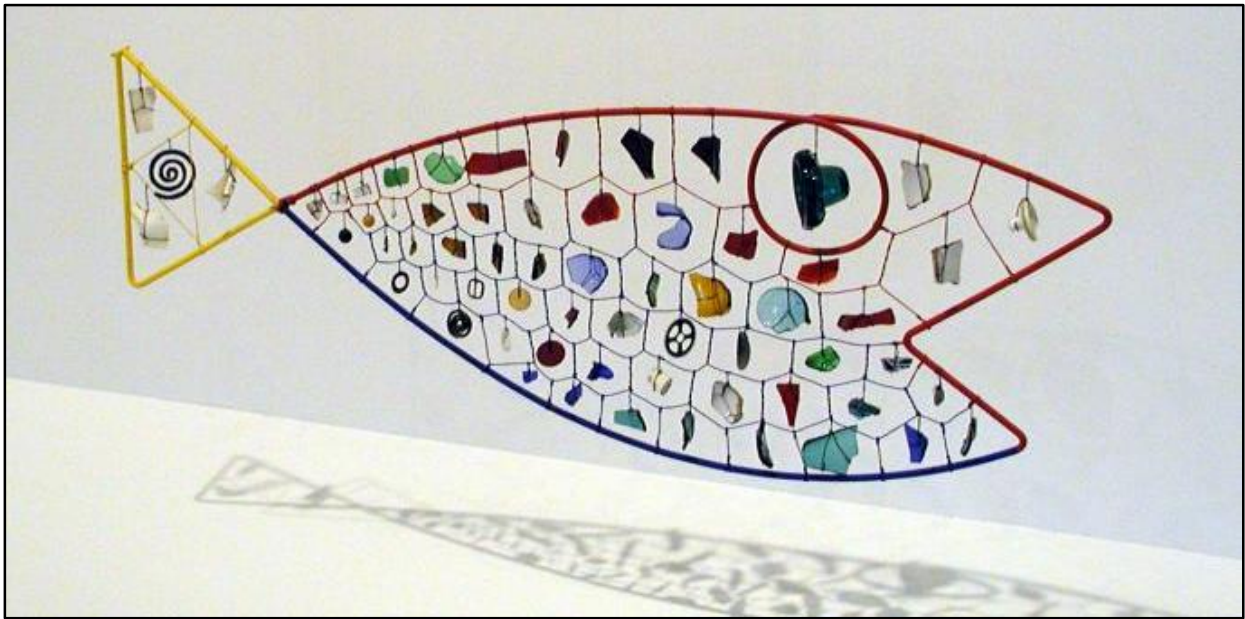


A Person: 2 chenille stems

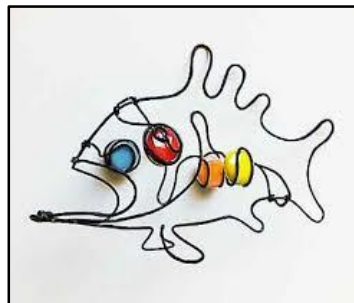
1. Hold two chenille stems together, bend in the center and twist an oval for the head and neck.
2. Bring 2 stems down for the legs and 2 out for the arms
3. Twist an oval shape for the abdomen.
4. Fold each arm in half, making ovals for hands, and upper and lower arms.
5. Bend the legs and arms to give action or motion to your figure.

CALDER INSPIRED FISH

Alexander Calder is one of the 20th century's most influential artists. He created games, toys, jewelry, sculptures, drawings, paintings, costumes, movie sets, and more. He became the founder of a new art form, *kinetic art*, or art that moves. His mobiles (suspended sculptures that move with air currents) hang in many museums and public places. Wire was one of his favorite art materials.



Alexander Calder's Fish (1944).

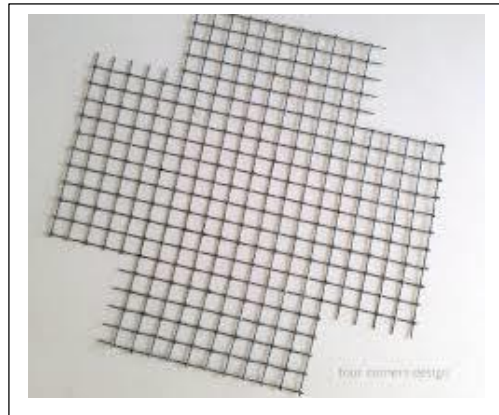


Wire and glass fish sculpture inspired by Alexander Calder.



Directions for wire baskets:

Start with chicken wire or wire mesh. Cut into shape as above to make the sides and base the height and width you want. Pinch wire together at the sides and weave in recycled fabric, yarn or other materials.



Jill Clark, *Flotsam*, Sculptural basket made from stitched hog casings, parachute cord, and beach debris from the Japanese tsunami that washed up along the British Columbia coastline.

Abstract Sculpture

2D to 3D optical collage

Draw a line on a piece of cardboard or scrap mat board. Tape a metal or chenille wire to the board at the end of the two-dimensional line. Continue the drawn line as a wire line to create an interesting three-dimensional sculpture. Add cut paper, beads or buttons.



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Wire Quilt Art: A decorative, sculptural interpretation of the Friendship Quilt. Students contribute one square using traditional patterns or a "crazy quilt" theme.

*From Mrs. Hulls Art Room.
mrshullsartroom.blogspot.com*





Elizabeth Berrien,
<http://www.wirelady.com/>

Sources and Lesson Plans

1. Teaching Innovative Wire Sculpture to Kids, by Elizabeth Berrien,
<http://www.wirelady.com/>.
2. Mrs. Hulls Art Room. *mrshullsartroom.blogspot.com*.
3. Wire Sculpture for Kids (Inspired by Alexander Calder) by MaryAnn Kohl by
 gryphonhouse, April 10, 2012.
4. www.twisteeze.com; wire sculpture
5. dickblick.com/lessonplans/wireform-figure-sculpture/wireform-figure-sculpture-wireform-figure-sculpture.pdf
6. A person: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nk1mbfLA2iQ>
7. A corkscrew puppet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5sJS9qWZSg>
8. A face with 2-dimensional drawing:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDZWeOWyPBQ>
9. A horse with 2-dimensional drawing:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1BOt05hWUs>