
Fibre Art Module

Introduction

The fibre arts are one of the most versatile of all art making venues. From pre-historic times humans have used fibres for functional and aesthetic purposes. Fibres, natural and manmade, have been used in such diverse items as clothing, suits of armour, buildings, jewellery, wall hangings and storage containers. Fibre art concerns itself with the extension of fibre to the world of intentional art making. Fibres that range from fine silk threads to tree roots to metallic wires have been used by artists to create one of a kind art pieces that go beyond the ordinary.

Four categories of processes and techniques are explored in this module based upon how the fibres are used.

1. **Construction** examines those areas which use the fibres to build up the piece in some way. These include weaving, knitting, spinning, knotting, crocheting, basketry, coiling, stuffing and wrapping.
2. **Wet processes and techniques** include those which require the use of fluids for their completion. These include papermaking, felting and tying.
3. **Application** covers those areas which involve applying things or substances to surface. These include direct drawing, transfer drawing, block printing, screen printing, painting with ink, dye or paint, and stencilling.
4. **Embellishment** includes those techniques which involve modification of surfaces. These include stitchery, beading, applique, tufting, lacemaking, and surface distortion.

The projects included in this module present options. Specific techniques or processes used in the classroom may depend on local circumstances and resources. Students are not expected to produce all of the time, rather, they should explore and experience the methods and techniques with an eye to creating pieces manageable in both time and materials.

FIBRE ART SLIDES

- FI 1 Suzanne Swannie/*Torso and Childlike Figures*
FI 2 Margie McDonald/*Woven Loom*
FI 3 Heather Pocius/*Buttons*
FI 4 Don Wright/*Wolly Bird I*
FI 5 Dawn McNutt/*Kindred Spirits*
FI 6 Dawn McNutt/*Testimony*
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FI 16 Bunty Severs/*Anne Meredith-Barry Jacket*
FI 17 Bridgette Meaney/*Hat-Costume*
FI 18 Heather Pocius/"*A Flower of Bliss Beyond All Blessing Blest*"
FI 19 Shelly McCoy/*Cow in Field #1*
FI 20 Katie Parnham/*Window*

Artist: Suzanne Swannie
Title: *Torso and Childlike Figures*
Medium: Tapestry
Size: 30 cm x 30 cm each
Date: 1985
Location: Private Collection, Vancouver

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: A beach scene with human figures on the land and in the water is the subject of those two companion pieces. In one piece the figures are either in, or diving into the water. In the other, figures are sitting around on the beach in a group. In both pieces, we see the head and shoulders of a figure peering over the sand banks at the other people.

Design: The artist has carefully chosen her fibres to create the wanted textures, throughout the pieces. Through the use of pattern, line, contrasting light and dark tones, and repetition of these, we feel a strong sense of movement. The pink sexless bodies contrast with the busy textures of the earth tones of the middle ground. The background area makes use of whites, greys, and pale blues which leave the space open to a feeling of great depth and distance.

Techniques: Tapestry weaving technique.

Mood: A feeling of fun, frolic and enjoyment is evident in the activities, the warm colours and relaxed poses of the figures.

Thought Provoker: How could you change the mood? colour? pattern? activity in the scene? clothing?

Notes:

Artist: Margie McDonald
Title: *Woven Loom*
Medium: Woven tubes, stuffed with sawdust
Size: 125 cm x 125 cm x 200 cm
Date: 1982 - 83
Location: Collection of Craftsmens Art Supplies, Halifax, Nova Scotia

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: A loom made from weaving so that the object of production becomes the product.

Design: The piece has a coarse, bumpy, surface texture. Since it is held up by nylon monofilament, the piece will change shape overtime. There is repetition of line and shape in the tubes. Subtle colour variations, resulting from the play of light and shadow, can be seen. Soft, spongy, malleable tubes contrast with the hard, rigid wood of the actual loom. We usually think of weavings as being flat. This piece is a lifesize three dimensional recreation of an actual loom.

Techniques: The work was sewn, woven, stuffed with sawdust, and suspended with nylon monofilament. It would change over time and each time assembled. Tubes were woven to replace the wood of the actual loom.

Mood: Explorative, humorous.

Thought Provoker: What would happen if you changed the colour? the materials? structure?

Notes:

Artist: Heather Pocius
Title: *Buttons*
Medium: Nugold and Coloured Wire
Size: 40 cm along each side, 10 mm deep
Date: 1991
Location: Collection of the Artist

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: Three triangular, metallic buttons make up this set. The two rigid sides border horizontal bands of wire wrapped around a core.

Design: Negative space is a very important part of this work. Contrast exists between the solid frame and delicate interior. Colours are subtle and warm. The wire wrapping and twining contributes to the pattern of the piece. Though a set, each retains its individuality. This is an innovative, non-traditional shape. Contrast exists between the softness of the fabric these will be attached to and the hardness of the metal.

Techniques: The work incorporates metal in a traditional fibre technique of coiling and wrapping. Jewellery techniques of scoring, bending and soldering are also used.

Mood: Aggressive, subtle.

Thought Provoker: What type of clothing would these be used on? What other non-traditional materials and forms could be used?

Notes:

Artist/Maker: Don Wright
Title: *Wooly Bird I*
Medium: Mixed media - branches, brin, rope, etc.
Size: Approximately 120 cm x 70 cm
Date: 1973
Location: No longer in existence

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: The artist has assembled the objects in a natural environment and hung them from a branch. This piece is from the Devils Purse Series, which was a series of large constructions based on the egg case of the skate fish. It is an exploration of the environment, the relationship between the sea, the woodlands, the wildlife, and the people who live there. There is no intention to recreate a bird, but to suggest the remnants of one.

Design: The three-dimensional quality of the work is striking. Since it is suspended, one can view it from all sides. This is fibre sculpture in the round. Found objects retain their local colour.

Texture is important in the work. One can feel the difference between rope, nets, and branches.

Techniques: A variety of materials were found and assembled in a sculptural manner.

Mood: There is a questioning, unsettled atmosphere about the piece.

Thought Provoker: Are there visual relationships between the various elements of our natural environment? What is our relationship/responsibility to it?

Notes:

Artist/Maker: Dawn McNutt
Title: *Kindred Spirits*
Medium: Copper Wire, Seagrass, Rope
Size: Range from 1.7 m - 2.2 m
Date: 1984
Location: Collection of the Artist

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: Six lifesize human-like forms which, even though we can see light shining through them, have a very solid appearance. These free standing figures interact as a group. Here they are photographed on a beach. The work has been installed at various galleries in Canada and Europe.

Design: Strong, vertical, cylindrical shapes have surfaces that are bumpy and rounded in places. Though solid, they look as though they could be dented or changed at will. Their organic form combined with variations in posture and size give them a human quality. The shiny wire provides a contrast to the dull colours of the seagrass.

Techniques: These were woven on a loom using copper wire, rope and seagrass. The materials were doublewoven into flat tubes, then manoeuvred into these forms. Each figure is inside the tubes as she pushed and pulled them into their present shape.

Mood: A contemplative, reflective interchange occurs between the figures. This is evident from their posture, bent heads, grouping and title.

Thought Provoker: The artist has used unusual materials here. What other unusual materials could one use to make interesting artworks?

Notes:

Artist/Maker: Dawn McNutt
Title: *Testimony Willow 1, No. 2, No. 3, No. 4*
Medium: Willow
Size: #1: 46 x 16 x 18 cm; #2: 58 x 22 x 23 cm; #3: 112 x 48 x 50 cm;
#4: 129 x 56 x 60 cm
Date: 1987 - 88
Location: Collection of the Artist

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: Four distorted basket-like structures of varying sizes sit in a cluster. Everyone is turned inward as if gathered around a focal point, enclosing it. They are arranged from the smallest on the left, in ascending order to the largest on the right.

Design: A warm natural weathered colour invites touch. The wood surfaces seem smooth, uneven and firm. Functional use was not a consideration in creating these. Their irregular shapes with bulging belly-like sections make them look more like characters than baskets or jars. They even enclose space while at the same time, the group is arranged to enclose a larger space. The strong vertical movement of each piece contrasts with the horizontal lines of the element which construct them. Compare with FI 5.

Techniques: This is a traditional basketmaking technique using willow. Others of this series titled *Man in Pain Series* (1987-88) were done using seagrass and hemprope.

Mood: A sense of reserve is evident in the pieces.

Thought Provoker: Compare this work with the basket made by folk artist, Anthony White (FO 20). Discuss the similarities and differences. Is the question of decorative vs. functional appropriate to these works?

Notes:

Artist: Wendy Coombs
Title: *"Pick Up Sticks"*
Medium: Handmade, Dyed Paper, Wrapped Around Twigs
Size: Centre panel of three;
Date: 1991
Location: Collection of the Artist

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: A number of coloured stick-like shapes are arranged in an intermingling pattern against a black background.

Design: In this three-dimensional piece, colour is crucial. The bright colours create movement, pattern and line as they overlap and are layered. A visual vibrancy results. The delicate looking twigs may be interpreted as many things such as bones of small animals and birds, lines, etc.

Techniques: Handmade paper was dyed by hand, moulded around found twigs and dried. The coloured twigs were then interlaced, wrapped/tied to connect them to the background. The individual twigs project into three dimensional space.

Mood: A celebration.

Thought Provoker: Consider what would happen if the colours were different? What if the twigs and colours were arranged in a more orderly way? What other objects would make interesting arrangements? What if the scale was different?

Notes:

Artist: Margie McDonald
Title: *Reflections*
Medium: Collaged Paper, Abaca, Wood Pulp
Size: Approximately 55 cm x 75 cm
Date: 1990
Location: Enterprise Newfoundland and Labrador, McCurdy Bldg., Gander

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: The artist has chosen to focus on a section of the shoreline close up. The piece explores that area where the water meets the shore, where sand, rocks, water and foam merge. Here the shapes and colours change with every moment yet one knows what to expect there. This piece was part of an exhibition of work which explored the theme "shorelines".

Design: Subtle earth and sea winter colours are arranged with careful consideration. The layering of different paper shapes combines with colour to create a sense of space. The light and dark areas also support this. Paper edges create lines and spaces in the work. We can detect shapes within colours which remind us of drawings. The location of the materials in the picture plane creates a sense of distance as the eye moves upward from the shore out to sea.

Techniques: Cast paper technique. Wood pulp was cast inside real shells to create the paper ones in the piece. Large sheets of wet paper were draped over the raised shapes. They were left to dry in place.

Mood: Atmospheric, overcast wintry environment where the coldness of the weather influences how we see the scene.

Thought Provoker: Would this piece be very different if it showed a season? different weather? Are there other types of shorelines the artist could have used as inspiration?

Notes:

Artist: Marlene Creates
Title: *Shoreline, England 1980*
Medium: Paper, Natural Environment, Photography
Size: Framed - 50 cm x 65 cm
Date: 1980
Location: MUN Gallery Collection

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: A wet strip of rice paper moulded to and between a number of rounded rocks at the point on a shore where the sand ends and the rocks begin. The piece is in the tradition of earth works where the artist makes use of the natural environment as a component of the work. Here the artist's intention is to create such a work without modifying or destroying the environment to create the piece. After photographing the scene the paper was retrieved.

Design: The sand in the lower one third of the image contrasts sharply with the larger rocks in the upper two thirds. The white paper accentuates the division line, yet unifies the two. Wet paper takes the shape of the object it covers, temporarily assuming a three dimensional quality it normally doesn't have. The wetness of the paper creates a clinging quality which meld it to the rocks it covers. It also gives it a translucency which accentuates its fragility in comparison with the rocks.

Techniques: The artist selected a specific site to install the paper, arranged it carefully, then photographed the scene.

Thought Provoker: What other shorelines, environments or paper could have been used? What role does placement play in this work? shape? pattern?

Notes:

Artist: Danielle Ouellete
Title: *Algues #3*
Medium: Felting and Weaving
Size: 110 cm x 200 cm (approx.)
Date: 1989
Location: Collection of the Artist, Shediac, M.B.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: Five repeated semi-enclosed vertical felt objects, similar in shape but with variations, are presented to us in a vertical arrangement. The objects have been photographed against a black background. The pieces depict the birth of algae. Each successive one increases in its elements and details.

Design: Oceanic colours move throughout these undulating, soft-flowing, shell-shaped forms. There are combinations of cool and warm pastel colours. Each object is horizontally aligned. The presentation of six of them, one above the other, creates a strong vertical formation. These container like forms have sensuous outer shells which enclose delicate fragile interiors. They each have an organic shape which differs slightly from all the others. Some loose weaving, resembling nets, emerges from the enclosed areas. Each piece is sensitively proportioned.

Techniques: Felting, Applique, some Weaving. The white section of each one is a felting technique. The insides were woven on a frame and inserted into the felting piece. The warp is of hand-painted silk while the weft consists of silk, metallic threads, cotton and wool.

Mood: Reflective, quiet.

Thought Provoker: Delicacy is an important quality in this work. What other materials suggest such delicate qualities? How could you use non-delicate materials to suggest delicate qualities?

Notes:

Artist: Sarah Spence
Title: *Resurfacing*
Medium: Felting
Size: Approximately 35 cm x 130 cm
Date: 1991
Location: Collection of the Artist

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: This work is based on architectural details of mouldings found in a 19th century building. A geometric pattern of pink rectangular shapes travel across its length. A variety of threads, fibres, textures, and colour intermingle throughout the piece, reflecting the surface texture of the building.

Design: Geometric blocks of colour reflect architectural design. Large blocks at each end flank a row of smaller blocks. Colours used here are subjective. This is a three-dimensional piece which emphasizes a flat view plane. It was designed for installation in a specific interior space.

Its linear shape reflects architectural design, specifically the rows of building blocks that travel across the building.

Techniques: This felting technique used natural wool, dyed and layered with commercial thread. The piece was then washed to shrink it, allowing the materials to merge more tightly together.

Mood: Subtle, quiet, with lively moments - playful.

Thought Provoker: Are there architectural designs which are repeated in your community? How would this piece look with another technique?

Notes:

Artist: Sarah Spence
Title: *Faces*
Medium: Fabric Over Wood
Size: Two Blocks, Each Measuring 11 cm x 11.5 cm
Date: 1991
Location: Collection of the Artist

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: This work explores serial art where the sequence of the repeated shapes are important as in mathematics. We see two of a six-block serial in which a human-like face situated in the lower left corner of the first block is repeated in each successive one. It becomes larger each time until its size dominates the surface of the final block.

Design: A repeated square supports a facial image which moves from an asymmetrical arrangement in the first block through to an almost symmetrical arrangement in the second block. The various blotches of colour against the black background diminish in number as the size of the face increases. The image on fabric covers uniform sized wooden blocks. Warm red colours which border on cool purple contrast vividly with the black background. Organic shapes of these colours float in the space around the head changing shape and size from block to block. Movement is sensed as the viewer zooms in on the face as its size increases.

Techniques: A bleach was used to discharge colour from the black fabric, after which dyes were applied to the bleached area. The surface and edges of particular areas were then machine embroidered.

Mood: Amusing, introspective.

Thought Provoker: How could you change this piece and have it remain a serial?

Notes:

Artist: Di Dabinette
Title: *To Find a Pitcher Plant*
Medium: French Dyes on Silk
Size: Approximately 44 x 39 cm
Date: 1982
Location: Department of External Affairs, Ottawa

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: The work is based on a walk through the woods in Gros Morne Park with the artist's mother to find a pitcher plant. The colours, plants and light which the artist encountered during the outing in the woods are documented. She kept sketches and photographs to work from. The book was done to commemorate her mother's visit.

Design: The author makes use of a book format, a diary, a documentary which presents the images in a fixed sequence. Images are painted on silk and sewn at the spine. The border which surrounds each image is sometimes interrupted when the image overflows onto it. Local colours of summer foliage commonly seen in the Newfoundland environment are used. The book contains 6 pages and has a hard cover front and back.

Techniques: Painting of silk requires the use of a substance called gutta to control hard edge lines or prevent dye from reaching certain spaces. Gutta blocks the dye from entering the silk. After colours are dry, the gutta is dissolved by steam reveal the untouched area. Gutta is similar to rubber cement. The dyes are primary colours mixed to produce all others. An application similar to watercolour is used. The colours tend to blend and bleed. They are also transparent which allows light to be seen through the silk. This piece also has metallic threads embroidered throughout it.

Mood: Peaceful, contented, warm, reflective.

Thought Provoker: How important is the story to appreciating this work? What would happen if the border were a different colour? or contained a different pattern?

Notes:

Artist: Donna Clouston
Title: *Snow, Outer Battery*
Medium: Silkscreen Printing on Fabric
Size: 40 cm x 50 cm
Date: 1990
Location: Collection of the Artist

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: Colourful houses and building are perched along the base of cliffs known as the Outer Battery at the entrance to St. John's harbour. Snow has fallen which disguises the rugged rocks.

Design: Repetition of basic block shaped houses in a variety of colours against a snow white background, broken now and then by the dark rocks. Soft snow surfaces contrast with the coarse rugged rocky surfaces. Blue appear in the water and sky to further highlight the colours of the houses.

Techniques: A printing technique which makes use of a squeegee to force ink directly onto the surface through an image already prepared on a silk, organdy or even polyester screen. The area not to receive any ink is blocked out to prevent ink from getting through. The piece is then dried and stretched onto a frame.

Mood: Reflective.

Thought Provoker: What would happen if you changed the time of year? the environment? the subject? the colours?

Notes:

Artist: Danielle Ouellet
Title: *"Janick"*
Medium: Embroidery Floss on Canvas
Size: 116.8 cm x 88.9 cm
Date: 1989
Location: Collection of the Artist, Shediac, N.B.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: An open door reveals a group of children of various ages, looking at the viewer. Other figures are visible on both sides of the doorway. One figure stands, partially hidden, behind the door. Angel-like figures hover above and behind the children. This piece is an arrangement of images taken from a child's drawings and a dream. The artist repeatedly experienced this very pleasant dream where her daughter rang the doorbell and stood on the doorstep with a group of her friends from school. The child offered her a bouquet of flowers. The daughter, Janick, died of cancer at age six. Her mother, the artist, had saved Janick's drawings from the time she was three years old, from which she selected parts for this piece.

Design: The red border around the doorway dominates the piece. Balance is symmetrical. The receding lines of the open door directs our gaze into the central rectangle. This rectangular shape is repeated throughout the work. The figures creates depth by their overlapping and placement in the picture plane. Horizontal and vertical quilting lines are visible.

Techniques: Embroidery and applique.

Mood: Playfulness and happy, yet quiet and serene.

Thought Provoker: How would you interpret this dream? Can you think of other ways of visually presenting this experience?

Notes:

Artist: Bunty Severs
Title: *Anne Meredith-Barry Jacket*
Medium: Quilt, Hand and Machine Sewn, Embroidered
Size: Lifesize
Date: 1991
Location: Collection of Anne Meredith-Barry

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: A low contrast landscape image. The work is based on an Ann Meredith-Barry painting, whose subject matter was about the land and the sea. This piece is a 3-D translation of a two-dimensional work.

Design: Coloured fabrics have been applied to the black background of the jacket. Muted silver comprises a great deal of the positive areas. The jacket is symmetrical with an asymmetrical image on it. The image moves around the coat from front to back. Placement of the image was determined by how it sat in this format. The amount of black space left in proportion to the colour used is significant.

Black silk and coloured fabrics are sewn on and around the exterior surface of the jacket. The artist's choice of colour, shape and their placement was influenced by the painting.

Techniques: Quilting, stitchery, construction techniques.

Mood: Mysterious, reflective, sombre.

Thought Provoker: What if you changed the background colour? What would happen if the inside of the jacket were a bright colour? if you reverse the approach? used different subject matter? Would you get the same mood with an urban subject?

Notes:

Artist: Bridgette Meaney
Title: *Hat/Costume*
Medium: Fabrics, Thread, Metallic Objects
Size: Adult Wearable
Date: 1984
Location: Collection of the Artist

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: A symbolic personal costume, highly decorated with ordinary objects; safety pins, felt tins, etc. Simple objects are elevated to precious status, similar to medals, medallions, or award pins. Storytelling, memory images, primitive motifs are suggested by the arrows and sun shapes. It relates to the whole purpose of wearing costumes - it transforms the wearer.

Design: There's a colourful coordination of design - asymmetrical areas are adjacent to symmetrical arrangements. Black areas bordered by white lines contrast strongly with the reds. Hard metallic surfaces invite comparison with the soft textures of the fabric.

Techniques: A combination of surface stitchery, applique, surface embellishment and quilting techniques is used. Pins, beads, rivets, felt tins, safety pins, and braided cord are attached in various ways to the fabric.

Mood: Symbolic, magical.

Thought Provoker: When/where do we give ordinary objects precious status? Do you have personal symbols which are precious? Is clothing a costume?

Notes:

Artist: Heather Pocius
Title: *"A Flower of Bliss Beyond all Blessing Blest"*
Medium: Mixed Media - Diaper Pins, Cotton Diaper, Xerox Transfers, Createx Pigment, Permanent Markers, Cotton Threads, Customs Stickers, Postage Stamps, Polyester Stuffing
Size: 60 cm x 80 cm
Date: 1985
Location: Collection of Mauera Mannion, St. John's

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: A white cotton diaper with a variety of objects and images attached to, incorporated in, and applied to its surface. All items and photographs have personal significance to the artist. This connects with a personal history. The title is from a greeting card the artist had purchased for the expectant mother. This quotation is an integral part of the piece. This piece was done to commemorate an impending birth of a child and sent through the mail to the expectant mother. It is a celebration of life.

Design: The piece is folded as a diaper, designed to resemble an envelope and has the expected address, postage stamps, and postal stickers on the outside. It is rectangular, asymmetrically balanced on the outside. The piece unfolds to reveal an almost circular pattern of images and objects. Warm yellows, browns and pinks against white make up the colour scheme.

Techniques: Drawing, handpainting, embroidery, applique, quilting/stuffing, and transfer techniques. The baby figure is attached to the diaper by a cord, in a padded area which represents the womb. The piece was done to commemorate an impending birth of a child and sent through the mail to the expectant mother. The wear from its passage through the mail system is part of the piece. There is a long tradition of mail art.

Mood: Cheerful yet serious, humorous yet reflective.

Thought Provoker: The fact that this has been mailed is important to the piece. What other extraordinary objects could you send to commemorate events?

Notes:

Artist: Shelly McCoy
Title: *Cow in Field #3*
Medium: Photography/Assemblage - Mixed Media
Size: 8" x 10"
Date: 1983
Location: Lost in a fire

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: A cow shape of multi-coloured stripes is seen striding through a black and white field. In the background we see a rail fence, or a house and a row of trees.

Design: Contrast of colours against black and white; contrast of medium - fabric and photopaper. The repeated horizontal bands of colour contribute to the sense of movement in the cow. The colours move from blue and green at the feet through a neutral grey to warm reds and finally a brilliant yellow at the top. Each colour is separated by a band of white. These horizontal bands are aligned loosely with the fence rails and the baseline of the trees.

Techniques: The artist photographed the cow in the field, then cut the cow out of the print, creating a window. The fabric was placed behind the opening. This is part of a series using the same photograph but different fabrics.

Mood: Playful, whimsical, quirky.

Thought Provoker: What other non-fibre techniques might be combined with fibre to make art?

Notes:

Artist: Katie Parnham
Title: *Window*
Medium: Collage, Cotton, Silk, Thread
Size: 16" x 20"
Date: 1988
Location: NLCDA Office

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter: A series of rectangular shapes which appear to be windows. Those on the left are different only in colour and surface decoration. The large window on the right has a number of bottle shapes sitting on its sill. Along the bottom is a series of brickshapes in a variety of colours. The fabric piece is matted with a neutral mat against a red background which is visible around the edges of the piece.

Design: A strong horizontal arrangement with repeated vertical shapes. There's a variety of texture, colour and size of objects. Repetition of the rectangle and the organic bottle shapes contribute to the artists concern with all-over pattern. Shading is important in the subtle changes within the large blue area. The horizontal nature of the work, as seen in rows of windows is accentuated by the band of green at the bottom, the embroidered gold at the bottom of the green and the shape of the mat.

Techniques: In this collage there is a combination of hand embroidery, machine embroidery and quilting techniques. The window openings and shapes were handcut. The bricks were cut and frayed. Fabrics were chosen according to their implied texture - shiny or dull, smooth or course. The colour choices came from a fashion forecast in the furniture industry for that year.

Mood: Cheerful, lively, musical. The work is influenced by the artist's observations of what people put in their windows.

Thought Provoker: What if you reversed the shapes - the architectural forms became organic and the decorations geometric? How would this piece look if the artist had been looking out the window?

Notes:

Fibre Arts Project #1: Construction

Key Learning

1. Single fibre elements can be assembled into larger elements.
2. These larger elements can be used singly or in multiples to produce fibre objects.

Processes/Techniques

Weaving, knitting, spinning, knotting, crocheting, basketry, coiling, stuffing, wrapping.

Materials

- ! anything long and pliable
- ! string
- ! wire
- ! twist ties
- ! audio tape
- ! ribbon
- ! plastic strips
- ! grasses
- ! twigs
- ! tape
- ! leaves
- ! glue
- ! thread
- ! seaweed
- ! old man's beard
- ! found feathers
- ! safety pins
- ! paper
- ! roots
- ! twigs
- ! fabrics
- ! hair
- ! yarn/wool
- ! rope
- ! bark

Motivation

Visuals

FI 1, FI 2, FI 3, FI 4, FI 5, and FI 6. Examine each slide and discuss why the artist has chosen that

particular fibre to create the work. How does it affect the appearance and function of the object?

Experimentation

1. Collect grasses, weeds, and leaves. Explore possible ways of combining these to create long pliable yarn. Students might try braiding, gluing, taping, tying, stapling, binding, or anything else they think of.
2. Bring together a variety of yarns and fabrics. Pick them apart to see how they were put together. Identify the technique.
3. Collect constructed fibre objects such as crocheted works, nets, baskets, hooked mats, cloth weavings, lace; naturally constructed objects such as nests, cocoons, hives, and devil's purses. Compare how they look, feel and are made.

Suggested Themes

Anything from the natural environment would make a good theme, particularly trying to create atmospheric references in a piece. Objects based on such natural items as the devils purse, nests, cocoons, hives or old man's beard would be quite interesting.

Studio

Each student will select a technique. Using any materials readily available, create one or more long narrow pieces which incorporates all of the techniques selected. Knitting could be accomplished using small trowels or broom handle pieces. A coiling technique could be used in wrapping yarn tightly around mailing tubes or paper towel tubes. An open netting could be used. Crocheting could be done using the hand as a crochet needle and small rope. Suspend all completed pieces from the ceiling to create an environment that could be walked through. The environment could reflect an emotional journey or naturally occurring ritual.

Summary

What is the total effect of the pieces on the environment in which they are installed? Are the techniques still obvious even though their scale has been altered? What basic similarities exist between all of these techniques which allow them to be referred to as construction techniques?

Notes:

Fibre Arts Project #2: Wet

Key Learning

1. There are two distinct categories of wet techniques and processes. One involves the construction of pieces from individual fibres, the other with altering the constructed materials.
2. A raw material can be completely transformed into something else when subjected to such technical processes as papermaking and felting. Papermaking has its origins in the animal world in the construction of cocoons and wasp hives. Felting is the oldest method of using fibres known to humans and was probably first observed in the matted fur and wool of animals.
3. Humans have a tendency to enhance their products through manipulation. Dyeing is one of the oldest and simplest methods of doing this. Early dyes consisted of natural materials such as berries and plants. Today, artists use both natural and commercially produced dyes to alter the colours in their products.
4. The techniques and processes are as important as the final product since their mastery has such significant influence on how successful the product is.

Processes/Techniques

Papermaking, felting, tie dyeing.

Materials

- ! egg cartons
- ! grasses/weeds
- ! wood pulp
- ! cotton rags
- ! unbleached newsprint
- ! found objects
- ! vegetables
- ! wool/hair/fur
- ! dyes (natural, chemical)
- ! food colouring
- ! threads
- ! rubber bands
- ! plastic clips
- ! paper clips
- ! clamps
- ! screen/deckels
- ! blender
- ! food processor

Motivation

Visuals

FI 7, FI 8, FI 9, FI 10, FI 11. Examine the slides in terms of how significant wetness is in creating the surface in each.

Experimentation

1. Find a variety of paper. Examine the fibres. Are they fine or coarse? Soak them in water. To break them down to their fibres, put the soaked paper in a blender. Examine the pulp that results. Pour some of it on a screen to dry. Squeeze some of it over a variety of objects to dry. Notice how the paper reacts. Does it drape over the objects in a clinging fashion? Is it transparent or opaque?
2. Collect readily available materials which might dye or stain fabrics. Experiment with a variety of fabrics - synthetic and natural - some with existing colour and some without.
3. Experiment with wool felting. Try integrating strings, sticks, yarn, and other found objects into it. Make a hidden pocket in the felt.

Suggested Theme

The natural environment, designed objects, people, clothing, masks, kites or serials could be inspiring.

Studio

Using one or a combination of these processes make an image that relates to the environment - physical, cultural, personal or moral.

Summary

Set the final pieces on display. Discuss how wetness affected the outcome of the works; the enhancement procedures and the transformation which occurs.

Notes:

Fibre Arts Project #3: Application

Key Learning

1. Substances other than fibres may be applied to fibre surfaces for aesthetic or functional purposes.
2. These substances can be controlled to create images, alterations or contribute to already existing visual effects on a surface.

Processes/Techniques

Direct drawing, transfer drawing, block printing, screen printing, painting with ink dye or paint, and stencilling.

Materials

- ! cotton
- ! silk
- ! natural dyes
- ! commercial water based dyes
- ! gutta
- ! printing inks
- ! fabric paints
- ! fabric crayons
- ! water based silk paints
- ! wood blocks
- ! screens (silk, synthetic, riso)
- ! found/handmade stencils
- ! found objects
- ! lino blocks
- ! brushes

Motivation

Visuals

FI 12, FI 13, FI 14. Compare the works in terms of how the artist has made use of ? in these works.

Experimentation

1. On a variety of fibre surfaces experiment with a variety of mark end colours using whatever materials are available. Work with printed fabrics as opposed to plain.
2. Choose a piece of no longer used clothing and enhance its design and purpose through surface

application.

3. Use found objects to explore the effects of block printing on a variety of surfaces, including handmade paper.
4. Experiment with the metamorphosis of an object/image in a serial.
5. Explore layering or superimposition of one medium over another medium.

Suggested Themes

The environment, signs, symbols, designed objects or clothing will make interesting themes. Perhaps a design from the students familiar landscape could be used.

Studio

Using one or more of the application techniques create a single or serial image related to the students environment or experience.

Summary

Display and discuss the students work with respect to a) the creation of the image; b) how the work relates to environment or experiences; c) the choices/decisions involved in application techniques, manipulation, format series, and sequence chosen.

Notes:

Fibre Arts Project #4: Embellishment

Key Learning

1. Adornment of surfaces is an activity that goes back as far as the first use of clothing. Humans adorn their clothing, body, material possessions and natural objects.
2. The embellishment of fibre surfaces occurs in several ways. Items may be attached to the surface, incorporated into the materials, or the surface of the material may be physically manipulated or distorted.
3. Cultural traditions, intended use, availability of materials and tools, all influence the type of surface embellishment that people choose to do.

Processes/Techniques

Stitchery, beading, applique, quilting, tufting, lace making, surface distortion.

Materials

- ! beads
- ! fibrefill
- ! quilt batting (polyester, cotton)
- ! glue
- ! staples
- ! T-pins
- ! large assortment of found objects
- ! metal studs
- ! *see also the list of materials under Project #1.

Motivation

Visuals

FI 15, FI 16, FI 17, FI 18, FI 19, FI 20. Making the ordinary special is one of the main reasons for embellishment. Compare the slides and discuss what is special in each of them and how the artist has achieved this quality.

Experimentation

1. Take a close look at the clothing we wear today to discover how we embellish it. Examine such items as jackets, jewellery, footwear, T-shirts, and sweatshirts. How do people associated with specific occupations dress? How do rock musicians dress, religious leaders, business people, artists, teachers, firefighters? Are there adornments particular to each of these groups. Observe people over a period of time; on the street, in the school corridors or at the local hangout. Document or record your observations of the way they use embellishment.

2. Visit a local clothing store or look through catalogues to observe how embellishment is used to enhance products. Try to identify which techniques are being used.

Suggested Theme

Music and musical instruments lend themselves to exploration using these techniques. The music subculture relies heavily on adornment. Designed objects such as furniture, masks, cars, and the internal structures of objects such as watches could be a starting point. Design elements observed in the natural environment in animals, fish, butterflies, and trees could be used as inspiration for embellishment.

Studio

Select a discarded article of clothing to embellish with a variety of techniques so that it becomes something special or creates a new character for the wearer.

Summary

What influences were brought to bear in the embellishment of the article? Explore why wearable art is called art and what its purpose is. From looking at the work, attempt to figure out what the person wanted to say or become.