

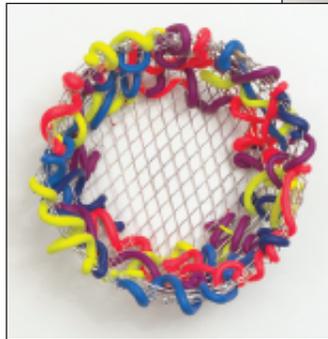
"Snake" Baskets

Baskets can be woven out of almost any material, not just reeds and straw. This basket project is whimsical and free-form, using wire and colorful "snakes" that move randomly throughout the piece. Polymer clay bakes right on the wire, so finished pieces are long-lasting and very durable.

Grade Levels 5-12

Objectives

- Students will employ basic basket weaving techniques by creating a form and embellishing it
- Students will use the design elements of balance, color and form as they determine the placement of coils on the basket form
- Students will learn the principles of line movement and repetition through creating coils and shapes
- Students will recognize the differences and similarities between a functional and non-functional piece of art



Preparation

1. Cut Wireform from the roll into 8" x 10" pieces with heavy-duty scissors. Be careful when handling - it can form sharp edges.
2. Cut each Polymer clay block into twelve pieces.

Process

1. Wireform will have sharp edges, so students should wear gloves for the first steps. Place Wireform under the bowl and folding up around it (A) Wireform will have to be folded against itself to conform to a round shape. Wire form is very flexible and can be easily manipulated, but it is a strong material, and will hold it's molded shape firmly.
2. Using scissors, trim Wireform so that it's about 1/2" above rim of bowl, then fold edges over tightly. Push all around and roll bowl against table to make sure Wireform fits shape snugly. Then, pull up edges around the rim enough to remove your bowl, and fold back down again (B). Once the edges are folded down, Wireform shape will now be safe to handle without gloves.
3. Using small amounts of clay, students begin rolling coils or "snakes" about 1/8" in diameter, just small enough to fit through the openings of the Wireform. "Snakes" should be 4" long or less, because longer pieces will be more difficult to weave without tearing or stretching them.

Materials

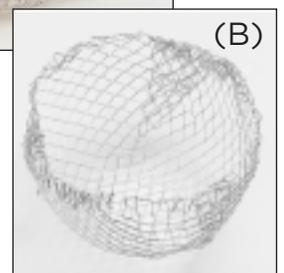
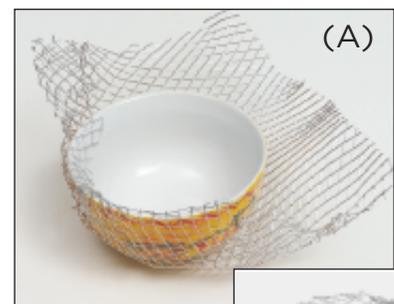
Sculpey® III Polymer Clay, assorted colors, (33218-), need approximately one block per student

Amaco® Wireform®, Gallery Mesh (33408-2950), 20" x 10-ft roll, cut to 8" x 10" pieces for 30 per roll, need one piece per student

Bowl, flower pot, or other vessel

Utility gloves (garden or work gloves)

Rex Heavy-Cast Shears (57021-1008), one pair for cutting mesh from roll

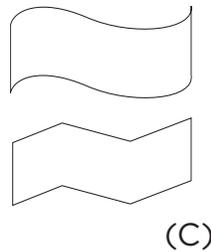


Process, continued

- Students attach the coils to the basket form by moving the "snake" in and out in a random order. "Snakes" can coil around the top of the basket and around each other. Encourage students to rotate the basket so that "snakes" cover all sides. Don't put snakes on the bottom of the basket or the pressure may flatten them.
- Bake baskets at 275°F for 15-20 minutes and allow to cool.
- Finished pieces may be sprayed with a gloss coating, such as [Krylon® Crystal Clear Glaze \(21710-1005\)](#) if a gloss surface is desired, but no coating is necessary.

Options

- Instead of wrapping Wireform on a bowl, cut a flat sheet and fold the edges over. Bend it into a serpentine or zig-zag shape so that it is freestanding (C). Weave "snakes" as directed above
- Limit color choices to one or two colors or have students mix colors
- Form other shapes (spheres, cut-outs) and press them onto sides of the basket
- Add glass or metal beads, sculpture wire or other bakeable objects prior to baking.
- Add ribbons, plastic beads, raffia, and other non-bakeable objects AFTER baking.



National Standards:

Content Standard #1 —

Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes

- **5-8** Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experience and ideas.
- **9-12** Students apply media, techniques and processes with sufficient skill, confidence and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks

Content Standard #2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions

- **5-8** Students generalize about the effects of visual structures and functions and reflect upon these effects in their own work
- **9-12** Students create artworks that use organization principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems