

## Painted Tapestry

Combine painting with weaving for a fresh mixed media textile experience.

As a student at the Bauhaus school of art and design in Germany in the early 20th century, Gunta Stölzl excelled in weaving and other textile arts. At the time, it was referred to as "the women's department," and followed traditional processes to create modern designs. In 1925, Stölzl became the first female master at the Bauhaus, teaching at a new campus with more advanced facilities and technology. She and her students, including Anni Albers, began to move weaving away from the previous gender bias, and incorporate math and geometry as well as encourage experimentation with materials, new machinery, business training, and designing for mass production. Under Stölzl's trailblazing direction, the weaving workshop became a highly successful, modern facility.

In the spirit of the Bauhaus, this unexpected combination of painting and weaving brings a new way to express art through fibers. One of Stölzl's ideas was to create a piece that aesthetically merged with the materials used. Approaching a weaving as creating a sort of textural, colorful canvas prepared for painting requires a choice of fibers that are absorbent and suitable for paint.

Students can use "found" materials such as classroom scraps of felt and fabric, ribbons, cotton yarn, and canvas — even the string used for the warp of the weaving can absorb paint. Create a design, then enhance it with shading and color gradients to define forms and develop details.

**GRADES 5-12** Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

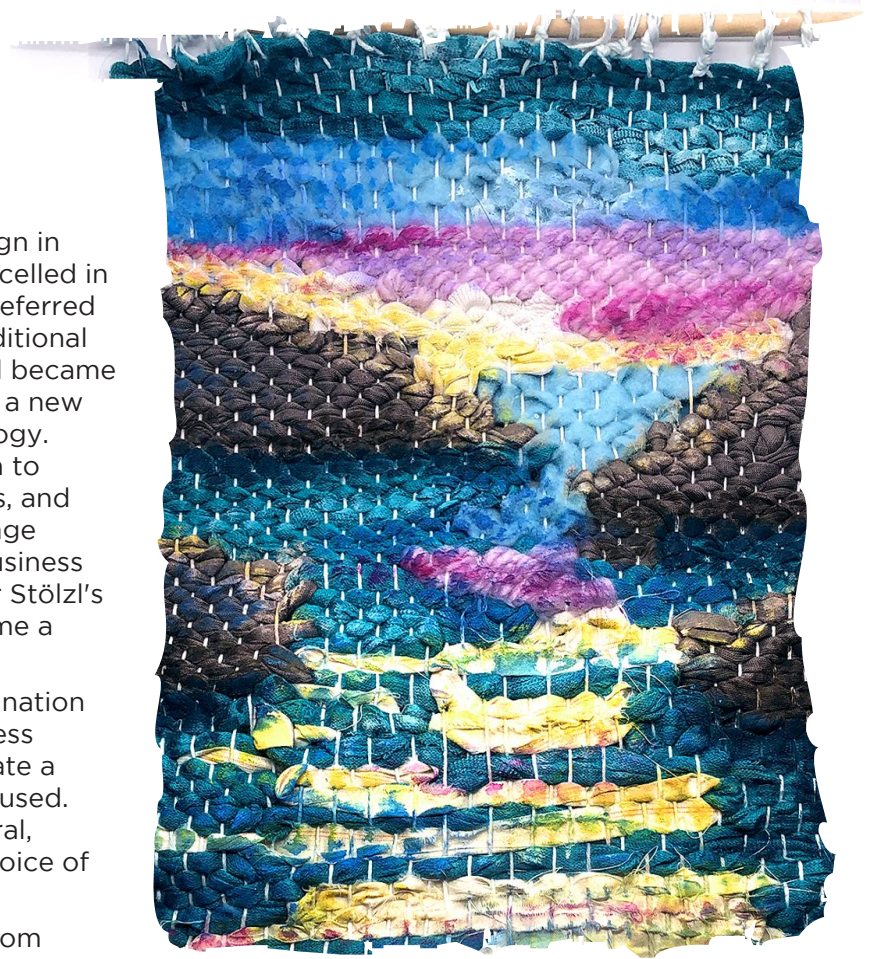
### Preparation

1. Gather weaving materials. For best results, look for materials that are made with cotton and other natural fibers. Discarded clothing such as unprinted T-shirts and jeans are useful. Classroom scraps such as felt, canvas, muslin, burlap, etc can be used. Fabrics can be cut into strips of varying widths or torn to leave inconsistent edges.



(A)

Fabrics and felt in bolts can create long strips for weaving. If sheets need to be cut down, cut from one edge and stop before reaching the opposite edge. Rotate the sheet, space next cut appropriately, and cut from that side (see A).



### Materials (required)

**Cardboard Looms**, 9-3/4" x 13", pkg of 12 (65005-1098); one per student

Weaving materials, including:

**Felt Sheet Assortment**, 100 sheets, 9" x 12" (63201-1003); share one across class

**Design Works Unbleached Muslin**, 45" x 1 yd (63987-1001); share one yard among four students

**Maysville Cotton Warp**, 8 oz, 800 yd spool, assorted colors (62800-); share five to six across class

**Roylco Plastic Lacing Needle**, 3" long, pkg of 32 (81339-1001); share two across class

**Richeson Opaque Watercolor Pan Set**, palette-shaped set of 12 colors (00380-0079); share one set between two students

### Materials (optional)

**Plaid Fabric Creations Soft Fabric Inks**, assorted colors, 2 oz (63422-); share five to six across class



### Ready to order materials?

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## Process

1. Begin by creating a sketch of the design and drawing it onto the cardboard loom with a pencil. For best results, choose a subject that can be created with a series of shapes. Keep spaces open and large, no narrower or shorter than 1".
2. Create the warp. "Warp" is the term used for the strings, usually placed vertically, that the other fibers will pass over and beneath. To tie a double (or triple) knot in one end of cotton warp, insert it into the first notch at the top of the loom. Pull the warp down tautly and insert it in the first notch at the bottom. Pull the warp tautly around the back side of the loom and insert it in the second notch at the top then pull it through to the front. Repeat until all notches are filled.

3. Choose fibers to create the weaving. The horizontal fibers are known as the "weft." Start in one of the corners (it doesn't matter if it is the top or bottom). Choose a fiber as weft for that area and cut a length that is manageable (somewhere between 2 ft to 4 ft). Tape one end to the back side, and thread the other end into the eye of a large, blunt needle. Weave to the other side, then push the fiber snugly to the warp at the notches.
3. Weaving to fill areas of the sketch, stop above pencil lines and weave back to the edge. Keep in mind that the weaving will be a loose interpretation of the area.
4. Select a fiber for the next area of the sketch and weave it. When shapes meet, cross and share warp so that gaps do not form between shapes.

Notes for successful weaving:

- Do not pull weft so tightly that it pulls warp in on the sides. Leave it a little loose.
- The needle can be passed under the back side of the weaving, if needed to get to another area.
- If a stitch is missed, pick up the cadence as soon as possible. Don't undo stitches or start over. In a weaving with this many textures, it will not likely be noticeable.

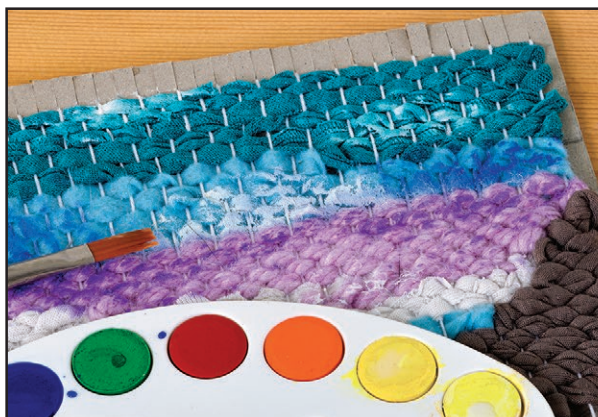
5. When the weaving is complete, paint over the fibers. Using opaque watercolor will provide a soft, subtle look. For stronger color, use acrylic fabric paint.
6. Glue any loose ends, including the starting end, to the back side of the weaving.
7. Turn the loom over and cut the warp in the center of the board. Take the loose ends at the top and bottom and knot two to three strings together close to the weaving. If desired, add a decorative bead over the strings before tying them.
8. Tie the top set of strings over a dowel rod to hang the piece.



**Step 1:** Draw sketch on cardboard loom with a pencil and create warp by securing string in notches.



**Step 2:** Weave with a plastic needle. Use absorbent fibers that will accept paint such as felt, T-shirts, jeans, muslin, etc.



**Step 3:** Paint opaque watercolor over the woven piece to create shading, gradations of color, details, and definition.

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## National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

### Creating

**Anchor Standard 1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

**Anchor Standard 2:** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

### Connecting

**Anchor Standard 10:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

**Anchor Standard 11:** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.