

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students watch Consuelo Jimenez Underwood's segment from Craft in America's THREADS episode of the PBS series which explores the large mixed media textiles and installations of Consuelo Jimenez Underwood. Students will consider ideas about how weaving can be a form of artistic expression, the interplay between content and form, the use of materials and how decisions about materials can contribute to the meaning of a work.

Students will select their choice of various materials to use for a weaving or multimedia work, and create their own "personal thread" to express their ideas and feelings about a person, place or event. Students may work individually on their textiles and assist each other with ideas and threads.

Key Concepts:

- Weaving can be a form of expression.
- Artists' decisions about materials can contribute to the meaning of their work.
- Artists work to integrate content into their form.
- An artist's choice of materials often depends on intended content.

Critical Questions:

- In what ways do weavers create expressive works of art?
- What is a "personal thread?"
- How can a "personal thread" create meaning in a weaving?
- How do artists integrate content and form?

Objectives

Students will:

- Learn about the weaver Consuelo Jimenez Underwood.
- Translate the expressive qualities of a person, place, or event into physical material.
- Construct a weaving made of materials that suggest the qualities of a person, place, or event.
- Better understand the interplay of content and form.

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

This lesson addresses the following standards. The performance standards listed here are directly related to the lesson's goals.

Content Standard:

1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
2. Using knowledge of structures and functions
5. Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

Student Worksheets

- Worksheet 1: Consuelo Jimenez Underwood: Weaving Together Content & Form
- Worksheet 2: Consuelo Jimenez Underwood: Weaving Together Content & Form

Interdisciplinary Connection

- Language Arts

Materials

- Large variety of materials from which to create thread such as varied weights and colors of yarn, string, rope, plastic and paper bags of varying colors and weights, wires, cable ties, fabric of various textures and colors, paper, pipe cleaners, feathers, etc. (This a great time to dump out those “odds and ends” boxes in your storage closet.)
- Sturdy warp string
- 4”x6” pieces of sturdy cardboard to store the “personal threads” created by students
- Loom—cardboard, counterbalance, or frame loom
- Shuttles (if using a counterbalance loom)
- Large eyehole embroidery needles (if using a cardboard or frame loom)
- Examples of woven items such as scarves or hats
- Examples of woven artworks that illustrate the scope of weaving across cultures and throughout time
- Sketchbooks or sketch paper
- Pencils

About the Artist

Consuelo Jimenez Underwood is a textile and installation artist. By exploring how Underwood’s various weavings and installations are designed and made, THREADS offers viewers a unique look at the expressive nature of her work and how the content informs the chosen materials, and how these materials contribute to the content of her work. Her work represents her own history as a migrant agricultural worker as well as her hybrid culture.

“I love bringing the lowest into the highest realm of art hallways in the museums—to me that’s always been almost like church. It’s like you flip the world around; you play around with ideas and understandings of your reality, and mix it up.” – Consuelo Jimenez Underwood