

FIBER : PAT COURTNEY GOLD



MEET Pat Courtney Gold and **WATCH** a video that features the artist at work and shows her connection with the Wearable Art Movement. **MAKE** an artwork inspired by these artists and **REFLECT** on your finished artwork as you consider what you might want to make next.

MEET

MEET PAT COURTNEY GOLD,
Wasco basket maker

"I thought that the whole technique had died out—that I would never see anyone weave a basket. It just never dawned on me. Not only would I not see someone weave a basket, but it never entered my mind that I would eventually become a basket weaver."

—Pat Courtney Gold



Pat Courtney Gold, Sturgeon Basket

THE WASCO PEOPLE, who lived along the Columbia River, are highly regarded for their distinctive cylindrical baskets. These baskets featured pictorial representations of ancestors and scenes from everyday life and were used to store and transport preserved salmon. Wasco baskets were often found along trade routes, and one even made its way into the hands of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. This basket collected during the Lewis and Clark Expedition—significant to both the Wasco people and the history of the United States—was deeply inspirational to Wasco basket maker Pat Courtney Gold.

A former mathematician, Gold turned to basket making after becoming dissatisfied with her career. Seeking greater meaning, Gold began studying, documenting, and reverse engineering Wasco designs held in museum collections. Through apprenticeship in Wasco basket making traditions with tribal elders, Pat Courtney Gold revived the nearly lost tradition of full-turn twining, a defining feature of Wasco designs.

Gold's work honored ancestral themes while also offering modern commentary, blending traditional imagery, such as condors, with modern symbols like airplanes. Her work functions like a visual language, providing a conduit for ancestral memory to speak into the present.

WATCH



SEE AND LISTEN TO Pat Courtney Gold describing her life as a basket maker.

<https://youtu.be/BGSGdTft3D0>

After viewing the segment, consider the following:

- Describe the approach to basket making you saw in the video.
- Can you name some different ways to create handmade baskets?
- In the video, Pat Courtney Gold mentioned her past as a mathematician. Is mathematics involved in basket making? How might a background in mathematics help Gold in her work as a basket maker?
- Search the internet to find out more about basket making and other fiber arts. Have you ever thought of basket making as an art form? In what ways are handmade baskets different from the kind you would find in department stores?

MAKE



Pat Courtney Gold, Basket



<https://youtu.be/dsDMDQcf0O4?si=IUj8pJSGqm4EOC17>

Gold apprenticed with tribal elders for many years to become the basket maker she is today. Follow the instructions below to create a basic coiled basket of your own. Though you may not become a seasoned basket maker overnight, this introductory exploration is a great starting point!

You'll need:

- assorted yarn
- clothesline or other similar rope
- a thick plastic sewing needle
- scissors
- masking tape

THE PROCESS:

1. Prepare by threading about 6 feet of yarn, doubled, onto a plastic needle.
2. Build your basket from the bottom center, first creating a tight coil with clothesline. Secure it into place with masking tape and trim any unneeded excess.

3. Wrap the clothesline with the doubled strand of yarn, so that the clothesline is completely covered by the yarn. As you build, coil the basket layers into a spiral. Attach the layers of basket coils to each other by threading the yarn over and under to “sew” the coils together.

As your basket takes shape, think about how people will interact with it. Will the form need to reflect the basket’s intended function?

4. Optional: Add patterned or pictorial decorations to your basket. Try planning your decoration on graph paper first, using the blocks on the paper to “pixelate” your image. Then, use the same over and under method described in the previous step to add your decoration to the basket.

CONSIDER WHILE WORKING:

- As you plan and work, consider whether you want your color combinations to contrast or blend together.
- Will your decoration be patterned, pictorial, or a bit of both?
- Will you use traditional decorative motifs and images, contemporary motifs and images, or a combination of both?
- Watch Gold demonstrate the full-turn twining technique: https://youtu.be/VGfoC1OgAIs?si=yVf_kKSq43iobcdi
- What similarities and differences do you notice between this technique and the adapted coil technique you just tried?



Pat Courtney Gold twining

REFLECT

LOOK at your finished product.
Think about the process.

- Describe your creation. What did you make?
- Are you pleased with your result? Why or why not?
- Would you try making another basket in the future? What will you do next time?
- What else would you like to make out of fiber?