

CREATE A MEXICAN INSPIRED YARN PICTURE

The Huichol Indians, or Wixaritari, of the remote Sierra Madre Occidental areas in Mexico are famous for their brightly colored and elaborate yarn paintings. These works of art reflect this community's religious and cultural beliefs. The process involves melting a layer of beeswax or pine resin to use as glue to adhere yarn to a square or circular wooden base. Here, you can imitate this process using glue instead of beeswax.

What You Need:

- Square or circular piece of cardboard or wood; heavy construction paper will work, too
- Yarn in assorted colors
- Glue
- Toothpick
- Pictures of Huichol symbols and yarn paintings (you can go to the library to find books with these kinds of images or go on-line)
- Scissors



What You Do:

1. Find library books or Internet resources that illustrate Huichol sacred symbols and their meanings, and show examples of yarn paintings. Often, birds such as eagles and hummingbirds are depicted in Huichol art, as well as the sun, earth, water, air, fire, shaman's wand, prayer arrow, peyote cactus, sacred deer, and portals between worlds, just to name a few.
2. In pencil, draw your picture onto the cardboard. Select one or two key Huichol symbols to showcase in your artwork and build upon those. Use different images to fill the empty space. Be creative!
3. Before you begin gluing on the yarn to color in your "painting," think about what colors you want where, so that you can get a sense of where the yarn will go.
4. Now work in small sections at a time to trace the pencil outlines in yarn, filling them in with bold colors. First, spread glue in the selected area and then, using a toothpick or your fingertips, gently press the yarn into place. You can coil one continuous piece of yarn or cut it into smaller pieces, whichever you find easier. Keep a damp cloth or paper towel handy to wipe dried glue off of sticky fingers.
5. The more vibrant the colors, the better!

If you are feeling ambitious, you can fill in the background completely so that there is no white space, making it more similar to an authentic Huichol yarn painting.