



## Sustainable Waste 2 Art Prize

### Let's Have a Yarn

A lot of fabric in your everyday life is made through a process called weaving. Learn how to make your own recycled artwork using this construction technique.

Textile waste contributes millions of tons to Australian landfill sites each year. Let's reclaim it! Fabric is a versatile material for art as it is flexible, strong, easily cut and can be attached to easily. 'Plarn' is a creative solution to plastic waste as it is yarn made out of plastic packaging which has been cut into strips.

### SUGGESTED MATERIALS

#### You can make weaving thread from:

- Plastic packaging cut into strips to make yarn. Plarn!
- Old clothes
- Yarn
- Ribbon
- Interesting paper
- Bread ties or old pipe cleaners.

#### You can make weaving looms from:

- A cardboard box
- An old window frame
- An empty ice cream tub
- A recycled picture frame.

### Steps

1. The first step is to create the structure for you to weave on and this is called a loom. A loom should be sturdy and strong. A rigid cardboard box or an old empty picture frame could work well. Next, find the material you want to weave with. Perhaps you have some scraps of old knitting wool or ribbons you could use? Cutting worn out clothing or soft plastic packaging into strips can work well too.

#### When deciding what to weave with, some things to think about include:

- What colours would you like to use? Do they complement each other?
- What kinds of textures would like you explore? Sometimes contrasting texture can add an extra element to your design.
- Look for something strong and long to use as your 'up and down' (warp) thread.

2. Measure along the top and bottom of your frame and make a mark using a pencil at even intervals (eg. every 1 cm). The gap between your marks depends on how thick the thread is that you want to weave with – the thicker it is, the wider the gap. If you are working on a cardboard loom, you will need to make small cuts where the pencil marks were, as this will keep your thread in place.
3. Select a long and strong material to use as the 'up and down' (warp) thread.
4. **Picture frame directions:** Secure the end of your warp thread at the back of your frame with tape to keep it tight. Wind the ball of thread using a figure-of-eight pattern going in and out of the centre of the frame as well as over the top and the bottom. Continue all the way to the end and secure thread with tape.

*steps continue next page...*





## Let's Have a Yarn continued...

- 5. Cardboard box directions:** Tape the end of your thread at the back and then bring the thread through the first cut on the front of your loom. Bring your thread down and then push through the bottom slit, around to the back, then around to the front and through the next cut. Bring your thread back up to the top and follow the cuts across the rest of the loom.
6. Now you're ready to weave! Choose your "across" (weft) thread and secure at the base in the bottom left corner of your loom. A simple weaving pattern (called 'plain weave') follows a basic over and under pattern. Your weft thread should go over the first warp thread, then under then, then over the next and so on. When you get to the end, turn your thread around and come back tight to left. Remember to reverse your pattern: under then over!
7. Gently pull your weft threads across so that you don't distort your weaving. You can also press down your weaving to reduce gaps between the threads. This can be done with a fork or a comb.
8. Keep weaving until you fill your loom. If you want to experiment, you can try other patterns such as 'twill weave', which is made by going over two warp threads, then under one. You can also experiment with weaving using other materials and thicknesses of thread.
9. When you have finished weaving, you can leave your weaving on the loom if it is part of your design or carefully snip the warp yarns off your loom. Make sure to cut these threads as long as you can to keep your artwork secure.

