

Barbara Gustafson

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Weaving

Residencies Offered:

BASKET WEAVING: Students may weave several different styles of baskets using commercial or gathered materials. “Woven” into each basket will be information about that basket’s historical form and function, as well as the natural materials traditionally used in its construction.

TRADITIONAL “SALLY” BAGS: Using a variety of fibers including yarns, jute, raffia, cattails, corn husks, iris or lily leaves, students will use a weaving technique called twining to make a small, soft-sided cylindrical bag. This traditional bag, commonly found along the Columbia River, was used to hold roots dug for food or for medicinal purposes.

WOVEN PORTRAIT PANELS: These two-dimensional woven panels may be constructed from a variety of materials. They may be a collage of collected memories, images, feelings, or beliefs written or glued on strips of paper, wood or ribbon. They may include actual items such as artwork, memorabilia, fabrics, plant matter, feathers, etc. The panel represents a collective memory of an experience or moment in time. This is a great team-building project!

Preferred Age/Grade Levels: 2-12

Supplies, Equipment, Space and Time Considerations:

Weaving supplies may include commercial reed, gathered materials or fibers, clip clothespins, measuring tapes, strong scissors or clippers, and plastic dish tubs. Large tables to work on are helpful. Most projects require two to five hours.

Teaching Experience:

For the past twenty five years I have been teaching people of all ages to weave. I have had four VAIS residencies with the fifth grade art students, involving weaving baskets, maypoles, “Sally” bags and 7’ x 5’ portrait panels. VAIS has supported ten years of my residencies with the seventh-grade math students in a project called “Math in a Basket”, where we incorporate the Fibonacci sequence and Golden Mean into 2D and 3D weavings. Additionally, I have twice worked with the VHS Horticulture class using gathered natural materials for woven vessels and once with an eighth grade humanities class creating traditional Columbia River Sally bags. For the past 3 years I have taught the 2nd graders at CES to weave as part of their Native American studies unit. For this residency I embrace the persona of an elder weaver who teaches by the “watch and copy” method used by native weavers. I love introducing the ancient art of basket weaving to these impressionable children. I have also worked directly with VISD teachers in a series of basket weaving workshops.

Artist’s Statement:

Through the millennia people have woven functional, spiritual and fanciful vessels. The care and ingenuity with which the materials have been harvested, prepared and woven have endowed these vessels with an intrinsic beauty and value. Traditional basket weavers live and work closely with nature; they nurture and respect it. By giving young people the opportunity to learn the art of weaving, we help them to possess a connection with our ancestors, to value the process of creating something of meaning and beauty and to express themselves.