



FISH STITCHERY

FISH PRINTS AND FABRIC — DIVE IN!

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Earn the history of gyotaku printmaking and learn how to make gyotaku using fish replicas.
- Learn about fibers such as yarn, thread, and burlap and their applications in creating artwork.
- Learn and use the following stitches: running stitch, backstitch, chain stitch, satin stitch, couching, and French knot.
- Combine gyotaku and a variety of stitches on burlap to create an ocean scene in fiber.

STANDARDS

Students will understand and apply media techniques and processes; learn the difference between materials, techniques, and understand the visual arts in relation to history and cultures; and learn that visual arts have a history and specific relationships to various cultures.

GYOTAKU:

“Gyo” = fish — “taku” = impression (pronounced guy-yo-tah-koo)



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

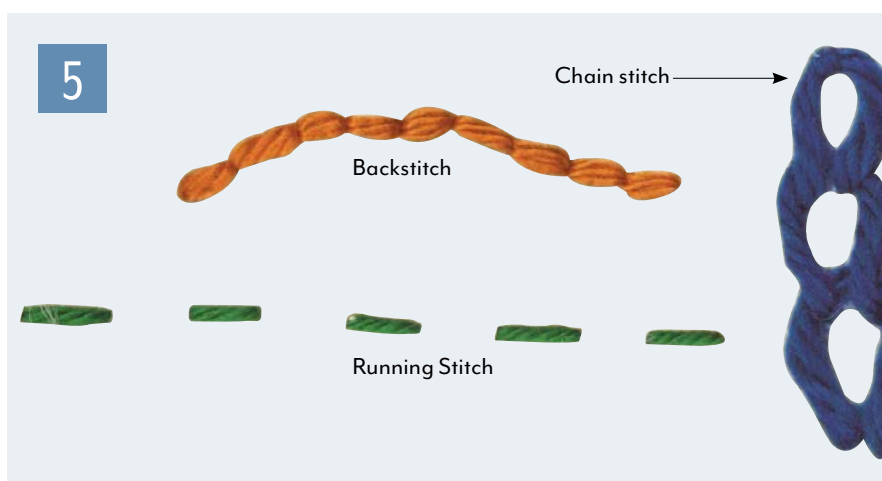
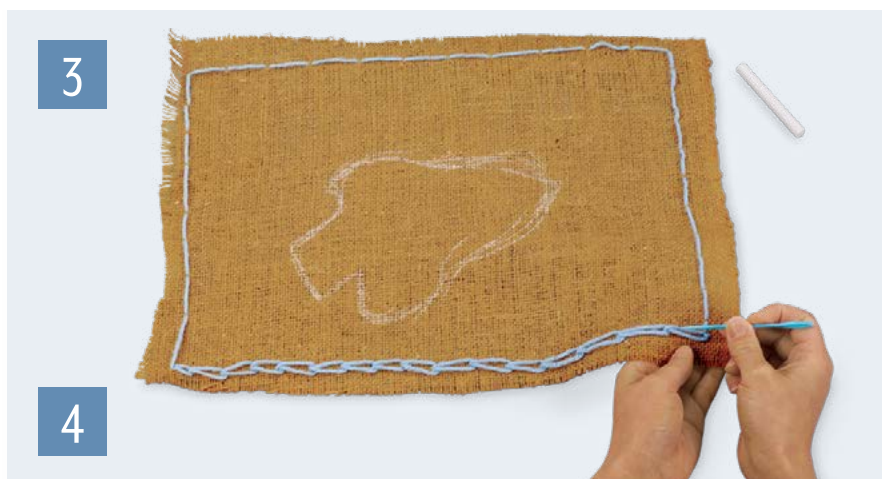
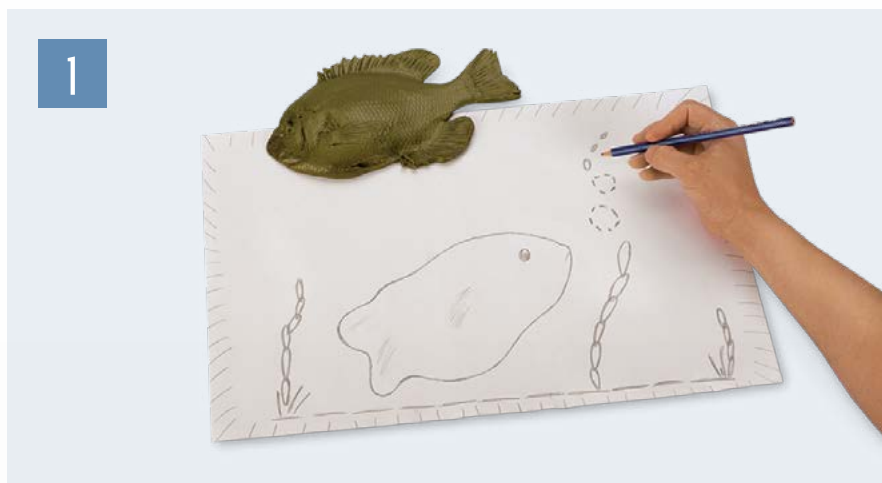
Gyotaku is a great way to excite your students about everything from Japanese culture to printmaking. A science teacher can use gyotaku to introduce fish anatomy. For a geography teacher, it's a great way to introduce the students to Japanese culture. In the art studio, gyotaku has endless avenues as a printmaking technique. Gyotaku is a technique used by Japanese fishermen to record the size and species of trophy fish they catch. The Japanese fisherman returns from the sea and takes his fish to the market to sell. On the rare occasion that the fisherman catches a large fish worthy of record, he hires an artist to make a print of the fish using waterbased inks or paints. Since the paint is waterbased and nontoxic, the fish can be rinsed off and sold in the fish market. Each year the Japanese hold contests and use gyotaku as proof of a trophy catch. Although gyotaku originated in Japan over 100 years ago, it has more recently become popular in the United States. Along the docks in San Francisco, and also in other parts of the country, artists wait for the fishing boats to bring their catch back from the ocean. Many tourists on these fishing boats choose to have a print made of their fish, rather than having it stuffed and mounted by a taxidermist.

PREPARATION

As with many projects, there is preparation that needs to be done before the project can begin. The muslin needs to be washed and torn or cut into pieces at least as big as the largest fish replica (approximately 6" x 18"). The burlap also needs to be cut into pieces, each approximately 12" x 18".

TIP

If you have never cut burlap, a great way to get equal pieces is to remove a strand from the weave and cut in the open area where the strand was.



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PROCEDURE: STEP 1

On the first day of this project, students will be involved in two different activities. Set up stations where students can print their fish. While some students are printing, others can begin to sketch ideas for the ocean scene. Have plenty of sea life visuals available. Sketches should be done on 12" x 18" white drawing paper. Students should select the fish replica they will print and plan for it in their drawing.

NOTE: Do not try to press the fish onto the muslin. Remove the muslin and allow to dry completely. Wash the replica thoroughly using soap and water; be sure it is completely dry before storing.

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STEP 2

When printing the fish replica on the muslin, have plenty of clean newsprint to lay the fish on. Apply a thin layer of acrylic paint to the fish with a brush or brayer. Carefully move fish to a clean work surface and place the muslin over the fish pressing gently with the palms of the hands.

STEP 3

While the fish print is drying, work can begin on the burlap. Using a large-eye plastic needle and yarn, sew a running stitch around the edge of the burlap (about 1½" from the edge). This will stop the burlap from fraying along the edge. Remind the students that the needle must come up from the back of the burlap or the knots will be on top of the burlap, the front of their project.

STEP 4

Working from the original sketch, students draw the ocean scene onto the burlap with chalk.

STEP 5

Stitch over the chalk drawing using a variety of stitches. Any embroidery stitches may be used. Some basic, successful stitches include the running stitch, backstitch, chain stitch, satin stitch, couching, and French knot. The running stitch, backstitch, and couching all work well for outlining; the chain stitch makes great seaweed; the satin stitch can be used to fill in areas; and the French knot can be used to make eyes on fish or details on coral. Experiment and try combining as many of the different stitches as you can.

STEP 6

When the stitched ocean scene on the burlap is complete, trim the muslin around the fish print, leaving a ½" border.

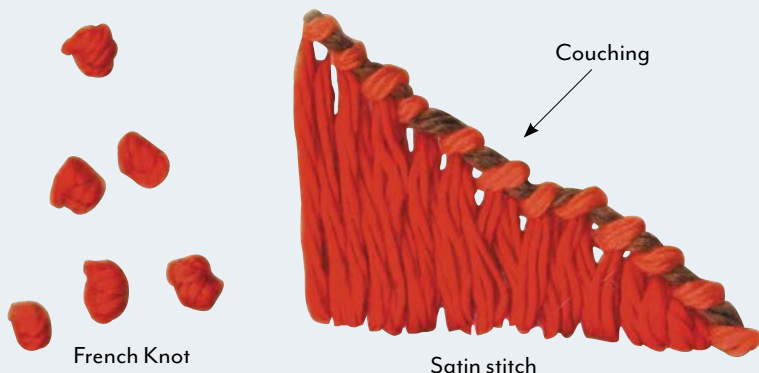
STEP 7

Place a line of Aleene's No-Sew Fabric Glue™ around the outline of the fish, leaving a 2" opening at the top and adhere the fish print on muslin to the burlap. Leave the opening so the fish can be filled with stuffing after the glue is dry. Allow the glue to dry overnight.

STEP 8

Stuff fish, glue the opening closed, and pin to secure. Allow the glue to dry overnight; remove pin. Your fish stitchery is complete.

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Fish Stitchery

— beautiful and eye-catching — you will be delighted with the results of this multimedia project!



MATERIALS

- Nasco Gyotaku Fish Replicas — 9724022
- Muslin, 6" x 18" — 6500285
- Assorted colored yarn — 9720748(A, N, P, U, W, Y)
- Fish and ocean visuals
- Acrylic paints — 9705749
- Large-eye plastic needles — 7500153
- White drawing paper, 12" x 18" — 4100479
- Paint/ink mixing trays — 9722405
- Stuffing — 8500234
- Pencils
- Brushes — 9701362
- Straight pins — W05440
- Chalk for drawing on burlap — SB09901
- Water containers — 9724664
- Scissors — 9718528
- Newsprint — 9700914
- Brushes for painting — 9728039
- Aleene's No-Sew Fabric Glue™ — 9726498
- Burlap, 12" x 18" — 9733568

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