



BkM Art Hangouts  
**Process**

# Goals

In Art Hangouts, learners will:

- Look closely at a work from the collection
- Explore new artistic processes through close looking, conversation, and art-making
- Reflect on their own art-making processes

In this lesson, learners will:

- Observe Judith Scott's sculptures
- Experiment with textile processes to create a wrapped sculpture
- Consider how artists can play with form in a work of art

## Materials

- Fibers (e.g., yarn, rope, embroidery thread, twine, fabric strips)
- Nontraditional fibers (e.g., plastic bags, streamers, tape)
- Objects to wrap (e.g., bottles, utensils, cardboard pieces, etc.)

BkM Art Hangouts are adapted from a series of virtual classes that took place in spring 2021. These thirty-minute lesson plans are designed for teachers and caregivers to engage learners with works from our collection and to explore hands-on, artistic processes. Lessons are created for ages 9–14, but can be adapted for any age group. In each lesson, participants will look closely at a work of art, consider how an artist finds inspiration, and create their own artworks inspired by these approaches. Art Hangouts are open ended, and students are invited to continue working on their projects even after the lesson ends.

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## Judith Scott

American, 1943–2005

Judith Scott began creating art at the age of forty-six, producing idiosyncratic sculptural assemblages during her seventeen-year career. Scott often used textiles (relating to fabric or weaving) and fibers (threads or filaments from which textiles are made) in her sculptures. From 1989 until her death in 2005, Scott worked at Creative Growth, a studio-based program in Oakland, California, founded to support artists with developmental disabilities. Fastidiously weaving, bundling, and wrapping fiber, found objects, and other unconventional materials, she often worked for weeks or months on a single piece.

Scott's life experience as an artist with Down's syndrome who was largely deaf and spoke little highlights the limitations of the conventional art historical canon. Moving beyond the term "outsider artist," critics and curators have recently contextualized her objects within mainstream art history, telling a richer, more complex story about how artistic gifts can be nurtured and compelling works of art can be made by artists reflecting a broader range of cognitive diversity than has been historically recognized.



Judith Scott (American, 1943–2005). *Untitled*, 1994. Fiber and found objects, 27 × 23 × 17 in. (68.6 × 58.4 × 43.2 cm). Brooklyn Museum; Florence B. and Carl L. Selden Fund, 2015.30. © Estate of Judith Scott. (Photo: Benjamin Blackwell)

## ● Part 1: Look!

Invite students to look at images of Scott's work.

→ What do you notice about the different ways in which Judith Scott uses string?

Summarize student observations and share that sometimes Scott's work is layered and tightly wrapped, and other times individual strings stretch across the sculpture. Some works are multicolored, and others are monochromatic or within a family of colors.

Scott often hid objects inside her sculptures. These objects form a base for the sculpture and sometimes influence its overall shape. However, in some works, the final shape is totally different from what's inside.

→ Can you find a sculpture where the object inside is obvious? Can you find one where it isn't? What do you imagine is inside?

Some of Scott's works have even been X-rayed. (Inside one of her sculptures was an engagement ring!) Her work might contain anything from keys to a shopping cart. Scott was known for using objects she found around the Creative Growth studio.

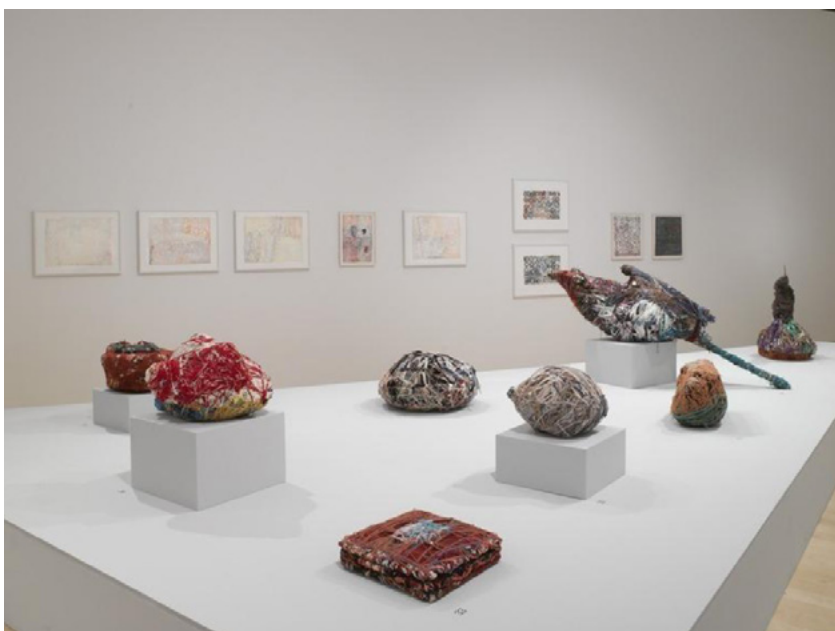
Show students Scott's work titled [Untitled \(1994\)](#).

→ Can you guess what this sculpture is made of?

→ How does Scott's use of fiber materials in this work compare to the earlier works we observed?

→ What does this artwork remind you of? What do you see that makes you say that?

This sculpture is made from paper towels! Scott made it at a time when she did not have access to fibers in her studio. She got creative and found a way to make art without the materials she was used to working with. Perhaps you've experienced a time when you did not have the supplies you needed. How did you get creative and use what you had available?



Installation view, *Judith Scott—Bound and Unbound*. Brooklyn Museum, October 24, 2014–March 29, 2015. (Photo: Jonathan Dorado)

## ● Part 2: Explore!

Judith Scott made fiber sculptures by wrapping yarn around objects and binding them together. She transformed the bases inside to make cocoonlike objects. How will you transform an everyday object by wrapping?

**Step 1: Gather your materials.** What objects will you hide within your artwork? Make sure it isn't anything too precious. Consider choosing an object based on its shape or size. You can use a mix of traditional fibers such as yarn, string, or fabric strips, or experiment with nontraditional fibers. Judith Scott even used paper towels. Try using plastic bags, streamers, tape—anything!

**Step 2: Wrap an object.** Choose one object to wrap. Knot a string onto part of the object and wrap to secure it in place. Use as much (or as little) string as you like.

→ Tip: Start to sculpt with the string (wrapping more string will create a thicker area, while less string will produce a thinner one).

**Step 3: Keep wrapping.** Build onto this as much as you like, slowly adding additional objects and securing them in place with string. Try completely hiding the objects within the yarn, or keep them visible.

Project in Progress ↓



## ● Part 3: Reflect!

What are some adjectives that describe your sculpture?

What inspired your artistic choices? Did you conceal or reveal any objects within your sculpture? Why?

How is your piece like Judith Scott's? How is it different?

A Finished Project! ↓



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This resource was written by Sarah Dinkelacker, Curriculum Consultant and Teaching Artist, with assistance from Stacey Kahn, School Partnerships Coordinator and coordinator of the Art Hangouts initiative. Additional assistance provided by Michael Reback, School Programs Manager.