

MAKE: BRINGING ART AND CULTURE TO YOU

Everyone can be an artist! Get creative using everyday objects around you.

PICA invites you to get involved with art and culture through free activities that you can enjoy at home or in your local neighbourhood. Gather your friends and family, and be inspired by the textiles, sounds and stories in Katie West's exhibition *We Hold you Close*.

Katie West is of the Yindjibarndi people of the Pilbara tablelands in Western Australia. Her exhibition explores collaboration and connection between people. A meeting place has been created in the PICA gallery where, over a cup of tea, visitors can make hand-twisted string from recycled fabric to add to a colourful textile structure. Working together provides people with an opportunity to listen to each other and connect with the world around them.

[Watch](#), [Listen](#) and [Read](#) online information to learn about the exhibition and different ways art can be made.

Share your creations with PICA using the #picaartists

Photo: Tashi Hall



ACTIVITY 1.

Make a bag from scratch – no sewing required!

What you'll need:

- Fabric – any old clothes or unused fabric laying around
 - Scissors
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First Stage. Hand twisting string

[Watch](#) how Katie West makes string.

Cut fabric into strips – about 1cm wide, and at least 30cm long

Hold strips of fabric - at both ends.

Start twisting - with one hand twist away from your body. With the other twist towards your body.

Keep twisting - to create tension.

Bring both ends together - the fabric will twist around itself to form a string.

Tie a knot - at the end to hold in place.

Repeat the process – to lengthen the string by threading more fabric through one end

ACTIVITY 1.

Make a bag from scratch – no sewing required!

Second Stage.

Making a bag with only fabric and string

Join layers of fabric together with a seam of knots instead of sewing. Attach your hand twisted string to use as a strap.

[Watch](#) how we did it.

Cut a rectangle of fabric – about 50cm long and 25cm wide.

Fold the fabric - in half along the long side. The folded edge will be the bottom of the bag.

Cut a fringe. Starting on one side working from top to bottom, cut slits about 5 cm deep that are about 1 cm apart. Cut both the front and back layers together. Repeat on the other side.

Make a seam - by tying pairs of fringes into knots. Repeat on the other side.

Strengthen the knots – either by tying a double knot or by joining one knot to another. To close the gap between knots, take one strand of a knot and tie it to one strand from the knot next it. Continue working up the fringe.

Turn the bag inside out – once there are two complete seams of knots along the sides. Or leave the seam of the outside if you like the fringed look.

Make a strap – by tying handmade string to strands of the knots at the opening on each side.

ACTIVITY 2.

Don't throw that out!

You can use food scraps and things in your garden to dye fabrics naturally at home. Try upcycling old clothes, sheets, napkins, or pillowcases from op-shops. Experiment with different fruit and veggie peels, skins, or petals and leaves to create a variety of colours.

Blue: blueberries, blackberries

Red: raspberries, beets, pomegranates

Pink: avocado skins and pips, red and pink roses,

Yellow: turmeric, lemon and orange peels, eucalyptus leaves, marigolds, sunflowers, dandelion

Green: spinach leaves, grass

Orange: onion skins, carrots

Purple: red cabbage leaves

Brown: tea, coffee, walnut hulls

How to naturally dye fabric.

It is best to use fabrics with natural fibres like cotton, linen, silk, and wool as they absorb the dye better than synthetic fabrics. Remember to use plastic gloves when working with dye, and to be careful when boiling water.

1. Chop-up 1 cup of your chosen plant material.
2. Add the plant material to a saucepan with 2 cups of water.
3. Add 2-3 tablespoons of vinegar or salt - this is a 'mordant' that helps the dye bind.
4. Bring the water to a simmer using medium heat.
5. Simmer for about an hour or longer for a richer colour.
6. Let the water cool to room temperature.
7. Using a strainer pour your dye into a container and discard plant material.
8. Dampen the fabric you want to dye with water to help the dye soak in.
9. Make a design by folding the fabric using different techniques or using elastic bands, string and pegs.
10. Dip or submerge fabric into the dye and wait for at least 30 mins. The longer you wait the richer the colour
11. Once completely dry, iron the fabric to set the colours.

ACTIVITY 3.

Craft and Connect

Start your own social craft group with friends or family and nurture your inner artist. Find some time to connect with others, slow down, and be present in the moment.

Meet as a group online or in person. Decided together what craft techniques and materials you would like to experiment with. Think about simple, affordable, or recycled materials that you can get hold of easily.

Try to focus on the process of working together rather than the outcomes. Once you have met up as a group think about what you learnt about yourself and each other.

Group craft ideas:

Making banners, signs, or badges.

Sculpting and painting models or figurines.

Designs using beading, cross-stitch, or embroidery.

Learning knitting, macrame or weaving.

Making clothes, bags, or jewellery.

Paper folding, origami, or cardboard art techniques

