

Fine Arts 103: Demo

LOLANDA PALMER: Hi, everyone. Welcome to Visual Concepts 103 online class.

Today what I'm going to demo is your wire project, and it's called wired. You will find more details on this project on your written handout.

So for this project what you'll need is bale wire, which you can find at your local hardware store. Don't get thin jewelry wire. Get wire that is actually a little stiff.

This project is at least two feet in any one direction. So you'll need a bit of it. So just be sure that you get thick gauge. You should be able to bend it with your hands easily. The kind that I usually use is this black kind, and as I said before, you could use it, or excuse me, you can find it at your local hardware store.

You'll also need a pencil or a Sharpie, and needle nose pliers, like these. I have pretty agile hands because I use them a lot to make art work. These don't have a spring action. You can find them with a spring action. These don't. You can get either.

I find that the ones that are spring action are a little easier for beginning students. Be sure when you get your needle nose pliers that they do come to a point, and that they have a little cutter. You see this little circular thing here? It has a cutter to it, so you can cut your wire.

If, for some reason, you already have one pair and needle nose pliers on hand, but they don't have a cutter, you can buy cutters. But just don't use scissors to cut this wire. It'll ruin them.

And then you also need a sheet of paper. This paper is 30 by 22. I would say this should be your smallest sheet of paper, and that's where you're going to start to build your piece.

So after we've gone through the lecture for this particular demonstration, you'll know that what I'm looking for in this project is some type of object that references containment in some way. That could be something abstract or it could be something literal.

So if I gave you a challenge of containing something that is, let's say, love, what might that object look like? So you really have to bend your mind a bit with this project. As I said before, it can be abstract or it can be realistic. That's up to you.

But what I do want you to think about is not getting too tight with this project, because wire doesn't really lend itself to real tight angular points. And you'll see what I mean as you work with it.

So the first thing I'm going to do after I have all of my materials is I'm going to sketch out the actual size that I want my piece to begin from. So this is what I will actually start with. So with every project you have 15, at least 15 drawings that I want you to do.

And as I said before, they can be drawings that are sketches, or they could be photographs that are sketch-like or some ideas that you have. But for this particular project, you need to take one of those drawings, or a combination of some of those drawings or photographs, and illustrate it via a drawing like this. A very simple line drawing.

So first I sketched it with a pencil. Because this is on film, I went over it with a Sharpie. And essentially what's so wonderful about starting from a drawing to wire, essentially, this line here you create with wire. So it's as if a drawing becomes three-dimensional. So it's a wonderful transition.

So after I have my drawing here what I'm going to do is outline that very first singular line here. And this is actually my abstract form that represents a containment associated with my father. Because he often had-- he was an artist, and he did a lot of very simple stone and wood sculptures. And so when he passed away several years ago, I started thinking about the shapes that he used over and over again in his work.

So I came up with this shape that's very abstract, but it references a containment. It references holding onto something, and you can see it's abstract. You can sort of make out that these might be like two arms that are containing something. So it doesn't have to be an actual, literal thing that you're quote unquote "containing," but it could be something really elusive. And that's what's so beautiful about abstract art, is that it helps us see things in a different way. It's quite lovely.

So this is my first sketch, and watch how simple this is when I do this. So I'm going to take my wire-- and be careful with wire. It has a tendency to-- when you snip it off, it is sharp. So if you're prone to hurting yourself, you might want to wear gloves. It gets in the way of how we sort of feel material. But if you find yourself-- you're hurting your hands along-- go ahead and get some thick gloves for yourself.

So just think of this as the line of a drawing. So I'm going to unroll some of this. I'm going to cut it. So I'm going to take my pliers, my needle nose pliers, and I'm just going to use this part right here to snip it off. And then I'm going to start to--I actually learned this trick from one of my students.

She couldn't quite figure out how to make something three-dimensional with this project. So this was years ago in my foundations class, and she did this. She had this idea to sketch it out first and then lay the wire over it. So I have her to thank for that.

So I'm literally kind of tracing this guy, that I've drawn, with my wire. And I'm just gently bending it into position. It doesn't have to be perfect. I don't teach that way. Sometimes artists want their work to be absolutely perfect. I don't even know what that means. Perfection isn't really what I'm looking for.

As I said before to you all-- what did I say before to you all? I said that I value experimentation. So don't feel like anything that you make in this class has to be quote unquote "perfect." It's more about you seeing the world a little tiny bit differently.

So I'm cutting another piece to finish this beginning. So when you attach two pieces of wire there are a couple of ways to do it. My hands are pretty strong because I use them a lot. So you can take to cross and then start to gently twist it around like that. But if your hands aren't real strong, I would just use this guy.

So at the end, though, and I can't twist it anymore, I'm just going to pull it around with my needle nose. You see that? And then I want you-- this is really important. I want you to cinch it down. There shouldn't be any pieces that stick out like that.

Even though this is an online class, I am going to be looking for good completions like that. That's an example of a good completion. That's not a good completion. That's sloppy.

So I'm just going to cinch this one. And there I have two connected pieces. So I put it back down on my drawing, and I continue to trace around. So these two need to connect.

But there's quite a bit of wire here, so I'm just going to snip that off, and then I'm going to connect my two pieces just like I did last time. This time I'm just going to use mainly the-- oop. The wire looks like [LAUGHTER] I'm just going to use my needle nose this time.

So as I hold one side I twist the other. It gets a little bit unruly, but you'll see how it-- it won't always be like this. It will be firmer.

So remember your detail. Remember that part of your grade is the technical. A big part of it is concept too, but definitely technical is important. So there it's cinched up.

So this is generally the beginning of my drawing. I know it doesn't look like much now, but you'll see how we build up form-- which is a word that you have probably already read about in you're reading, that very first reading-- how you build up form and volume.

Think of a bird cage right now. Not the film, the actual thing. Think about that. Put that in your mind. It's built up with form via wire. It's stronger wire than this, but that's a perfect example of how wire creates a structure. And in some ways, a bird cage is a symbol. It could be a symbol for something that is contained, or something that is free, or something that lacks freedom.

So here's the beginning structure of my piece. And the way this is right now I will build a structure, excuse me, I'll build volume in this direction, and I will also build volume on this other side. So it then becomes a three-dimensional form. Well, how do you do that? Well, I'll show you how you do that.

So just like with a drawing-- and I'm going to show you this via wire and a drawing-- when you start to build up form, you may need a little more guidance with your drawings. It depends. If you're used to three-dimensional, probably not.

But if I draw a line like this, and like that, and like that, what am I suggesting here? I'm suggesting volume. Why? Because those lines are curved. They're not straight.

And so if I go like this through the whole thing, it looks like a--what are those little breads, little sweets.

Can you see how that starts to look three-dimensional? I hope you can. I hope you can see how it works. But let's do that in actuality.

So I have my drawing here. I'm just going to pin it up, so I have something to go by. So there's my simple drawing about my dad. So the first thing I am going to do is connect the line from the center of my form to the other side of it. And let's say I want it-- remember, these are at least two feet in any one direction.

So I think what I'll do is I'll attach this guy here. I'll attach this guy here. And I'll attach another one here. So these three. This one, that one, and this one.

This is the longest. So I'm going to take that and I'm going to just curve it onto that form, the original form. So you're essentially making a three-dimensional drawing.

That's why I like using wire. I think it's a lovely process, a lovely way for people to see how something two-dimensional can become three-dimensional.

I'll do the same thing here. Your hands do get dirty with this particular baling wire, because it has some kind of coating on it. But don't worry, just wash it off.

So there's the first part there. Do you see how that starts to happen? Do you see how that starts to make a form? We're going to attach the other two. So this one is going to go here.

And be careful. Wire does get a little unruly, so watch your eyes. So cinch it up and attach it over here. Here's the second piece. And then I'm going to attach my third.

So here are my first three pieces. You start to get a sense of how that becomes form. So now we're going to take a piece, and we're going to put it around the whole thing here, from here over.

A couple ways you can do it. What I would suggest is doing it in small sections first. So again, think of a bird cage. Think about how those wires are close together, obviously, so the bird won't get out.

With this project, I want you to think about how-- it's similar to crosshatching, if you've ever you've ever done crosshatching. And in the lecture, one of the artists that I show you does a form of crosshatching with wire. So when pieces of wire are close together, it's shaded, it's dark. If pieces of wire are farther apart there's more negative space. So there's more white.

So as you're building your piece-- and remember, you have a week to do this. So I'm expecting your project to show that week's worth of work.

So sometimes you may have wires that are really close together to create a three-dimensional shadow, or depth, or darkness. And other parts you may have it so there's lots of negative space in there, and that's fine. Just so at the end, on that Sunday when you turn in your project, it looks like you really spent time doing it.

So I'm just taking one small piece and I'm going to attach it from here, to here, to there. So I start here, and then I'm going to attach it to this guy. Just one turn is good. And then I'm going to go over here and attach it on to here.

And you slowly, slowly but surely, start to build up that form for yourself. Remember, this is a three-dimensional class, so your work has to show that you understand at least the beginning basics of three-dimensionality in space. It's like painting creates an illusion, sculpture tends to be concrete, both literally and figuratively, because it situates itself within a space and you have to walk around it.

So I'm going to do the same-- I'm going to finish this guy this way.

And this wire is really nice. It's my favorite wire to use. As I said before, there is jewelry wire, which is pretty expensive. And you can really build something like this without, one, spending a lot of money, and two, using lots of it. And it's not structurally what I want you to start with in this class.

Let's say you're building small pieces, little tiny small pieces, then you could probably use that jewelry wire. But I try, with this class, to keep the costs down. So a lot of your projects are things you can find around town. I don't know if you live in a city or a small town, but there's always a hardware store somewhere, or a thrift store.

So this one, it's a little-- hmm. Not so much. It'll be OK. I'm just talking to myself.

So you can get into a mindset here. If you spend two, three hours working on something it's like you're focused on it and you can get pretty efficient. So there's our first half. If you think of this as a half, here's your first half.

As my mom always says, it's close enough for jazz. So from here, I want to literally take it off the wall, and I want to build this back up. Your piece-- we go over in this class symmetry and asymmetry.

Symmetry is when both sides are the same. Asymmetry is when both sides are different. So you have to figure out for yourself, depending on what kind of project you're making, if you want that other side to be the same as the first side or different. So with this guy, I think I'll just quickly build up this side, make it a little bit asymmetrical.

I purposely show you the beginning demonstrations, not a finished product. Why? Because I want you to think for yourself.

I show you artists that do similar things, but remember, as I said before, there is no wrong answer. It's about how creative you are.

Sometimes I show you past student work, but I'm getting further and further away from that, because I like to see what you all develop by yourselves.

So I'm just building up that other side that is going to be a little asymmetrical. I'll make this a little taller, and I'll twist it over like that. Remember, if your hands can't really bend this wire, that's cool. Just use your needle noses.

So there's the beginning of that form. See it? Imagine a fat croissant. That's sort of what it reminds me of, a fat croissant-- pudgy. See.

So there's the beginning. So from here-- a lot of my students get a little upset with me with this project, because it does take a bit. It takes a bit of time, but it's fulfilling because you really get a sense of how 2-D becomes 3-D.

So I'm going to attach my-- this center spine. So now you get a sense of what I'm going for here, right?

So now what you want to think about is, as I was saying before, if you think about crosshatching, if you think about layering lines together, if you cross your lines it's like you're building up the surface of your form. So for example, you don't have to always go in one direction like this. You can start building up lines crisscross.

And you see, as you build it, you'll see how it gets stronger and stronger. Because you're adding more metal to it and it gets structurally more sound. So you could attach pieces like this. And you can continue willy-nilly like that.

Keep in mind, when your projects are finished there should be areas that are at least-- it always helps to have a ruler-- at least an inch apart. I'm sorry, what I meant to say was at most an inch apart. So think about wire is this building up of a form.

So if you have your wire close together, it's going to be, as I said before, shaded, darker. So areas should-- consider, depending on what kind of project you have, maybe the whole thing is

really packed tight together. Then that means it takes a long time as you put your wire close together.

If you want to go the same way over and over again, that's totally up to you. How you put your wire structure together is up to you. But if I turned this thing into me, I would say, no, that's like a D grade. It needs to be worked.

You need to think about. You can hang it up from the ceiling, you can look at it. Oftentimes, at WSU, I'll have my students hang their pieces from the ceiling so you can really get a sense of it in space and what it needs.

So as I build this form up, and I put my pieces together, and I do my 3-D sketches, it starts to create a form. And then I can get a sense of, oh, yeah. I kind of like that. I'm going to go with that.

So remember, parts of it, 1/2 inch, inch apart. Other parts can be more open. As long as it looks intentional. That's the thing is intentionality is so incredibly important in art.

So I want you to think about that, and as this class develops, I will meet with you all, as you know, for 15 minutes, via Skype, looking at your in progress projects. So if I see that-- I feel like maybe you're not spending enough time doing a certain thing, I'll let you know that.

So this is the beginning of this wire project. I want you to feel like you can organically go about this project. You're not tied or bound to your drawings that you did, or your Instagram photo sketches, at all. You can see how it goes.

And I want you to experiment too, with putting it on the table, stepping far away from it to see that form. And with three-dimensionality you need to be able to get away from it. It's the same thing with two-dimensional too. But with these 3-D forms, it's important to get away from it and see-- start seeing what that shape becomes.

And as always, if you questions just let me know. I will respond via voice or in writing. So I'm always here for you until I'm not.