

Next: read the text below about wire sculptures and answer the following questions:

What Is Wire Sculpture Art?

Art can be made from many things other than traditional art materials like paint or paper. Some artists make elaborate, detailed sculptures from a simple material like wire. **Wire** is long, thin, flexible strands of metal usually made by a process of heating and stretching. It comes in a single strand or several strands twisted together. Wire is made of different materials like aluminum, bronze, copper, or steel and has different gauges. A **gauge** is the thickness of the wire's diameter. The larger the gauge, the thinner the wire (yes, the larger the number of gauge, the smaller the thickness of the wire!).

Wire has many uses in art. You can even use it to make **wire sculpture art**, art in which three-dimensional forms are shaped or assembled from wire or wire mesh. Using wire in art isn't new. In fact, thousands of years ago, the Egyptians used wire to make jewelry. But the first artist who brought wire sculpture art to people's attention was **Alexander Calder** (1898-1976), who made a series of wire sculptures in the 1920s after he'd used wire to experiment with jewelry making. A more contemporary wire artist is **Elizabeth Berrien**. She makes wire animal sculptures with techniques adapted from textile processes like weaving and knitting.

Now let's look at some techniques for making wire sculpture art.

Tools for Wire Sculpture Art

Wire is a very versatile medium for artwork. It can be braided, twisted, tied, wrapped, wound around other wires, or woven into a loose or tight mesh. Sculptors use it to create small, delicate works or large installations that can take up whole rooms. Some artists also make wire sculptures for outdoor spaces.

You don't need many materials to make wire sculpture art, but there are a few basic guidelines you should follow. Unless you want to wrestle with strong, stiff wire, choose a type of soft, pliable wire. A good choice is **armature wire**, a soft, flexible aluminum wire made for use in art. It comes in many sizes and thicknesses, can be easily worked by hand, and you can find it in art supply or hobby stores.

Now, you'll need some tools, including wire cutters and several kinds of pliers, like long-nose pliers. **Wire cutters** are handheld tools with a sharp, short, double blade specifically for cutting many gauges of wire. **Pliers** are handheld tools that allow you to pull, bend, and twist wire more tightly than could be done by hand alone. You should also have safety glasses, because a cut end of a long wire could swing and injure an eye. You might also want to use gloves for a better grip.

Outlining

Now you're ready to begin sculpting.

One of the easiest ways to make a wire sculpture is to create an outline of an object. Wire has a very linear quality that can give the impression of a pencil or pen drawing translated into three dimensions. Taking a long piece of wire, bend it into the basic shape of, say, a model car.

1. What are 'traditional' materials used in art?
2. Which materials is the wire made from?
3. What is the gauge of the wire?
4. What did the English used to make Jewellery from years ago?
5. Who was Alexander Calder?
6. How does Elizabeth Berrien make her sculptures?
7. Why is Armature wire so useful for creating wire sculptures?
8. What are some safety tips that could be utilised?