

RECOVERY ART

Being In Touch

A creative and social workshop



Hello Recovery Art Members!

We hope you are all safe and well, welcome to March's Recovery Art session. This month's theme is *Being in Touch!*

Over the next three months we will be focusing on the theme of TOUCH and how this relates to ourselves, relationships and the wider world around us.

We hope that you like us, you are looking forward to this month's Recovery Art zoom session on Monday 29th March and hope that these sessions are giving you space for expression, connection and optimism, while supporting your wellbeing.

Have you used the landscape techniques from last month while creating at home? Have you created any new art or revised old works? Have you been inspired by other artists, programmes or podcasts you would like to share?



Touch

During this month's theme of *Being in Touch* we will be focusing on ourselves and how we use touch to inform, learn and create.

Touch connects us to so many things and over the last year our relationship with touch may have changed, we may view the concept of touch differently now, from the lack of human contact to the need for comfort and care. Touch has so many benefits from wellbeing, creating social bonds, reducing anxiety and pain. It is a vital part of how we behave as humans.

Within these times we may have found comfort in other ways - like the comfort of a favourite blanket or item of clothing, a piece of jewellery from a friend or family member, a favourite smell or getting in touch with a friend on a phone call or video. These new ways of touch may be helping us to feel connected to people and places.





Exploring touch and your favourite objects at home.

It might be a good way to start this theme by finding an object at home, this could be a favourite collected item like a pebble, or a regularly used object like your fave cup. Find a quiet space to sit comfortably in front of your object, close your eyes for a moment and move your hands towards your object. Lift and cradle the object in your palms.

How does it feel?

Is it warm or cold?

Smooth or rough?

Heavy or light?

Move your hands around to feel edges, textures and forms. Think of a word to describe your object.

Is it loved and cared for? Is it familiar?

Take the time and space that you need to explore this object with touch.

Here are some positive words we have been thinking about which relate to Touch:

UNRAVEL

COMFORT

SENSORY

CARE

TACTILE

COMPASSION

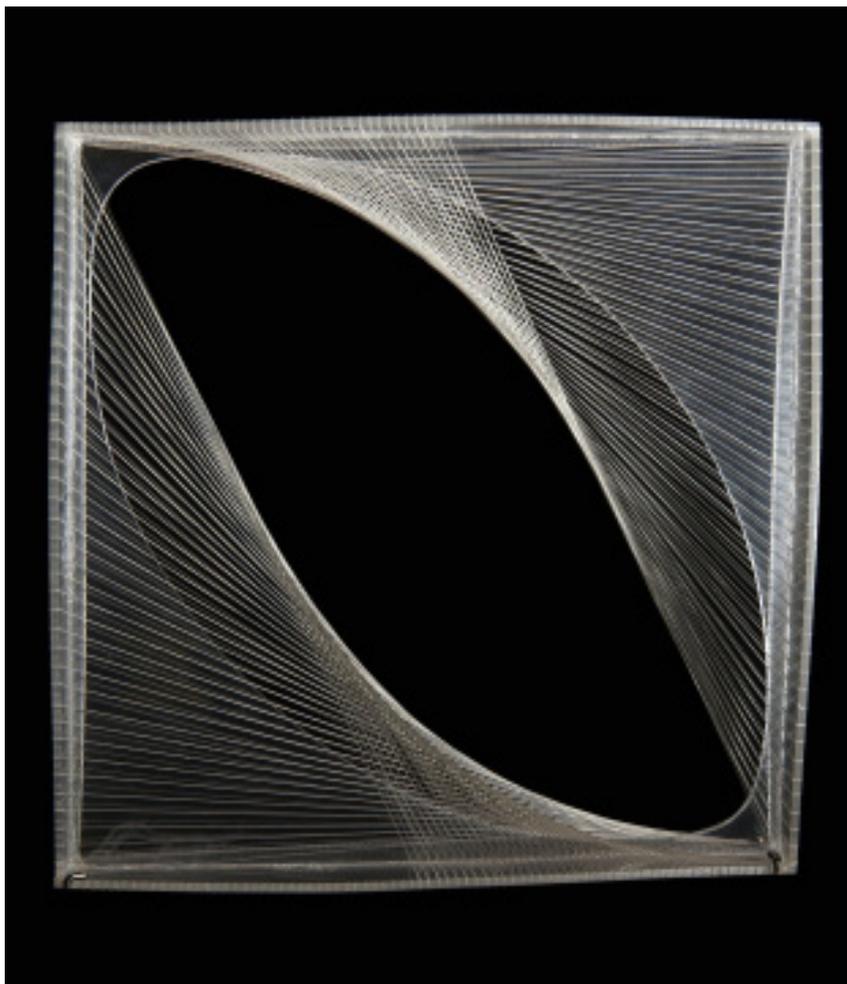
HELD

Suggested Materials:

peg doll
wool
raffia
twine
threads
elastic bands
balloon
papers
t-shirt yarn/fabric

Take a moment to get comfortable and make a tea.
Gather our art materials, thoughts and a biscuit or 2...





Naum Gabo, *Linear Construction in Space No 1*, 1942/43.
© The Henry Barber Trust, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts,
University of Birmingham.

This month we will be looking at a artwork within the Barber's collection:

Naum Gabo's *Linear Construction in Space No 1*

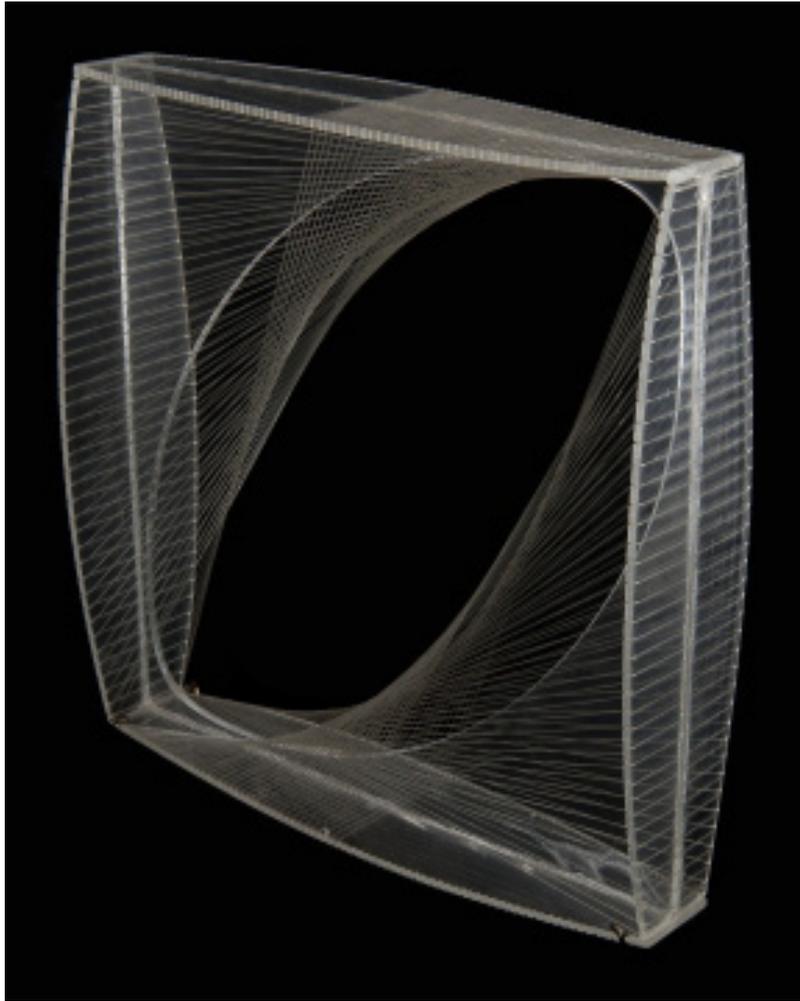
This piece was produced in St Ives in 1942/43 using Perspex with nylon monofilament.

Gabo was a Russian constructivist and used many different materials during his life which combined his love of new materials, engineering and art.

Here he uses new materials of the time, like Perspex and nylon to create an illusion of a continuous parabolic form – and a work of ethereal beauty. Always at the forefront of avant-garde art, Gabo sought to produce objects that 'appeal more to our minds and our feelings than to our crude physical senses'.

Gabo settled in London in 1936. At the outbreak of World War II he followed his Artist friends Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth to St Ives in Cornwall.

Some of us will have viewed the artworks up close at The 'Cornwall as Crucible' exhibition at The Barber in February 2020.



Naum Gabo, *Linear Construction in Space No 1*, 1942/43.
© The Henry Barber Trust, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts,
University of Birmingham.

This exhibition considered the relationships and networks between artists who lived and worked in Cornwall at that time, examining their development of a visual language that explored the boundary between representation and abstraction, and demonstrating the impact of the distinctive Cornish landscape upon their art. Displayed within the Lady Barber Gallery, other artworks surrounded Gabo's piece where we could see the direct influences between artists such as Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Peter Lanyon and Sandra Blow.

From viewing this work, I loved the way the linear filament could represent water, landscapes, fluidity, and thought.

Viewing the piece from so many angles gives a different perspective each time as if the piece is moving and creating a flowing motion.

Do you like how Gabo has used these materials?

What did you notice most in this constructed piece of artwork?

Do you feel inspired by this work, if so why?

Joana Vasconcelos

During this session we are going to be exploring wrapping, holding and containing objects with textile materials. Before we start I wanted to share some images where wrapping objects have been used as an art form.

Portuguese artist, Joana Vasconcelos (b. 1971) uses crochet to wrap traditional portugese ceramic dogs. Often known for her large scale installations and the use of everyday objects. She creates decorative and vibrant coverings for these dogs.





Wrapping

Wrapping is also a technique used in Art Therapy sessions - this piece of work was made while taking part in Art Therapy training session at Hertfordshire University.

Why would you wrap an object?

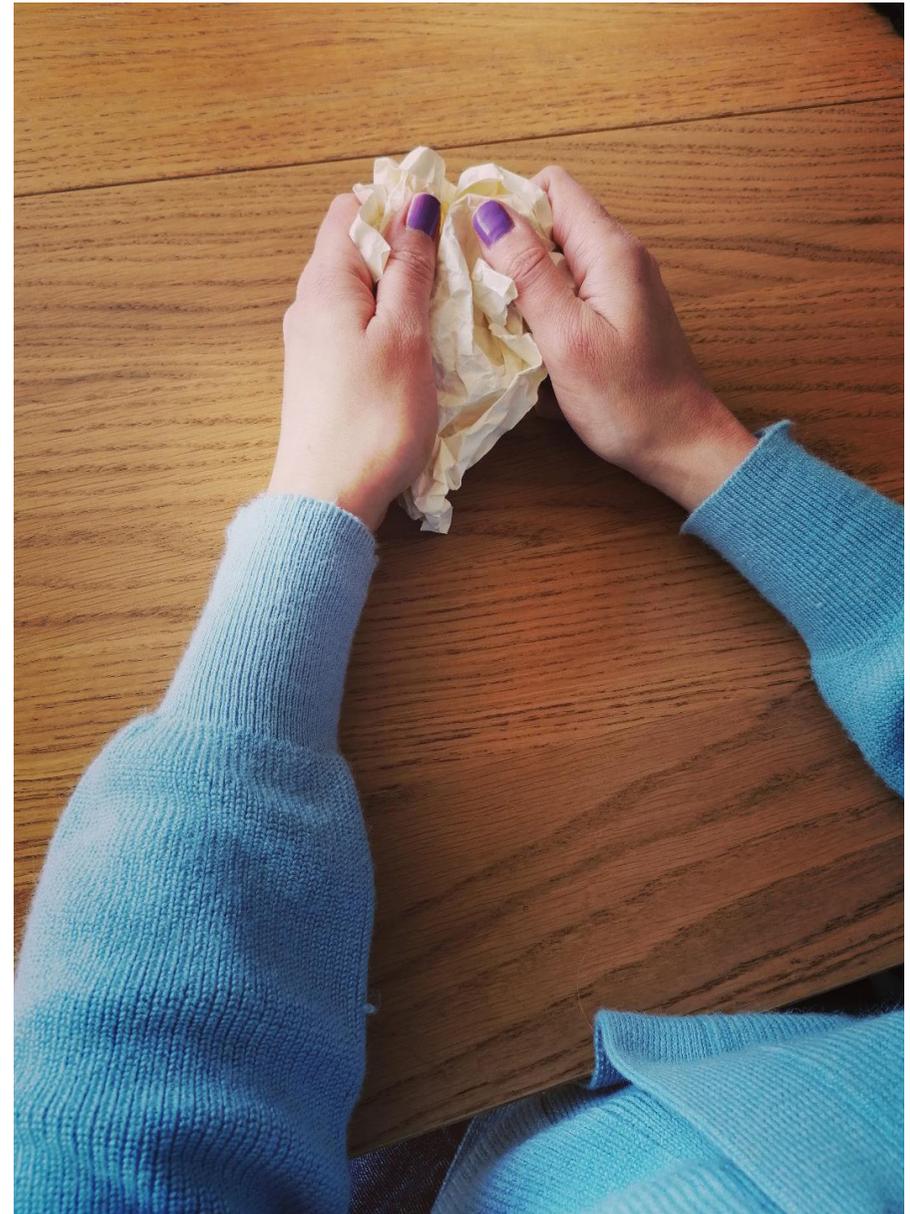
The technique of wrapping objects/artworks can be to contain, protect, mask, cover or hide. It is a useful activity for people who find traditional drawing materials difficult to use, so it is a refreshing change to have textiles, fibres, recycled materials and fabrics to use.

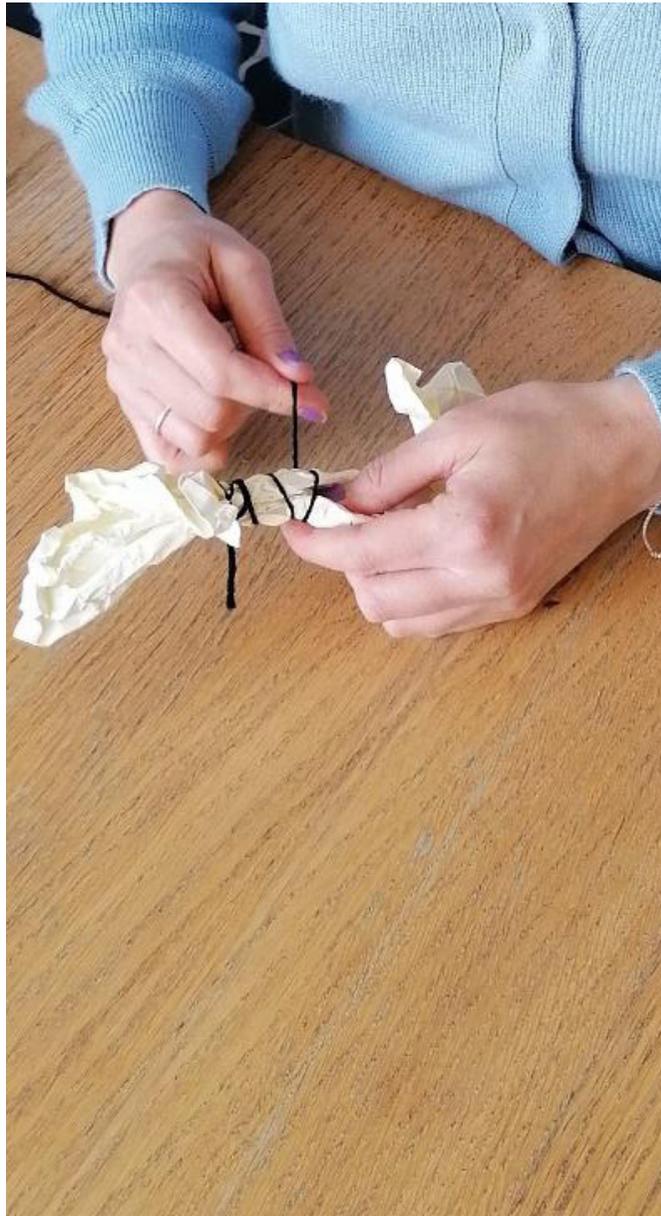
These materials can be great for their tactile properties and for that connection to touch.

Paper manipulation and wrapping techniques

Lets transform the properties of a piece of paper so that we can sculpt with it. Scrunch one of the A4 pieces of paper up in your hands (notice how it feels) then open it up. Scrunch it again and open it up. You can do this until the paper has become more malleable, and transformed its properties, it may have started to feel softer almost like fabric.

You can create shapes with the paper, rolls, tearing pieces away, pinching ends and twisting. Now choose a yarn and start to wrap tightly around the paper, it may start to change shape as the yarn pulls tighter. Experiment with thinker wool or thinner thread (the embroidery threads can be separated into 6 strands depending on the thickness you would like). You can tie knots around the paper, wrap elastic bands or cut the balloons width ways so that they can be looped around creating different tensions, textures and forms.





Peg doll wrapping

Now we are going to focus on wrapping the peg doll. Do you want to use a delicate neat way of wrapping or a looser more chunky method, you could wrap the whole peg doll in a piece of paper or fabric before covering in yarn. Try exploring mixing different textured yarns together or create a constructed piece out of the yarns first by knotting, twisting and plaiting. You can untie your peg doll at any time and try something different.

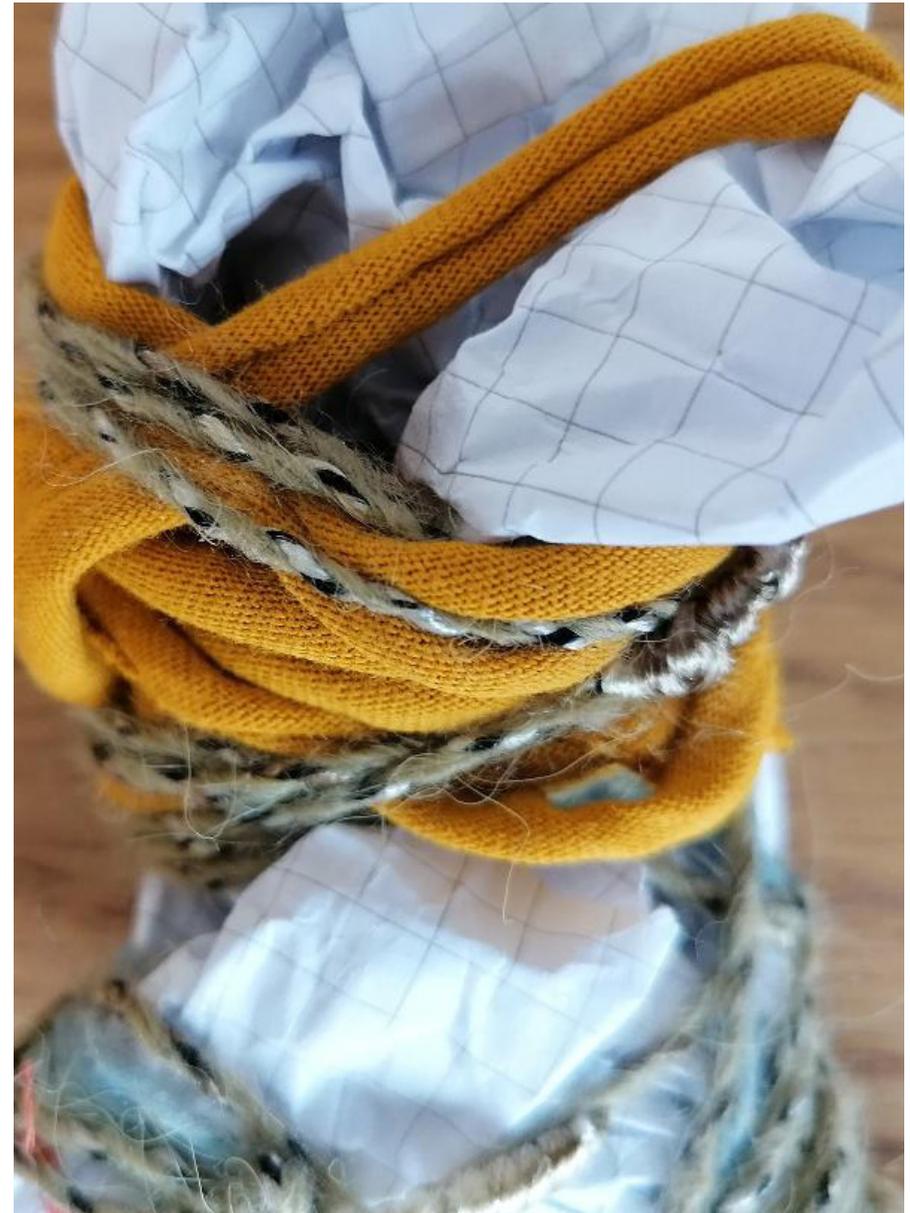


Wrap an object

Let's have a go at choosing our own object to wrap! Do you have an object that comes to mind, it could be a precious, gifted or collected item or something more practical like a paint brush, spoon or piece of fruit. Before you start, take a look at the collection of yarns and materials, touch the yarns to see how you feel about each one's properties, texture or colour. Are you drawn to a particular material? Could you use contrasting yarns?

Try not to worry and let your instincts take over, remember this is your work and you are in control!! You may be enjoying the repetitiveness of wrapping or the feel of the materials or how the object is changing.

Once you have finished touching, feeling and moving your object, explore what you have made.



Evaluation

Talking about wrapping our objects is a great way to evaluate this work.

How have we wrapped or covered the piece? What have we used? Think of words to describe how it is covered, eg. encased, trapped or held. Why did we choose a particular material or technique? Do we feel differently about the object now that it is wrapped? Do we want to keep it this way?

You may want to display or photograph the wrapped object or put it somewhere else, somewhere hidden or safe. You may feel more comfortable unravelling the object and putting it back to its original state, it's important that you do what feels most comfortable.

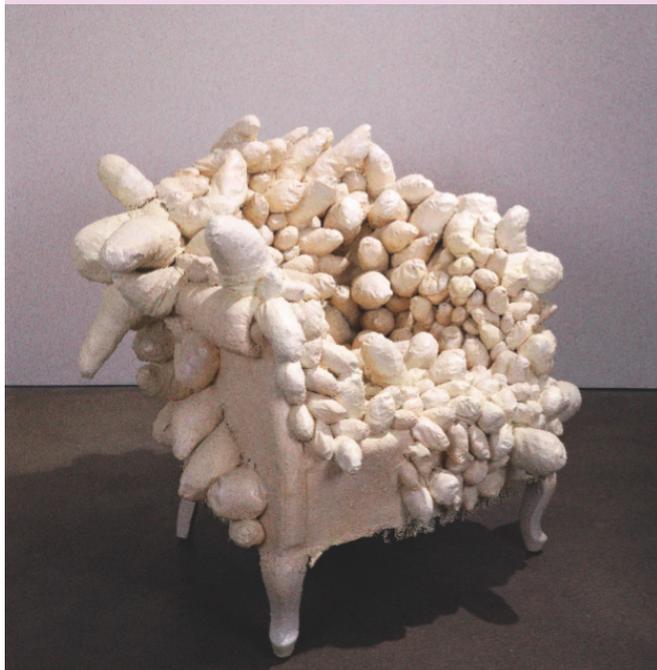
This may be a technique that you wish to continue experimenting with at home, you may have other materials that you could use, or other objects to wrap. We would love to see how these works evolve.



Artist Research:

Here are some suggestions of Artists who use wrapping, materials and textiles in their work:

Louise Bourgeois



Artist Research:

Here are some suggestions of Artists who use wrapping, materials and textiles in their work:

Joana Vasconcelos



Christo





Thank you for taking part in this Recovery Art workshop.

We hope you have enjoyed using textiles and wrapping with us at The Barber, and would love it if you could join us again next month either at home using this resource or for our live zoom session.

Our monthly zoom workshop for Be In Touch is - Monday 29th March, 11am. The link and recorded video will be sent this coming week.

learning@barber.org.uk