

July 3, 2024

What is String Art?

String art is weaving colored string, wool, wire, or yarn between hammered nails to make geometric patterns. Artists use lines of thread to create curved patterns that can form various desirable shapes. This organic idea to use thread and nails to form angles has grown from an educational tool to an art form like no other.



Artists from around the world continue to make their name through being able to execute string art uniquely. Their creations attract a global audience with an appreciation for intricate design. The best way to know where string art will go in the future is to understand what gave birth to this innovative visual art. The first person known for forming curves out of straight lines is Mary Everest Boole. The Englishwoman used what is known as curve stitching to help teach children mathematics. She would go on to publish a book in 1909 entitled *Philosophy & Fun of Algebra*. The curves Mary Everest Boole used in her teaching methods became known as the Bèzier curve. Inspired by an algorithm created by French mathematician Paul de Casteljau, Pierre Bèzier -- a fellow French mathematician -- developed a curve formula to help solve a practical issue. At the time, Bèzier was working at a car company and was in need of an accurate way to describe a curve that worked for both manufacture and design. The result was the Bèzier curve, which can describe any second-degree curve with only four points. The curve was publicized in 1962 and is credited with inspiring numerous artists although its intentions were strictly mathematical. One of those inspired artists is American artist John Eichinger. He specialized in creating geometric designs which he referred to as "string mandalas." A popular hobby kit distributor at the time, Open Door Enterprises, first marketed his string art kits in the late 1960s. This is noted as one of the first times everyday people took interest in string art. It became widely popular in the 1970s with an uncountable amount of U.S. homes boasting home-made string art on their walls.

This excerpt was taken from String of the Art (<https://www.stringoftheart.com/pages/origins-of-string-art>)

Let's Make Our Own String Art

Materials:

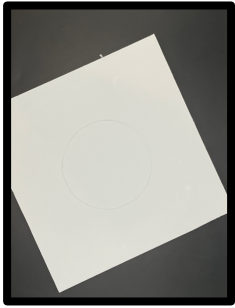
- foam board
- string
- scissors
- pins or push pins
- pins
- mallet



Process:

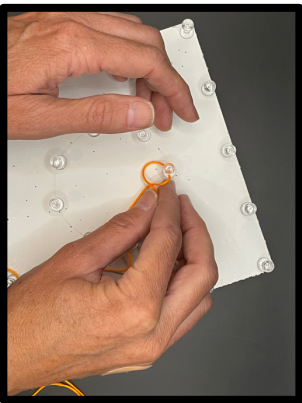
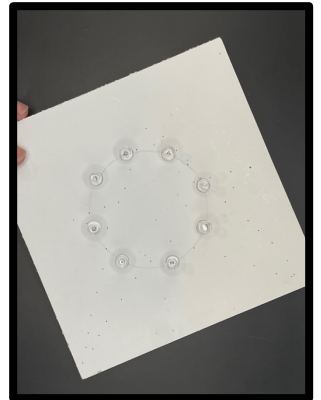
- 1) Traditionally string art is done with wood and nails but to make this project more kid friendly we are going to use foam board and push pins. For those of you that are just a little older and want more of a challenge, feel free to use the small sewing pins.
- 2) Find a comfortable place to work and pour out all your materials.

This project is brought to you by:



3) Pick a design for your string art. You can do a light outline right on the board or you can draw a design on a separate piece of paper and place it on top of the board using it as a template. *(Young children will most likely enjoy just putting pins in wherever they please!)*

4) Using your pushpins or your sewing pins, outline your design by pushing the pins into the foam board along your outline. It is up to you how close you would like your pins to be and where you would like them to be placed. The more pins you use, the more solid your design will be and the more lines you are capable of making. Feel free to use your mallet to put the pins in. If you use a paper template, you will need to carefully tear away the paper so that just the pins and board are left.



5) Take a piece of string and tie it around one of the pins, leaving a small tail. Cut your tail off, leaving just a small piece that can easily be tucked into the design.

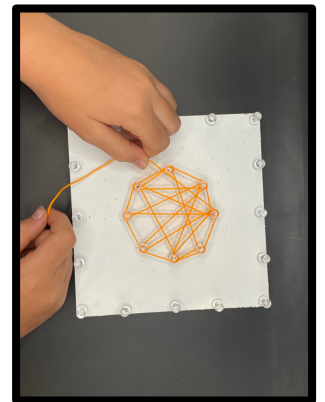
6) Begin wrapping your string around the pins. I found that making a complete wrap around the pin before moving to the next was helpful to keep it from unraveling. I also found it helpful to push the string down as I was wrapping. Don't pull too hard on the string as you wrap. Because we are using foam board, the pins are not as surefooted as nails would be in wood.

7) Wrap! Be methodical and have a plan or wrap haphazardly...both are fun.

8) When you finish with your string tie a couple of knots to one of the pins to secure. You can also tie it to the nearest string. Tuck any tail remnants into the design to make them discreet.

9) This art allows for a lot of your own discretion.

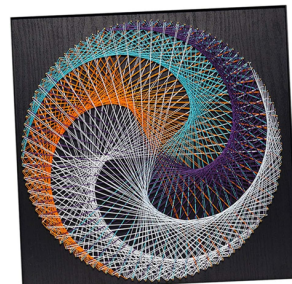
- a. You can do multiple layers of color on top of one another.
- b. You can make outlines of your shapes before or after stringing back and forth.
- c. You can make a shape and instead of stringing the shape, you can string the entire space around it.



- d. Young children will have fun putting in the pushpins and stringing to the best of their ability. Parents be on hand to help them find a wrapping strategy.



10) Be proud of your artwork and bring it back next Wednesday so that we can display it for all of Fort Collins to see!



Follow us on Instagram @nola_creative_company as we will be featuring artwork from each week. We will not use full names or identify your children in any way other than using their first name in order to give credit.

About the Art for the Heart Program

Art for the Heart is a program of the Fort Collins Downtown Development Authority and NOLA Creative Company.

All returned projects will be displayed in our outdoor kiosk located in between Coopersmith's Pub and Poolside restaurants. All projects will be returned to you the following week after they have been displayed.

Each art project returned will earn you a punch on our "Frequent Artists" punch card. Artists with consistent participation will be awarded prizes at the end of the program.

You can find all of our past projects and more information about the program at <https://downtownfortcollins.org/art-for-the-heart/>