

Traditional Otomi Art

Get creative with this activity inspired by Otomi embroidery motifs.



What is Otomi Art?

Otomi textiles feature hand-sewn symbols and patterns that are embroidered onto fabrics in brightly colored satin thread. Common Otomi designs include animals, plants and geometric figures that symbolize the harmony between humans and the natural world. These symbols may represent fertility, nature, life, helpful and harmful spirits that serve as intermediaries between the world of the living and the dead.

The indigenous Otomi people live in central Mexican Altiplano regions. Currently, the Otomi communities can be found in the north of Guanajuato, east of Michoacán, and south of Tlaxcala. Although, the majority of them live in the states of Hidalgo, México and Querétaro. Otomi culture is one of the older complex of Mesoamerican cultures, and lived near the Olmecs until the Nahuatl arrived around 1000 BCE.

Be inspired and create your own masterpiece

List of Materials you will need for this activity

- ☐ Yarn (assorted bright colors)
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Tacky Glue
- ☐ Markers, color pencils, or crayons
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ *Optional: embroidery thread and needle

Steps

- 1 Choose an Otomi template and color in the figures with different colors. You may use, color pencils, crayons or markers.
- 2 Trim loosely around the Otomi figures and glue them onto the construction paper
- 3 Cut out small pieces of yarn to fill in the shapes on your Otomi figure. Use tacky glue to paste the yarn onto the template. Pick the same color of yarn as the one you chose to color in the shape.*
- 4 Once you are done with your design, glue a loop of yarn to the back of your artwork and hang it on the wall.

*Challenge yourself! (With adult supervision) Instead of using yarn to fill in the figures, use the embroidery thread. Stitch the thread inside the figures, use the black outline as a guide and stitch from one end of the figure to the other, until you fill in the shape. You can try this technique using canvas for your background instead of construction paper.











