

## EMBELLISHMENTS: SPIRAL HEADPINS



### TEACHING ARTIST: AMY WILDERSON

Amy Wilderson loves so many things about being a teaching artist but the one that excites her the most is being able to share this art form that so many people have never considered being something that they could actually do. It's an absolute joy for her to be able to assist participants as they explore and expand their thinking about creativity, color schemes, and even what is "acceptable" as elements of jewelry making. In Amy's own work, she uses metalsmithing, wire-working, and knotting techniques, to tap into memory, culture, and heritage by reviving forgotten treasures along with surplus or discarded items and reclaimed metals, connecting them to gemstones that are associated with myth, power, and healing to create wearable, living stories.

### LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, we will build on the focal point bead by creating a headpin using the Spiral embellishment technique.

### ARTISTS & PIECES OF ART INCLUDED:



Minnesota  
Humanities  
Center

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### COMPAS PRISM PROGRAM

Lesson plans are created by COMPAS Artists. Each highlights artists and artworks from African, Latinx, Indigenous, and/or Asian communities.

## LEARNING GOALS:

- The goal of this lesson is to continue building on the construction of a focal piece.
- **Why did you choose to share this lesson?**  
Many of the participants' Revived Memory pieces will have large holes or missing stones. The Spiral Headpin technique is an embellishment that can hold a bead as a focal point, and it does not require using non-cold connection skills.
- **What inspires you about this activity?**  
The spiral has significant meaning in a number of cultures and spiritual practices. It is a symbol of journey/path, growth, and life cycles. It is also a beautiful embellishment, and a creative technique to use in reviving an old piece of jewelry.
- **Why is this activity, these artists, this art important?**  
This activity builds on the participant's wire-working skills and creates another opportunity to use the treasured objects in an updated way. Amy uses this technique and the practice session to give participants an opportunity to share their family histories without having to stand up in front of the group. This is circle sharing while circle making. There is a long tradition of people (womenfolk) working in circles and sharing information. This lesson is built off of that concept.

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS LESSON:

This lesson can occur any time after the initial lesson on getting to know wire-working tools and materials. No previous experience is needed.

## EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- 1 large-holed bead
- 1 foot of wire
- Basic jewelry tools from the kit:
  - Round nose pliers
  - Needle nose pliers
  - Cutters
  - Soft cloth or wire-straightening tool

## LESSON ACTIVITIES:

1. Cut a length of at least 4 inches of wire with wire cutters.
2. Using the flat-nose pliers, place the end of one wire in the jaws at the widest width.
3. Flatten the wire by either firmly squeezing or pulsing the pliers.
4. Using the tip of the round-nose pliers, roll the flattened end of the wire as tightly as possible, creating a small P.
5. Using the flat-nosed pliers, gently squeeze on the P to make it smaller.
6. Hold the P end of the wire in the flat-nose plier with your dominant hand.
7. The round part of the P should be vertical in the pliers and the long tail of the wire should be horizontal.
8. Using the thumb of your non-dominant hand, push the horizontal length of the wire, up against the P.
9. Release the wire in the pliers and reset the long wire to the horizontal position.
10. Repeat the motion of pushing the wire up against the spiral to make it the size that you want.
11. Place the bead on the wire to check the size of the spiral.
12. Remove the bead. Hold the spiral with your non-dominant hand. Place the flat-nose pliers where the bend and the spiral meet. Bend the wire away from the spiral, so that it extends vertically.

## LESSON ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED):

13. Put the bead back on the wire and center the spiral beneath the bead.
14. Create a Perfect Wrapped Loop on the other end of the bead using the remaining wire.
15. Cut the excess wire and tuck in the end.

## INDICATORS OF REACHING THE LEARNING GOALS:

- 1 spiral headpin bead completed, including the perfect wrapped bail.

## COMMUNITY THIS ACTIVITY IS DESIGNED FOR:

- Each community is able to attribute meanings of circles and spirals from their own cultures and practices.

## EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

- Recognize the cultural significance of shapes and designs
- Ability to use measurements and apply them to the project
- Progression of steps to complete the final product
- Ability to use tools
- Ability to use the terminology
- This project can be used from 4th grade to adults

**WHAT COULD A COMPAS TEACHING ARTIST HELP YOU ACHIEVE IN YOUR CLASSROOM?**

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