



Strand:	Visual
Grades:	7 & 8
Content:	45 minute broadcast + hands-on activity

## ***Stitch Together with Laura Hale***

### **Overview**

Who actually made my clothes? Where did they come from? Join visual artist Laura Hale in creating artwork with selected items of your own clothing. We will consider the origin and journey of the items along with seeking to acknowledge the people who made them. Students will be introduced to textile art, freestyle embroidery, patchwork and hand stitching. While hand-working, they will be encouraged to consider the social, environmental, and health issues around fast fashion. All artwork will be inspired by the idea of the "X". "X" as a symbol or mark to represent, acknowledge, and give a voice to our anonymous collaborators.

During the broadcast and the post activity workshop, teachers should prepare needles, threads, and fabric pieces for the students to work with. During the workshop students are encouraged to deconstruct their clothing items and compose, stitch and create a new textile artwork inspired by the symbol "X".

### **Artist Bio**

**Laura Hale** was born and raised in rural Saskatchewan. She studied visual art, technical theatre production, and industrial design at the University of Regina and Emily Carr University in Vancouver. Her artistic practice is multi-disciplinary incorporating a wide variety of materials and techniques in its development and creation, which includes temporary site-specific installation and permanent public art along with object making and gallery works. Laura considers herself a place-based and project-based artist communicating and sharing her ideas through installation art, site-specific art, and intervention art realized through specific projects, community collaborations, residencies and responding to requests for proposals. Her work is often temporary installation, or ephemeral, or created for a specific project or community collaboration. She does create certain objects or installations for inside the gallery but most often her work happens in the public realm, accessible to all. Laura frequently works with natural materials and/or textiles but the artistic medium really depends on the location and culture of place, the call or project, and who (if anyone) she is collaborating and working with. Exploration of place and location, researching, sourcing, material exploration, and collecting are important parts of her process. Through this process Laura creates installations and/or experiences that animate space and increase mindfulness of our surroundings, renewing how we see familiar things and places. Documentation is also a very important part of her work. She is excited by the unknown transformation that can occur in her work and collaborative process.

### **Pre-Broadcast Preparation**

Students can work from their desks. Please print out the map on 11x17 and have students bring a piece of clothing from home to cut.

### **Post Broadcast Activity Preparation**

Students can work from their desks. Teacher will need to set up 5 stations as described below.

### **Materials: (see detailed list below)**

- Personal item of clothing (one per student)
- One print out of a large map (provided)
- Straight pins
- Construction paper
- Markers (dark colors) and chalk
- Eraser
- Fabric scissors
- Other scissors
- Glue sticks
- Hand sewing needles
- Threads of various colors
- Pin cushion(s)

### **Post-Broadcast Resources**

Follow the digital hyperlinks provided in this guide to see video examples.

### **Curriculum Aims & Goals**

#### **Creative/Productive:**

Students will learn hand-stitching techniques to produce original textile artworks.

#### **Critical/Responsive:**

Laura Hale encourages the dialogue of where our clothes are made and who made them. Artworks will reflect upon the world issues.

#### **Cultural/Historical:**

Hale will discuss the artistic, cultural and historical use of the symbol X.

### **Saskatchewan Curriculum Outcomes:**

#### **Grade 7**

CP7.11 Investigate and use various visual art forms, images, and art-making processes to express ideas about place.

CR7.2 Investigate and identify ways that the arts can communicate a sense of place.

#### **Grade 8**

CP8.10 Create visual art works that express student perspectives on social issues (e.g., poverty, racism, homophobia, sustainability).

## ***Detailed Materials List***

1. Personal item of clothing (one/student) selected from their closet or from family household closet (see notes below regarding clothing choice). Located with the student at their desk to start project.

2. One print out of a large map (file provided) of the world pinned onto a backing, something that pins can stick into like cork board or foam core (world map image provided, teacher prints out at 11"x17" or bigger if possible). Located up on wall or on a table to start project.



3. Straight pins also called dressmaker pins (not safety pins, not hand sewing needles), one per student plus some extra. Located at Needle and Thread Station in a pincushion or small container.

4. Construction paper (teacher to pre-cut into 5" x 5" squares), one per student and a few extra. Located on teacher's desk to be handed out later. This is a template and a backing.

5. Markers (dark colors) and chalk. This is for tracing around the 5" x 5" construction paper square onto the clothing. Chalk is the option to trace onto darker colored clothing. Located at Cutting and Tracing Station.

7. Eraser (used as the student's personal pin cushion). This is the designated spot where students place their hand-sewing needle when they are not using it, a way for them to always to keep track of their needle. Located on the student's desk.

8. Good quality fabric scissors (5 to 10 pairs). Located at Cutting and Tracing Station:

- a) to cut tags out of clothing
- b) to cut clothing fabric with ease

9. Other scissors: 5 x classroom quality scissors. To cut threads. Located at Needle and Thread Station.

10. Glue sticks. Used to glue paper template to fabric. Located at Gluing Station (10 or more glue sticks).

11. Hand sewing needles (larger eyed if possible for ease of threading). Located at Needle and Thread Station, in a pincushion.

12. Threads of various colors. As many color options as possible. Located at Needle and Thread Station.

13. Pin cushion(s) at Needle and Thread Station. This is where the hand-sewing needles live and return to. The goal...no lost needles!

**Notes on clothing selection:**

- No underwear or socks
- Clothing item(s) need to have the "made in" tag still attached
- Washed/clean clothing items please
- Student should consult and confirm with parent on the chosen item of clothing
- Teacher should bring in extra items of clothing or students can bring more than one
- Avoid thick or heavy materials (like jean or leather), too hard to sew through
- They will not get the clothing back, we will be cutting them up for our artwork materials
- Clothing item(s) need to be big enough for a 5" x 5" square to be cut out of garments

## ***Space Requirements – Setting up your classroom***

Set up 5 stations in classroom. Students will work at their desk or in groups around tables when not up and needing to be at workstations.

### **1. Map Station**

- a) Printed out large map of the world secured to backing that students can pin into. Located on wall or on a table.

### **2. Cutting and Tracing Station**

- a) scissors
  - to cut tags out of clothing but more importantly several pairs of good quality scissors to cut clothing with ease (younger students will need help with this)
- b) dark colored markers and some light colored chalk
  - to trace 5" x 5" construction paper square template onto clothing

### **3. Gluing Station**

- a) several glue sticks
  - you may want to protect your work surface from getting glue on it

### **4. Needle and Thread Station**

- a) straight pins for "made in" clothing tags to be pinned onto world map (may want to place pins in a pin cushion or something similar for students to handle pins easier), one pin per student plus extras
- b) a few pairs of scissors to cut threads (common classroom scissors will work fine here)
- c) larger eye hand-sewing needles, one per student plus a few extras
- d) pin cushion (all hand sewing needles start and end up in the pin cushion)
- e) Sewing threads (not embroidery but common sewing threads), a large variety of colors

### **5. Spot on floor to lie out and compose the group piece**

## ***Notes:***

- You will need volunteers to help with cutting and threading and knotting. Younger kids especially. We recommend one helper per three students.
- Teacher knows the class best and things like age appropriate skills (tracing, cutting, threading needles) and class size (numbers for amount of shared resource items – scissors, glue sticks, pins, needles)
- Second hand stores often have things like bags of thread, pin cushions, pins and needles





## ***Teacher Guided Hands-on Activity Instruction (45min-1hr)***

*Note: younger kids will need help cutting, threading and knotting. Suggested to have one helper per three students.*

1. Student at desk with their piece of clothing, pencil eraser out on your desk. The eraser is for their sewing needle. This is where the needle always lives if they are not using it. Please stress this: always put the needle in the eraser when not using it. We don't want any needles on the floor at end of day. If they do happen to drop it, attempt to find it right away and please make sure to tell teacher if you didn't find it (sweep up after project is over just to be safe).
2. Teacher hands out pre-cut construction paper square to each student at their desk. Assure them they are all the same size, they may be different colors but that does not matter, you won't see the paper in the end. It is a template to use to trace out a square on their piece of clothing. The paper also makes all squares the same size and easier to piece together in the end. The paper is also used as a backing for the fabric, this makes it easier to hold and sew. They are eventually going to glue this piece of paper to their fabric square.
3. Now ask students to spend some time thinking about what part of their clothing that they want to cut out to use for their artwork. Think about the color, pattern, seams, pockets...what part is appealing to you? Interesting to you as the artist?

4. When ready they will go over to the Cutting and Tracing Station. Trace around your square piece of paper directly onto your fabric with either a marker or chalk (whatever will show up best) and then using the good scissors cut out the fabric square (teacher there to help). Leave your leftover or non-needed cut up piece of clothing there (at Cutting and Tracing Station) as part of the community scrap pile. Everyone can use these discards to make their fabric X pieces later on.
5. Students take their cut out fabric square and their paper square over to the Gluing Station. Spread glue stick all over the paper making sure the edges and corners of the paper have glue on them (teacher there to help).
6. Place the gluey paper onto the back of your fabric square. Do this by placing your fabric square (good side down) on the table and then place the glued paper onto the back of your fabric square. Rub to secure the two pieces together, flip over, rub again.
7. Return to the Cutting and Tracing Station where the scrap fabric pile is located and pick out what pieces you want to use for your X shape. Your X is made with two separate strips of fabric. You have your choice of colors, lengths, widths, etc. Cut out two strips (teacher there to help). There is lots of fabric here if you want to re-cut or change your mind. Refer to my sample to show different ideas for the X.
8. Return to the Gluing Station and put glue on your two fabric X strips and place onto your fabric square. This is only a temporary hold to make things easier for you to sew.



9. Return to your desk with your fabric square (with paper glued to back and X glued on front). Leave it there on your desk.
10. Head over to the Needle and Thread Station (leave square on desk). You are going to pick out one color of thread to start with. You can always change colors as you go but right now you are picking out your first color only. The thread not only attaches everything together but also adds detail and color and pattern to make your artwork interesting and unique.
11. Pick your first thread color and cut a length as long as your arm span (hold thread spool in one hand and the end of the thread in your other hand, spread your arms wide and cut at that length). About 4' long.
12. Thread your needle (teacher there to help). The thread is doubled up (needle sits in middle of thread length). And tie a knot at end of the two threads.
13. Return to desk with your threaded needle. And remind them/ask them...where does your needle go when you aren't using it? Correct! In your eraser. The eraser is your needles home when it is not in your hand.
14. Emphasize that there is no rush to finish. Art takes time. Sewing takes time and concentration. Enjoy the process and learning a new skill. Someday you can sew your own clothes or patch your own clothes or become a textile artist. Think about the people who made your clothes and how far away your clothes came from.

15. Time to sew! Remember how Laura taught us the running stitch? Identify which is the top of your artwork and start sewing across the fabric, horizontally or from left to right/right to left (versus up and down vertically). Start on an edge (versus in the middle of the fabric) and go across the square (and freely across the X wherever your stitches land). (**Hyperlink** how to running stitch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4nhj8kMpAI>). And remember to start your first stitch from the back (your needle comes thru the back first) so the knot is on the backside of your artwork/fabric. Think about trying to keep your stitches sort of the same length and the spaces in between your stitches the same size. As a general rule, you want to end up with 7 to 10 running stitch lines across your work.
16. You will eventually run out of thread. Don't let your thread get too short because it will be hard to tie off. A rule of thumb is once your thread is about the length of your finger it is time to tie it off on the back of your artwork.
17. To rethread, take your artwork over to the Needle and Thread Station. Pick more thread (maybe a change of color? It is up to you). Cut the thread to length. Cut your needle off your thread and re-thread your needle and knot your thread. . Return to your desk.
18. Remember to tie off your cut thread on the back of your artwork so it doesn't come out later. Continue sewing back and forth across your artwork. Remember your knots should be on the back of your artwork.
19. Sew the entire face of the artwork using the running stitch, going back and forth across the square, back and forth across the X. You should end up with around 8 lines across your artwork.

20. Great! You are now done Step 1 of the stitching part of your textile artwork. Everything is stitched down and attached with the running stitch. Step 2: now it is time to sew the X part to make it stand out a bit more and to have some fun adding detail. You can use different colors of thread, different patterns; have fun and play! At the very least do a running stitch on each strip of the X (to secure it and to highlight it). Step 3: experiment and play! Stitch wherever you want now on your artwork. How about making some X's with thread? Circles, stars, flowers?
21. When students are all done stitching, ALL needles go back into the pincushion at the Needle and Thread Station.
22. Teacher to designate a spot on the floor to lie out all the squares as they are completed, have some fun arranging them into one large square (or rectangle shape) on the floor. Let the students play around with composition and color and what they think looks best beside each other. Come to a consensus. Make sure all the running stitch lines are going the same way (horizontally). If you need another square or two ask a keen student to make another (or teacher makes one later).
23. Pair up the student whose artworks are side by side on the floor. Those two students will sew their two artwork squares together into one. Place one artwork square onto the other, face-to-face, good side to good side with the running stitches going the same way. Take note of which edge to sew together. Goal is for the final group piece to have all the stitch lines going the same direction, horizontally.
24. The two student artists head over to the Needle and Thread Station together. Thread and knot a needle with any color thread. Make sure the two artworks are lined up as best as possible. One student holds the two artworks steady as the other student sews along the identified/noted edge of the artwork with a running stitch. Tie off thread and then open up the two pieces and flatten the seam.

25. Return the sewn piece to the spot on floor from where it came. Continue sewing all blocks together as described above. As the piece gets larger (more pieces get attached together) and heavier the students should sew the pieces together in place (sitting on floor and sewing).
26. For the students who are done before others: get them to finish off the edges of the group piece. Start with the top edge of the group piece (to reinforce strength when hanging) and if you have time, do all the edges. Do this by cutting strips from the scrap pile at 2" wide by various lengths. Fold strips around outer edge of the piece and use the running stitch to attach. This will finish the piece off nicely. Several students can work on this at once.
27. Done! Awesome job! Install the artwork on the wall using small nails along top edge (or you may have your own ideas for installation). Display with the world map of tags beside the collaborative textile artwork.
28. Ps. clean up and sweep up in case any needles were dropped.

