

MATERIALS

- fabric pieces 18" x 22" (for each student)
- pencils
- scissors
- glue and glue brushes
- feathers
- sequins
- pom-poms
- beads
- plastic jewels
- buttons
- bells (optional)
- small fabric pieces, scraps, & ribbon
- scrap paper, newspaper

RESOURCES

- Museum of International Folk Art, Online Collections.
<http://collection.internationalfolkart.org/search/retablo>
- Smithsonian Folklife Festival - Ayacucho Crafts.
<https://festival.si.edu/2015/peru/crafts/ayacucho-crafts/smithsonian>

VOCABULARY (definitions on page 4)

- **Festival**
- **Embroidery**
- **Stump work**
- **Esclavinas**

NATIONAL VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS

- **Creating:** Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.
- **Presenting:** Interpreting and sharing artistic work.
- **Responding:** Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.
- **Connecting:** Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.



Dance Cape. Huayucachi, Junin, Peru, ca. 1958. Gift of the Girard Foundation Collection Corporation, MOIFA. Photograph by Blair Clark.

Folk Art of the Andes

Peruvian Dance Capes

INTRODUCTION

The Andes is the great mountain range of South America that extends along the western coast of the continent. It is separated into three natural regions, with the north running through Venezuela and Colombia and the south through parts of Argentina and Chile. The central area, encompassed by Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, was the most important for the development of prehispanic cultures.

OBJECTIVES

1. To learn about how dance capes are an important part of celebrations in the Andean region (historical and cultural understanding).
2. To recognize the different types of dance capes in the Andes and the characters that they convey (perceiving, analyzing and responding).
3. To find different ways to construct a dance cape by using a variety of materials and by exploring line, color, shape and form. (Creating and performing).

Folk Art of the Andes

INTRODUCTION

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In the early nineteenth century, colonial citizens in different parts of the Andes began to organize an independence movement to free themselves of the Spanish Crown. This led to a series of battles where the Spanish military opposed troops consisting of colonists and Indians. By 1829, the liberators had succeeded and several autonomous republics were founded. Within this post-Independence environment, folk art began to flourish. Mestizo and indigenous artists were freer to create useful and beautiful things for their own benefit and for trade to a broader market.



Questions for Discussion:

- How would you describe the environment in which you live?
- Is it a mountainous region?
- What types of vegetation thrive in your area?
- What is the history of the peoples?
- Were there indigenous people who lived where you do?
- What happened when people from Europe came?

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Make a Dance Cape

MOTIVATION

- Talk to your students about the way that Peruvian dancers wear capes decorated with images of historical and current events in annual local festivals. The heavily embroidered capes are part of a costume which includes a shirt, pants, mask, anchor and a bell, which dancers hold in their hands. Ask them to think about and discuss historical or current events which have had an impact on their lives.
- Tell the students that they will be making capes which celebrate a historical or current event, make a political or social statement or describe an imagery event. They can think about which of these have the most personal relevance and sketch their ideas on paper.

PROCEDURE

1. Have each student select a large piece of fabric for their dance cape. The capes can be worn either by tying the corners around the neck or by cutting an opening into the top section of the fabric. If students will be cutting a space for their head, they should make an "x" shape several inches away from the top edge of the fabric. Then, they can put their head through to make sure it will fit. They can cut out more fabric to make a shape for their head to go through, such as a circle, rectangle, heart, etc., or leave the "x."
2. Students can imagine how they would like to compose their scene on their cape.
3. They can draw the most important shapes from their sketch onto the smaller pieces of fabric and fabric scraps and cut them out.
4. After they arrange the shaped pieces on the cape, they can place them on top of newspaper to brush glue on the backs of the shapes, being sure to apply glue evenly to all of the edges.
5. Students will place the glued fabric pieces on the cape.
6. They can add additional decorative elements, such as pom-poms, bells, buttons, etc.
7. Set aside to dry.



EVALUATION

- Have students share their capes by wearing them in front of the class and taking turns describing the scenes on the back. Ask them to talk about why they chose to depict their scene.

EXTENSIONS & CONNECTIONS

- Create and perform dramatizations of the stories or scenes depicted on their capes to the class or to the school at large.

VOCABULARY

1. **Conquistador** - a leader in the Spanish conquest of America in the 15th & 16th centuries.
2. **Festival** - a time for merrymaking especially with a program of cultural events
3. **Embroidery** - the art of working raised and ornamental designs in threads of silk, cotton, gold, silver, or other material, upon any woven fabric, leather, paper, etc., with a needle.
4. **Stump work** - embroidery technique that involves wrapping the thread around wooden forms or other stuffed shapes to create a three-dimensional surface texture.
5. **Esclavinas** - capes worn by dancers in the annual fiesta for the Virgen de Cocharcas in the town of Sapallanga.



Peruvian Dance Capes



Dance Capes. Huayucachi, Junin, Peru, ca. 1960. Gifts of Lloyd E. Cotsen and the Neutrogena Corporation, MOIFA. Photograph by Blair Clark.

These dance capes or *esclavinas*, are capes worn by dancers in the annual celebration for the Virgen de Cocharcas in the town of Sapallanga, in Peru's central sierra. These costumes are made by men and their families as a cottage industry and rented to dancers from different villages in the area who come to Sapallanga to participate in the *festival*. The dancers carry an anchor and a bell and are accompanied by drums and a brass band. The embroidery technique, known as *stump work*, involves wrapping the thread around wooden forms or other stuffed shapes to create a three-dimensional surface texture. The subject matter portrayed in the embroidery has evolved since the nineteenth century; many examples express themes related to South American military history. There is also a fascination in portraying modern technology, as shown with the airplanes flying overhead.

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TEACHER GUIDES

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FILM

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