

# Christo Brooch

## An Homage to *The Gates*

Marge Widmar

A visit to New York City's Central Park to see *The Gates* by Christo and Jeanne-Claude last February has become a relished memory. The saffron-colored *Gates* come to mind now, sometimes against the brilliant white snow, sometimes against the true blue sky, or from atop Central Park's Belvedere Castle, hanging perfectly still and straight or twisting and blowing in the wind.

Walking through the park that day under *The Gates*, there was a feeling of only good—no bad existed—just nature and the elements and people enjoying the

experience. Children atop parents' shoulders giggled as the fabric brushed against their foreheads. Smiles and expressions of awe warmed the air.

### Sharing the Experience

Prior to my going to New York, I introduced my classes to the work of Christo and Jeanne-Claude and presented numerous books and examples of their art. Before my flight to the City, I had a strong urge to person-

**I shared my *Gates* experience and photos with students and they created their own *Gates*-inspired brooches.**

ally participate in some way with the next day's experience and, as a result, made a saffron fabric and bead brooch to wear on my winter coat. Upon returning, I shared my *Gates* experience and photos with students and they created their own *Gates*-inspired brooches.

My objectives included an emphasis on awareness and application of color, value, shape, and textural balance. Students experimented with a large variety of supplies, in a wide range of saffron orange color values. Some students applied the "wrapping concept" as they had observed in the artists' fabric-surrounded and tied objects, buildings, and bridges.

### A Variety of Approaches

Three approaches were presented to create the brooch: **(1.)** The materials could be attached (glued, tied, etc.) to a base of mat board and when completed, a pin back would be glued to the back. **(2.)** The material could be attached to the pin back itself, pushing it through the holes or tying it around the metal. **(3.)** The third method was to use a good-sized safety pin and

### Materials

- the herb saffron (dried stigma) for origin of the color, presented for inspiration and clarification
- cut strips of numerous kinds of fabric in various saffron values
- saffron ribbons of various widths in silk and satin
- eyelash and other types of yarn fibers
- threads, floss, thin raffia
- beads
- needle and thread
- sequins
- various shapes and sizes of mat boards
- pin backs/safety pins
- craft glue
- hot glue gun
- iron (to press fabric, ribbons)

attach the materials around the metal wire that does not go through the clothing.

All three approaches were successful and each brooch became unique wearable art. Some students invented other approaches for a base, such as forming wire into a circle. One student used a matchbox, collaging a diagonal image of Christo and Jeanne-Claude on the outside and allowing the little drawer to open and close.

In the spring, Lorain County Community College hosts an Academic Fair for children from local schools. Faculty and staff volunteer to do special workshops with these children. Students created Christo Brooches and were happy with the experience, wearing their brooches as they left the classroom. 🧐

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### NATIONAL STANDARD

*Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.*

### WEB LINK

[www.christojeanneclaude.net](http://www.christojeanneclaude.net)



*Created by Diane M. Smith. She used a matchbox base. The little drawer slides in and out to store treasures.*