Pearl at Home

Art projects designed for family fun, for suggested ages of 5 and up to be completed at home with easily-accessible art materials.

FRENCH KNOT TREES

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MATERIALS

• 1 brown paper lunch bag
• 1 piece of cardboard cut to the same size as the bottom of the lunch bag
• Tissue paper in several colors (cut into pieces 3” wide, 6-8” long)
• Scissors
• Glue or glue stick
• Optional: pencils, ruler, tape

ABOUT FRENCH KNOTS

The French knot is a type of stitch in which the thread is wrapped around the needle, then passed back through the fabric to create a 3-dimensional dot. This decorative knot is known by several other names, including the Chinese stitch, colonial knot, forbidden knot, and knot stitch.

Several of the quilts we currently have on display in our Stitched: Contemporary Quilt Art from the International Quilt Festival Collection exhibition use French knots in their designs.

This project offers a no-sew paper version of this common needlework stitch.
DIRECTIONS

1. Start by opening the bag and placing the piece of cardboard into the very bottom. Close it and refold the bag, leaving the cardboard at the bottom. This is the base of your tree.

2. Being sure to cut through ALL layers of your paper bag, make 3-5 slits from the top (open end) to the crease you can see on the side of the bag. If there is no crease, cut to just past the center of the bag, as shown.

3. To make the trunk, hold on to the top part of the bag (where your slits are), then twist the bottom part. Twist only until you get to the beginning of your slits. You can add some glue as you twist to make it sturdier, but try not to make it too sticky on the outside. You can also add tape at the lower end of the slits.

4. To make the branches, twist each section ABOVE the slits separately. You can add a little tape at the lower end of the branches. Set the tree aside.
To make the knots, choose several colors of tissue paper and cut them into pieces 3 inches wide and 6-8 inches long. Twirl each separately into long twists. Tie each twist into a simple knot. Then, working one end at a time, roll each loose end around the knot in opposite directions; tuck the ends in. Make all your knots before continuing.

Put a dot of glue on a knot and place it on a branch of your tree. Glue on all the knots to make your tree blossom!