



by Loren Woerpel, Noc Bay Trading Company

MANDELLA

The Mandella wall hanging comes out of the tradition of the Southwest native peoples. The materials attached to or hanging from a hoop remind us of creation, the birds, animals, Mother Earth and all living things, through it's materials, shape and colors.

We prefer the more simple designs seen today so suggest avoiding "over dressing" your mandella.

The basic structure starts with the hoop. When using a manufactured hoop like a bare metal ring, you need to cover it with yarn or leather. For both you use the same techniques. Our example will use yarn.

Uncoil yarn from a skene and roll into a ball. You only need to do as much as required for the size of your ring. Coat the ring with rubber cement or contact cement and let dry until tacky.

With the yarn ball in your right hand (for right handed people) begin winding the yarn on the ring by overlapping the starting end as in Figure 1. Keep winding to the left around the hoop. End with a cinch knot as in Figure 2.

Lay out a rabbit fur with the skin side up. Select the best part of the skin and lay the hoop over it. Using a pen, draw a circle the same size as the hoop. Remove the hoop and now draw another circle 1/2 inch inside the first. Cut this inside circle out using a sharp scissors and only short strokes with the tip of the scissors to avoid cutting much fur hairs.

Orient the direction of the rabbit hair so the hair hangs down. Starting at the top, punch small holes at top, bottom and both sides. Also punch holes half way between these holes. These are the lacing points to attach the fur circle to the hoop. Cut eight 8 inch soft thongs for ties. Thread the thongs through each of the 8 holes and tie them over the hoop as in Figure 3 to evenly space the rabbit within the hoop.

This will leave about 3 inch fringe ends. The top fringe pair are tied together and used to hang up the mandella. Decorate the others with crow beads and finish the ends by crimping metal cones onto each end with a pliers as in Figure 4.

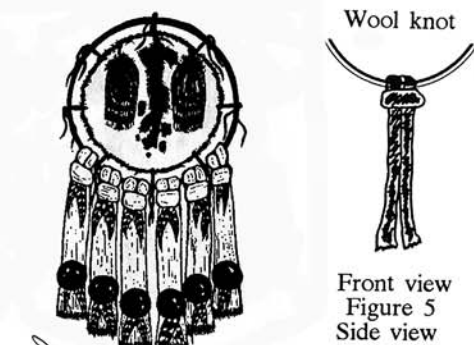


Figure 1

Overlapping
start of thread



Figure 2

Figure 3

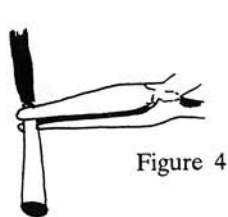
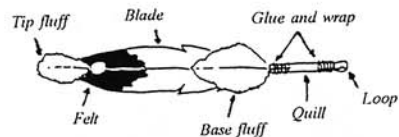


Figure 4



Wool knot



Front view
Figure 5
Side view



Cut the wool into 3 pieces, about 1 yard in length. For a 10" diameter hoop, split each wool length evenly into two lengths by dividing the wool at the top end and pulling it apart. With the first length, fold the piece over in half. Form a knot over the hoop as in Figure 5 and snugly pull tight to the hoop. Repeat for all of the pieces of wool.

All of the wool dangles may be cut off at the same length, or you can tier the lengths with the shortest outside and the longest inside.

The bottoms of the wool dangles can be tied with leather thong and decorated as those used to tie the rabbit to the hoop. You can also attach the wool dangles together with large wood beads with 1/2" center holes. Twist the ends of the wool into a point and then twist the wood bead in the same direction onto the wool as if you are attaching a nut to a bolt.

When you can pull the wool through the hole of the bead, move the bead to the position you desire and make a fresh end by cutting the wool off at the bottom.

Now you are ready to finish the decorating according to your tastes. Among the items available can be, yarn, hackles feathers, fluffs, hairpipe, conchos, shells, wing or tail feathers, or other special items to be attached that have particular meaning to you.

Light items like hackle or fluffs can be attached under the wool knots on the hoops or under the wood beads on the bottom of the wool dangles by putting a drop of glue on the base of their quill and while still wet, insert the quill ends into the wool directly under the bead or knot. Other heavier items need to be hung with leather thong or simulated sinew.

Wing or tail feathers can be trimmed into desired length and shape and then prepared with base loops in the same way we prepare our award feathers. See ideas in Figure 6. You can attach any of these items with thongs through holes in the rabbit hide and tie in the back or tie on the rim of the hoop.

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Figure 6