



# **Art Guide: Woven in Place**

***An invitation to connect our  
stories of land and body***



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## **ABOUT INDIAN LAW RESOURCE CENTER**

Founded in 1978, the Indian Law Resource Center provides assistance to Indian Nations and Indigenous peoples in the United States and throughout the Americas to combat racism and oppression; to protect their lands and environment; to protect their cultures and ways of life; to achieve sustainable economic development and genuine self-government; and to realize their other human rights.



# AN INVITATION TO CONNECT OUR STORIES OF LAND AND BODY

The Indian Law Resource Center welcomes you to co-create a woven story of land and body...this is an invitation to share with a global audience of change-makers and community members about a place of significance and belonging to you and your relatives. By reflecting on the safety, security, healing, memory, and teachings we as Indigenous peoples draw from our relationship with land, water, and sky, we can honor the places that have held us. Creating has always been a part of Indigenous values, and we carry that tradition forward by using art as a form of advocacy.

Attachment to place is resistance to severance. Art is an act of political, social and personal power. Art is part of how we witness and grieve during the assault of our bodies, land, water and our more than human relatives.

This invitation is a call to action: a demand to hold extractive industries and enabling/benefiting governments accountable by illustrating visually how their values, words, and actions are a destructive thread that threatens the places, the people, and the memories we hold.

Calls to action can take the form of legislative or policy fixes, other times they look like lawsuits, demands to defund, or for additional oversight. This call to action is a radical invitation to connect by creating a large-scale enduring community weave that tells OUR lived experiences of this violence.

The act of co-creating a woven representation of our lived experiences is a practice of connection. The practice of connection through art is both political and cultural. Each weaving that is sent to us will be connected to another making a thin but long line of our interlocking stories. The primary objective is the depth of our connection to loved ones (human and more than human), and the secondary objective is to name that which is destructive to these relationships.

Regardless of your perceived artistic experiences or strengths, we hope that you boldly engage in this action. The staff at the Indian Law Resource Center are attorneys and advocates. While some of us have some artistic ability, art is most certainly not our focus. But storytelling is.

There are many ways to engage in this shared practice, and we will be updating and continuing to invite communities and individuals to this space over the next several months. This Art Guide is meant as a way to help you start! If you want to host something in your community to further explore these conversations, there is a facilitator guide at the end of this document that includes questions to help guide you.

# PURPOSE STATEMENT

## Why are we doing this?

The Indian Law Resource Center works across many themes politically and legally, specifically gender-based violence and violence against land. This includes the dispossession of land and the dispossession of bodily autonomy. When we started this discussion, we were focused on our upcoming CSW Parallel Event at the United Nations in March of 2026. Our focus has shifted to extend beyond this fixed date. Though our conversations prioritize the legal and political relationship of governments to Indian Nations and how to protect and support our relatives across Turtle Island and the globe, we necessarily treaded into discussions about the places that matter to us as Indigenous people on staff— what creation stories connect us to these places, what familial histories are held within the land and the water, our cosmovisions, our teachings, and our identity. We are uniquely aware of the threats that extractive industries proliferate on our land, water, air and bodies. Some of us are first-line defenders, some of us protect in court, some of us engage in other political spaces, but all of us are impacted daily by living in these spaces or by being separated from them. Each of these experiences are violent. This is personal to us.

We constantly face the reality of our shared histories. Our work is emotionally and intellectually challenging— which is why the practice of connecting is an act of ceremony. We recently shared space together in Helena, MT (where we are headquartered) and spent an evening weaving on borrowed looms in our office manager's basement. We were welcomed, no matter our level of experience, to create. We were far from home, we did not all speak the same language, none of us had supplies...but we engaged in the practice of connection and weaving provided the medium for us to do so. We shared photos of our families weaving together, we shared stories about how important home was to us, we talked about grief, and we laughed.

This collective weaving will be a visual call to action that we will display on our website ([www.indianlaw.org](http://www.indianlaw.org)) and it will serve as a representation of our shared histories and resiliency. The final art piece on our website will include an interactive component – visitors of our site will be able to click on each individual square and learn about the place of significance and the violence experienced by the community due to environmental injustice and exploitation. We hope this space can be used to educate, uplift, and honor the history of our Indigenous lands. We will also look at hosting it as an exhibit and will be working with our partners to determine how the weave can fit into our collective actions in the shared work that we do.



# HOW TO PARTICIPATE

## WHAT TO CREATE

- The goal of this project is to create SOMETHING woven (weavings, embroideries, cross stitch, etc.) within certain size constraints (no bigger than 8x10 in. and no smaller than 4x6 in.) to show a place of significance for you and to examine the impacts of land and body violence. Maybe you are critically aware of the impacts of deforestation in your area. Maybe you are connected to the Great Lakes and want to dive into the industries that are interfering with the patterns of these waters.
- You can use any materials that you have, but examples include:
  - yarn, canvas, photographs, paper, recycled materials, pine needles, sawgrass, sweetgrass, or other traditional materials.
- Weaving is a simple process, but we suggest using a cardboard loom to help you. Cardboard looms can be made at home by following simple guides such as those included here:
  - [How to Make a Cardboard Loom](#)
  - [DIY Cardboard Weaving Loom](#)
  - [Make a Cardboard Loom and Weave](#)

## ● Important Dates

- September 30, 2026 - DEADLINE for first showing (Details to come)
  - Indian Law Resource Center  
Care of: Melanie Dayton  
602 North Ewing Street  
Helena, MT 59601

## ● Who Should Participate

ANYONE who aligns with the mission of this event and the values espoused by the Indian Law Resource Center. All relatives are welcome to participate.

# HOW TO SUBMIT

## What Should Accompany Your Submission:

- Your name (and anything else you would like for us to know about you).
- Your Tribal or Indigenous affiliation, if any (not required to participate)
- The location of the place you have woven/coordinates of your location
- 150-300 words (in any language) about why this location is significant to you, and the connection between this location and land/ and body violence (mining, logging, oil extraction, rare earth extraction, pollution, sexual assault, human trafficking, domestic violence, dating violence, strangulation, stalking, violence against land defenders, systemic injustices, historical injustices, etc.) Identify the threats to the place you have highlighted, if you feel comfortable.
- Other aspects or items you may want to include:
  - Photo of self
  - Photo of location
  - Story connected to location
  - Language translation
  - Organizations or practices you wish to uplift
  - Policy recommendations or direct action you want to elevate and center
  - You can submit these via our convenient form (QR code below) OR you can mail them in with your submission if that is easier. Please understand that materials will not be returned, so please do not send anything sentimental (such as photographs, etc., unless you have kept additional copies).



**ART AS ADVOCACY  
SUBMISSION FORM**



# PROMPTS AND SUPPLIES

## ● Prompting

- Think about a place of significance for you. This could be land, water, sky, a specific worldview or cosmology, a memory, a story.
  - Reflect on how this place is protected.
  - Reflect on how this place is at risk for violent extractive industries.
  - Think about the people and the non-human relatives who exist within this space.
  - How do all of these relatives relate to and experience this place you have identified?
  - How is the violence this place experiences connected to the violence experienced by the relatives who live there or who have a connection to this place?
- How can you visually represent this place in a weave? (Draw out some thoughts. You don't need to be an artist!). What colors bring this place back to you? What smells or textures remind you of this place?

## ● Supplies (these are just suggestions; you can use any materials or processes that work for you)

- A medium to weave with (yarn, strips of canvas, pine needles, sweetgrass, paper, recycled materials, etc.).
- String of some sort (needs to be somewhat strong/durable...but we promise to treat submissions with respect, care, and gentleness).
- A loom (cardboard looms are great) or other tools for your weaving process.
- Tapestry needle or something to use as a shuttle (a tool to help carry the yarn through the threads).
- A space for reflection and a journal or other way to collect your thoughts.



# LOOKING TO HOST A COMMUNITY NIGHT? HERE IS A *FACILITATOR* GUIDE TO ASSIST YOU.

- Start by sharing a little about yourself, introduce whom you brought together, and give them some information about the Indian Law Resource Center. Share what inspired you to host a community weave in support of our efforts to address land and body violence.
- Ensure that you have enough materials for participants or request for participants to bring their own materials. Encourage people to bring extras for others who may not have access to materials.
- Review the prompt shared above to help people get going on their narrative/connection to a place of significance to them.

## ● **Questions to further explore as a group:**

- What places of significance do we have in common?
- Encourage people to share about why they are selecting their space (can be done as people are working on their weave).
- What threats can we identify that are impacting us and our spaces? Who or what benefits from those threats?
- What protects our places if anything? (Treaties, individuals, advocacy organizations, laws, etc.)
- Are there experiences of violence in the places identified? What resources exist to support individuals and groups who are impacted by this violence?
- What is the historical story of the places we have identified?
- If you live and work in a largely non-Indigenous space, consider focusing heavily on the impact to Indigenous peoples and the legacy of land stewardship.



We wish to share our gratitude for our co-sponsors and our partners for their support and ongoing advocacy. This project could not be possible without the connection and movement building of our cohort of resource centers, grassroots organizations, international advocates, and community members.

### **Co-Sponsors and Partners**

- Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center
- National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center
- International Mayan League
- Alliance of Tribal Coalitions to End Violence
- Minnesota Indian Women’s Sexual Assault Coalition
- Cardozo School of Law Human Rights and Atrocities Prevention Clinic
- Pouhana O Nā Wāhine

*We also want to express our sincere thanks to Vera Ergeson, citizen Forest County Potawatomi, for her time, her artistic brilliance, her curiosity, and the joy she helped to generate around this project. The Indian Law Resource Center was honored to collaborate with such a bold and deeply creative relative.*



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**“ATTACHMENT TO PLACE  
IS RESISTANCE TO  
SEVERANCE. ART IS AN  
ACT OF POLITICAL, SOCIAL  
AND PERSONAL POWER.  
ART IS PART OF HOW WE  
WITNESS AND GRIEVE  
DURING THE ASSAULT OF  
OUR BODIES, LAND,  
WATER, AND OUR MORE  
THAN HUMAN RELATIVES.”**

**- VERA ERGESON,  
CITIZEN FOREST COUNTY  
POTAWATOMI**

