



ART ON THE GO

August 4, 2021

Reusable Tote

Design your own reusable canvas tote bag to be used again and again while you are out and about.

Everyday objects that serve a function, such as bags, can be beautiful. Bags, specifically plastic bags, are typically thrown away after each use. This action pollutes the earth. Most plastic bags all look the same. They tear easily because we know we will throw them away. Create your own reusable bag with a special one-of-a-kind design that you are proud to use.

Native American artist Peter G. Jemison (Seneca, Heron Clan) created this painted bag with crows on it. He transformed a plain brown paper bag into an object of beauty. He upcycled a functional bag into something unique and special. Jemison's art brings attention to the human relationship with the natural world. In this artwork, we can think about our relationship to birds and the environment. Look at the pair of crows on the front of the bag and how they are interacting with each other. Notice the detailed lines on the wings and around them, and how the whole design wraps around the side of the bag.



G. Peter Jemison, *Winter Crows (Paris)*, 2009, ink, China marker, foil, prefabricated yellow bag, 17 × 10¾ × 4¾ in. Clara S. Peck Fund. 2017.19.2

One easy way to take action and pollute less is by using a tote bag instead of one-time use plastic bags that are toxic to the earth. People have a choice in how they care for the earth. What choice will you make the next time you need to use a bag?

Materials:

- White canvas tote bag
- Fabric markers
- Piece of cardboard or newspaper (approximate size 13” square) – not included

Please note the fabric markers are permanent! They do not wash out of clothing.

Steps:

1. Insert a piece of 13” square cardboard or scrap newspaper inside your tote bag so that the marker designs do not bleed through to the other side. This will allow you to design both sides of your bag.
2. Use your imagination and draw your own design on your bag.
3. Think about your relationship with plants and animals that you love and try adding some designs inspired by nature.
4. Try drawing a line pattern that wraps around to the sides and back of your bag. Repeating shapes or lines is a great way to add simple designs to your creation to make it stand out.
5. Use your tote in style! The next time you are out and about and need a bag, use your colorful tote. You can use it for shopping, carrying books, sleepovers, going to the lake, on long car rides and so much more.



Be creative and have fun!

