

# Art Activity

## Create your own Year of the Metal Ox Ornament!



VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

**Take & Make:** Create your own Ornament

**Ages:** 8+

**Collection:** East Asian

**Culture/Region:** China

**Subject Area:** Fine Arts, Visual Arts

**Activity Type:** Hands-On Activity

### Create your own ornament inspired by Chinese Lunar New Year, Year of the Metal Ox.

China has a long history of decorative knotting. In ancient China, knots were once used to record events. Over the centuries, the art of knotting became a popular art form to adorn garments, pendants and hair accessories. As referenced in ancient literature, the Chinese knot remains one of the most favored ornaments during the Lunar New Year celebration.



A Chinese knot (中国结) is woven from a single cord, or thread, to create complex shapes that look the same from both the front and the back. Knots embody principles of balance and unity and each type of knot with its unique design has its own symbolic meaning, such as joy, peace, and longevity.

There are 11 basic types of knots, each with different levels of intricacy. More elaborate knots are created by repeating or combining basic knots.

Each Lunar New Year in China brings a new zodiac animal. An ox occurs every 12 years and represents positive characteristics such as intelligent, honest, and reliable. A zodiac animal, such as 2021's Metal Ox, may also be included on Chinese knot ornaments to welcome a new lunar new year.

### Follow the steps below to create your own simplified knot ornament!

#### Materials:

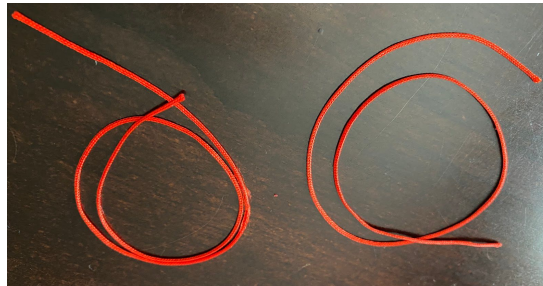
- Red Yarn(or cord)
- Crayons or markers
- Scissors
- Beads (we will be using red and yellow/gold, but you can use any color)
- Ox cut-out (this can be found on our ChinaFest event page on [VMFA.museum](http://VMFA.museum))

# Creating your own Metal Ox Ornament

1. Print and color your ox cut-out.



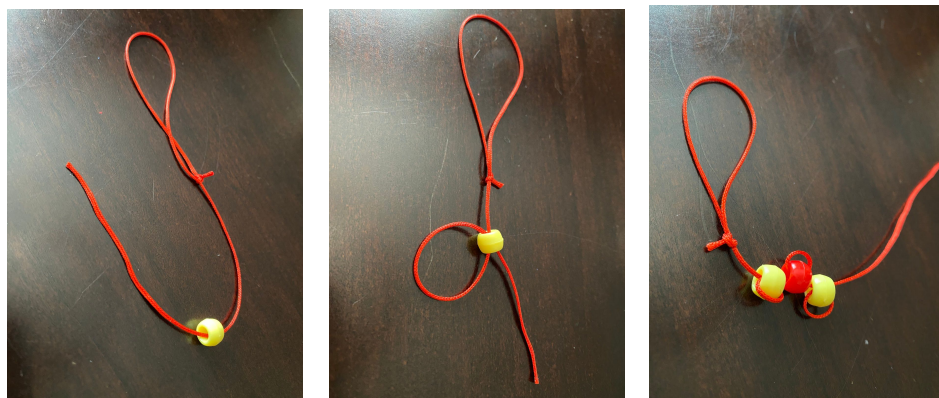
2. Cut out two, 12-inch pieces of cord or yarn.



3. Select one piece of cord/yarn; tie one end around the other end to make a loop.



4. String one or more beads onto the cord/yarn. You can stack the beads together or you can loop the cord back through the bead and make a knot.



5. Using a pencil, make a small hole at the top of the ox cut-out; lace the string containing your beads through, and tie a knot to secure it. Now, use the same pencil to make a small hole at the bottom of your ox cut-out and lace your second piece of cord through. Tie a knot to secure it.



**TOP**



**BOTTOM**

6. Place one or more beads on the cord at the bottom of your Ox and make a knot after the last bead to hold it in place and leave the excess cord.



7. To create a tassel, wrap a piece of string around 4 of your fingers 4-5 times. Once wrapped, cut one end of the bunch. Keeping the bundle together, find the excess cord at the bottom of the ox cut-out; this is where you will tie the bundle of string together to make a knotted tassel.



8. Tie the tassel onto the string at the bottom of your ox and cut the opposite end. If your tassel is loose, tie the individual pieces of yarn together to secure it.



9. Place your ornament in your desired space to attract good fortune!



## Explore More at VMFA!



**Reclining Ox**, 19th century  
Unknown Artist  
Chinese, Qing dynasty  
Nephrite (jade)  
[East Asian Gallery, VMFA](#)  
2003.76



**Boy Playing Flute on Ox**, 20th century  
Unknown Artist  
Chinese, Qing dynasty  
Dehua Ware - Porcelain  
[East Asian Gallery, VMFA](#)  
85.1487