



# Sound Capes

Inspired by the art of Nick Cave

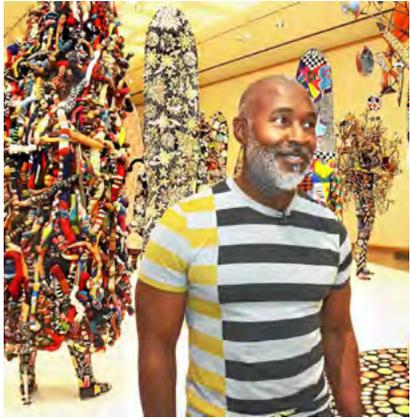


[www.PeninsulaSchoolofArt.org](http://www.PeninsulaSchoolofArt.org)

3900 County Rd. F | Fish Creek | 920.868.3455



# Artist Spotlight



## Nick Cave

The works of art pictured here are some of [Nick Cave's Soundsuits](#)—named so because when you move around in them, they often make noise. Nick makes them out of discarded objects he finds at thrift stores and things most people don't find valuable. Sometimes, he wears the *Soundsuits*, dancing in them or leading parades of people in them.

When Nick Cave made his first *Soundsuit* in 1992, he was thinking about the video of police beating Rodney King, another black man, the year before. He says, "I felt like my identity and who I was as a human being was up for question. I felt like that could have been me. Once that incident occurred, I was existing very differently in the world. So many things were going through my head: How do I exist in a place that sees me as a threat?"

Imagine whenever you left your house, people were afraid of you, just because of who you are. How would you feel? What would you want to do?



Nick Cave recalls what he did, saying, "I started thinking about the role of identity, being racially profiled, feeling devalued, less than, dismissed. And then I happened to be in the park this one particular day and looked down at the ground, and there was a twig. And I just thought, well, that's discarded, and it's sort of insignificant. And so I just started then gathering the twigs, and before I knew it, I was, had built a sculpture."

"At first, it didn't occur to me that I could wear it; I wasn't thinking about it." When he finally did put it on and moved around, it made a sound. "And that was the beginning," he says. "The sound was a way of alarming others to my presence. The suit became a suit of armor where I hid my identity. It was something 'other.' It was an answer to all of these things I had been thinking about: What do I do to protect my spirit in spite of all that's happening around me?"



Has there ever been a time when you wanted to walk around without people knowing who you are?

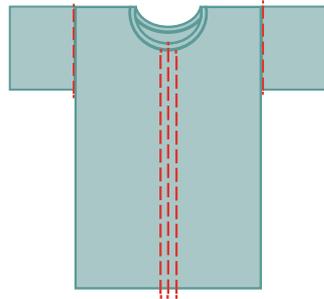
If so, talk about that time and why you felt that way. If not, talk about all the things in your community that are there to make you feel safe and comfortable. How might some of those same things make other people feel uncomfortable?

# Let's get started...

Nick Cave's suit was both protection and a way to hide, kind of like Harry Potter's cloak of invisibility. You can make something like a *Soundsuit* using the t-shirt in this bag. You can leave it as it is or cut it up the front to make a cape. Here's how:

## Making a cape

Cut all the way up the front of the t-shirt to open it up like a cardigan. On each side of this opening, cut a one inch strip up to the collar to make tying strings. Cut off the sleeves and sew closed the remaining holes.



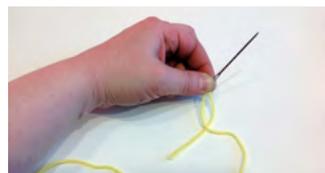
## Threading the needle

For young children, it is best to cut twice the length of yarn you'd like, double it up, and tie the ends together. This way, the needle is on a giant loop of yarn and cannot fall off. Older kids can just leave a tail of yarn, allowing them to take off the needle when they wish or cut the yarn off the project. To keep the needle from sliding off unintentionally, instruct them to hold the needle where the yarn comes out when they pull on it.



## Attachment

You can pinch the fabric, making two parallel snips at the fold to make two slits. Then, you can tie on strips of plastic like you would your shoes or make a hitch knot by folding the strips, threading the loop through the holes in the fabric, and pulling the ends through the loop.



Supplement the plastic bags with other materials. For less supple things like newspaper or sticks, tie or sew them on with yarn. For stiff cardboard and plastic, cut slits on opposite sides and circle the yarn through the narrower section between the slits. Fold foil pieces over the yarn and twist the ends together.

