

# Hooking: Craft and Art Form

## By definition:

Rug hooking is both an art and a craft where rugs are made by pulling loops of yarn or fabric through a stiff woven base such as burlap, linen, or rug warp. The loops are pulled through the backing material by using a crochet-type hook mounted in a handle (usually wood) for leverage.

In contrast latch-hooking uses a hinged hook to form a knotted pile from short, pre-cut pieces of yarn. Designs for the rugs are often commercially produced and can be as complex as flowers or animals to as simple as geometrics. *(source: Wikipedia)*

## A bit of history:

Rug-hooking has been popular in North America for at least the past 200 years. In its earliest years, rug hooking was a craft of poverty. Since hooking was a craft of poverty, rug makers put to use whatever materials were available. Antique hooked rugs were created on burlap after 1850 because burlap was free as long as one used old grain and feed bags. Every and any scrap of fibre that was no longer usable as clothing was put into rugs. In the United States, yarn was not a fibre of choice if one did not have access to thrums. Yarn was too precious, and had to be saved for knitting and weaving. Instead the tradition of using scraps of fabric evolved. Yarns and other creatively used materials have always been used for hooked rugs in the Canadian Maritimes. The well-known Cheticamp hooked rugs used finely spun yarns and the highly collectible Grenfell mats were meticulously hooked with recycled jerseys. Everything from cotton T-shirts to silk and nylon stockings were cut and used.

In more recent decades hookers have followed quilters in exploring new materials and new techniques. This experimentation, combined with knowledge and respect for the past, will allow rug hooking to evolve and grow in the 21st century. *(source: Wikipedia)*

### **Tools of the trade:**

- Strips of wool or other fabric; yarn, string, plastic bags, etc.
- a hook; a frame or hoop; a loosely woven sturdy fabric for backing
- Colours and textures of fabric, yarn, etc
- a design



### **Creative elements:**

- variation of strip width or thickness to achieve different effects
- hooking in straight or curved lines
- use of colour theory and colour planning
- how the hook is held in relation to the direction of hooking
- dyeing fabric many different ways
- effects created by where and how loops are pulled