

Mandala Rock Art

By Caponi Art Park

Project description:

Recommended for ages 6-Adult

Keep calm and relax by learning the art of mandala rocks. In this workshop, participants will learn the history and meaning behind mandala art, and apply that knowledge to their own mandala rock art. Whatever you decide, you'll certainly enjoy this serene workshop, and share your newly-discovered art form with friends and family.

Supply List:

- Large, flat stones
- Acrylic Paint, at least 3-4 different colors. You may also use tempera, but this will not survive outside without a clear coat of nail polish.
- A palette for putting paints on (Use something washable, or something you can just throw away afterwards.)
- Toothpicks or the end of a paintbrush. (You just need something pointed that you are willing to get paint on.)
- Scrap paper (For practicing)
- Water cup and paper towel
- Clear nail polish (if available)

Project instructions:

- Lay rocks flat on the table. Each participant should have several rocks to decorate. Have the participants go on a "Rock Hunt" outdoors prior to the workshop.
- Set out paints on the palette, and carefully dip pointed tip into paint. Rinse and wipe with a paper towel when switching to a different color paint.
- Create a pattern, placing one dot of paint at a time, until the pattern is complete. The pattern is usually circular, but really any design will work.
- Participants should pay attention to rhythm, balance, and colors in their design.
- Optional: Paint a happy message on the back of the rock (once the top has dried).
- Once the paint is dry, participants may cover their rocks in a clear coat (clear nail polish works for this). You must use a clear coat if you used tempera paint, but it is recommended for acrylic paint as well.
- Let rocks lay face-up to dry for a couple of hours.

- For fun, place your rocks in front of your home so that people walking by can see your beautiful artwork!

Example of Finished Project:



Discussion Questions:

- How did you incorporate rhythm and balance in your mandala rocks?
- What geometric shapes and patterns can you see in your mandala art?
- How did color and dot size play a role in how your mandala rock turned out?

Short Lesson Plan for Mandala Rocks:

- Mandala is a spiritual and/or ritual geometric configuration of symbols in the Indian religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism or Japanese religion of Shintoism representing deities, or in the case of Shintoism, paradises, kami or actual shrines.



Thangka painting of Manjuvajra mandala

- In modern, typically American use, "mandala" has become a generic term for any diagram, chart or geometric pattern that represents the cosmos metaphysically or symbolically; a cosmic diagram that shows us our relation to the infinite, the world that extends beyond and within our minds and bodies.
- The basic form of most mandalas is a square with four gates containing a circle with a center point. Each gate is in the general shape of a T. Mandalas often have radial balance.
- Radial balance is any type of balance based on a circle with its design extending from the center. A star, the iris around each pupil of your eyes, a wheel with spokes, and a daisy (among many flowers and other plant forms) are examples of radial balance.
- Mandalas are often based on an important tool in learning art theory: The principles of design.
 1. Contrast: Contrast refers to how different elements are in a design, particularly adjacent elements. These differences make various elements stand out.
 2. Balance: Every element of a design—typography, colors, images, shapes, patterns, etc.—carries a visual weight. Some elements are heavy and draw the eye, while other elements are lighter. The way these elements are laid out on a page should create a feeling of balance.
 3. Emphasis: Emphasis deals with the parts of a design that are meant to stand out. In most cases, this means the most important information the design is meant to convey.
 4. Proportion: Simply put, it's the size of elements in relation to one another. Proportion signals what's important in a design and what isn't. Larger elements are more important, smaller elements less.
 5. Repetition is a great way to reinforce an idea. It's also a great way to unify a design that brings together a lot of different elements. Repetition can be done in a number of ways: via repeating the same colors, typefaces, shapes, or other elements of a design.
 - a. **Repetition is one of the most visible principles of design in a mandala design.**
 6. Rhythm: The spaces between repeating elements can cause a sense of rhythm to form, similar to the way the space between notes in a musical composition create a rhythm.
 - a. **Rhythm is one of the most visible principles of design in a mandala design.**

7. Pattern: Patterns are nothing more than a repetition of multiple design elements working together.
 - a. **Pattern is one of the most visible principles of design in a mandala design.**
 8. Movement: Movement refers to the way the eye travels over a design. The most important element should lead to the next most important and so on.
 - a. **Movement is one of the most visible principles of design in a mandala design.**
 9. Unity: Unity refers to how well the elements of a design work together. Visual elements should have clear relationships with each other in a design. Unity also helps ensure concepts are being communicated in a clear, cohesive fashion
- Here is a chart to help describe these principles:

The Principles of Design (how to use the tools to make art)		
Pattern		A regular arrangement of alternated or repeated elements (shapes, lines, colours) or motifs.
Contrast		The juxtaposition of different elements of design (for example: rough and smooth textures, dark and light values) in order to highlight their differences and/or create visual interest, or a focal point.
Emphasis		Special attention/importance given to one part of a work of art (for example, a dark shape in a light composition). Emphasis can be achieved through placement, contrast, colour, size, repetition... Relates to focal point.
Balance		A feeling of balance results when the elements of design are arranged symmetrically or asymmetrically to create the impression of equality in weight or importance.
Proportion/Scale		The relationship between objects with respect to size, number, and so on, including the relation between parts of a whole.
Harmony		The arrangement of elements to give the viewer the feeling that all the parts of the piece form a coherent whole.
Rhythm/Movement		The use of recurring elements to direct the movement of the eye through the artwork. There are five kinds of rhythm: random, regular, alternating, progressive, and flowing. The way the elements are organized to lead the eye to the focal area. Movement can be directed for example, along edges and by means of shape and colour.