

MoNA

Museum of Northwest Art

Age: Pre-Kindergarten

Lesson Duration: 1 hour

Subjects: Sculpture & Shapes

Architecture Sculptures Inspired by Benjamin F. McAdoo

A HANDS-ON ART ACTIVITY DESIGNED
BY MONA EDUCATORS

Description

In this activity students will be led in a **Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)** activity with Kobi Yamada's book *What Do You Do With an Idea?*, create their own wooden sculpture and learn about Seattle architect and activist Benjamin McAdoo.

Vocabulary

- ✓ Three-dimensional (3D)
- ✓ Two-dimensional (2D)
- ✓ Square
- ✓ Cube
- ✓ Circle
- ✓ Sphere
- ✓ Form



Student example

Source: Museum of Northwest Art

Materials

- *What Do You Do With an Idea?* book **or** [this video](#) for a read-along
- Pre-cut cardboard rectangles
- Solid tempera paint sticks
- Elmer's glue or kid-friendly wood glue (optional: small trays and brushes for application)
- Wood pieces, popsicle sticks, blocks, and/or other creative extras for building
- Images of McAdoo's work (included at the end of this lesson)

Instructions

1) As a class, read *What Do You Do with An Idea?* by Kobi Yamada. An optional read-aloud video is also included in this lesson.

- As you read, incorporate **VTS** using the illustrations in the book. A VTS overview is included at the end of this lesson.

2) Introduce architect Benjamin F. McAdoo (information on the following page).

3) Students will then head to their work stations and begin their art-making activity.

4) Students begin by adding color of their choosing to their cardboard bases using the solid paint sticks.

5) Then, using glue and the available wood pieces, students will begin to adhere pieces to the cardboard base. As they experiment and continue to build upon their wood pieces, the 3D sculpture will take form.

- To emphasize **ideas**, **imagination** and **creativity** have students write or verbalize their thought process behind their sculpture.

Modification

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This lesson can be modified and extended to challenge older students. You could add limitations, such as requiring that the sculpture have one or two lines of symmetry. To emphasize architecture concepts (see **further exploration**), have learners model their form after a specific architectural style. Additionally, you could give students profiles of different societal needs and have them fashion different buildings to respond to these needs (i.e. maximize roof surface for solar power or focus on accessibility issues). Further, you can have students paint their structures and/or add collage elements at a later session.

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Benjamin F. McAdoo



Benjamin F. McAdoo (1920-1981)

After graduating from the University of Washington, Benjamin F. McAdoo became the first African American to maintain an architecture practice in Washington State. Interested in benefiting his community, many of McAdoo's projects included community churches, family residences and developing low-cost housing to be widely accessible to all! Some of McAdoo's famous architectural projects include the Queen Anne Swimming Pool and the Seattle Fire Station No. 29. Read more about McAdoo [here](#).



What Do You Do With an Idea? by Kobi Yamada



Exterior view of the McAdoo House, Bothell, c. 1958. Image credit: King County, Department of Assessments.

Get inspired by Benjamin McAdoo! If you were an architect, what kind of building would you create? Would it be a home? Would it be a building for your community, like a hospital, library, or a school? Remember, your ideas can help change the world!

Learning and State Standards

- **VA:Re8.1.PK** (Interpret art by identifying and describing subject matter)
- **VA:Cr3.1.PK** (Share and talk about personal artwork)
- **VA:Cr2.3.PK** (Repurpose objects to make something new)

Visual Thinking Strategies

MoNA's Education programs utilize Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), which is a research-based teaching method that promotes aesthetic development including critical thinking and communication skills. Here in the MoNA, we use VTS to engage students and general visitors with art encouraging them to observe closely, think critically and discuss respectfully; however, VTS can be effectively used across curricula. This approach teaches its participants how to take the time to observe closely, describe what they see in detail and provide evidence for their observations. Students learn that their reflections and thoughts are valued and appreciated in this inclusive teaching method.

In order to facilitate a VTS discussion, you first encourage viewers to take a quiet moment to observe the work you are going to explore. Then you ask the following questions and paraphrase the responses without adding any of your own judgements. You can insert additional vocabulary and point to specific parts of the artwork.

What's going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say...?

What more can you find?

Visual Thinking Strategy Links

If you are interested in learning more about VTS, [here is their website](#). If you already know and love VTS, but want help finding great images to use in your classroom, here is a [fantastic gallery](#). You can also visit this website for additional resources: www.monamuseum.org/resources-for-educators



Benjamin F. McAdoo Office, designed by McAdoo. Image taken August, 2001. Seattle Historical Sites.

Image credit: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/historicalsites/QueryResult.aspx?ID=753245415>



King County medical building designed by McAdoo, 1970
Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Image credit: <https://www.facebook.com/WASHPO/photos/pcb.4098033150220333/4098030716887243/>