

# MoNA

Museum of Northwest Art

## Beaded Clay Mosaics Inspired by Reham Aarti

A HANDS-ON ART ACTIVITY  
DESIGNED BY MONA  
EDUCATORS

### Description

During this activity, students will learn about the ancient origins of mosaic art and the modern artists that keep the tradition alive today. Inspired by the work of Reham Aarti, students will make their own mosaics with clay and beads, incorporating classical ideas such as radial symmetry into their designs.

**Age:** Third Grade

**Lesson Duration:** 1 hour

**Subject:** Ancient Roman History



*Educator example*

*Source: Museum of Northwest Art*

### Materials

- *Bloom Where You're Planted* and *Wonder Wall* by Reham Aarti (included at the end of lesson)
- *Mosaic of Duck Facing Right* from the Brooklyn Museum (included at the end of lesson)
- [Video on ancient mosaics](#)
- [Video on Reham Aarti](#)
- Air-dry clay
- Small paper plates or cardboard
- Beads of various sizes and colors

## Instructions

**1)** Introduce the lesson by asking students about their previous knowledge on mosaics.

- Have you seen mosaics at your school? Your neighborhood or local park?

**2)** Show students the attached videos on ancient mosaics and Reham Aarti.

- This is a great moment to introduce and go over the relevant vocabulary, including the concept of radial symmetry.

**3)** Show students *Bloom Where You're From*, *Wonder Wall*, and *Mosaic of Duck Facing Right* (attached at the end of the lesson) and use Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to apply the vocabulary learned and talk more about the images.

- VTS is an inquiry-based method of facilitating discussion. Tips and resources on VTS are included at the end of this lesson.

**4)** Pass out craft supplies and instruct students to spread the clay on a paper plate evenly.

- During this step, have students plan out their mosaic design by placing the beads on another paper plate or lightly onto the clay.

**5)** Students can then add their beads to the mosaic by pressing them into the clay.

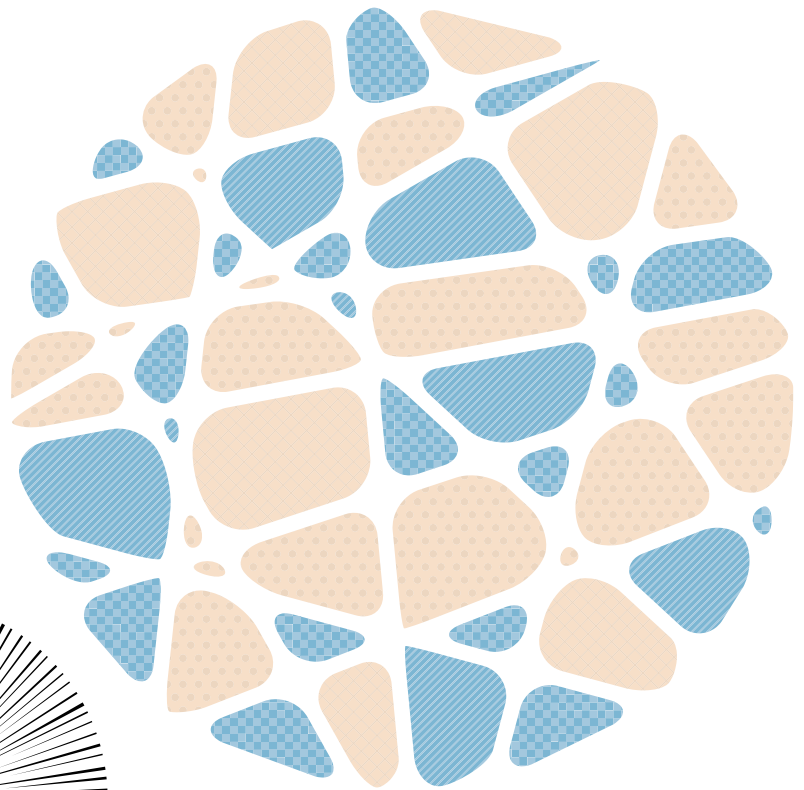
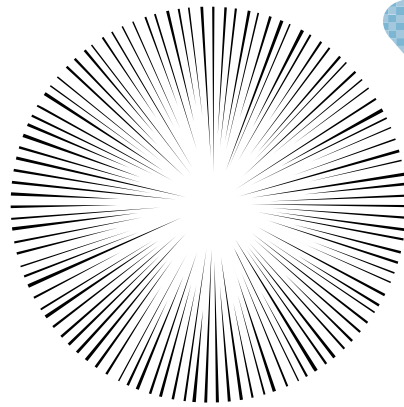
- Encourage students to press the beads in very firmly so they don't fall out when the clay dries.
- After 48 hours, the clay can be removed from the paper plate if desired.

**6)** After the students have finished their mosaics, give them time to share their work with the class and reflect on the activity.

- Ask students what they enjoyed about the lesson? What does their mosaic represent? Did anyone use radial symmetry in their design?

## Relevant Vocabulary

- ✓ Mosaic
- ✓ Pattern
- ✓ Radial Symmetry
- ✓ Tessera



## Learning and State Standards

Fulfills **Washington State Arts Learning Standards:**

- **VA:Cr1.1.3** (Elaborate on an imaginative idea)
- **VA:Cr2.1.3** (Create personally satisfying artwork, using a variety of artistic processes and materials)
- **VA:Cr2.2.3** (Demonstrate an understanding of the safe and proficient use of materials, tools, and equipment for a variety of artistic processes)

# 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](http://www.monamuseum.org/resources-for-educators)

# About the Artist: Reham Aarti



Image Source: Idaho Statesman

Reham Aarti is a mosaic artist based in Boise, Idaho.

Aarti and her family immigrated to the United States in the 1990s as refugees from Iraq. While in the United States, she discovered her interest in mosaics and began to teach herself how to construct them. Aarti works most often in public spaces, creating mosaics for places such as Shining Mountain Elementary School in Spanaway, Washington and various parks in the Boise area.

**“WORKING IN MOSAICS GIVES ME  
A DAILY REMINDER OF THE  
TRIUMPH OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT.”  
- REHAM AARTI**



*Bloom Where You're Planted, Reham Aatri*  
Image Source: ArtsWA



*Wonder Wall, Reham Aatri*  
Image Source: JK Mosaic



*Mosaic of Duck Facing Right, 6th Century CE*  
Image Source: Brooklyn Museum