

# MoNA

Museum of Northwest Art

Age: Kindergarten

Lesson Duration: 3 45-Minute Sessions

Subjects: Art, Science, Nature & Botany

## Cherry Blossom Art Inspired by Aki Sogabe

A HANDS-ON ART ACTIVITY  
DESIGNED BY JENNIFER THRAMER  
OF BURLINGTON LITTLE SCHOOL



Example by Jessica Conway

### Description

Using pencil, watercolor crayon and tissue paper, students will create a mixed-media artwork of blossoming branches. They will use their knowledge of the art elements and perspective to enhance realism. Additionally, in this lesson students will be introduced to artist Aki Sogabe, a prominent Northwest artist who features cherry and plum blossoms heavily in her artwork.

### Materials

- Artist background & images (included)
- Paper
- Pencils
- Watercolor Crayons
- Cardstock
- Tissue Paper
- Paint Brushes
- Glue



### Vocabulary

- ✓ Line
- ✓ Shape
- ✓ Color
- ✓ Texture
- ✓ Form

Spring Falls by Aki Sogabe

Image credit: <http://www.akisogabe.com/>

## Instructions

**Day 1-** Introduce students to the artist and example images. Have them pay close attention to the characteristics of the tree, tree branches and blossoms. Have students pair & share what they observed. After discussion, students may begin sketching their blossoming trees with pencil and paper.

- Facilitators may choose to integrate elements of art vocabulary
- It may be helpful to practice VTS (Visual Thinking Strategies) while looking at the artists' work. VTS information and resources are included at the end of this lesson.

**Day 2-** Return to the example images and have students draw an outline of the tree once more, this time with watercolor crayon. Instructors may again emphasize art elements and perspective. Once outlines are complete, discuss drawings with partner or small group, asking questions, noticing similarities and differences between renderings. Compare & contrast both pencil and watercolor crayon drawings.

**Day 3-** Use water to blur the lines of the watercolor crayon sketch. This effect will create a watercolor painting from the crayons. Allow time to dry completely. To create blossoms, have students carefully cut tissue paper and glue pieces onto the branches of their watercolor painting.

## Learning and State Standards

Fulfills [Washington State Arts Learning Standards](#):

- **VA:Cr2.3.K** (Create art that represents natural and constructed environments)
- **VA:Cr2.2.K** (Identify safe and non-toxic art materials, tools, and equipment)
- **VA:Cr2.1.K** (Through experimentation, build skills in various media and approaches to art-making)



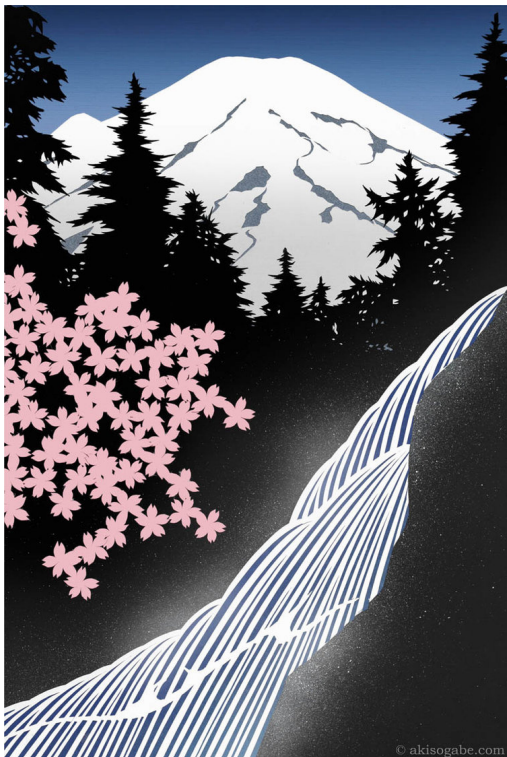
Aki Sogabe, Image Credit:

<https://www.bellevuereporter.com/news/artist-looks-forward-to-32nd-year-at-bam-artsfair/>

**Aki Sogabe** relocated to the Pacific Northwest from Japan in 1978. With her, she brought the traditional art of Japanese paper cutting called *kirie*. By carefully cutting delicate pieces of paper, Sogabe is able to create beautiful scenes that often show nature and the city of Seattle.

Sogabe's artworks have found many different homes in the Pacific Northwest: many local schools, Uwajimaya Village, government offices, and Pike Place Market! Sogabe is also an award winning children's book illustrator. The artist currently lives in Bellevue, Washington. To learn more about the artist and her work, visit [her website](#) and the [Washington State Art Collection](#). Full size images included at end of lesson.

Aki Sogabe often creates artworks featuring cherry and plum blossoms. She forms delicate flowers and sturdy tree branches. Keep an eye out for cats in her artworks, Sogabe will often add a kitty lounging peacefully under the blossoming trees!



Night Blossom 3 by Aki Sogabe

Image credit:

<http://www.akisogabe.com/>



Plum Blossom by Aki Sogabe

Image credit: <http://www.akisogabe.com/>



Kitty and Blossoms by Aki Sogabe

Image credit: <http://www.akisogabe.com/>



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*Plum Blossom* by Aki Sogabe  
Image credit: <http://www.akisogabe.com/>



April Flow 2 by Aki Sogabe  
Image credit: <http://www.akisogabe.com/>



Moonrise 8 by Aki Sogabe  
Image credit: <http://www.akisogabe.com/>



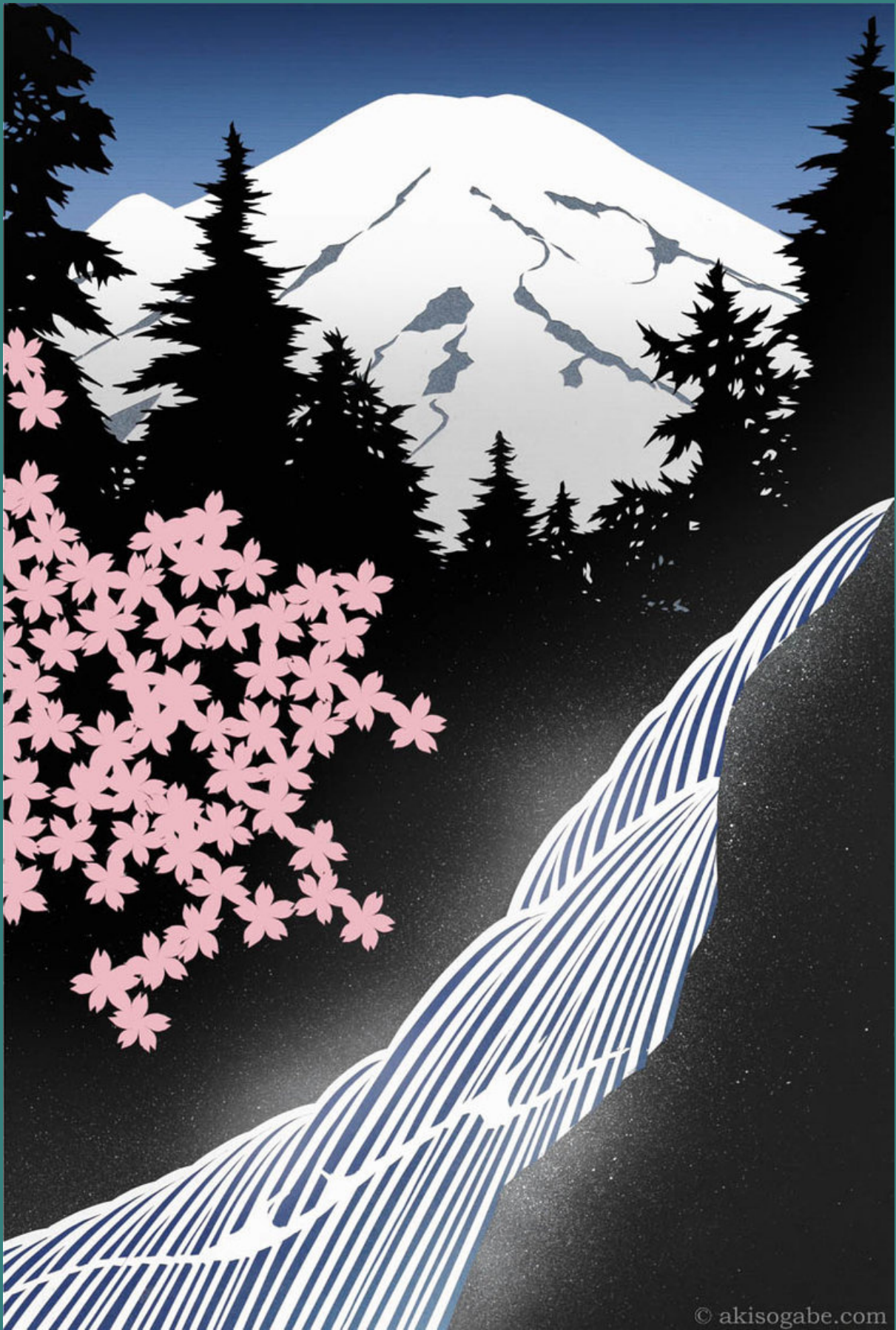
*Kitty and Blossoms* by Aki Sogabe  
Image credit: <http://www.akisogabe.com/>



*Spring Falls* by Aki Sogabe

Image credit: <http://www.akisogabe.com/>





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*Night Blossom 3* by Aki Sogabe  
Image credit: <http://www.akisogabe.com/>

# Visual Thinking Strategies

MoNA's Education programs utilize Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), which is a researched-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 that...?***  
***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 VTS in your classroom, here is a [fantastic gallery](#). You can also visit this website for additional resources: <https://www.monamuseum.org/resources-for-educators>