

## WORKSHOP: "ROCK MANDALAS"



**Summary:** Participants create acrylic paint dot mandalas using styluses, paint brushes, acrylic rods and paint markers. We are working on smooth stones. Painting techniques include layered dots, brush strokes and solid backgrounds. Pattern templates are available or participants can create their own designs. The process can be very calming and meditative, helping participants reconnect in a relaxing way.

### Materials and Equipment:

smooth rocks 3-4" diameter	pencil, eraser, sharpener
acrylic paints artist	sketch paper
acrylic paints for crafts	carbon paper
paint brushes assorted sizes	masking tape
styluses assorted sizes	scissors
acrylic rods assorted sizes	reusable pattern templates
wood skewers	ruler
foil or plastic lids	compass
water containers	x-acto knife
sponge	a small piece bubble wrap
Q-tips (paper and cotton)	soap, water and small bucket
t-shirt scraps	dry cloth
old tooth brush or scrub brush	wood filler
outdoor UV varnish satin, semi-gloss or gloss	putty knife
scrap paper foam core to practice on	thin plastic gloves
palette knife	sandpaper
table cover	toothpicks
optional: iridescent medium	puff paints in squeeze tubes
optional: acrylic paint pens	optional: hair dryer with a cold setting
instructions/ideas sheet	optional: mandala and rock painting books

### Class Plan:

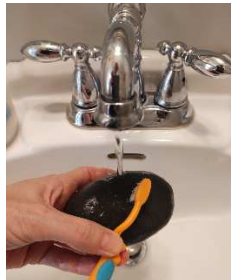
1. Select stones that work with your design or plan.
  - a. Choose ones that don't have holes to avoid disruptions in your design.
  - b. Round or oval flat stones are ideal for mandalas



- c. Shaped stones can be inspiring and might look like a creature, giving you ideas.
- 2. If you are gathering stones in nature, be sure that removing stones from that area is allowed. If you gather lots, spread your gathering between multiple areas to minimize disturbing nature.
- 3. If you have an otherwise perfect stone with a small hole or rough area, you can fill these areas with wood putty. Smooth the putty into the hole using a putty knife if available or your finger with gloves on.
  - a. Allow the putty to dry about 15 minutes before sanding it. Allow it to dry 2 hours before painting it. Dry times depend on the type of putty you are using. Always check the directions.



- 4. Clean your stone with soap and water. An old toothbrush is useful to help with cleaning. Dry your stone with a cloth.



- 5. Decide which side of the stone is the top, or plan to work on both sides.
- 6. If your rock is uneven, place it on a small piece of bubble wrap to keep it steady while you paint.



7. Decide if you are painting your background or not. Apply at least one coat of your background colour to the top and sides of your stone. We recommend 2-3 coats depending on the transparency of your paint.



- a. Adding several layers can make a porous stone smooth for adding dots.
- b. Craft paints tend to have less pigment than artist paints and need several coats to achieve a solid colour if that is what you're hoping for. The left image has 1 coat of paint and the right has 4 coats.



8. Remember your stone has a back as well. Decide if you'd like to paint the back or bottom as well, or if you'd like to end your pattern around the sides of your stone. Dry the top and sides before turning it over to paint the back.



9. Optional: Lightly sand your paint with very fine sandpaper (e.g. 240 grit) to make the surface smoother.

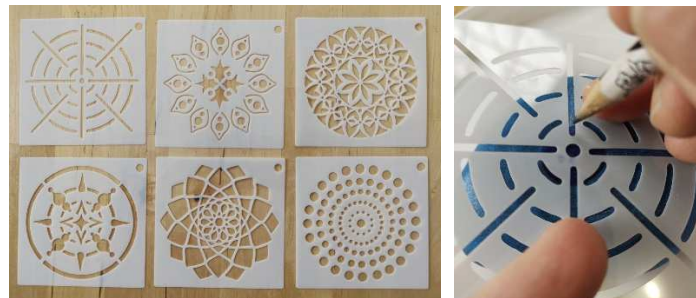


- 10. A hair dryer with a cool setting and low speed can help dry your paint faster between coats. Use a low-speed setting to avoid blowing your dots out of shape or flattening them.
- 11. Find the centre of your rock using a ruler. Use a ruler to locate the centre of your rock, lengthwise and widthwise, marking it with a pencil.



12. Decide on your design. There are many ways to work and here some examples.

- a. You can work from a template stencil, tracing the design onto your rock with a pencil, paint brush or paint on a sponge. The stencil shown here (right) is particularly good for marking lines radiating out from the centre as a guide. There are stencils available that are flexible and fix over the contours of a rock (not shown here).



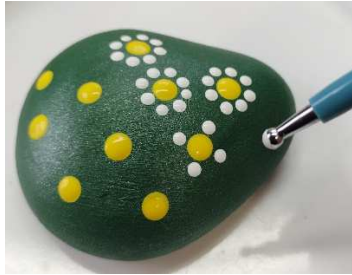
- b. Draw your own design on paper and transfer it to your rock using carbon paper. You can also just draw directly onto your rock.



- c. Use a compass to draw a starting circle or circles on your rock working from the centre.



- d. Work without a pattern, starting with large dot(s), adding different sized dots and building on that as you go.



- e. Work without a pattern, adding lines and building patterns with paint markers over them as you are inspired.



### 13. Choosing your paints:

- a. Artist paint dots keep more dimension, creating a raised bump, and they have more pigment so less coats are needed for solid colour coverage.



- b. Craft paints work well to but in a slightly different way. More coats are needed for good coverage but less coats gives a nice translucent effect. They create flatter dots.

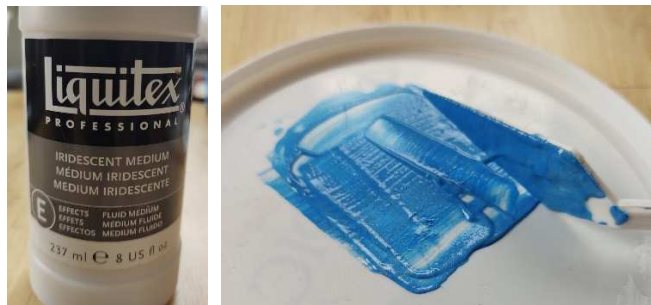




- c. Working with acrylic paint markers makes it easy to create lines and patterns in lots of colours.



- d. Acrylic inks also work well for mandalas.
- e. Optional: Add iridescent medium to some of your colours for a metallic shiny effect on your rocks. We mixed the paint 50:50 with the medium using a palette knife but you can vary the amount based on how iridescent you want your colour.



#### 14. Dots can be created using a variety of tools.

- a. A stylus is a tool with a small round ball on the end and they come in various sizes for making different size dots.



- b. Acrylic rods work in a similar way but make flatter dots.



- c. Improvised tools can be used to make dots, such as the end of a paint brush, a skewer end, allen keys or the ends of found objects for unusual shaped dots.

15. Paint brushes are useful for filling in areas, creating shapes like flower petals and fine lines.



- a. Small scraps of t-shirt fabric can be used to blot extra water off of your brush. They can be washed and reused.



16. Try using a sponge to create a background that looks like it glows or blends with another colour.



17. For making dots, use a larger stylus or acrylic rod to make larger dots. Smaller stylus means smaller dots.

- a. To make dots all the same size, use the same stylus and reload paint for every dot. Press down the same amount for each dot. If you are unsure press all the way down until the stylus end touches your surface gently.
- b. To add dots that get gradually smaller, load your stylus with paint once and then make 5 dots in a row. They will get smaller automatically as the paint on your tip is used up. Reload with paint for the next row of 5 dots.



- c. To space smaller dots evenly around the outside of a larger dot, add the first small dot. Next, place the second dot opposite it. Add the third and fourth dots halfway between the other two dots on either side. Working this way with dots opposite each other divides the space evenly.
  - d. TIP: You don't have to centre the next dot on the previous one. Try putting it to one side to add interest or add several smaller dots in a pattern on top of one larger dot.
18. If you make a mistake or smear some of your paint, wet paint can be rubbed off with a damp cloth, a damp Q-tip or a piece of fabric over the tip of a skewer for tight areas.
- a. If your paint is already dry, the area to be removed can be scraped off with a scalpel or x-acto knife. Then touch up the area with the tip of a fine paint brush.
  - b. Adding dots to your design to cover the area can help.
19. For cleanup, we used an old soft toothbrush to clean paint off of the stencils ready for reuse.



20. When your painted stone is completely dry apply 1-2 coats of acrylic clear outdoor UV varnish to it, allowing the top to dry before turning it to work on the bottom.
- a. Apply the varnish in thin coats.
  - b. Use as few brush strokes as possible to apply a smooth coat. Avoid over brushing the varnish or it will dry cloudy.



21. Wait 24 hours before placing your varnished stone outside.
- 22. Project Example 1: Create your own design with dots**
- a. Try starting with several large dots in one colour applied with a very large stylus.



- b. Add smaller dots around the outside of each larger dot, using a smaller stylus.  
TIP: To space smaller dots evenly around the outside of a larger dot, add the first small dot. Next, place the second dot opposite it. Add the third and fourth dots halfway between the other two dots



on either side. Working this way with dots opposite each other divides the space evenly.



- c. Add tiny dots on top of the larger dot, using the tiniest stylus.



- d. Keep adding dots in the spaces all around your starting dots, building up your pattern to more and more detailed.

### 23. Project Example 2: Create your own feather design

- a. Draw an outline of your rock on paper, and sketch in that space so you know it will fit. A simple object outline like a feather is a good starting place.



- b. Add section lines to your drawing, dividing your feather in pieces that can be filled with patterns next.
- c. Transfer your design onto your rock using carbon paper, holding the drawing in place with masking tape.



- d. Using a paint marker, go over the lines of your drawing on your rock.



- e. Add dots to some of the sections of your feather and some around the outsides.



- f. Add patterns to some of the sections of your feather with a paint brush or paint marker.



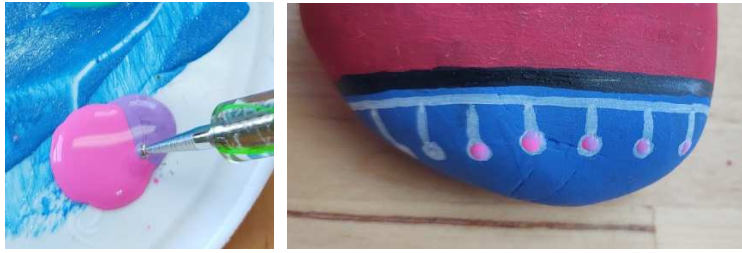
24. Happy creating, and please send us photos of your creations if you feel comfortable sharing.

**Useful Information/Adaptions/Variations:**

- Mandalas can be created on all kinds of surfaces, such as wood panels, wood objects and foam core board to name a few.



- Try making multi-coloured dots by loading two colours on your stylus at once.



- Wood putty is very drying on the skin, so wearing gloves when applying it is recommended.
- Try painting coloured rocks in flower patterns by making rock markers for where your tulips will come up.

#### **Trouble Shooting:**

- If you have pencil lines still exposed after painting, gently erase them when the paint is dry.
- Ensure your stone is thoroughly dry before painting on it, to avoid the paint peeling.
- Ensure successive layers of dots are thoroughly dry to avoid them blending together.
- If you put a dot in the wrong place, remove it with a damp Q-tip if it is still wet and not near to other wet dots. Otherwise, scrap it off your stone with an x-acto knife when it is dry and then touch up the area with paint.
- Add to your pattern with more dots and lines to cover any paint/dots in the wrong place that cannot be removed otherwise.