

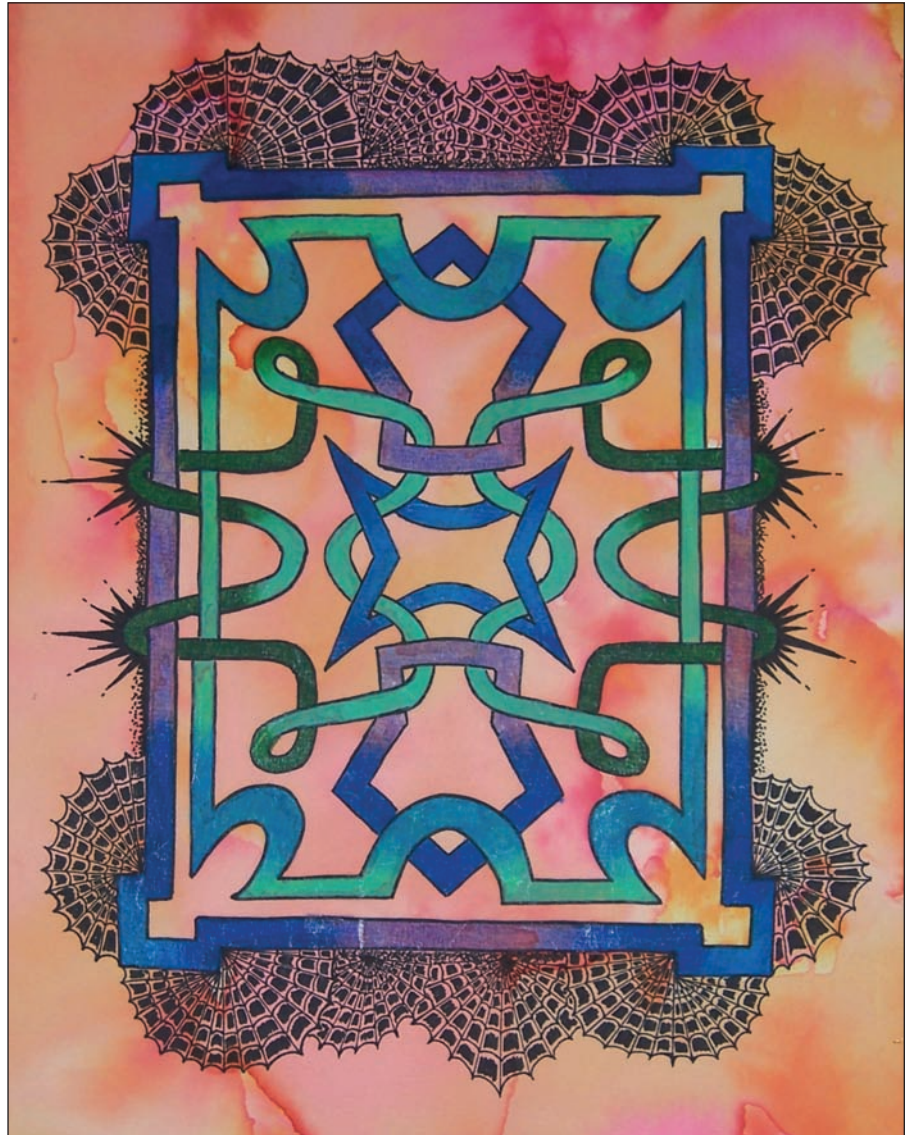
# CELTIC ROADS

by Jan Kinney

**B**uilding upon lessons learned is relevant to art and life. As an art teacher dealing with teens, I try to give my students an understanding of art as a window to the “big picture” as well as a practical, relevant skill. I developed this lesson plan, “Celtic Roads,” with that objective in mind. The success rate is high, the product is fabulous and the pride factor is evident.

At the beginning of the lesson, I give a brief history lecture using a PowerPoint slideshow of ancient Celtic monuments, artifacts, examples of Celtic-influenced Christian art and architecture. Also included are current Celtic-based designs on CD covers, posters and body art. During our open discussion during the slideshow, students come to the natural conclusion that there exists a flow of inspiration through past, present and future.

**Using black permanent marker, students embellished their dry compositions with interesting texture.**



Some teachers hesitate to show a finished project sample before studio work begins, but I find, given a dramatic flair, a grand revealing of the end product will spark enthusiasm—especially with student-made samples from former years. I tell students they will be referring to previous hand-outs, such as texture exercises and the color wheel. Again, lessons from the past are revisited.

Everyone gets three sheets of white photocopier paper for initial designs, and each sheet is folded into quarters. In one quarter-size section, the stu-

dent draws two interlocking ribbons or “roads,” taking care that the roads make closed negative spaces toward the paper’s open edges. Conversely, the roads should be open and run off of the folded edges. This allows roads to connect throughout the design.

I do not allow use of rulers or compasses, but rather instruct the students to estimate half an inch (or the width of a fingernail) for the width of the roads. Designs are drawn with ebony pencil or soft graphite drawing pencil. The paper is folded and refolded back onto itself, and the outside is rubbed for graphite

transfer to all quarters. Retracing to reload graphite is likely necessary.

A midpoint grade is taken on completion of all three designs. With my guidance, the artist picks a favorite and it is graphite transferred onto a large sheet of watercolor paper. The copy paper is temporarily secured with low-tack tape.

Next, the student carefully removes the copy paper and retraces all graphite lines with a fine-point permanent black marker. All remaining graphite is gently erased when finished. Using color theory knowledge, the student

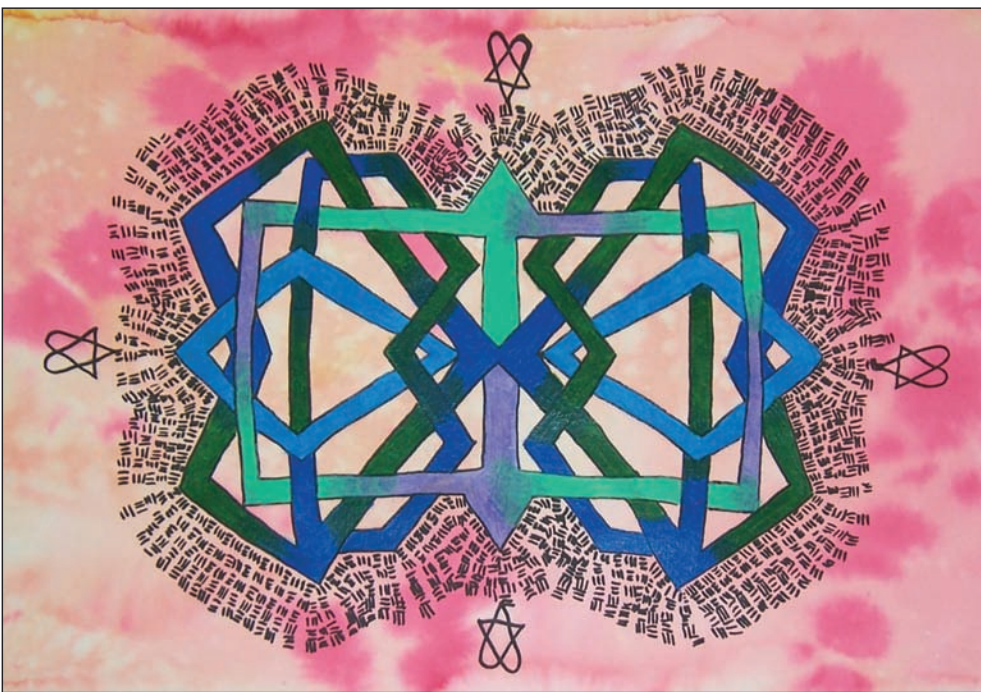
## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

High-school and special-needs students will ...

- recount basic historical facts about the European Celts.
- compare and contrast Celtic design, past and present.
- create three unique designs with project-specific criteria.
- utilize graphite transfer techniques.
- select an appropriate design for the final stages.
- apply proper media techniques using Prismacolor®, crayon and watercolor.
- invent or modify texture, referring to past examples.
- relate past art and art lessons to the present.

## MATERIALS

- 18" x 12" watercolor paper
- Copy paper
- Watercolors
- Rubbing tool (bone folder)
- Ebony pencil
- Art eraser
- Masking tape
- Black fine-tip permanent markers
- Crayons or Prismacolor® pencils



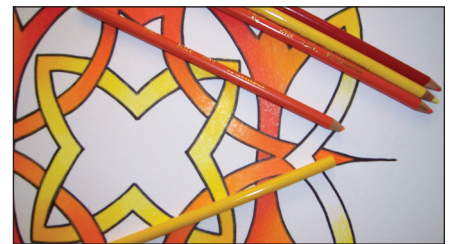
▲ Aron, grade 9.  
◀ Noel, grade 9.



With the copy paper temporarily secured with low-tack tape, the design is graphite-transferred onto a large sheet of watercolor paper.



The students retrace all graphite lines of their design with a fine-point permanent black marker.



Either a cool or warm color scheme is used to fill the interior of the "roads."

chooses either a cool or warm color scheme to fill the interior of the roads. This is done in either Prismacolor pencil or crayon as a resist to the upcoming watercolor background. I demonstrate blending techniques and circulate among the artists as the coloring process takes place.

When the first student is ready to move into the watercolor stage, I demonstrate the wet-into-wet technique for the background. If the artist has chosen a cool color scheme for roads, they must have a warm background and vice versa. We have three sinks for

approximately 24 people so it is easier to wet the entire paper under the faucet and return to the tables to paint.

I encourage splattering à la Jackson Pollock and make sure clothing and environment is protected with aprons, old T-shirts and newsprint paper. A "thirsty brush" can clean up puddles as needed. Then it's off to the drying racks.

Referring to previous handouts, the dry compositions are embellished with interesting texture using black permanent marker. The student artist may want to practice several textures on scratch paper before committing to one.

This texture is primarily added to the outer contour of the design extending into, but not overwhelming, the watercolor background. Some students dig old texture projects out of their portfolios to refresh memories. Some students create textures "from scratch."

This project is step-by-step intensive, but very rewarding. My special-needs students are successful and pleased with their work. Advanced Placement two-dimensional design students can include this project in portfolios. Parents are pleasantly surprised, and when the artwork is featured at the year-end district art show or on the bulletin board, it's a hit. I have also seen this Art I project used as an inspiration to some amazing high-school advanced art creations. How rewarding it is to see the creative legacy of the ancient Celts live on in my classroom! ■

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