

**A**s many of you already know, I love to use current, living artists as the inspiration for my art lessons. I feel it makes the content more meaningful for the students because they can see how the concepts they are learning in art class are applied in our world today.

One such artist is Matt W. Moore. Matt wears many creative hats as an artist based out of Portland, Maine. Matt creates textile designs, logos and murals, and has many other talents. Most of his work falls into the abstract realm. I love his use of bold colors and hard-edged shapes in his striking visual compositions. Many of his pieces have electricity about them, due to his play with the visual elements of line, shape and color.

After showing my students Matt's work on his website, we narrowed our focus on one mural in particular. Upon viewing the mural together, I prompted students to share with me what they saw—circles, designs, patterns, and colors. They also shared what makes the circles different from one another in the overall design—varying sizes, different patterns, different colors, and so on.

**STUDENTS WERE THEN INTRODUCED** to the concept of radial symmetry. I explained that radial symmetry is a type of balance where parts of an object or picture radiate or revolve around a central point, like the spokes on a bike wheel or a sliced-up pizza.

I told them that each student in the

**Students glued their extra small circles onto their small circles, then added patterns to both.**



**The radial designs were just as interesting and unique as the students who made them.**

class would be making a circular design that had a variety of patterns—which is an example of radial symmetry. They were very excited when they learned that their individual pieces would be included in a larger mural-type installation inspired by Matt's mural composition.

To build their pieces, students started out with both an extra small (3" x 3") and a small (6" x 6") piece of paper. They drew a circle on each, cut them out, and glued the smaller piece onto the large. Once this was done, they added patterns to the two pieces. I showed them that they can split the circles into smaller bands or they can leave them alone and create larger patterns.

Once that step was completed, students were



^ **Students learned that radial symmetry is a type of balance where parts of an object or picture radiate or revolve around a central point, like the spokes on a bike wheel.**

< **The individual circles looked sharp, but grouping them in an arrangement similar to Matt's mural took their visual impact to a whole different level.**

# ROUND AND ROUND

by Don Masse

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

### Elementary students will ...

- learn about the work of muralist and designer, Matt W. Moore.
- revisit the use of abstract style in art.
- learn about the concept of radial symmetry in art and use it in an original mixed-media piece.
- learn how rhythm is created in art through the use of repeating shapes and lines, then apply this knowledge to their own work.
- participate in cooperative art making by having some of their pieces arranged with others to create a larger work of art.

## NATIONAL ART STANDARDS

- CREATING: Conceiving and developing artistic ideas and work.
- PRESENTING: Interpreting and sharing artistic work.

## MATERIALS

- Squares of colored construction paper in various sizes (3" x 3"; 6" x 6"; and 12" x 12")
- Scissors, glue sticks
- Graphite pencils, Crayola color sticks



Go to [artsandactivities.com](http://artsandactivities.com) and click on this button for resources related to this article.



After showing my students Matt's work on his website, we narrowed our focus on one mural, located in Portland, Maine. Photo courtesy of Matt W. Moore.

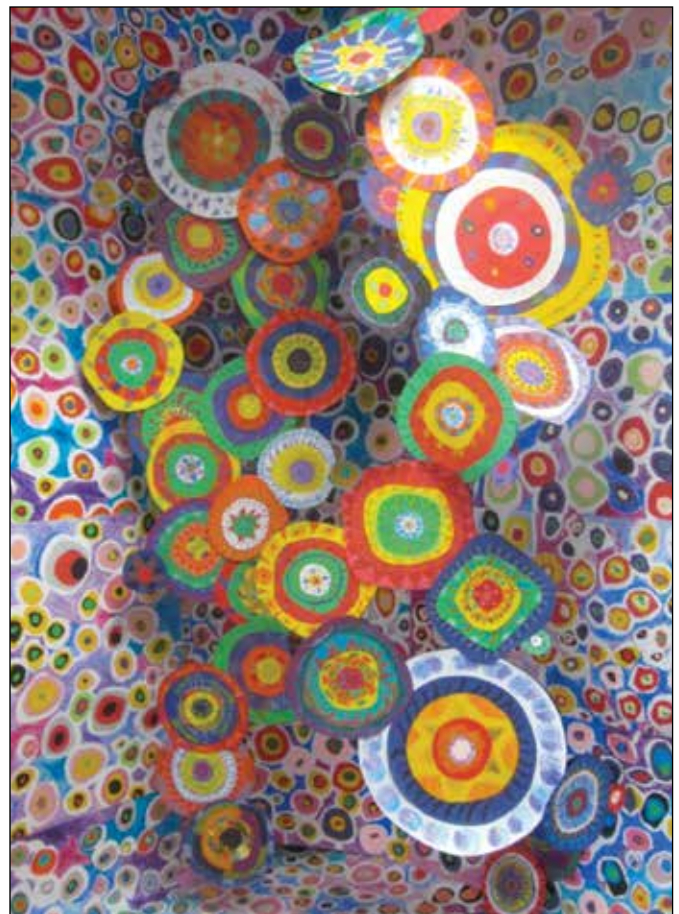
given a medium (9" x 9") size piece of paper and repeated the process. Then, finally, they received a large (12" x 12") piece of paper and repeated the same steps one last time.

For students who finish early, they may help construct an even larger circle design with others who are also done. These larger circles are not completed in the class period, so the next class's early finishers contribute to them as well. Students also have the option of creating a smaller, mini version of the circle design, either by themselves or with partners.

After the pieces are done, I work with small groups of students to assemble the circles into a larger installation. The individual circles look sharp,



Those who finished early teamed up to construct even larger circle designs.



We created a large installation with these pieces at our school's annual Celebration of Art.

but grouping them in an arrangement similar to Matt's mural takes their visual impact to a whole different level. We created a large installation with these pieces at our annual Celebration of Art. This could be done any time of the year, though, when you want to do a project that breaks the frame of your usual bulletin board or art panel. Also, while I have done this project with my third-grade students, by modifying its size and/or complexity, it could be done with a wide range of students.

**DURING THIS PROJECT** and all the others I do with my students, I document the creative process and steps by taking photographs of the kids in action. These visuals are so nice to have when sharing lessons with other educators, focus artists, and substitute teachers. My students have become quite accustomed to me taking these photos during class.

When this project was complete, I shared a number of images with Matt W. Moore, and he was kind enough to write the kids an email. He also shared the project on his art blog, with more words of encouragement for the students. I was then able to share this with my students the next time I saw these classes. It's interactions like these that can make the content we cover in class more real and meaningful for our students. ■

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