

What is a mandala?

A mandala is a geometric meditation map made of nested squares and circles, typically arranged to represent the center of the universe and the four main directions, east, west, north, south.

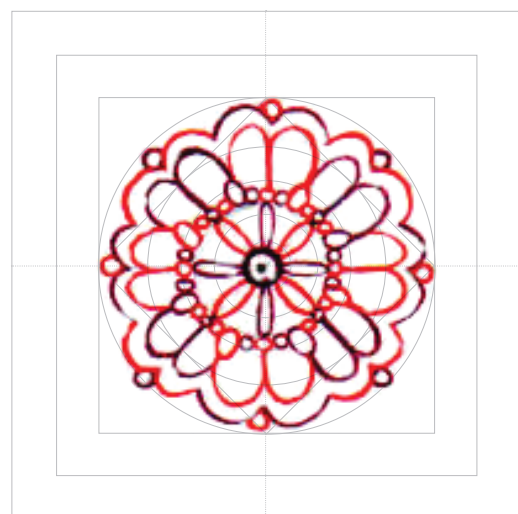
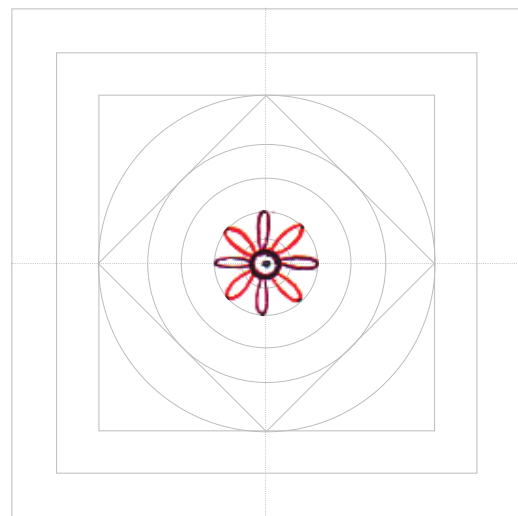
Most painted mandalas are flattened, two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional structures. For Buddhist followers, however, mandalas are not just images to view, but worlds to enter—the meditator focuses on the

mandala and then imaginatively enters it, taking a mental journey towards the center.

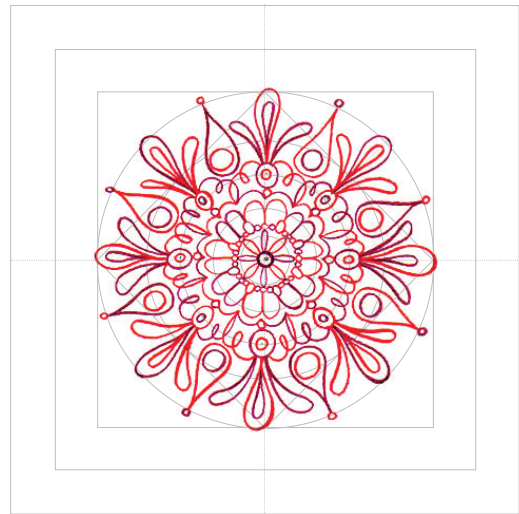
The act of creating the mandala can be a quiet, meditative act, as well; drawing repeating patterns, especially of meaningful images or symbols, can be a calming experience that helps keep the artist centered and focused.

Ready to make your own mandala?

1. Start from the center and stay in one quadrant (the docent will hold up examples). Using the lines and circles on your sheet as guidelines, you can **draw shapes like triangles, raindrops, petals, loops, leaves, etc., even letters.**
2. The important thing is to **repeat your pattern.** For example, if you draw a shape on one of the lines, be sure to draw it in the same spot on the other lines.



3. This creates **repetition**, which is a key element in creating a mandala. As you draw more and more designs, your mandala will start to look more complex.



Try your own...

The key is to take it slowly, drawing one shape at a time and going around the whole circle drawing that one shape in the right place.

Then you build on that shape by drawing other shapes around the circle in the same manner.

After you finish drawing your mandala, **you can choose to color it in.**

Take your mandala home to show your family—maybe they can make their own mandalas, too!

Sources:

Introduction: “The Purpose of Mandalas” http://www.asianart.org/exhibitions_index/the-purpose-of-mandalas

Mandala drawing directions: www.art-is-fun.com/how-to-draw-a-mandala

