

# WORCESTER ART MUSEUM

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& workshops



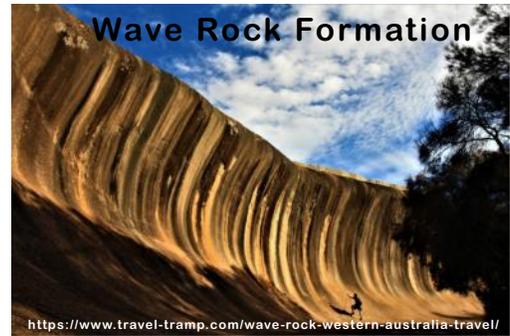
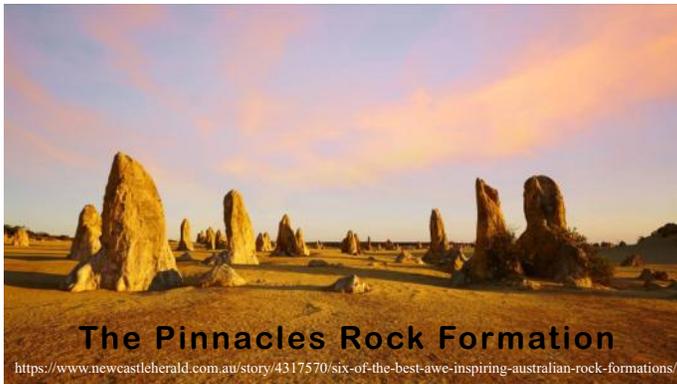
## Symmetry, String, & Squiggles

Featured Story

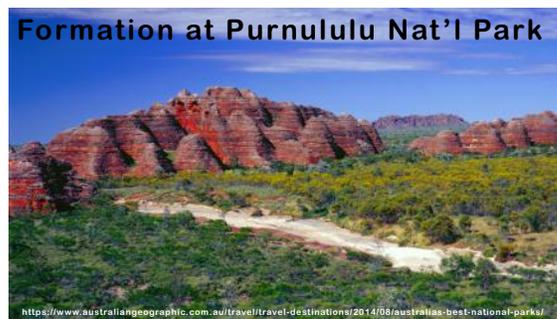
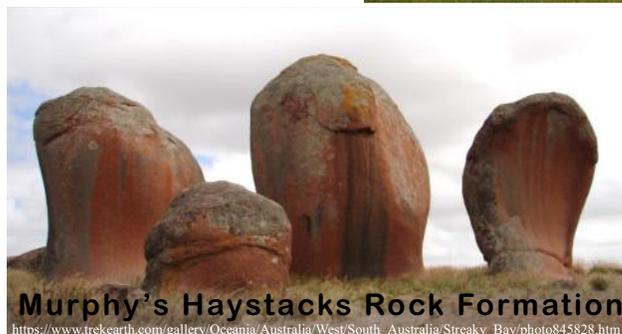
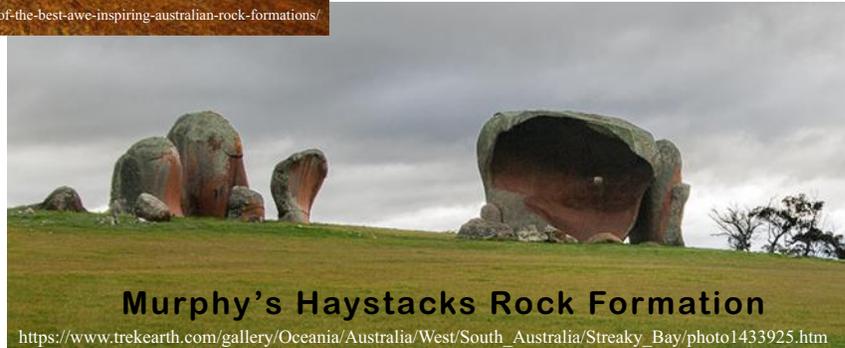
As told to K. Langloh Parker and printed in her 1896 collection:  
Australian Legendary Tales: Folk-Lore of the Noongahburras

### The Mayamah

Adapted and Read by Elizabeth Buck



Images of  
rock formations  
in Australia - rock  
formations like  
these inspired the  
Mayamah tale.



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## Inspiration Works from WAM's Collection



**Shield**, late 19th century or earlier, Australian, wood with pigment, 2004.150 (<https://bit.ly/WAMAustralianShield>)

This shield was made by shaping wood and by applying color with pigment - which is natural color from a plant or animal that is used to make paint. This shield is an example of symmetry, where the shapes and patterns are the same on both sides. Here the design is symmetrical - the same - both up to down and left to right.

**Kangaroo**, 1950s, Western Arnhem Land culture, Australia, natural earth pigments on euclyptus bark, 2004.184 (<https://bit.ly/WAMKangaroo>)

This artwork was also made with pigment on wood bark. The artist chose to represent a kangaroo from the side, using carefully selected patterns along the back or spine of the figure. The pattern is symmetrical on both sides of the spine.



**Paintbrush**, date unknown, Australian, bark, 2004.168 (<https://bit.ly/WAMAustraliaBrush>)



Some of the artwork made by the indigenous people - the original or earliest known inhabitants - of Australia the people that lived there before others moved in - is very special and can only be made by their own artists! This image is of an older, traditional brush made from bark. Artists around the world have been inventors, finding new and creative ways to make their mark throughout time. What can you use to make a brush?

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## This Side, That Side - String Paintings

### Supplies

- **Paper:** Drawing, Mixed Media, or Cardstock paper works well. You could also do this using two pieces of cardboard. As many pieces as you wish to use
- **String or Yarn,** cut to 12-24" lengths
- **Paint or food coloring**
  - **Paint:** acrylic with a little water or tempera/poster paint works well, you will also need a brush
  - **Food coloring:** Use 10 drops in about 3 tablespoons of water, more drops for darker color. You may want gloves.
- **Small cup or bowl for each color**
- **Optional:**
  - **Protection for table or floor**
  - **Light book or paper pad for weight**
  - **Markers/colored pencils**



### Create

1. Fold your papers in half.
2. Fill your small bowls or cups with the colors you want to use.
3. Lay one piece of paper down on your work surface.
4. Color your string: (Leave the last couple inches clean for you to hold.)
  - **Paint:** Using a brush, paint your string and run the string through the brush to remove extra paint.
  - **Food coloring:** Dip string in colored water, and lightly squeeze out extra dye.
5. Lay the string down in any squiggly shape you want on one side of the paper, leaving the last couple inches of clean string hanging off the bottom of the paper.
6. Fold the paper closed on top of the string, and if you want, lightly place a book or other flat object on top.
7. Gently hold the paper closed and pull your string out from the paper fully, then and put it on your workspace.
8. Open the paper to see your symmetrical (same on one side as another) creation!
9. **Optional:** Once your paint dries, use markers to add to your symmetry painting.

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## Pattern and Line

### Supplies: Paper Version

- Paper with one or more circles traced on it
  - A circle to trace - cup or mug
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Something to color with
  - Crayon, marker, oil pastels, gel pens, colored pencils, etc.

### Supplies: Rock Version

- Smooth, clean rock
- Pencil
- Marker
- Paint - acrylic works best
- Small brush
- Cloth and water to clean brush between colors



### Create

The process is almost the same for both projects, differences are noted when necessary.

1. Start in the middle of your rock or the circle on your paper and with your pencil, draw a dot in the middle.
2. Draw a line dividing the rock or circle in half from side to side, draw a line down the middle from top to bottom. These will help with spacing.
3. Draw circles around the center dot - each one around the last, like ripples in a cup of water. These will also be guide lines.
4. Draw a pattern in the first circle ring, another in the next, etc. Use the straight lines to help guide your pattern to make it symmetrical.
5. Use coloring materials or paints to finish your work.
  - When working on paper with colored pencil, crayon, marker, etc., work from small spaces to bigger spaces and lighter colors to darker colors.
  - For paint on rock, paint in larger areas first, let dry, and layer over with smaller details, letting dry as needed.