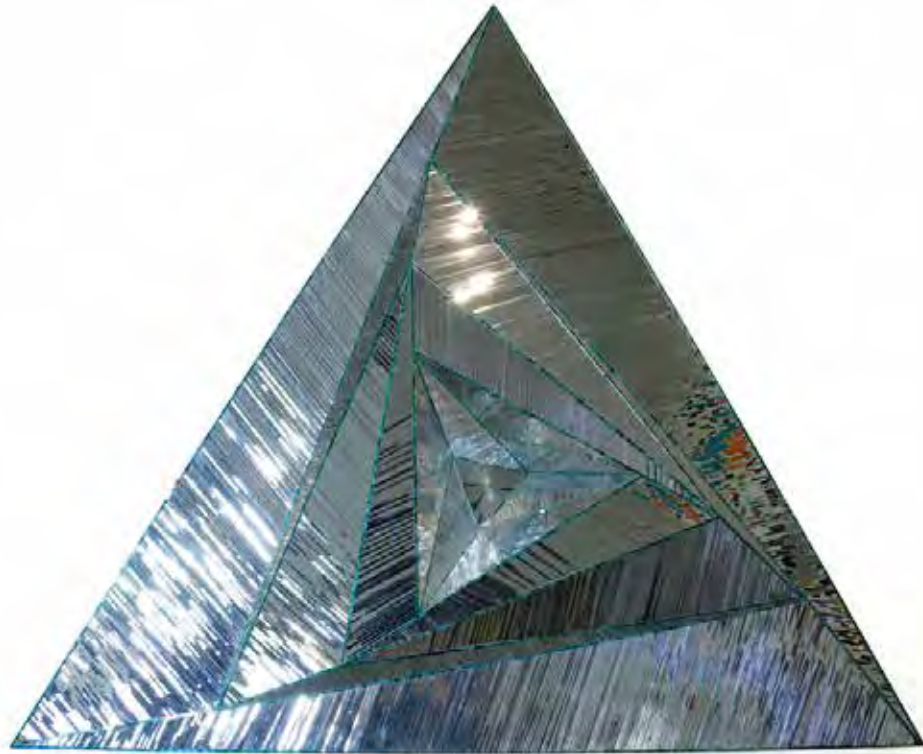


Studio Saturdays: Beaded Bubble Wands



The Alfond Collection of Contemporary Art at Rollins College, Gift of Barbara '68 and Theodore '68 Alfond, 2015.1.31 Image courtesy of the artist and Haines Gallery.

*Second Family-
Triangle*
Monir Shahroudy
Farmanfarmaian
(Iranian, 1922 - 2019)

2011

Mirror, reverse-glass painting,
and plaster on wood

39 1/2 x 45 1/4 x 5 in.

MATERIALS

Wooden
dowel or
pencil

Pipe cleaner
Beads

Bubble solution:
2 cups warm
water

1/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup dish
soap

Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian was a sculpture and installation artist who was born in 1922 in Qazvin, Iran. Focusing mainly on geometry, her sculptures like *Second Family-Triangle* use glass and mirrors to emphasize light, lines, and shapes. Farmanfarmaian often brings artistic inspiration from Islamic art in Iran into her work; to use this artwork as an example, the artist says that the triangle in Islamic design **symbolizes**—or represents through imagery— the intelligent human being and human consciousness. **Consciousness** is being able to think about yourself and the world around you. For example, when you think about what you want to have for lunch, or wonder why something makes you sad or happy, you are able to do these things because you are “conscious”.

Farmanfarmaian also says of her mirror artworks that, in Iran, the mirror symbolizes water. Water reflects light, and so the mirror symbolizes light and life. *Second Family-Triangle* contains all these symbols. The artwork also changes when you look at it with different lighting and different reflections; the mirrors reflect the room and the person or people looking at it. Farmanfarmaian’s mirrored artworks were first inspired by these changing reflections.

The geometric design of her mirror artworks is also inspired by mosques she would visit growing up in Iran. In Islamic culture, calligraphy, geometric shapes, and floral or plant designs are used for the decoration of buildings. In many Islamic communities, this is partly because images of humans and animals are not allowed. This practice is called **aniconism**. Islamic art instead turned to words, flowers, and shapes to add beauty to buildings. Farmanfarmaian’s geometric works are influenced by this tradition.

Farmanfarmaian’s mirror artworks show the symbolism of water and life through shifting light. What reflects light, color, and life better than... BUBBLES! Today we’ll be making our own triangular bubble wands, along with homemade bubble solution.

THINK LIKE AN ARTIST

1. Think about different shapes. Can you think of different traits or things they might represent? For example, a circle might represent the earth, or a square could represent strength.
2. What kind of shapes can you see in the architecture—or the design of the building—in your home?

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Take your dowel and your pipe cleaner. Wrap one end of the pipe cleaner around the end of the dowel to anchor it to the dowel.
- 2) Next, put your beads on your pipe cleaner in whatever pattern you'd like. Once you've filled most of the length of the pipe cleaner, fold it into a shape and use the unattached end to connect back to the dowel. I chose a triangle because Farmanfarmaian's artwork is a triangle, but you can do any shape you want.
- 3) Optionally, you can use your colored pencils, markers, or pens to draw or color in the handle of your bubble wand!
- 4) To create the bubble solution, combine two cups of warm water, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sugar, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dish soap in a cup or bowl.
- 6) Mix the solution up until the sugar is dissolved. Now you can dip your wand in and start blowing bubbles!
- 7) The mirrors that make Farmanfarmaian's artwork reflect color and images because light bounces off the surface. Look closely at your bubbles and you can also see colors and your own reflection in them because light bounces off of the surface of the soap like it does to a mirror!