



# STEAM Connections

## Art Activity



### Dried Bean Nature Mosaic

#### Featured Artwork

*Relative Position* is a beaded sculptural box that mixes nature with technology and traditional Native art. Each side of the box features a bird and a plant that are native to the Great Plains. Viewers can scan the QR codes at the bottom to reveal information about each species and their location. Inside the box are beaded waving lines that represent wind patterns. The geometric designs at the top mimic the patterns of parfleches, a folded bag made of rawhide (cow or buffalo skin) historically used by some Indigenous tribes.

Adams created *Relative Position* while she was an Artist in Residence at the Great Plains Art Museum in 2013. Speaking on the inspiration behind the piece Adams said, "My perspective is that we learn more about an ecosystem's health by looking at the ground for the variety of plants, by looking at the diversity of trees, and by listening to the cacophony of birdsongs. I think the variety of subtle landscapes is the real treasure of the Great Plains."

#### About the Artist

Molly Murphy Adams specializes in contemporary sculptural beadwork. She was born in Montana and is a mixed blood descendant of the Oglala, Lakota tribe. Adams describes her work as a mixture of traditional Native arts and modern art. She currently lives in Oklahoma and continues to explore creating art that reflects her background and traditions.

#### Learning Objectives

- Create your own beaded nature art using dried beans.
- Observe how each dried bean fits together to form different shapes in your artwork.
- Reflect on the importance of creating art that keeps traditions alive or encourages others to care for the environment.

[Click here to zoom in](#) ↗



Molly Murphy Adams, *Relative Position*, 2013, mixed media, commissioned for the Elizabeth Rubendall Artist-in-Residence Program.

# Art Activity

## You will need...

- Dried beans, seeds, or rice
- Liquid glue
- Piece of cardboard or paper plate
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Ruler (optional)



## Instructions:

**1** Cut out a piece of cardboard (example here is 8" x 10"). Next, draw a simple design using a pencil. This could be a butterfly, a leaf, a bird...anything that comes to mind!



**2** Gather your dried beans, seeds, or rice and sort into piles by type and color. Plan where each bean will go and test various combinations. You can write in the names of colors in each section as a guide before gluing.



**3** Start with your first section and spread a generous and even layer of glue. Place beans one by one to fill the space. Be sure to press beans down firmly to ensure they will be fully stuck to the cardboard.



4

Next, move onto your next section and repeat the same steps. Continue these steps until you've filled in all spaces of your design.

5

Allow your artwork to dry flat at least an hour or overnight. Once dry, you can add color to the beans or empty spaces of the cardboard using paint or markers.



**Tip:** Spread another layer of glue over your fully dried artwork to create a protective seal.

## Share!

Share your new creation with family and friends. Or show us your work! Use #GreatPlainsArtMuseum.

## Explore more!

If you created a plant or animal, try a geometric pattern next. Look at Molly Murphy Adams's parfleche inspired designs in *Relative Position* for inspiration.