



### *AN ARTIST'S FIRST EXPERIENCE*

I first experimented with ARTriangles by doing some suggested activities of making a circle, star, and straight and curved lines. The circle was easy and the star followed suit. Surprisingly, straight and curved lines—especially the ring—took a little more time. I had to really observe the examples and the way the tiles fit next to each other, rather than trying to just line them up. I realized I was already exercising geometric hand-to-eye coordination and attention to detail without even knowing it.

I practiced—duplicating a big and little bird of varying colors and then a tiny fish from the many designs provided on the ARTriangles.com website. Positioning them in different relationships elicited a scenario that didn't turn out so well for the little fish. It brought up an unplanned drama with great potential for language skills development, if I had still been teaching in a classroom. It would have been a great tool for that purpose.

But this was not what I was after. My purpose was to explore the creative aspects of the famous Golden Proportion as an artistic tool.

I abandoned the poor fish. His end was near. I wanted to experience a creative process that could merge an analytic scientific ability with an artistic bent. For myself, I wanted to develop an intuitive understanding of the obvious relationship between art and science that our educational system has so sadly ignored, much to the detriment of creative young minds. I was looking for some concrete results.



Could geometry (one of my least favorite subjects) actually DO something as the box proclaimed? Could it really inspire my artistic endeavors?

Such an approach radically challenged my impression of geometry as rote memorization of formulas and templates to PROVE something I didn't care about or relate to in the first place. How could such a theory-based academic subject be relevant to a creative artistic process? Such was my thinking—unfortunately based on the way the otherwise fascinating field of shapes, sizes, colors and their ways of relating is often presented so lifelessly in classrooms.

As an artist, I had learned to watch for shapes as indicators of spacing. Since the tiles are definite shapes and sizes, they appealed to my sense of organization and proportion. I thought there might be something to this Golden Proportion. I didn't think da Vinci, Kepler, Durer, and their modern counterparts could be completely off-base.

I wanted to make an original design without following examples. I waited for inspiration.

No animals came to mind so I tried a few flowers. The results all looked oddly twisted, frostbitten. It was difficult to think of something I felt competent to do in this medium of angular tiles.

Eventually I abandoned all control of the outcome. I started with a circle of ten tiles, identical in shape, size, and color. Removing every other one gave me a pinwheel effect that reminded me of a mandala.

It looked bland, so I stacked two progressively smaller different colored triangles of similar shapes but contrasting colors on top of each triangle in the pinwheel. I made each pinwheel part identical to help me "keep my place."

I didn't know what to do next. There were so many placement choices. When I am painting I simply put down a color and let it dictate the next move, depending on my personal aesthetic sense of how it fits in with the other shapes and sizes. But paint is fluid, impermanent in hue, and looks different every time you put it on the canvas, depending on brushes, strokes, texture, and so many factors. There was no variation in the color consistency of blue tiles. They were equally blue. Likewise with shapes: There were only two, and each was identical to the rest of its kind. I just kept looking at the tiles I had used so far, trying to make some sense out of what might work next.

Then I made a surprising discovery. My process of deciding what to do next was just like meditation. I simply had to keep bringing my erratic thoughts and ideas back to the present moment. I needed to LOOK at the tiles and see them as they are rather than how I thought they should, could, or might be. I had to see them AS THEY ARE.

Then I saw a kind of anise seed star in the center but not on the same plane as the other triangles. It was bright red. I liked the way it looked and brought my attention back to the "big Picture."

I decided to use something yellow, since I had just used blue. Since I no longer wanted to totally cover the red, I looked for a yellow to fit in the space and expand the design. I placed medium obtuse yellow tiles between the blue tiles all the way around.



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This was getting to be fun. I was experiencing the Golden Proportion. I didn't have to decide anything. New shapes would appear by themselves if I just paid attention to the big picture and filled in the empty, unconnected sides of one of the triangle pinwheels with anything that would expand the design. I used similar colors for the other four matching pinwheel parts, placed in the same relationship as on the first one.

I walked away in awe. My developmental process was an eye-opener. Your own experience will differ, but I expect your creations will give you a similar sense of wonderment, discovery, and self-satisfaction. I grew energized. I felt joyful and connected to a principle greater than myself I was just beginning to understand. It is difficult to describe, but I know I have permanently been affected in a positive, creative way.