



#FontanaTogether

## Henna Hand Art

### What is henna?

Henna is a plant that has been used as a dye since the Bronze Ages, primarily in the Eastern Mediterranean region encompassing Northern Africa, Italy, Spain, and the Middle East. It was also widely used in India, where it is still a popular form of temporary body art to this day.

### How is henna used?

To create a dye for the skin, the henna plant is grounded into a paste with a few other ingredients, which is then applied to the body using a cone-shaped funnel. The henna must stay undisturbed on the skin for several hours to properly stain the skin, and then it is washed off. Henna designs can last for days or months.

### Why do people decorate their skin with henna?

In many cultures, women have henna decorations applied to their hands and feet for festivals and celebrations. Before a wedding, a bride will have elaborate henna designs drawn onto her hands, arms and sometimes feet. In some regions, the groom will be decorated as well. In India, henna designs on skin are called mehndi.

This Henna Hand Designs Art Lesson shows you how to create a unique and unusual self-portrait of your hands!



The art lesson allows students to learn about:

- other cultures
- the role of pattern in abstract art
- how to create abstract patterns
- how to express themselves in a symbolic way



## Materials:

- Pencil
- Pen
- Markers
- Paper

## Instructions:

1. Tracing your hand: The first step is to trace your hand onto the paper. I recommend using a pencil to outline your hand first, so that you can erase any mistakes. Then go over the outline with a pen or marker.

Tip: Be sure to spread your fingers far enough apart so that you can easily get the pencil in between your fingers.



2. Now you can fill your hand with designs and patterns!

Tip: You might want to draw your designs with a pencil first, so that you can erase any mistakes - or you can leap right in with a pen or marker.



3. The patterns and imagery you choose reflect who you are – your personality, your essence, your own unique flair. By drawing patterns on your hand, you are creating an original self-portrait that captures the essence of who you are! Common motifs found in henna hand designs include flowers, paisley, tendrils, stars, vines, spirals, leaves, water drops, crisscrosses, waves, and more.



*"Remember that your drawing doesn't have to be perfect... it's character that matters here - your character!"*