

Start at home

Folded faceted bird



Certainly the artist will find beauty
in unexpected places...

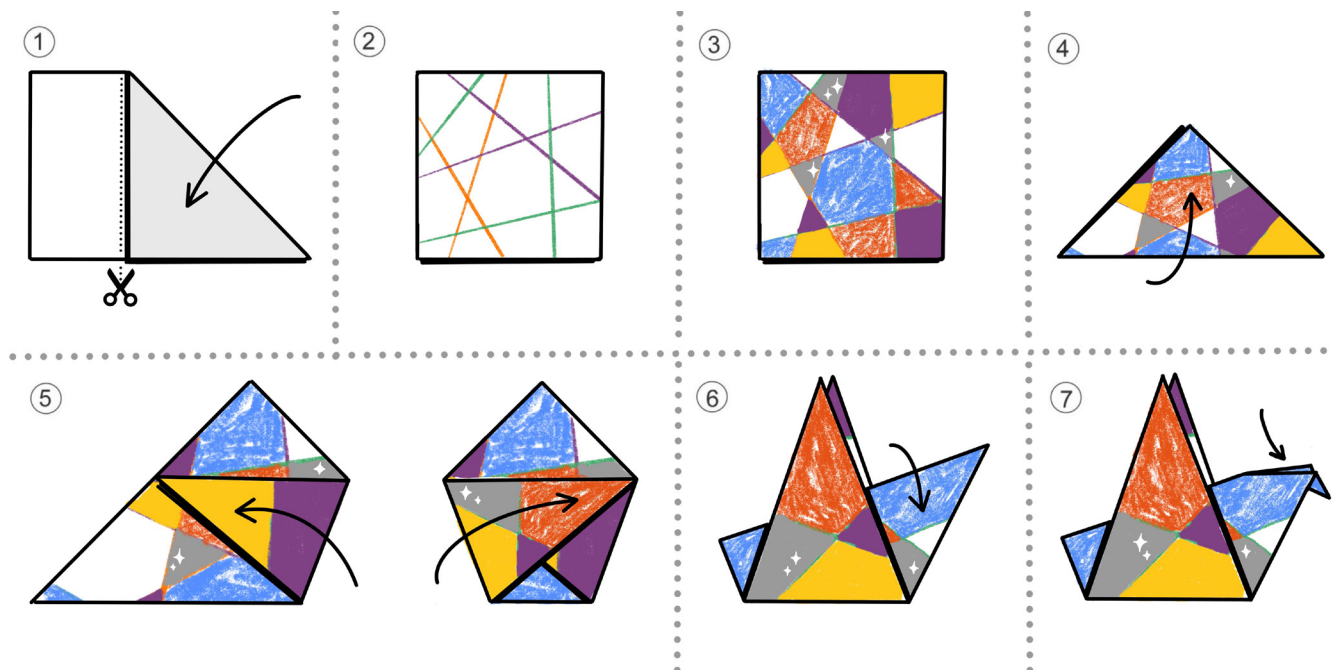
James Cant, 1945

About the artist

James Montgomery Cant was an only child and his parents gave him both their surnames. He grew up in Sydney and his father passed away when he was only six. As a boy, James attended several different schools and took Saturday morning art classes. As a young man he travelled to London and was inspired by a range of modern art movements. James' work was a hit in London, but when WWII broke out he returned to Australia, settling in the Adelaide Hills. Always experimenting, and influenced by local cultures, colours and creatures, James had a prolific and varied forty-year art career.

About the work

This painting is called *Mundoie bird*. You might wonder what kind of bird that is. A "mundoie" was an early Australian slang term for a foot or a footprint, derived from the languages of the Eora and Awabakal people. It seems perfect for this bird, stepping carefully across the land in the moonlight. Both birds and mountains were recurring themes in James Cant's abstract work of this period. In this piece, the forms of bird and mountain intersect and fracture one another. The olive hues of the moonlit land are distinctly Australian. Having worked as a camouflage designer for the Royal Australian Engineers during WWII, Cant had an excellent eye for natural colours.



Materials you need

- a piece of A4 paper
- scraps of coloured paper
- scraps of shiny foil (alfoil or easter egg wrappers)
- coloured pencils
- scissors
- a glue stick
- a ruler

Take it further

Origami is the art of paper folding, originating in China and Japan.

This activity uses a basic origami bird pattern, but there are many other methods. Find more origami patterns in books or online, and create a whole flock of folded birds!

If you have used shiny reflective foil, hang your birds near a window to catch and reflect the sunlight.

Create your own folded faceted bird

James Cant was influenced by a wide range of cultures and art movements. This activity combines collage and origami to create a faceted 3D bird inspired by Cant's painting.

- 1 Fold one corner of your A4 paper diagonally to meet the opposite edge. It should look like a folded triangle with a strip left over. Carefully cut off the strip so that you are left with a folded triangle. Unfold this, and you will now have a square.
- 2 Use a ruler to draw diagonal lines in coloured pencil all over your paper square. Let them intersect at different angles, breaking up the page into sharp shapes.
- 3 Now fill the shapes with different colours. Glue coloured paper or shiny foil into some areas, and use coloured pencil for others, creating a mosaic effect.
- 4 Now fold your paper square in half diagonally, making a triangle with the colour on the outside.
- 5 Fold the right-hand point of the triangle straight across to the other side. Then repeat with the left-hand point, making a crossed pentagon shape.
- 6 Fold your pentagon shape in half, but don't fold the two triangles. These should point straight upwards - they are your bird's wings!
- 7 Finally, make a small fold for the beak. Your folded faceted bird is finished!

Mundoie bird is currently on display in Gallery 6 and online: <https://bit.ly/3CTeOXY>

Text and diagram: Robin Tatlow-Lord, 2021

We would love to see your work! Ask your parent or carer to post a photo on Instagram and tag the Art Gallery of South Australia. Or you can email your photo to us at public.programs@artgallery.sa.gov.au

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