

The evolution of an idea...

Teresa Anderson's 2021 Minnesota State Fair crop art entry

Saw this quote on Facebook back in September 2020, and thought it was something meaningful I could illustrate (and the nature theme seemed to tie in with seeds). Assumed I would end up shortening it because that would be a LOT of lettering!

“
**Rivers do not drink
their own water; trees
do not eat their own
fruit; the sun does not
shine on itself and
flowers do not spread
their fragrance for
themselves. Living for
others is a rule of
nature. We are all born
to help each other. No
matter how difficult it
is...Life is good when
you are happy; but
much better when
others are happy
because of you.**

Pope Francis”



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I went online and found a stock illustration that looked like a basis for what I needed—water, fruit, flowers, sun, etc.

I wanted the piece to be 3-dimensional, both because I enjoy working that way and because it is a less crowded category at the fair!



My first attempt at building a mountain was a disaster. The clay didn't stick to anything so it all fell apart and made a big mess.



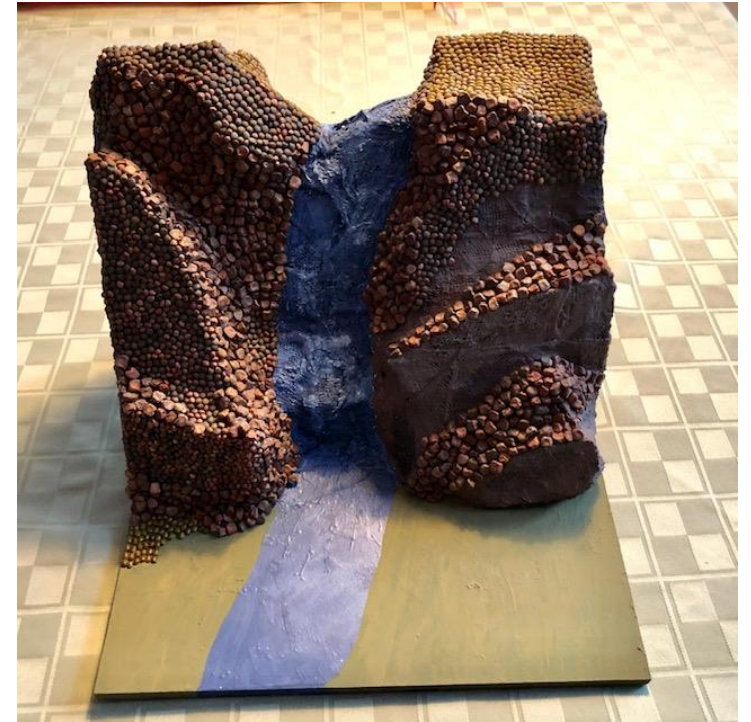
I started over with a wooden base and some Styrofoam my son rescued from his condo building's trash.



Next I got some plaster of Paris and sculpted a mountain. I had never played with this medium before and it was actually fun!



I like to underpaint my background so that was the next step. This helps bare spots not show through the seeds.



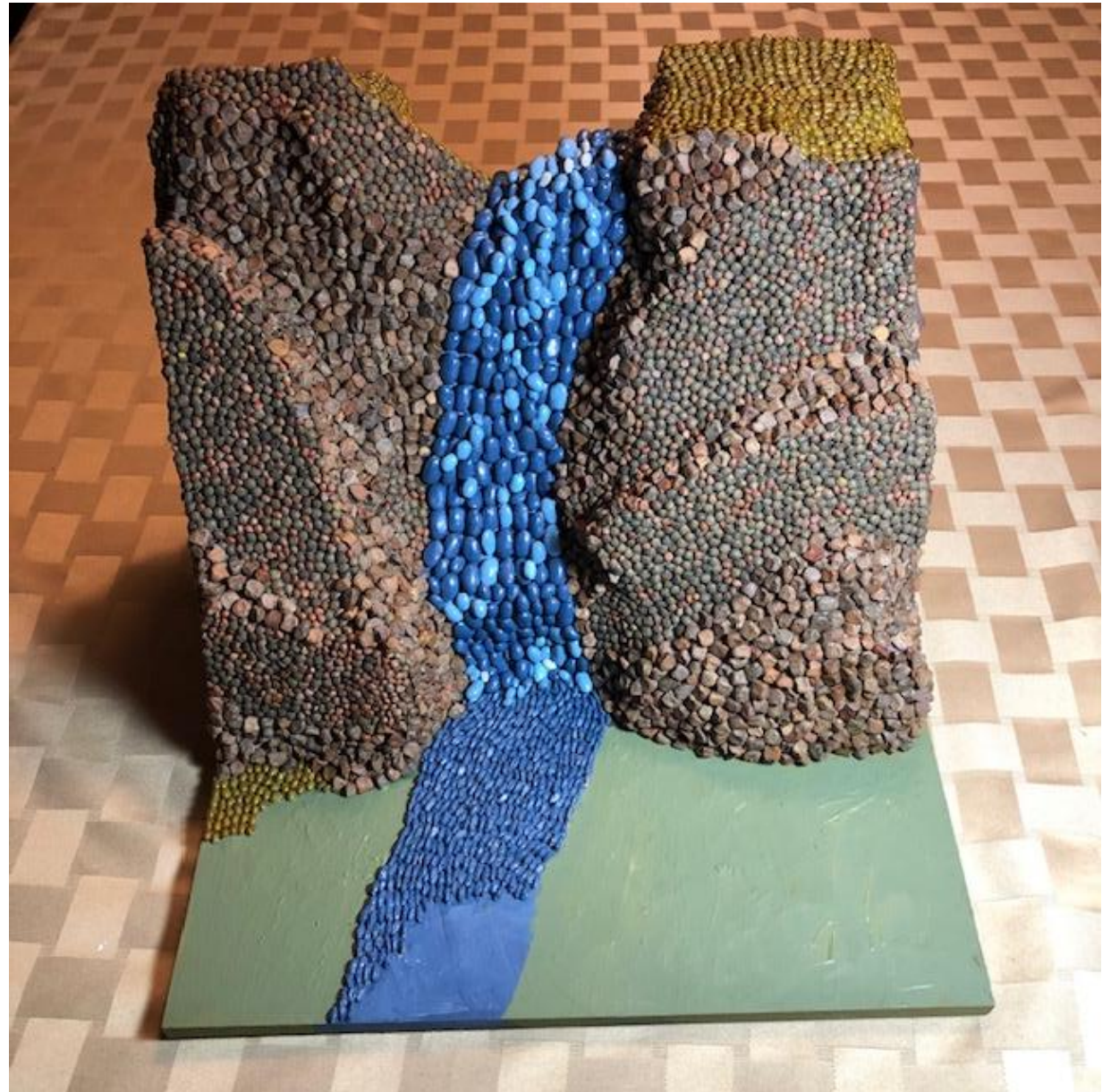
Next, the tedious process of seeding the mountain with French lentils, radish seeds, and chickling vetch, and the grass with split mung beans.



Seeding on a non-flat surface was a challenge. Here I'm using a medicine jar lid to hold my mountain seed mix to minimize the distance from seed to surface. I also had to place the structure on different sides as I worked.



I painted four different seeds various blues for the waterfall and river.





And made a sun from wood, peeled mung beans and corn. Not yet attached...





Tree template



Gluing wood



Painted



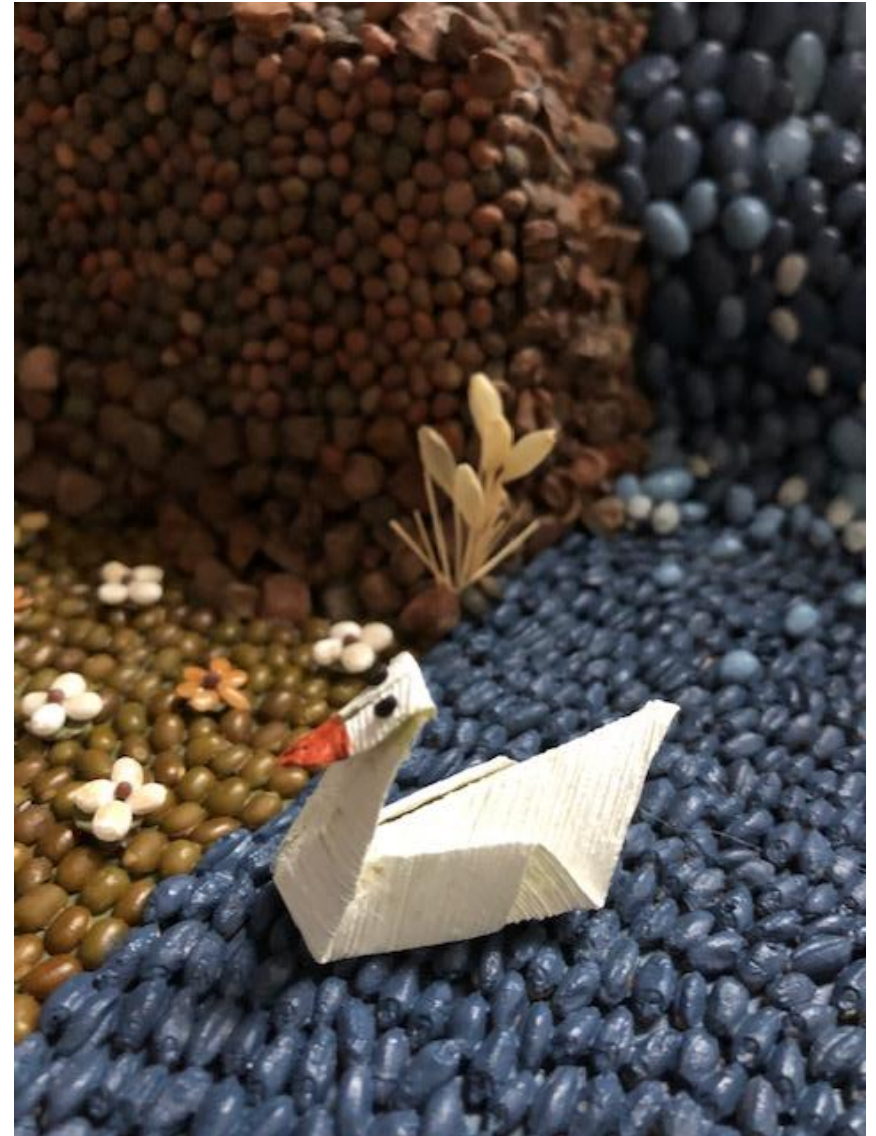
Seeding

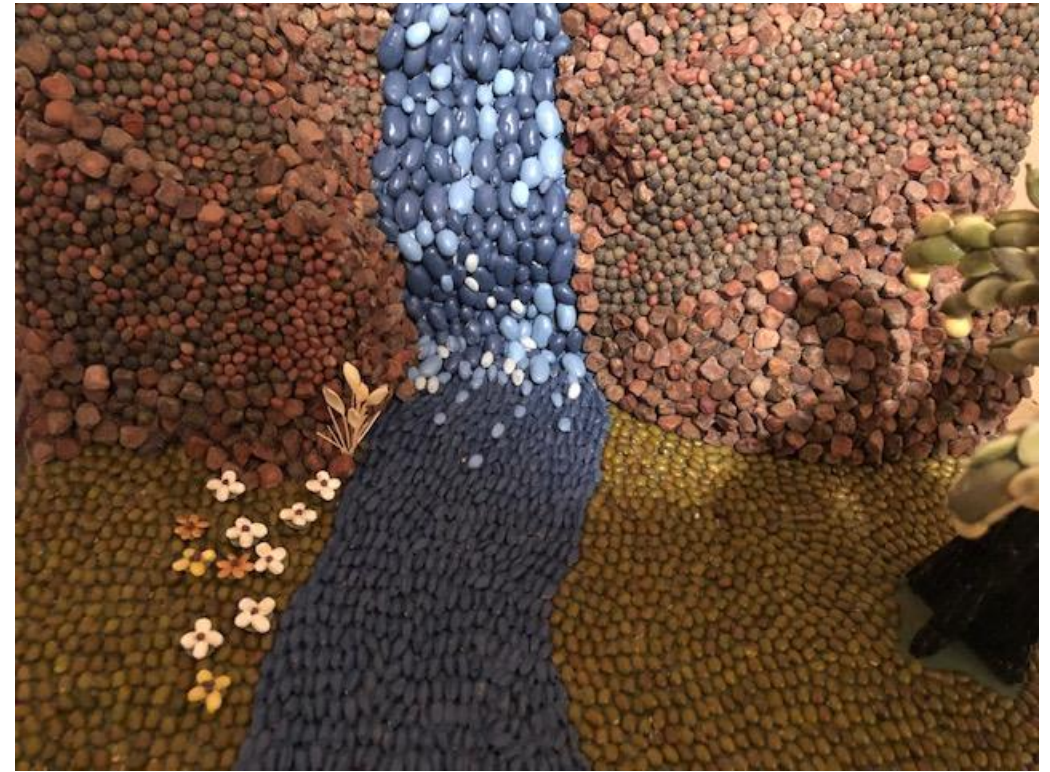


The tree



Because of all the dark seeds, I thought the whole piece looked rather drab and depressing. Perhaps a little origami swan made out of corn husk and paint would make it pop! I later added a couple birds. Note: folding dried corn husks to make tiny animals is not easy.





Also made a bunch of little flowers and some marsh grasses to add interest and lighten things up. I attached the 'petals' to a tiny cardboard circle painted to match the grass. This kept the flowers more regular than gluing them directly on the bumpy mung beans.



Added in more surface for lettering.



Working on the GREATLY shortened quotation!
The complete quote will be included on my index card.

Attached the sun with the help of some more wood and
Gorilla Glue.

I was thinking of adding a cloud behind the sun
but my pesky husband pointed out that clouds were
close to earth and the sun was 93 million miles away.



Finished lettering; added fruit to the tree, more flowers, and another bird. And called it QUITs!