

Snowshoe Art

Create beautiful and intricate designs with your feet

By Casey Flynn

Snow is an art medium. From neighborhood snow angels to expert skiers laying down figure-eight tracks on a mountainside, snow is naturally aesthetic and draws out our inner artists. A pure white blanket of fresh snow provides a blank canvas for expressing yourself. With every new storm or sunny day comes another opportunity to create something uniquely you.

Snow artist Simon Beck has been stomping down breathtaking designs in the Alps for seven years. Using map and compass skills, basic math tools, and sheer tenacity, Simon plods, sometimes for ten hours straight, to create giant masterpieces of ephemeral art. He shares his expertise with *Women's Adventure* readers interested in exploring this new medium.

Naturally uncomplicated, snowshoe art requires just a little planning and a few basic tools to get started. The designs consist of geometric shapes linked together to form complex and beautiful compositions, which are then laid down using snowshoes and a sighting compass.

Begin with a simple geometric shape, such as a star, and map it out on paper with a ruler and protractor to help visualize it once you go outside. At your site, roughly determine the location of each of your star's points and then walk in a straight



line from one of those points to the center. Count your paces into the middle so you know how long to make the other arms of your star. Creating straight lines is as easy as focusing on a single object in the distance and walking to it.

From the center, take bearings with a sighting compass to each of the remaining points, using your drawing as a guide. Walk out to each point from the center, and then connect every point to every other point. Stylize your inaugural image with a little shading by stamping down selected areas of snow, and your piece is complete!

Simon listens to classical music to channel his muse. Find your inspiration and take to the snow!

do

- **Dress warmly.** Good gloves, a warm hat, and a change of clothes will help you stay toasty.
- **Start simple.** Try a small, less complex design at first and then let your ambition carry you on to larger projects, like the Flower of Life or Sierpinski Triangle.
- **Choose the right site.** An open, flat area such as a field, lake (test the ice first!), or parking lot are best. Try to choose areas with minimal traffic so others don't tread on your work.
- **Get a photo!** Make sure you have a vantage point to take photos of the finished product and share them with friends.

don't

- **Aim at the wrong point.** An easy mistake is to pick the wrong landmark and then—oops!—a straight line turns crooked.
- **Get burned.** Put on plenty of sunscreen to protect you from sun reflecting off the snow.



Gear

A comfortable pair of snowshoes and a good sighting compass with a folding mirror—to allow you to maintain eye contact with your target and take an accurate reading—are all the specialized tools you'll need. Suunto, Silva, and Brunton are quality brands. thecompassstore.com

SIMON BECK