

Exploring Works on Paper and the Art of Shahzia Sikander

Time: 3 hours including dry time

Difficulty level: Medium

Messy level: Medium



Shahzia Sikander, *Pendulum*, 1996, watercolor, gouache, graphite and tea on wasli paper. Courtesy of Mrs. Claire Ankenman. © 2021 Shahzia Sikander. Courtesy: the artist, Sean Kelly, New York, and Pilar Corrias, London.

To view high-res images from the exhibition *Shahzia Sikander: Extraordinary Realities*, visit the [Museum's website](#).

Inspired by the Pakistani American artist Shahzia Sikander, this activity will guide you in exploring South and Central Asian illustrated manuscript painting while creating a painting to symbolize yourself.

Investigate the Work of Art!

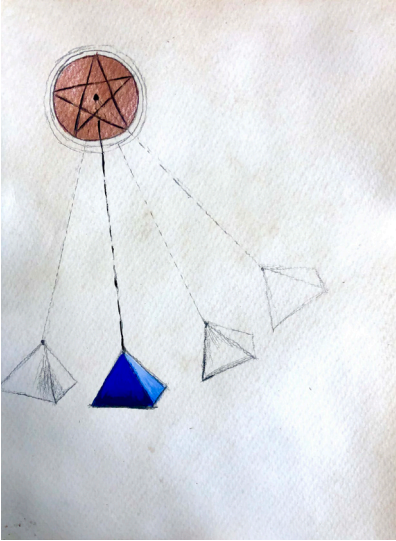
1. This artwork is made on wasli paper, a handmade paper developed and produced in India. For this work, the artist stained the paper using tea. What other methods do artists use for staining or coloring paper?
2. Look at the pendulum. A pendulum is a weight hung from a fixed point that can swing back and forth freely. What three words would you use to describe the pendulum in this artwork?
3. Look closely at this drawing. How would you describe the shapes at the top of the pendulum? And those at the bottom?

Let's Make Some Art! Gather These Art Materials

- Watercolor paper
- Tea bag
- Hot water in a ceramic mug
- Cookie sheet
- Gouache paint, tempura paint, or acrylic paint
- Graphite pencil
- Paintbrush
- Palette or paper plate
- Cup of water

(Continued on next page)

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Step-by-Step Artist Instructions

1. Boil hot water and fill a mug halfway. Add a tea bag and let it steep. For this first step, a grownup will need to help or supervise.
2. Place a sheet of watercolor paper on the cookie sheet.
3. Pour the tea water over the paper and let it sit immersed in the tea for 5–10 minutes.
4. Take your tea-stained paper out of the cookie sheet and let it dry.
5. Think of two shapes that symbolize you: a star, diamond, heart, circle, pyramid, crescent, sports ball, etc.
6. Use the pencil to draw one of the shapes at the top of your page as the pivot for the pendulum weight to hang from.
7. Draw a straight line down toward the bottom of the page and draw your other symbolic shape as the weight of the pendulum. Shahzia Sikander drew her head as the weight.
8. Use paint to add color to the two shapes you have drawn; one for the pivot and the other as the weight of the pendulum. When adding the color, think about how light and shadows will affect the object.

Optional: You can lightly sketch in the flight of the pendulum weight in a half circle. For this, you would draw the shape again lightly with a pencil, along the arc that it would swing.