

Mondays with MoMA



MoMA

Step 1 Look closely

Questions

1. Write down six descriptive words that come to mind.
2. What forms or patterns do you see repeated in this image?
3. How are these forms and patterns connected to each other and the figure?

Step 2 Learn more

Shahzia Sikander is a Pakistani-American visual artist. She takes images from Hindu, Persian and Muslim cultures and uses them in new ways in her artworks. She combines them with Western and modern references as a way to question the meaning of these images. She said, "I'm still going to the same image but trying to find another way to transform it. I'm not trying to hide where they come from but they need not be associated with their source. I'm interested conceptually in the distance between the translation and the original."

This drawing is called *Turb-in-motion*. It represents a male figure engulfed by turbans. A turban is a man's headdress, consisting of a long length of cotton or silk wound around a cap or the head, worn especially by Muslims and Sikhs. Sikander says of the turban in the drawing: "It's an image which is already loaded, it's masculine. It's got race and religion. When it's flapping around, it's like butterflies and fragile, and then it fits on and all you see is turban".

Step 3 Activity: Descriptive Poetry

Materials: pencil, paper or anything to write with. Optional: your list of six descriptive words about *Turb-in-motion*.

1. Take a moment to find a comfortable position and try to clear your mind of distractions to focus on the artwork again.
2. Begin to write freely about the artwork. Don't think about whether it's good or bad - just write whatever comes to mind. If you want, you can use your list of six descriptive words as inspiration for your writing.
3. Go back and reread what you have written. Circle the words or phrases that jump out at you.
4. Take those words or phrases and arrange them to create a poem. A poem can take many forms, so don't worry about whether it rhymes or about how many lines it has.

Step 4 Share!

Share your poem with a classmate. Or, you can email it to us at MoMA: schoolprograms@moma.org

To learn more about Shahzia Sikander and her process, watch the Art21 video: <https://bit.ly/2QLwbXU>



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Image: Shahzia Sikander. *Turb-in-motion*. 2005. Ink and gouache on prepared paper, mounted on board. Gift of Martina Schaap Yamin. Copyright © 2021 Shahzia Sikander.