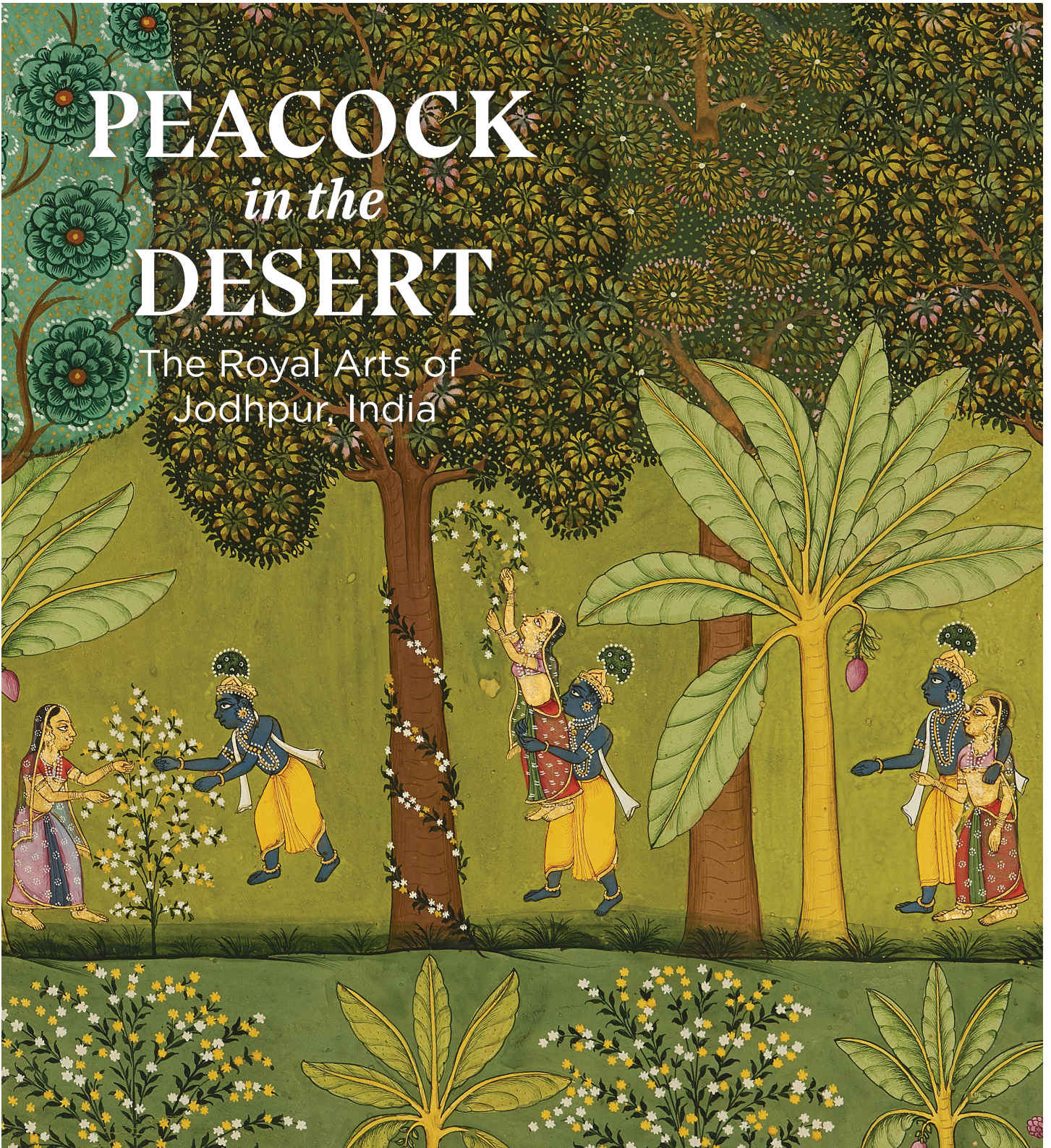


PEACOCK *in the* DESERT

The Royal Arts of
Jodhpur, India



EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

visitsam.org/peacock
#SAMPeacock

SAM SEATTLE
ART
MUSEUM

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

THE EXHIBITION

Peacock in the Desert: The Royal Arts of Jodhpur highlights 500 years of royal life from the former kingdom of **Marwar-Jodhpur*** in northwestern India. The **Maharajas** of the **Rathore** clan ruled from Jodhpur, the former capital city of the kingdom, from the 15th to the mid-20th century and were patrons of the arts. Today, the Maharaja and his family are private citizens of India, and they work to promote the region's thriving culture and arts through the Mehrangarh Museum Trust, which organized this exhibition. Over 250 paintings, decorative arts, tents, canopies, carpets and other textiles, arms, and jewelry presented beside large-scale photomurals evoke the stunning setting of the Mehrangarh Museum.



photo courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

*Definitions of bolded words can be found at the end of the guide in the glossary.

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE



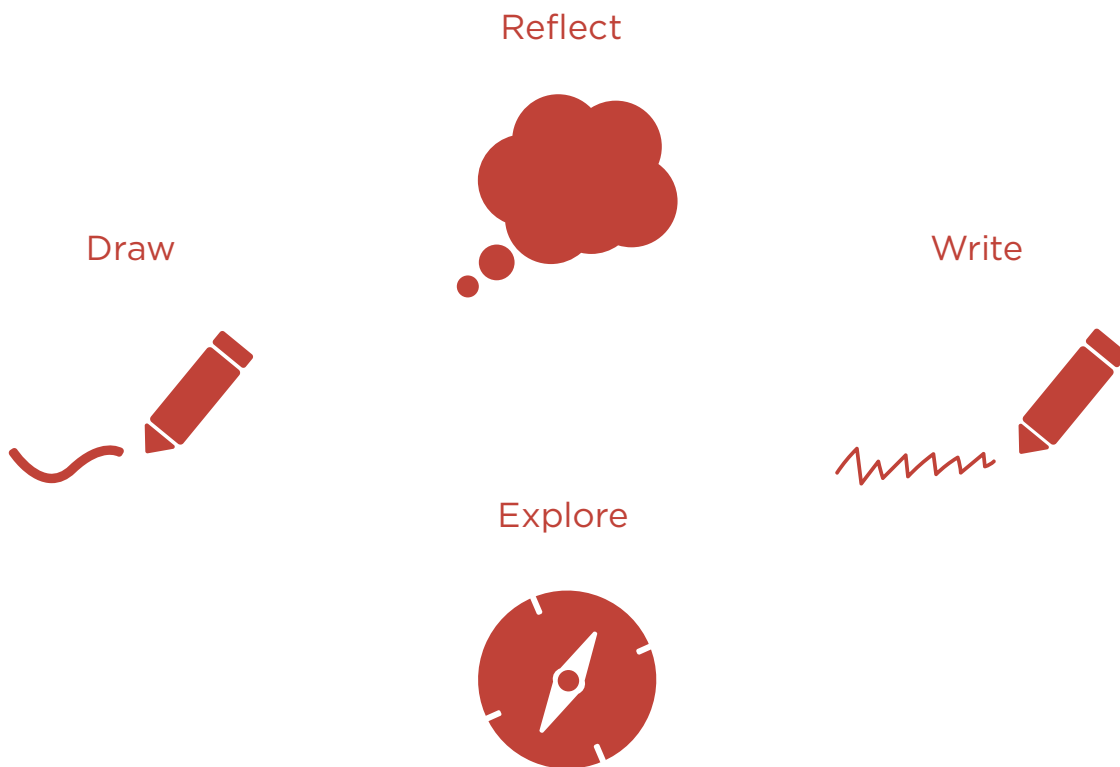
photo courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

These maps are ca. 1900, and represent India during the time when many of the objects in this guide were created. The location of Jodhpur and Rajasthan are the same today. For a contemporary map of India, please visit PBS's [Map of India and Surrounding Countries](#)*.

*Hyperlinked URL can be found in the glossary.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide looks at four works of art from Jodhpur's rich history and thriving contemporary culture and explores ideas of family, gender, **identity** and representation, and religion. Students and educators can use this guide in the classroom or during a visit to the Seattle Art Museum. Each exercise starts with looking questions and background information about the work. A blank sheet is included for you at the end to select additional works of art from the exhibition to think about with your students.



Information in this guide is adapted from the exhibition catalogue *Peacock in the Desert: The Royal Arts of Jodhpur, India* by Karni Jasol (2018). We would like to thank our Advisor Juan P. Córdova, 5th Grade Teacher at Cedarhurst Elementary in Highline Public Schools for his work on this guide.

Support for K-12 programs during the 2018–2019 school year is provided by The Foster Foundation, Nordstrom, and Sound Credit Union.

PREPARING FOR THE EXHIBITION

COMPLEX CONVERSATIONS

Before leading conversations with your students, reflect on your own identity and be cognizant of how that identity shapes your personal perspective and biases, then encourage your students to do the same. Model self-reflection for your students and consider specific pieces of your own identity, such as race or gender, and how they have affected your life, worldviews, and interactions with others. Create a safe environment by sharing your experiences with your students and why these experiences are important.

Prepare your students for these conversations with the following techniques, which are adapted from The Studio Museum in Harlem presentation at the 2017 National Arts Education Association Museum Education Division Pre-Conference.

- 1 At the beginning of the discussion or visit, set group expectations of a respectful dialogue.
- 2 Honor individual experiences and avoid stereotyping with “I” statements.
- 3 When possible, begin with less controversial information and build to more complex topics.
- 4 Encourage students to step up and step back—create space for those to speak who do not normally do so and encourage thoughtful listening.
- 5 If a student says something concerning, try to ask for more information to find an underlying issue. Create an environment in which the group can unpack the statement, to take the spotlight off the student who voiced this and help others who may feel similarly to process.
- 6 Allow time for quiet reflection and check in with students after difficult conversations.

PREPARING FOR THE EXHIBITION

PRE-VISIT

When using this guide to prepare for a visit to the museum, use one or all of the enclosed images and activities so your students will be ready to explore the themes of the exhibition.

AT THE MUSEUM

During your visit, this guide will give you an overview of the art you will see in *Peacock in the Desert*. Expand your experience to explore works in [SAM's Collections](#) with the Cell Phone Tour.

POST-VISIT

Continue your discussion with additional resources.

- Dive deeper into the royal paintings of Jodhpur with [Garden and Cosmos*](#), a resource guide for educators from the Smithsonian Institute, or our Garden and Cosmos [audio slideshow*](#).
- Discover more about the arts and cultures of India in our [Origins: Myths, Histories, and Stories of India Outreach Suitcase*](#).
- Learn more about disrupting stereotypes around **turbans** from [Teaching Tolerance's Toolkit for "\(In\)Visible Identity."](#)* While the Toolkit discusses Sikhism, which the turbans in this exhibit are not related to, Teaching Tolerance provides resources for talking to students about identity and representation.

*Hyperlinked URL can be found in the glossary.

FAMILY: LOOKING QUESTIONS



The Predecessors of Rama: Folio 2 from the *Suraj Prakash*, 1830, Amardas Bhatti, Jodhpur, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 12 3/4 x 18 7/8 in., Mehrangarh Museum Trust, photo: Neil Greentree.

GETTING STARTED

What's going on here? What do you see that makes you say that?

How is it similar to other paintings you have seen? How is it different?

What do you notice about the colors? How do they make you feel about each figure?

What patterns do you notice? What do you think these patterns might symbolize?

What relationship do you think the people in the painting share?

DIVING DEEPER

Who do you think is being shown in this painting? Who do you think is missing?

Does this painting remind you of your family or culture? Why or why not?

If this was a painting of your family, how would each person pose?

FAMILY: ABOUT THE WORK

INFORMATION

This painting is part of a **genealogy**, or family history. Genealogies are important to the Rathore family's identity. They are created to show the importance and power of the family members, to indicate their worth as rulers, and to trace the history of their ancestors. Originally, bards composed genealogies as epic songs that were sung during important festivals, and were later written down. In 1830, artist Amardas Bhatti illustrated a famous Rathore genealogy, which traces the family from the **Hindu** god, **Lord Rama**, to the Maharaja who commissioned the paintings. Though we do not have an exact record of who each individual person is, these paintings show only certain members of the Rathore family—specifically the men and kings.



ACTIVITY

Genealogies can help tell the story of who you are and where you're from. Draw your own genealogy, showing either your family, your chosen family of friends, or both. It can look like the painting above, like branches on a tree, or something completely different.

Use the following sentences to help you get started:

I want to include my _____ in my family tree because

_____.

An important object in my family is _____.

One of my family traditions is _____.

Who did you choose to include in your family tree? What colors or symbols would you include? What do they represent?

FAMILY: ABOUT THE WORK

STANDARDS

WASHINGTON STATE EDUCATION STANDARDS: ARTS

1.2 Develop arts skills and techniques.

1.3 Understand and apply arts styles from various artist, cultures, and times.

4.4 Understands how the arts influence and reflect culture/civilization, place, and time.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening **Presentation of Knowledge and Idea**

4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

CREATING

Anchor Standard 1

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

PRESENTING

Anchor Standard 6

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

RESPONDING

Anchor Standard 8

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

GENDER: LOOKING QUESTIONS



A Durbar in the *Zenana* (detail), ca. 1850, Bulaki, Jodhpur, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 21 5/8 × 30 3/8 in., Mehrangarh Museum Trust, photo: Neil Greentree.

This is a detail image of the painting. An image of the full painting is located at the end of the guide. Begin by examining the details, then zoom out to view the details in context.

GETTING STARTED

What is going on in this painting? What do you see that makes you say that?

What do you think the women in this painting are celebrating? What are different ways that you and your family celebrate?

DIVING DEEPER

Take a look at each woman in the painting. What is she doing? What do you think her gestures, clothing, and pose say about her?

Who is being shown as important in this painting? What makes you say that?

How would you describe the **perspective** or point of view of this painting? Are you in the scene, or watching it from afar? How would it be different if the point of view was changed?

GENDER: ABOUT THE WORK

INFORMATION

Offering a rare glimpse into the lives of royal women in 19th century Jodhpur, this painting depicts a royal assembly in the **zenana**. The zenana was the women's living area of the palace. To celebrate the birthday of Maharaja Takhat Singh, the royal women have invited a group of musicians and dancers into the zenana to perform. The status of each woman is shown through their clothing, jewelry, and by how close they are to the center.

Women of the court were and continue to be important supporters of the arts and community organizers. They were financially independent and commissioned art of all kinds, as well as community resources such as hospitals, schools, temples, water tanks, and libraries. Many are still in use today, including Toorji ja Jhalra (Toorji's Step Well), a water reservoir built in the 1740s by a queen of Jodhpur. Women drove the cultural exchange in Jodhpur when they joined the royal court through marriage, bringing their own traditions, languages, clothing, food, religious worship, and political systems to their new homes. For example, when moving to Jodhpur, they were joined by artists, musicians, and dancers from their old home, introducing new styles of art that became part of the Rathore court.



ACTIVITY

Look closely at the painting's details, and consider the following questions. Write at least five lines answering one of the questions.

What are some ways in which women are leaders in your family or community? Think of all the things they are responsible for. How do these different responsibilities make them leaders?

Do we see enough women as leaders today? What do you usually see as the gender stereotype for women?

What story can you imagine for this painting?

GENDER: ABOUT THE WORK

STANDARDS

WASHINGTON STATE EDUCATION STANDARDS: ARTS

4.3 Understands how the arts impact and reflect personal choices throughout life.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Anchor Standard for Writing

Text Types and Purposes

3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: HISTORY/SOCIAL

Writing History & Science

Text Types and Purposes

6—8.1 Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

6—8.2 Write information/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

PRESENTING

Anchor Standard 6

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

CONNECTING

Anchor Standard 11

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historic context to deepen understandings.

*Hyperlinked URL can be found in the glossary.

IDENTITY & REPRESENTATION: ABOUT THE WORK



Sarpech (Turban Ornament), Probably second half of 17th century, India, probably Deccan, gold with champeleve and overpainted enamels; worked in kundan technique and set with diamonds and emeralds, 6 13/16 x 2 1/16 x 1/2 in., The al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al Islamiyyah, Kuwait.

Turbans of Marwar, Jodhpur, Mehrangarh Museum Trust, photo: Neil Greentree.

Turban Cloth, early 20th century, Jodhpur, cotton with brocade border, gold, 67 1/4 x 7 1/2 in., Mehrangarh Museum Trust, photo: Neil Greentree.

INFORMATION

The **paag**, or turban, is a headdress made of one long piece of cloth that is wrapped or worn around the head. In Rajasthan, the **paag** is typically worn by men. It is very important to a man's identity, and is a powerful symbol of expression and pride. Each community has a distinct style of wrapping and tying the turban. The colors and patterns of turbans are also associated with seasons, special occasions, moods, and emotions. For example, yellow is the color of spring and happiness. **Leheriya** is a wave pattern that symbolizes rain and is worn in the rainy season.

Turbans are worn all over the world, and not all turbans are the same or are worn for the same reasons. Sikh men and some women wear turbans as a commitment to their religion and as a symbol of equality. Some Muslim men also wear turbans as part of their religious commitment. In parts of South Asia, turbans have been symbols of wealth, power, and class. They are also worn for non-religious reasons, such as in Rajasthan, but are still important parts of a person's clothing and identity. These are examples and are not the only reasons someone might wear a turban. There are many ways to tie a turban, and they can be many different colors and styles.**

A **sarpech** is worn attached to the front of the turban. Turban ornaments like this have special significance and were symbols of royalty. Sometimes, they were given as gifts to loyal members of the court. They were intended to be easily visible to the ruler's audience in order to highlight their position of power. This emerald **sarpech** is made in the traditional form of a curved feather, popular during the 1600s. The emeralds are set without backing to allow sunlight to pass through the stone, which is believed to transfer the stone's powerful quality of immortality to the wearer.

** Information adapted from [Teaching Tolerance's Toolkits](#)* and the [Sikh Coalition](#)*

IDENTITY & REPRESENTATION: LOOKING QUESTIONS

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- To further dismantle stereotypes around turbans with your students, refer to [Teaching Tolerance's Toolkit for "\(In\)Visible Identity."](#)* While the Toolkit discusses Sikhism, which the turbans in this exhibit are not related to, Teaching Tolerance provides resources for talking to students about identity and representation.
- Vishavjit Singh is an engineer, writer, educator, activist, artist, and the creator of Sikh Captain America. He works to dispel myths surrounding Sikhs and the turban. Visit his [website](#)* to share cartoons, videos, his work as Sikh Captain American, and positive representations of people wearing turbans with your students.
- Listen to Sikh youth discuss their own experiences and identities through the [Digital Stories from the Iowa Sikh Association](#)* videos.

GETTING STARTED

How would you describe the sarpech? What shapes do you notice?

What is similar about each turban? What is different?

What colors, patterns, and designs do you see? What do you think they mean?

DIVING DEEPER

Think about the clothing and accessories you wear every day. Why do you choose to wear them? How do you express your identity through clothing?

Ornaments like the sarpech were often used as symbols of power and royalty. In what other ways can clothing act as symbols?

*Hyperlinked URL can be found in the glossary.

IDENTITY & REPRESENTATION: ABOUT THE WORK



ACTIVITY

Turbans are an important part of some people's identity, yet there are many stereotypes surrounding them. For some, turbans are important representations of their faith. For others, they are a critical tool of expression. Consider your own identity. What makes you who you are? How do you want to be represented? How does it make you feel when people misunderstand who you are and the things that are important to you? Take some time to reflect on these ideas, and think about how you can challenge stereotypes.

Now, think about where you have seen images of turbans. Have you seen them in the media, in movies, or at home? What have these images taught you?

What do you want to say to people that make fun of those who wear a turban? Consider what you used to think, what you know now, and what more you would like to learn, then write a myth versus fact list about the turban. How will you think of people that wear a turban from now on?

Use the following sentence to get you started:

I used to think _____
and now I know _____.

IDENTITY & REPRESENTATION: ABOUT THE WORK

STANDARDS

WASHINGTON STATE EDUCATION STANDARDS: ARTS

- 3.1** Uses the arts to express feelings and present ideas.
- 3.2** Uses the arts to communicate for a specific purpose.
- 4.3** Understands how the arts impact and reflect personal choices throughout life.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Anchor Standard for Speaking and Listening

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- 4:** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: HISTORY/SOCIAL

Writing History & Science

Text Types and Purposes

- 6—8.1** Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.
- 6—8.2** Write information/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

PRESENTING

Anchor Standard 6

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

CONNECTING

Anchor Standard 11

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historic context to deepen understandings.

RELIGION: LOOKING QUESTIONS



Krishna and Radha in the Forest, Folio 17 from the *Bhagvata Purana* (detail), ca. 1775, Jodhpur, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 27 1/2 × 19 3/4 in., Mehrangarh Museum Trust, photo: Neil Greentree.

GETTING STARTED

What is going on in this painting? What do you see that makes you say that?

Imagine you are inside the painting. How does it feel, smell, and sound?

What patterns, textures, lines, colors, and shapes do you see in this painting?
How does the artist use them to tell a story?

Describe the mood of the painting. What do you think the people are feeling?

DIVING DEEPER

In this painting, the same two people are repeated over and over again. Who are they? Why do you think the artist chose to repeat them? How do these images help create a story? How do you and your family share stories? Do you use pictures, writing, or share them out loud?

This painting depicts a story from **Hinduism**. Have you seen other religious art? What similarities does this have to the other religious works you have seen? How is it different?

Why do you think it was important to the Maharaja to have this religious story painted? How do you share what is important to you?

RELIGION: ABOUT THE WORK

INFORMATION

Religious devotion is one of the duties of the Rathore rulers. Maharaja Vijai Singh was devoted to the Hindu deity **Krishna**, and stories of Krishna's life were frequent themes in paintings made during his rule from 1752 to 1793. In this painting, trees are used to help tell the love story of Krishna and **Radha**, from the sacred text of the *Bhagvata Purana*, in scenes beginning from left to right. In the first scene, Radha and Krishna arrive in the forest. They pick flowers, and Radha expresses her desire to remain beside Krishna forever. When Krishna hears this, he disappears and leaves Radha alone. A confused Radha looks up to the sky and realizes that though she seeks Krishna from place to place, he lives forever in her heart.

The artist for this painting is unknown. During this time, it was common for Rajasthani artists to be uncredited. Indian rulers were expected to support art, and at the Jodhpur court this was undertaken through the creation of royal art workshops. The products of these workshops expressed the wealth of the court and the interests of its rulers. Many of these pieces can be credited to the court workshops, but the individual artist or artists are not recorded.



ACTIVITY

Step One Krishna and Radha in the Forest is an illustration of the sacred Hindu religious text, the *Bhagvata Purana*, which was very important to Maharaja Vijai Singh, who commissioned the work. Ask students to think of a story that is important to them, their family, and/or their culture. Why is the story important? What does it mean to them? How are stories important to you and your culture?

Step Two Have students create a drawing of their story. Ask them to consider how to tell the story using scenes to create a narrative, in three sections on their paper: one for the beginning, middle, and end. In what ways can you visually show the passage of time? How can images and symbols be used to create meaning? How can you use colors and patterns to represent people and objects in different ways to tell your story?

Step Three When students are finished with their drawing, share them with the class and have a discussion about the results. Use the looking questions to dive deeper into each student's artwork. How does illustrating their story tell it in a unique way? Did they learn anything new about the story through drawing it?

*Hyperlinked URL can be found in the glossary.

RELIGION: ABOUT THE WORK

STANDARDS

WASHINGTON STATE EDUCATION STANDARDS: ARTS

- 1.2 Develop arts skills and techniques.
- 1.3 Understand and apply arts styles from various artists, cultures, and times.
- 3.2 Uses the arts to communicate for a specific purpose.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

CREATING

Anchor Standard 1

Generates and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

PRESENTING

Anchor Standard 6

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

CONNECTING

Anchor Standard 11

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historic context to deepen understandings.

GLOSSARY

Genealogy A study of family history, showing the relationship between a person and their ancestors.

Hinduism A world religion and way of life originating in India practiced in many different ways.

Identity How a person views themselves, how others perceive you, and how a society as a whole defines groups of people.*

Krishna A major god in Hinduism. He is considered one of the avatars of the Hindu god Vishnu, the Supreme Being, along with Lord Rama.

Leheriya Wave pattern seen on some turban cloths from Rajasthan. It symbolizes rain and is worn during the rainy seasons.

Lord Rama A major god in Hinduism. Along with Krishna, he is one of the avatars of the Hindu god Vishnu, the Supreme Being. He is often considered the ideal Hindu king.

Maharaja Title for king.

Marwar-Jodhpur Formerly a kingdom in northwestern India. Now, Marwar is a region in the state of Rajasthan. Jodhpur was the capital of the Marwar kingdom, and continues to be a large bustling city in the Marwar region.

Perspective Seeing something from a particular point of view. In art, it can also mean creating the illusion of depth and volume on a two-dimensional surface.*

Radha A Hindu goddess worshipped in many ways across several traditions.

Rajasthan A state in northwestern India.

Rathores The clan that established the kingdom of Marwar-Jodhpur. The Rathore rulers considered themselves responsible for the protection of their subjects, solving disagreements, the administering of justice, religious devotion, and supporting arts and culture.

Sarpech Turban ornament.

Stereotype A generalized type, or a caricature of a person, place or culture, often negative in tone.*

Turban Also known as the paag. A long cloth wrapped around the head. They are worn around the world in many different styles, and there is no one way to wear a turban. Turbans are a critical part of many people's identity, and for some, they can also have important religious significance.**

Zenana Women's living area of the palace. The only men allowed in the zenana were the ruler and close members of the family. From the zenana, royal women made important political decisions, held festivals, and funded arts and community projects. Today, the zenana still functions but is open to everyone, and traditional festivals are celebrated there with the public year round.

These definitions are borrowed from [Art21's Educator Guides](#)

Definitions adapted from [Teaching Tolerance's Toolkit](#)

Links

Page 3: <https://to.pbs.org/2E9SRuy>

Page 6: <http://art.seattleartmuseum.org/collections>

<https://s.si.edu/2O9Q5dj>

<https://bit.ly/2O6BoYm>

<https://bit.ly/2Cs8KL3>

<https://bit.ly/2NprvzJ>

Page 13: <https://bit.ly/2w9uMPg>

<https://www.sikhcoalition.org>

Page 14: <https://bit.ly/2NprvzJ>

<http://www.sikhtoons.com>

<https://bit.ly/2pAToLK>

Page 20: <https://bit.ly/2yiCc1H>

<https://bit.ly/2w9uMPg>

ACTIVITY

WORK OF ART

SKETCH THE WORK



LOOK CLOSELY

What do you see?

What do you think about that?

What does it make you wonder?



The Predecessors of Rama: Folio 2 from the *Suraj Prakash*, 1830. Amardas Bhatti, Jodhpur, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 12 3/4 x 18 7/8 in., Mehrangarh Museum Trust, photo: Neil Greentree.



A Durbar in the Zenana (detail), ca. 1850, Bulaki, Jodhpur, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 21 5/8 x 30 3/8 in., Mehrangarh Museum Trust, photo: Neil Greentree.

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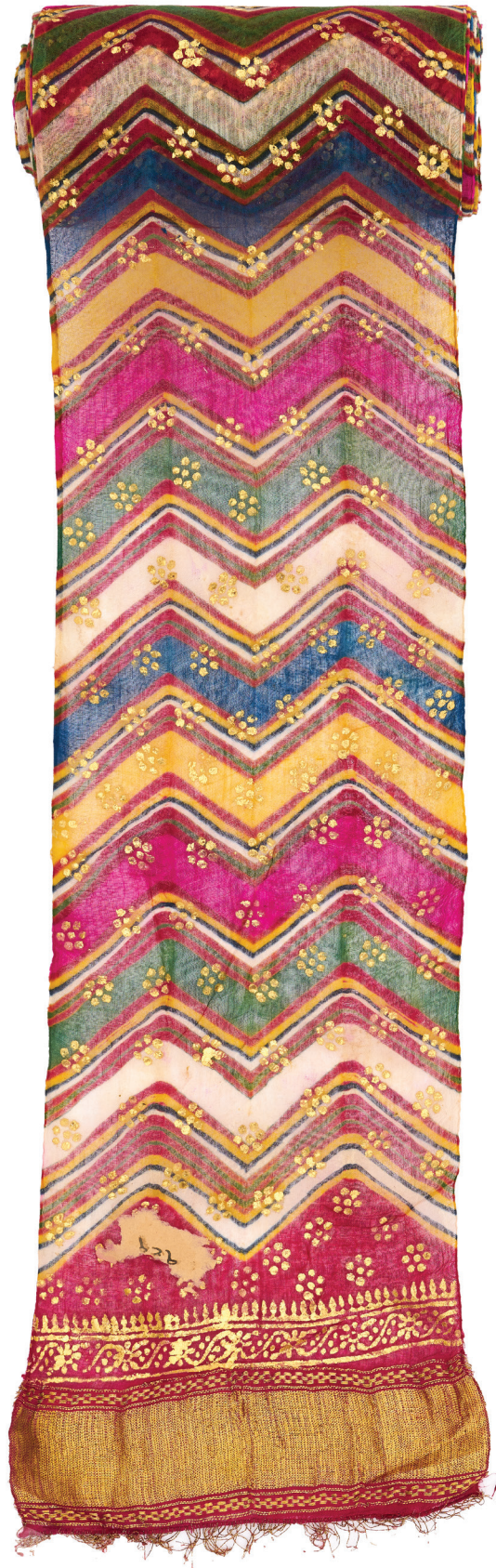
A Durbar in the *Zenana*, ca. 1850, Bulaki, Jodhpur, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 21 5/8 x 30 3/8 in., Mehrangarh Museum Trust, photo: Neil Greentree.



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Turbans of Marwar, Jodhpur, Mehrangarh Museum Trust, photo: Neil Greentree.



Turban Cloth, early 20th century, Jodhpur, cotton with brocade border, gold, 675 1/4 x 7 1/2 in., Mehrangarh Museum Trust, photo: Neil Greentree.



Krishna and Radha in the Forest, Folio 17 from the *Bhagvata Purana*, ca. 1775, Jodhpur, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 27 1/2 x 19 3/4 in., Mehrangarh Museum Trust, photo: Neil Greentree.