

Painting A Red Sky

The Art Of Manjit Bawa

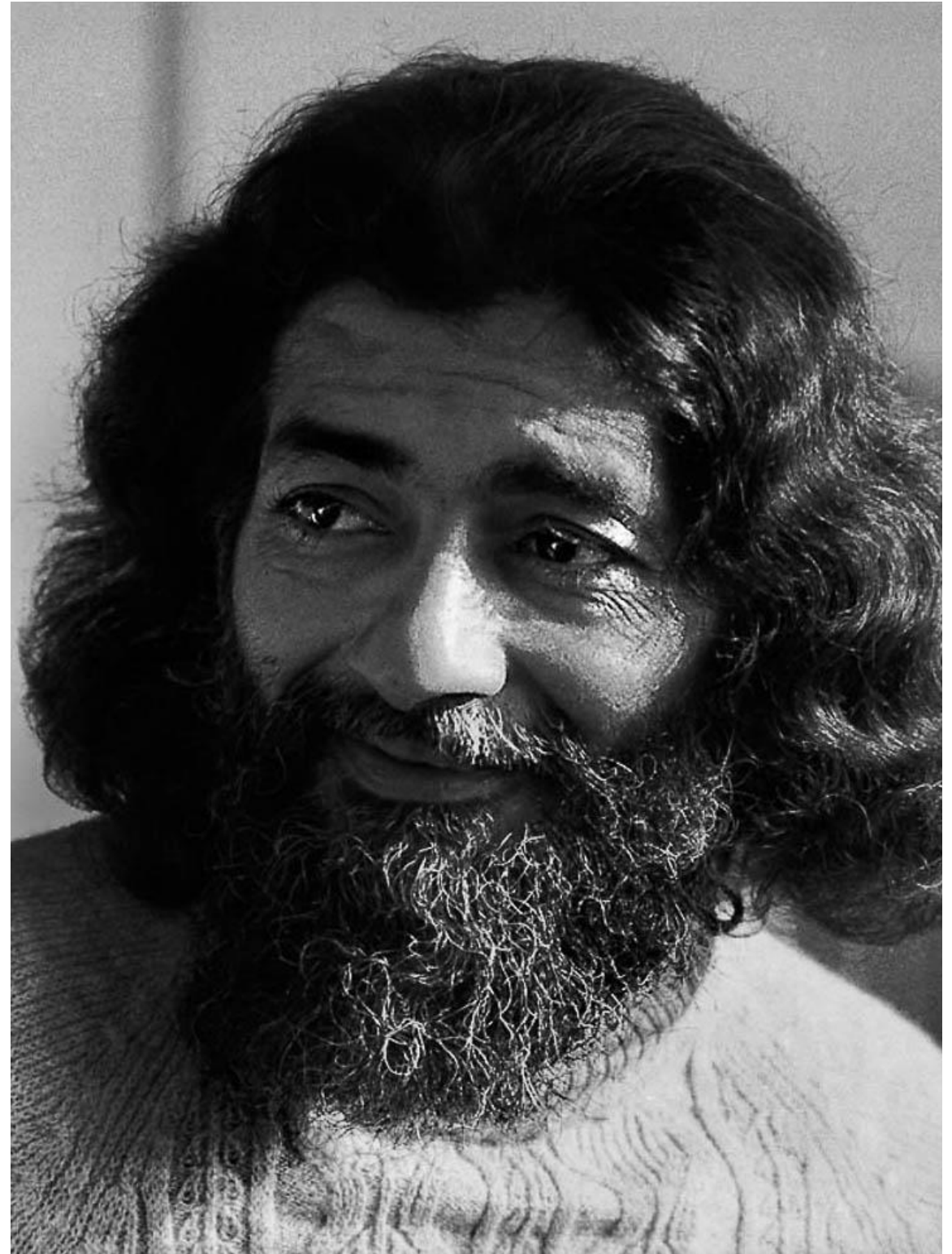


DISCOVER MAP

Manjit Bawa was an Indian Painter from Delhi. Here's a photograph of him that a fellow artist took in 1982, when he was 41 years old. Can you work out when he was born?

Bawa was born in a cowshed and his early years were spent in rural Punjab among lots of farm animals. As you will see later in this pack, cows remained his favourite animals to paint!

Do you have a subject that you love to draw over and over? Do you think that helps you become better at it?



ART SPEAK!

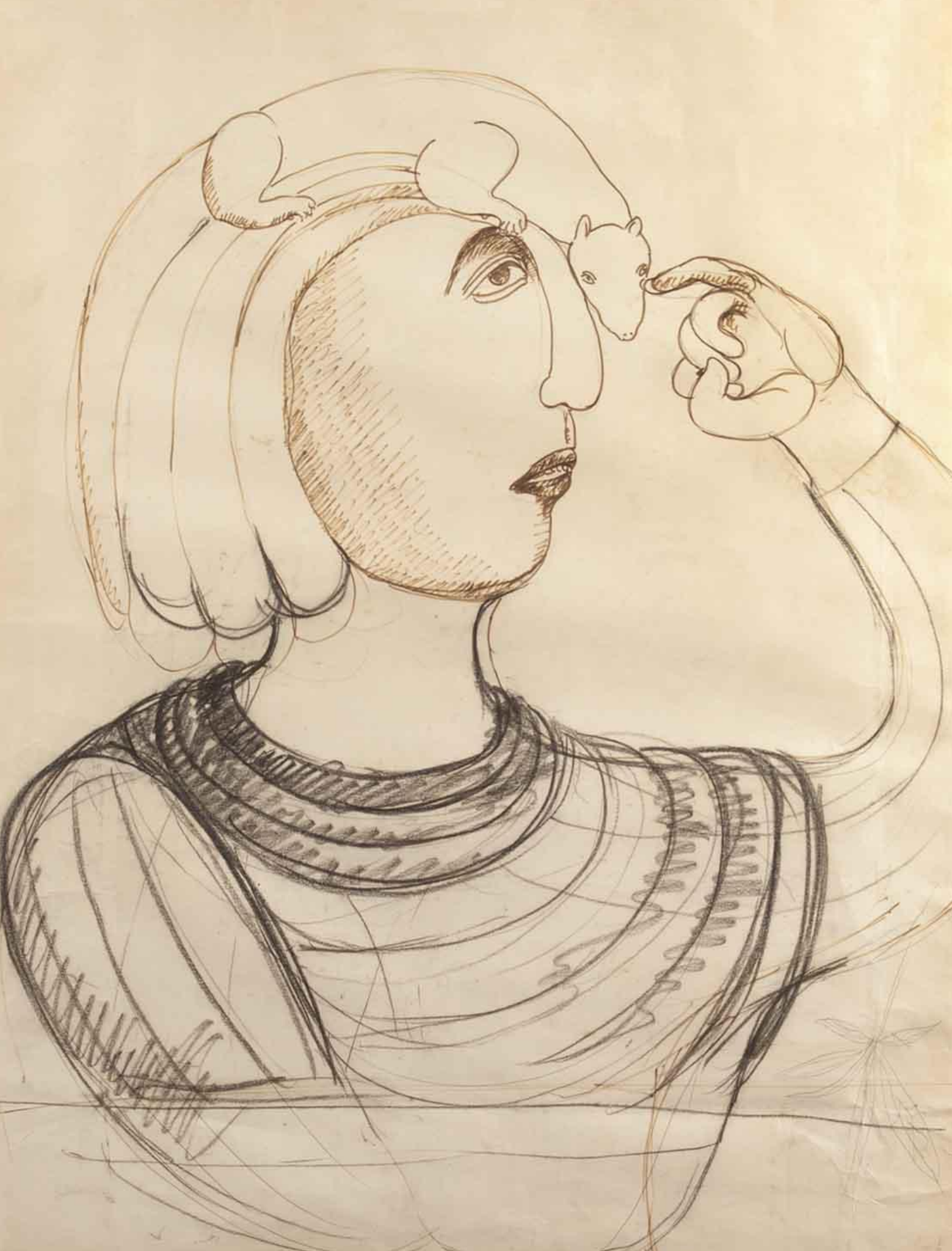
Manjit Bawa is considered a figurative artist. **Figurative art** is a form of art that retains strong references to the real world, particularly to the human figure.

Here is an example of a figurative painting by Kalam Patua, an artist from West Bengal.

You see how it is inspired by the human body, but parts of it (such as the elongated eyes reaching the corners of the face and the extra small lips) do not look very realistic!

If this painting were a song, what would it be?





Bawa loved to draw and sketch. He would often make many sketches from real life and experiment with layouts before moving on to his final composition.

Have you ever tried such a process of working with rough sketches before making a final piece?

Head to the next page for directions on some Bawa-inspired real-life sketching!

Think of a big idea or concept that this sketch is trying to highlight.

CREATE.



First, choose an item/ items to draw and put them on a flat surface like a table. Make sure that your table is close to a window.

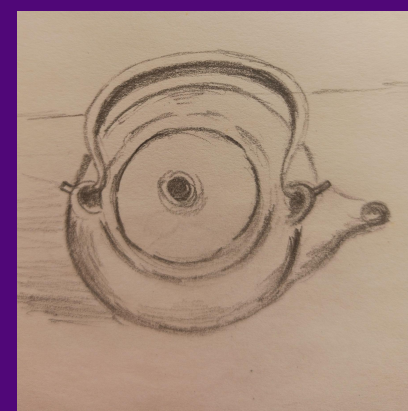
Next, add props around your subject if you want to. For example, if you have chosen a teapot, add a cup and saucer in the background, and maybe some snacks?



Now it's time to sketch! Make your first drawing from the front and then move around to view your subject from different angles and make more drawings from those viewpoints.

EXPLORE FURTHER.

Sketch it at different times of the day as the light changes. Do you notice any changes in your sketch too?



**Take
inspiration
from our
sketches of a
teapot made
from two
different
points of view!**



LOOK CLOSELY.

LOOK CLOSELY.

- How many cows are in the painting?
- How many colours?
- What is the human figure doing?

IMAGINE.

- If you could enter this painting, do you think you will hear any sounds? What kind of sounds?
- Will there be any smells? Where are these smells coming from?
- Take a guess at the temperature. Will it be hot and sweaty or cold and dry?



If this painting were the start of a story, how do you think it would progress?

THINK.

Indian myths and folklore were a major influence on Bawa's work.

This painting is also inspired by a famous Hindu legend. Do know which one?*

**This painting depicts a lesser known legend of Krishna. You may have heard stories of him eating butter, but have you heard the story of him eating fire? One time, Krishna and his friends were out grazing their cows when the trees caught fire! Krishna acted quickly, telling his friends to close their eyes, he swallowed the colossal forest-fire saving the cows and his friends.*



What three words would you use to describe this painting & why?

Here is a fun object that was made to Bawa's design.

It shows a famous mythical character. Can you guess who it is?

Do you know the story that this depiction is hinting at? What helped you make this guess?*

**This is a brooch or pin showing monkey-god Hanuman carrying a mountain! Curious about why he would do such a thing?*

Ask a grown up to tell you the story about Hanuman and the Sanjeevani plant, or look it up online!

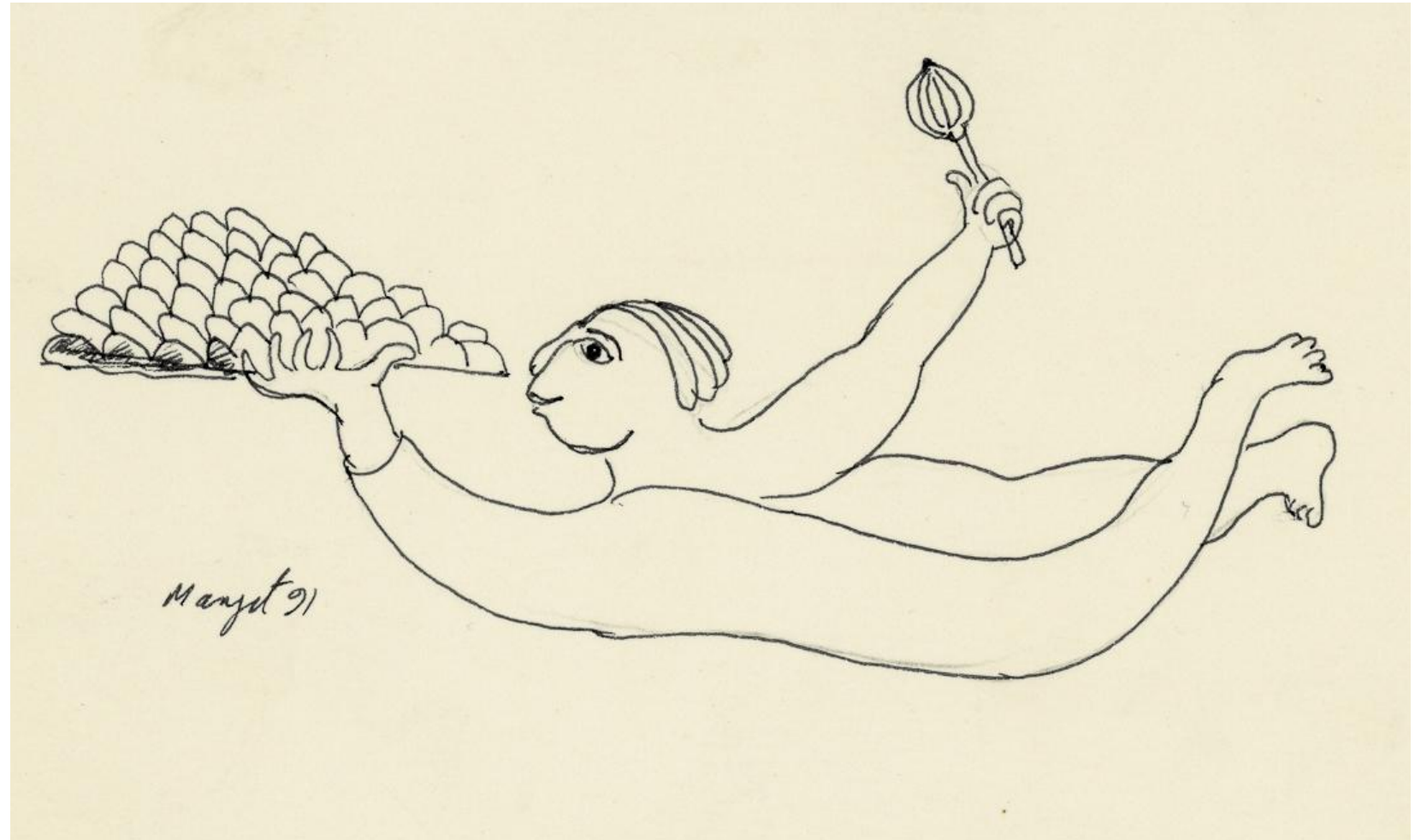


How do you think this object was made? Can you identify all the materials used to make it?

Here is the sketch that Bawa made, which turned into the brooch that you just saw.

EXPLORE.

Have you seen jewellery that depicts animals, humans, gods or other creatures? See if you can find any in your house, and try to reverse this process – by making a designer sketch for it now!



EXPRESS.

Imagine that you did not know the original story depicted. Can you think of an alternate story that might be represented by this sketch? Head to our **Stories With Art** extra for an activity on rewriting the story!



As you can see, Manjit Bawa loved painting mythological characters and one in particular was his favourite.

Look closely at this painting. Can you guess who this character is? What helped you make the guess?

This is Bawa's depiction of the Hindu god Shiva. How does it look different from other images of Shiva you might have seen before?

If you had to title this painting, what would you call it?

What about this figure?
Do you recognise him?

This is a representation of Krishna who was one of Bawa's favourite characters to paint. He made several works about him.

What do you think Krishna is doing here? Is there anything about his body that looks unrealistic? What are those things?

If you had to design a background for this painting, what would it be?



In addition to myths, Bawa loved to take inspiration from Indian artistic traditions. He was especially fond of Kalighat paintings and miniature paintings of the Pahari school.

Here is a Kalighat painting. Do you recall seeing a similar kind of painting some pages ago?

LOOK CLOSELY.

Do you see similarities between this one and Bawa's painting you saw in the last slide?

Pro Tip: Look at the way the colours are applied on both.



LEARN MORE.

Kalighat painting is a unique genre of Indian painting that evolved in 19th-century Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), in West Bengal. It is characterised by bright colours and bold outlines.

Kalighat is a place in Kolkata known for its Kali temple. Learn more about Kalighat and the art that it gave birth to in the articles [here](#) and [here](#).

If you repainted this, what colours would you use?





Collection: The Metropolitan Museum, New York

And here is a painting from Basohli, a town in present day Jammu Kashmir.

LOOK CLOSELY.

Do the same exercise with this one.

Observe the colours and how they are applied, and go back to compare it with the Bawa painting with the cows that you saw a few slides back.

Make a list of similarities.

Are there any differences that you notice? Make that list too.

ART SPEAK!

The Pahari school is a style of painting that developed in the Indian states on the Himalayan foothills (such as Basohli and Kangra) in the 17th century.

It was one of many courtly painting styles that were developed in various kingdoms across India in the pre-modern period. Learn more about these kind of paintings [here](#).

If you stepped into this scene, what do you think you'd hear and smell?



Manjit Bawa was also influenced by nature and the environment around him. When he was asked about the colour red in his paintings that he used so often, he once said that it was inspired by the sight of gulmohar trees during a sunset!*

**If you haven't heard of them before, google Gulmohar trees (Delonix regia) to check it out! .*



EXPLORE.

Look at the red in this image. Where else in nature can you find a similar shade? Go around your house and garden and try to find as many items as you can. Take photos of them on your phone, print them out and try making a collage using only reds!

You've learnt that live sketching was one of Manjit Bawa's favourite activities. And one of his favourite animals to paint live were cows and bulls!

This is one of his bull paintings from MAP.

LOOK CLOSELY.

- Why do you think there's no background?
- What material do you think was used to make this painting?
- What are those two small objects by the hooves of the cow? What are they doing in the painting?



What time of day do you think it is in the painting and why?

In addition to painting, Manjit Bawa had another fun hobby: making silkscreen prints!

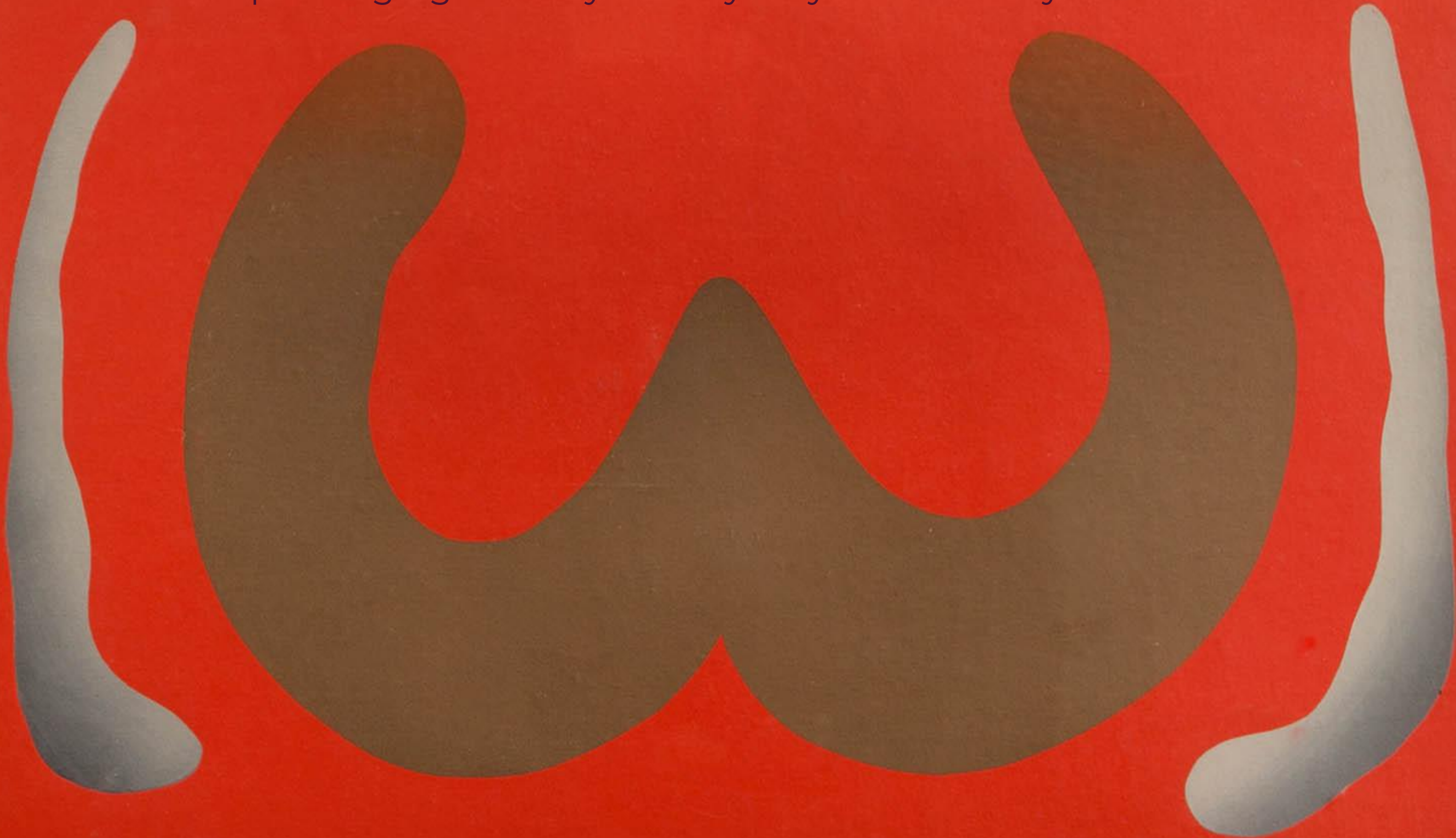
You saw one of them a few slides back. Do you recall the artwork with a lot of red and a 'W' like shape in the middle? That is a silkscreen print as well.

Do these shapes resemble anything you have seen in real life? How do you think the tinted effect is achieved?



REFLECT.

Do you know of other artists who experiment with a variety of mediums and keep changing their style? Why do you think they do that?



ART SPEAK!

Printmaking is a process for producing editions or multiple originals of an artwork.

Silkscreen printing is a type of print made with a stencil and a fine mesh screen. You can watch a video about this process [here](#).

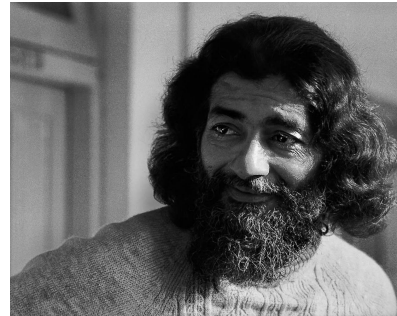
Head to our **DIY Sheet** Extra and learn how you can create a silkscreen print at home!



If this were a leg, what animal would you draw to complete the image?



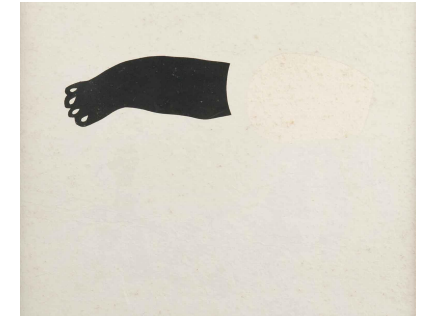
Goat, 1987
Manjit Bawa
Acrylic on canvas
H. 22 cm, W. 27 cm
MAC.01278



Portrait of Manjit Bawa, 1982
Jyoti Bhatt
Digital File
DC.00228



Cow with brinjals, 1987
Manjit Bawa
Oil on canvas
H. 120 cm, W. 151 cm
MAC.00839



Hand with object, 1977
Manjit Bawa
Silkscreen print
H. 35 cm, W. 32 cm
MAC.01175



Drawing for a brooch, 1991
Manjit Bawa
Pen and ink on paper
H. 9 cm, W. 15 cm
MAC.01664



Krishna eating the fire, 1980
Manjit Bawa
Oil on canvas
H. 180 cm, W. 246 cm
MAC.00480



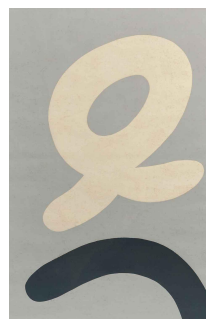
Brooch, 1991
After Manjit Bawa
Gold studded with ruby, emeralds and
diamonds
H. 5 cm, W. 10 cm, D. 0.5 cm
SCU.01200



Form II, 1977
Manjit Bawa
Silkscreen print
H. 23 cm, W. 33 cm
MAC.01173



Shiv, 1987
Manjit Bawa
Oil on canvas
H. 180 cm, W. 160 cm
MAC.00465



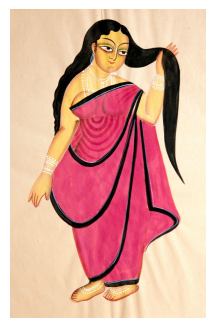
Loop in grey, 1977
Manjit Bawa
Silkscreen print
H. 35 cm, W. 25 cm
MAC.01178



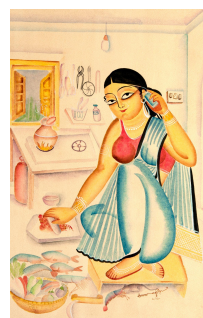
Krishna the nat, 1984
Manjit Bawa
Oil on canvas
H. 111 cm, W. 90 cm
MAC.01180



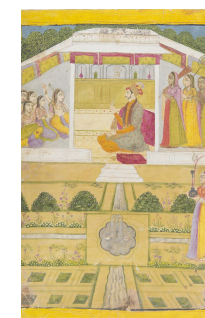
Form V, 1970
Manjit Bawa
Silkscreen print
H. 83 cm, W. 61 cm
MAC.01190



Courtesan, 2005
Kalam Patua
Watercolour on paper
H. 41 cm, W. 32 cm
PTG.00219



Woman in kitchen, 2012
Kalam Patua
Watercolour on paper
H. 51 cm, W. 37 cm
PTG.00217



A nobleman watching a
musical performance, 20th Century
Unknown Maker(s)
Opaque watercolour on paper
H. 38 cm, W. 29 cm
PTG.01347



MAP

Museum of Art
& Photography

MAP

Sua House
26/1 Kasturba Cross Road
Bangalore 560 001, India

map-india.org

 [museumofartandphotography](https://www.instagram.com/museumofartandphotography)

