

Depending on the age and interests of your class and the time available for studying South and Southeast Asia, you will know which of the following activities are suitable—and you will undoubtedly think up other activities based upon the themes listed on pages 50–51.

In discussing the slides and CD images for each activity, you may assign the descriptions to one or more students, ask them to read them and then lead the class discussion—or you may decide to do it yourself.

Activities

Worldly Power

Images

- 2** *Plaque with a Royal Family*
- 3** *One from a Pair of Royal Earrings*
- 32** *Prince Khurram (later, Shah Jahan) with His Son Dara Shikoh*
- 35** *Wall Hanging*
- 50** *Deified King (Jayavarman VI?)*

As the class looks at these images, discuss the ways rulers in South and Southeast Asia have displayed their wealth and power. Note costume, jewelry, physical surroundings, pose, colors, and the use of scale.

Prince Khurram and his son are pictured admiring jewels. Have the class draw themselves admiring their favorite things and holding what they would like to have.

Talk about the different kinds of power people can possess. Make a list of positive powers (creative, intellectual, spiritual, supportive, loving, etc.). Then make a list of negative powers (destructive, uncontrolled, cruel, etc.).

Select several powers from the list to use as examples and ask the students how these powers might be pictured (as symbols or emblems, through pose and expression).

Have each student draw or write a description of a powerful person in their own lives or a well-known famous person. In deciding how best to represent this person, have them consider the following:

stance, expression, dress, actions, and relationship to others, and what symbols this person might be holding or wearing.

Divine Powers

Images

- 14** *Yama*
- 15** *Krishna Battling the Horse Demon Keshi*
- 18** *Standing Parvati*
- 22** *Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja)*
- 27** *Seated Jain Tirthankara*

Poster A

Standing Buddha (image 6)

Discuss the definition of divine power, as distinguished from human power.

As the class looks at the slides, ask them to describe the particular powers each divine being radiates. How did the artist of each image express these powers? Note pose, expression, gestures, adornment, symbols held or surrounding the image, and scale.

Talk about the visual language and symbols our society uses to describe extraordinary powers. Ask each student to think about how he or she might picture an all-powerful god. Would this divine force be best illustrated as one being or several? In a human form or as a phenomenon of nature? Without physical form, how might a divine power be worshipped and meditated upon? (Think of a symbol or group of symbols.)

Ask the students to record their ideas about picturing divine powers in a drawing, a series of drawings, a short essay, or a clay sculpture.

Beliefs about the divine are part of what defines a culture. Talk about how gods are pictured in other cultures the class has studied.

Multiple Arms and Hands

Images

- 10** *The Buddha Amoghasiddhi Attended by Bodhisattvas*
- 16** *Vishnu as Vaikuntha Chaturmurti*
- 20** *Stela of a Four-armed Vishnu*
- 24** *The Goddess Durga Killing the Buffalo Demon Mahisha*
- 26** *Seated Ganesha*

As the images are shown, ask the students to express their opinions about what the meaning of each deity's unnatural "extensions" might be. Which deities seem to be the most powerful and why? Which is most appealing? Notice how the artists attached the extra arms (always in equal numbers) to the rest of the body.

Discuss the reasons why Indian artists portrayed many of their gods with multiple arms (and sometimes with more than one head). At this point, you may want to hand out photocopies of attributes of the gods to see if the students can identify them.

Tell the story about how Ganesha came to have an elephant head. Ask the students to imagine a person with a different animal head, and make up a story about how that combination came to be, and what that creature's powers are.

In our culture, we can often identify peoples' professions by the objects they hold. Ask the students to make a list of as many such objects as they can think of. They should be able to come up with at least twelve examples.

Divide the class into several groups and have each group draw a human form with four, six, or eight arms on a large piece of paper, or provide each group with a drawing already made. Ask the group members to decide whether their drawing needs one head or multiple heads and to choose objects for the hands that will symbolize the multiple powers of their deity. Ask each group to show their deity to the rest of the class, and ask the class to interpret the various symbols.

Brainstorm with your group to list all the things you could do if you had four (or six or eight!) arms. Write a story or short play that includes at least one person with multiple arms. Would he or she have any special adventures or difficulties? Or ask the students to draw a picture of themselves with four arms holding objects that symbolize their favorite activities.

The Ideal

A writing or drawing activity for image 6, Standing Buddha, India, 5th century

The aim of South Asian art was to express spiritual perfection by creating idealized human forms—not by creating an illusion of reality. Artists turned to literary metaphors, often derived from nature, to portray ideal anatomical forms such as:

- **the head in the shape of an egg**
- **eyes like little fish or the petals of a lotus**
- **eyebrows like an archer's bow**
- **the chin in the shape of a mango stone**
- **shoulders like the elephant's**
- **legs as graceful as a gazelle's**

Ask the class to think about contemporary ideals of beauty and the well-built body. What metaphors would you use to describe:

- **facial features (eyes, mouths, etc.)**
- **shoulders**
- **forms of the torso**
- **arms and legs**

With these visual metaphors in mind, ask the students to draw, paint, or sculpt an ideally handsome, beautiful, or well-built human being, or write about one using verbal metaphors.

Body Language

Images

- 6 Standing Buddha**
- 12 Standing Tara**
- 21 Shiva Seated with Uma**
- 23 Dancing Celestial**
- 43 Seated Transcendent Buddha Vairochana**

What do the poses in these images tell us about each deity? Which poses seem serene? Graceful? Most human? Most complicated? (Since the answers are a matter of interpretation, there may be different reactions.) Discuss the ways in which South and Southeast Asian artists use facial expressions and postures to express ideas about cosmic powers and other unseen forces.

Ask the class what facial expressions and poses we use to express certain feelings and reactions. How do these actions reveal our moods and personalities?

Play charades. Give each student a folded card which names an emotion or a situation such as winning, losing, thinking, protecting, or getting a high mark in class.

Hand Gestures

Images

- 7 Seated Preaching Buddha**
- 9 Standing Buddha**
- 29 The Gopis Beseeking Krishna to Return Their Clothing**

Poster A

Standing Buddha (image 6)

First, talk about the many sorts of hand gestures we use and what they express. Ask the class to draw hand gestures that they would use to express the following messages:

Don't be afraid

I'm giving you a gift

I am meditating

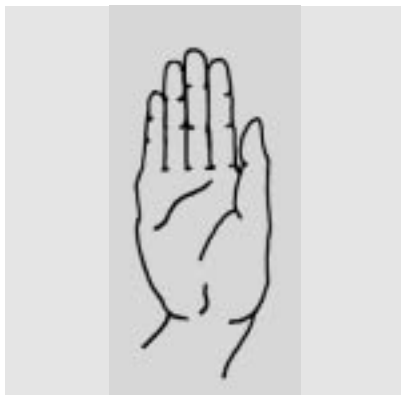
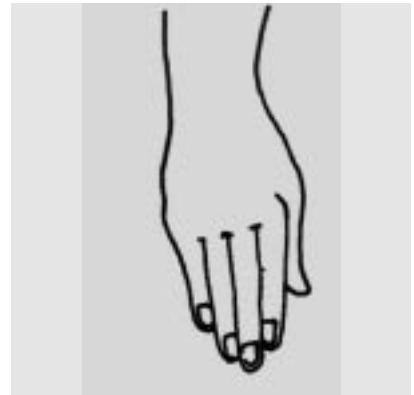
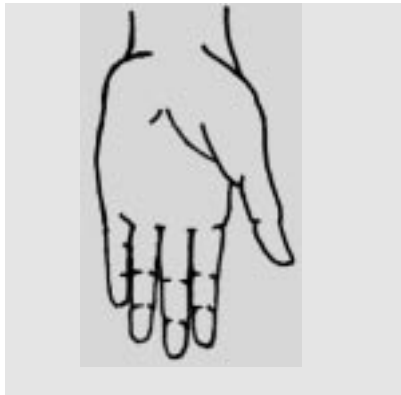
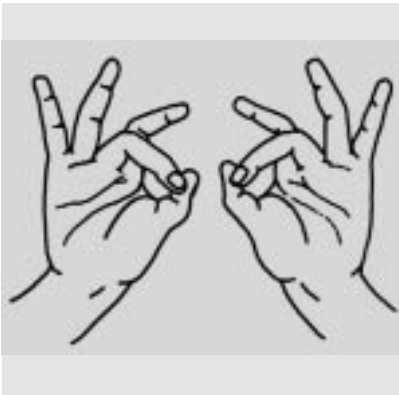
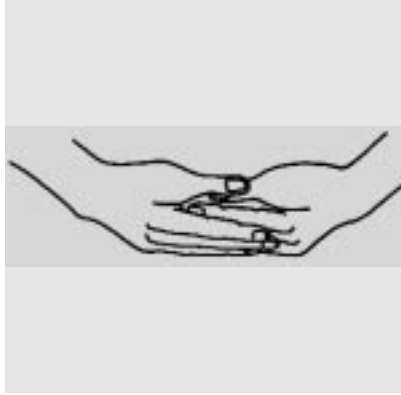
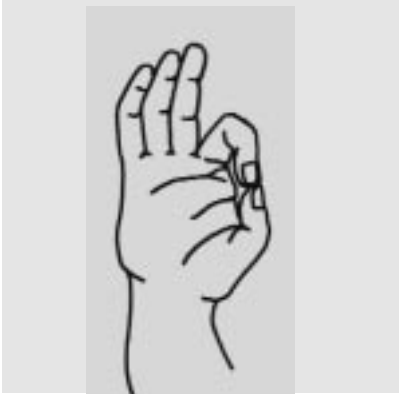
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Now have the students compare their drawings with the mudras used in Buddhist art (photocopy page 136). Many of the mudras are also displayed by Hindu deities. See if the students can guess what the mudras mean.

Look at the artworks so that the students can identify the hand gestures and their meaning.

Worksheet

Hand Gestures (Mudras) of the Buddha



Adornment

Images

- 4** *Standing Bodhisattva Maitreya*
- 11** *Portrait of Jnanatapa Surrounded by Lamas and Mahasiddhas*
- 12** *Standing Tara*
- 20** *Stela of a Four-armed Vishnu*
- 23** *Dancing Celestial*
- 36** *Shiva and Parvati Playing Charpar*

Discuss the body ornaments depicted on these images of gods, goddesses, and bodhisattvas. Where were they worn on the body? (Note necklaces of many lengths, ornaments looped over one shoulder and across the torso, large earrings, crowns and headdresses, armbands, belts, bracelets, anklets, and rings for hands and toes.)

How is this adornment decorated, and does the decoration have meaning? (Floral patterns, mythical beasts, and human-animal creatures are auspicious symbols believed to assure good fortune and protection for the wearer. They also symbolize majesty and the exalted state of a deity.)

Ask the students to draw or design their own ornament or ornaments that symbolize good fortune, protection, or both.

The Goddess

Images

- 18** *Standing Parvati*
- 19** *Chamunda (The Horrific Destroyer of Evil)*
- 20** *Stela of a Four-armed Vishnu*
- 24** *The Goddess Durga Killing the Buffalo Demon Mahisha*
- 49** *Standing Uma*

What do these images reveal about the many powers of Devi, the great goddess? What are the different powers expressed in these images?

Discuss the strengths and powers we associate with women and make a list of them.

Ask each student to create an image that illustrates one or more of the qualities listed. Have the students share their pictures and discuss the meanings. Explore ways in which all these qualities might be portrayed in a single image.

With these ideas in mind, ask the class or a group within the class to combine efforts in producing a mural or large painting of a modern goddess.

The Dance of Shiva

Image

22 Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja)

Discuss the various meanings of the image of Shiva as Nataraja. Talk about what modern symbols could be combined to illustrate our civilization's views of how the universe was created, how it is maintained, and how it may end.

A further step would be to have the class collaborate in drawing and painting a wall mural depicting their ideas.

Discuss with your class the creation myths of other civilizations they have studied.

Vehicles of the Gods

Image

48 Krishna on Garuda

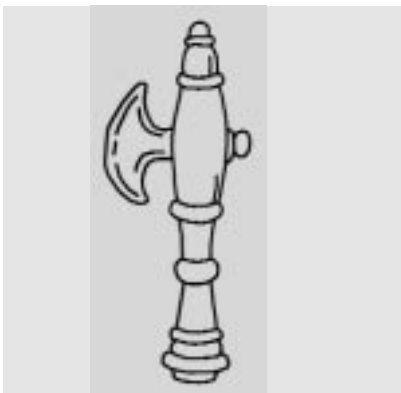
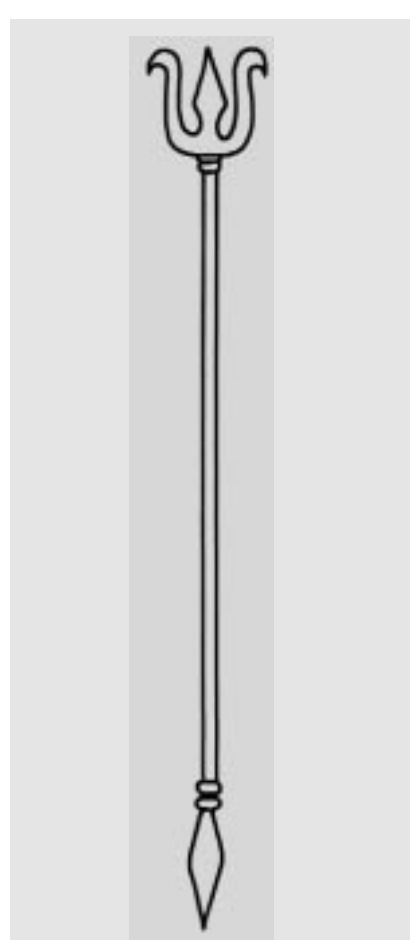
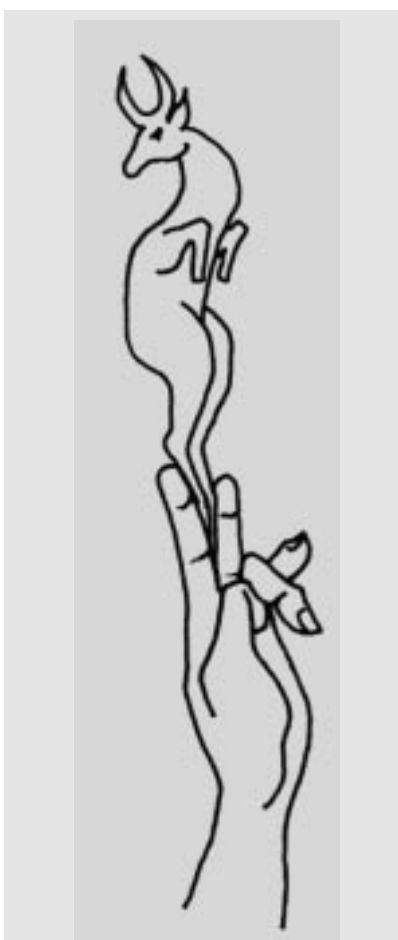
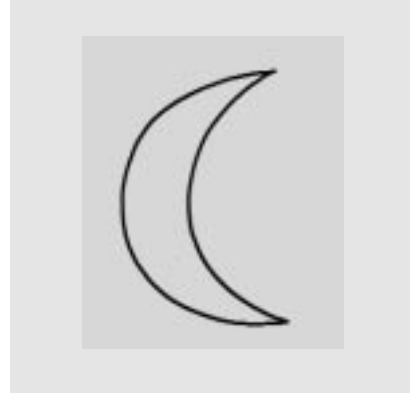
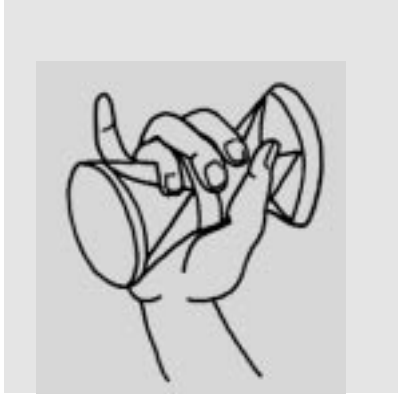
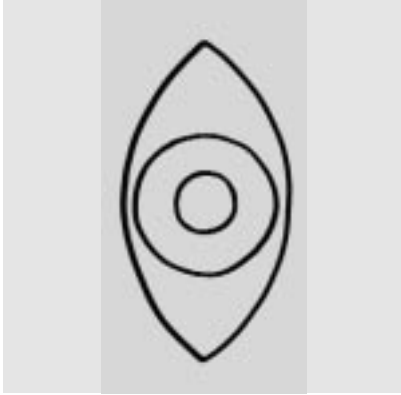
Show the slide and ask the class to guess what is happening. Who are the two actors, and what kind story do they think is unfolding? How has the artist created a sense of action and excitement?

Hindu gods travel about the universe on animal vehicles that symbolize their powers. Ask the students to draw an animal that symbolizes their personality, or construct a vehicle in that animal's shape, or write a story or poem about why that animal suits them.

Before the students sign the pictures, poem, written description, or construction, pass them around. See if the other class members can identify whose animal each creation is.

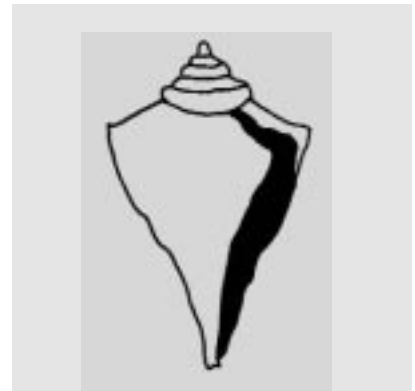
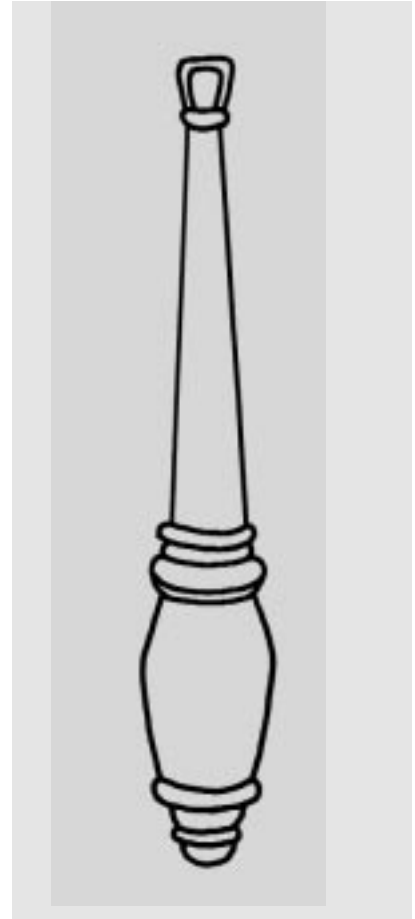
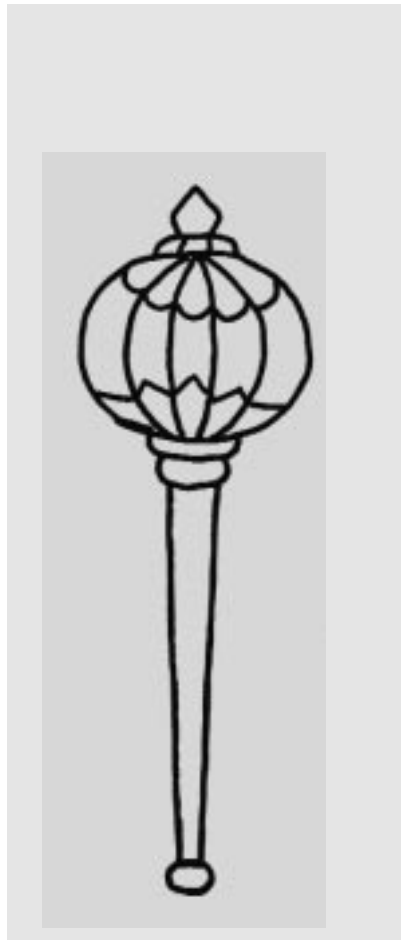
Worksheet

Attributes of Shiva



Worksheet

Attributes of Vishnu



Animals, Real and Imaginary

Images

- 1** *Seal with a Bull*
- 11** *Portrait of Jnanatapa Surrounded by Lamas and Mahasiddhas*
- 26** *Seated Ganesha*
- 30** *Leaf from a Harivamsa Manuscript, The Legend of Hari (Krishna)*
- 38** *Rama, Surrounded by the Armies of the Great Bear and Monkey Clans*
- 53** *Dish with Elephant*

In each of these images, animals function in different ways. Discuss their meaning and appearance. Which animals look natural? How have others been transformed?

What features would imply that some of them are imaginary and represent ideas?

How did the painter of the blue and white dish portray a large elephant in the center so that its form harmonizes with the shape of the dish?

While looking at the Ganesha image, tell the story about how he came to have an elephant head. Ask the students how they would picture a chubby boy with an elephant head? How could they prevent their drawing from looking weird or funny? How did the carver of Ganesha avoid such problems?

Have each student create an image—two- or three-dimensional—of a human with an animal head, and make up a story about how this human-animal combination came to be, and what this creature's special powers are.

Key Moments in Narrative

Image

5 *The Great Departure and the Temptation of the Buddha*

Discuss the way the carver of this well-known event in the Buddha's life included just enough of the key action for the viewer familiar with the story to recognize what was happening, what had happened, and what the Buddha's future would be.

Image

38 *Rama, Surrounded by the Armies of the Great Bear and Monkey Clans*

In the scene of Rama and his army of bears and monkeys, how many key moments of the story are depicted?

Ask the students to think about a story well known to them—religious, fairy tale, from film, fiction, television, etc. Identify the key figures and moments of the story and think about how they might be combined in one scene that people will immediately recognize.

When they have completed a drawing or painting of the most important moments, ask the students to share their pictures with the rest of the class to see if their story can be recognized.

Image

41 *Presentation Bowl*

Analyze the way the designer of this bronze bowl created a continuous narrative of royal activities that wraps around the widest part of the bronze presentation bowl.

Ask the students to think of two or more special events in their lives and draw them in a continuous narrative that will exactly fit the circumference of an oatmeal or cornmeal box, or an eighteen- or twenty-four-inch oaktag paper cut in a horizontal strip that will be stapled to form a cylinder when the drawing (and painting) is finished.

These activities can lead to discussions about figures and symbols that refer to myths and stories important to people of different cultures.

Imagine your P(a)lace

Image and Poster B

39 Maharana Ari Singh with His Courtiers at the Jagniwas Water Palace

Ask the students to take a close look at the Maharana and his activities and the details of his palace rooms. Have a discussion about what is happening in the various spaces. Are these events occurring at the same time? Are we seeing everything from the same point of view? Explain. Why did the artist decide to show the palace from several different angles? Why is the Maharana larger than the other figures? And what does that golden circle around his head signify?

Ask the students to imagine living in a perfect house. Which rooms would be the most important? What would they do in these rooms, who would be there, and how would these rooms be decorated? Ask them to draw a picture of their ideal home using several different points of view to show different things happening in each area.

The One and the Many

Talk about some of the basic opposites in life (for example, love and hate, creation and destruction, life and death, knowledge and ignorance, happiness and suffering). Discuss the possible ways of picturing a god who brings into balance all these seeming opposites.

Ask the students if they would picture this deity as a single being or several? Would it help to have more than two arms and one head? Could this ultimate unifying power be hinted at in an abstract design? (Think about pairing opposite colors or patterns in a balanced design.) Ask them to illustrate their ideas in a drawing, a series of drawings, or in a description in prose or poetry.

Image

21 Shiva Seated with Uma

Look at the image of Shiva and Uma. Discuss the way the sculptor hinted at ultimate unity in the pose, gestures, and symbols surrounding these two deities.

Talk about the Hindu belief that the many gods all point in the direction of the One and are manifestations through which the One (Brahman) makes itself approachable. They are like signposts that point us in the direction of the ultimate reality. Another metaphor is that the various gods are vehicles that take us to the Ultimate, and once we arrive, we will no longer need them.

Art and Culture

Discuss why art is an important source of information about civilizations. For example, talk about the different styles of depicting the human figure in South and Southeast Asian art. What do these distinctive forms communicate about the fundamental beliefs and the social structure of these cultures?

Discuss the way art communicates beliefs and social structure in other cultures the class has studied.

Think about how the human figure is depicted in art, photographs, and television in America. What do these forms suggest about our beliefs and the diversity and/or uniformity in our culture?

Lesson Plan: Animals in Art

Grade level Middle School, adaptable to elementary and high school

- Objectives**
- Students will look at and discuss the depiction of animals in three works of art from Mughal India.
 - Students will draw an animal from life.
 - Students will create a two-dimensional carpet using a pattern of plant and animal forms.
 - Students will sculpt a three-dimensional form decorated with animals.

Works of Art

- 31 Nilgai (Blue Bull)**
- 33 Carpet with Pictorial Design**
- 37 Priming Flask**

Motivation and Discussion

For the Teacher: Look at the three slides and read the entries before the lesson. You may adapt this lesson by choosing the activity or activities that best serve your classroom needs and time. Additional images from this packet that show animals may be added to the discussion.

The three components of this lesson are: (1) Drawing an animal from life; (2) Using animal and plant shapes in an all-over pattern; and (3) Adapting animal shapes to a three-dimensional form. The three images may be used as a basis for comparison and contrast in a class discussion. How does each work of art relate to the Mughal interest in animals? What is the function of the animal(s) in each work of art? How has each artist depicted animals and how does each artist use space?

Part 1: Drawing animals from life

Project slide 31 and ask students to describe what they see. The wild bull, or nilgai, is the most important element of this painting. Ask students to look at the way the artist Mansur has shown the body and muscles of the bull, its color, and the different textures of its muzzle, mane, and tail. Do students think that the artist was familiar with this animal? How can they tell? How has the artist depicted the animal's environment? Is it as detailed? What is the function of the detailed border?

A field trip to a zoo, nature preserve, or natural history museum will provide students with the opportunity to draw an animal from life. In the natural history museum, students may see the animals at closer range and have still subjects that they may observe and draw. They should notice the animal's pose, the textures of its skin or coat, facial qualities, etc. They may sketch the animal's habitat—rocks, grass, trees. Have the students save their drawings.

From the drawings they have made, have each student choose one to finish, using paints to add color, texture, and details. The animal should be the most important element of the painting and should take up most of the space. They may wish to add a few environmental details and perhaps design a border to frame the animal.

Part 2: Design a carpet using a stylized version of the animal

Materials

- 8¹/₂ x 11 inch or 11 x 18 inch red construction paper, one piece per student
- Small pieces of construction paper in a variety of colors
- Scissors
- Crayons, paint, or markers
- Pre-cut lengths of yarn for fringe

Show slide 33 and ask students to notice the animals. What animals can they identify? The artists who made this knotted rug also had observed the animals that they depicted. How can students tell this? Have them look for evidence of three-dimensionality in the animals, the white bellies of the ibex, and the way the stripes curve on the tiger's back. How realistic are the poses? Are the tigers acting like tigers? Notice their heads and their tails. Are the birds acting like birds, flying and roosting? Discuss scale, and the fact that all the animals, trees, and flowers are roughly the same size. The scale is distorted in order to make all the elements of the design fit together in a harmonious fashion. Are all the animals real? Which ones might be mythological or fantastic? Could some of the animals symbolize power or authority? Which ones and why?

Ask students to create a simplified version of an animal shape by cutting or tearing it from 3 x 3 inch construction paper. Have them use this shape as a template to cut or tear a series of identical forms. Position these on a piece of red construction paper, leaving a margin so that a border can be added. Some of the shapes may be flipped over to face the opposite direction. Cut or tear additional animal or plant forms and position them on the paper.

After all the forms are positioned, use glue or paste them into place. Add details to the animals and plants and a border with markers or crayon. Fringe can be attached by punching holes at the two short ends of the paper, then using lark's head knots to insert pre-cut lengths of yarn into the holes.

Part 3: Sculpt a form using the animals

Materials

- Clay
- Clay tools

Project slide 37 and explain to students the use of this object. Ask students to look at the animals on the priming flask and identify as many as they can. How has the carver of this object fit these animals together on the shape and space of the flask? Compare it to the carpet. Does the carpet show any overlapping of the animals?

Distribute balls of clay to students and ask them to roll it out so that it forms a smooth cylinder, then roll each end to a tapered point so that they have a shape similar to the shape of the flask. Students should sculpt animals into this shape by applying additional clay and by removing clay. Tools may be used to provide texture and details to the animals, but the basic shape of the clay should stay the same.

Science: Any of these projects may accompany and complement a science unit on animals, their protective coloration, their habits, and habitats.

Language Arts: To complement the study of these three works of art, students may explore how animals are depicted in writings: for instance, in scientific studies of animal habits and habitats, and in myths and legends. They may also learn about the symbolic associations of animals. Students may follow up with writings of their own to complement the artworks they have created.

Social Studies: Any of the additional slides in this packet may be combined with this lesson to look at the art and culture of South Asia specifically, or slides showing animals in artwork from other parts of the world may be compared for Global Studies classes.