



Art of Hiba Schahbaz Lesson Guide

Use these slide by slide notes to follow along with the Hiba Schahbaz powerpoint. Learn more about Hiba Schahbaz by visiting her website:

<http://www.hibaschahbaz.com/>

Slide 2

Hiba Schahbaz was born in Karachi, Pakistan and lives in Brooklyn, NY. She works primarily with paper, black tea, and water-based pigments. She depicts women's bodies while referencing self-portraiture, creating a space for herself and other women to tell their stories and reclaim their histories. Since migrating to the United States, her practice has expanded from miniature painting to human-scale works on paper.

Schahbaz trained in miniature painting at the National College of Arts, Lahore and received an MFA in painting from Pratt Institute. Her solo shows include The Garden (Spring/Break Art Show, 2018), Hiba Schahbaz: Self-Portraits (Project for Empty Space, 2017), Hanged With Roses (Thierry Goldberg Gallery, 2015), and In Memory (Noire Gallery, 2012).

Source: <http://www.hibaschahbaz.com/about>

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Artist Statement:

I speak an ancient language in a contemporary feminine voice. Trained in the centuries-old traditional Indo-Persian painting technique, working with imagery developed by men to tell the stories of antiquity, I aim to challenge the inflexible rules of miniature painting and recontextualize the art form to accept and embrace a female perspective.

In my work, I am both the artist and the performer. I photograph my body and use these images as references for my paintings. Through the stories I create I contemplate what it means to be a woman. These works addresses issues of



personal freedom, destruction, sexuality and censorship by unveiling the beauty, fragility and strength of the female form.

I use the female figure to unfold a narrative that transcends cultural and political boundaries. I tell my own story while heavily embellishing it with imagination and metaphor. And although the protagonist in the work is me, she also carries a dual, existential meaning. I often use the female form as a tool, portraying thoughts and concerns from socio-cultural and political realms.

Meticulously ornamented and vividly colorful, the miniature draws the viewer in. I pursue the world of the beautiful in my work, resulting in visually appealing paintings. This delicate allure is underscored, however, by an unsettling tension. Things are not quite what they seem.

Slide 4:

Hiba's art involves reclaiming individuality and feminine power from what has been imposed on by society. "[The] paintings have been healing in some way because... When we are kids we grow up internalizing what the world tells us about who we are, what we're supposed to be, what roles we take, how we look and all the roles that society puts on us. Then as we grow older if you're lucky we unlearn those things. That unlearning is kind of a process but it's a process which is supposed to bring you back to yourself".

Hiba's art often depicts women in full nude, using the female figure to "unfold a narrative that transcends cultural and political boundaries". Displaying sexuality, strength and beauty in the female form while addressing censorship, personal freedom and destruction

Slide 5: images of Hiba Schahbaz's work.

Slide 6: Feminist Art

In the earliest forms of art, women were often painted nude and languid for the sole pleasure of the viewer--men. They were hypersexualized in these paintings and laid out in abundance for men to not appreciate but objectify women and their bodies. Many female artists adopted more forms of art that were considered



“women’s work” such as textiles and performance art, to express themselves and expand the definition of fine art.

It was challenging to be a female artist because often times, women weren’t given the space to express themselves through art because the patriarchal society didn’t believe that women can be artists, nor were they taken seriously.

Female artists were virtually invisible because they weren’t getting the recognition they deserved for their work and were denied exhibitions, and so they had no other choice but to literally create their own space where they could showcase their art without male scrutiny and interjections.

The movement emerged during the late 1960’s amidst anti-war demonstrations, the civil rights movement, and queer rights movement.

It was created for a multitude of reasons:

- To create a space for female artists to reclaim their femininity and explore sexuality and masculinity through expression.
- Challenge male dominance in art and society
- They started this movement to actively fight oppression and discrimination by influencing the way women were being depicted in society by breaking barriers, influencing attitudes, and transforming stereotypes.

Slide 7: Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 1974-1979

Judy Chicago is an American feminist art artist who is well known for her abstract art in the 60’s and being a pioneer for the feminist art movement.

The Dinner Party is a monument to women’s history and Chicago’s tribute to great women throughout history such as Emily Dickinson, Georgia O’Keeffe, Sacajawea, and Sappho.

The table is in the shape of a triangle, and each side spans 48 feet long with 39 plates on each side, and 999 extra names are inscribed on the table’s base. Many criticized her work because of the ceramic plates on the table. Although they look like flowers, ruffles, or butterflies... they actually represent female genitalia. The transition to a more 2-dimensional image on the plates to a more 3-



dimensional figure is to represent the rise and progression of women empowerment throughout history.

People found it so “disturbing” and vulgar that Judy Chicago was actually threatened by the U.S. Senate when she tried to donate this piece to the University of District of Columbia. It wasn’t until 2007 that Chicago was able to find a permanent home for this exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum.

https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/dinner_party

Slide 8: Video interview with Judy Chicago on The Dinner Party:

<https://youtu.be/aNMnHlwoLc0>

Slide 9: Guerrilla Girls: <https://www.guerrillagirls.com/>

There is a multiple of underlying issues that encompasses feminist art that are not always recognized. Many women of color, queer women, and queer women of color, or transgender women do not get the same recognition as a cis-gendered, white female artist. , there are a lot of layers to this movement and grey areas that require more attention.

The Guerrilla Girls is a collective group of anonymous female artists and art professionals fighting sexism and racism in the art world through activism. Guerrilla Girls was formed in reaction to MoMA’s An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture 1984 exhibition. This exhibition only featured 13 women out of 169 artists that were chosen. In 1985, the group officially formed in New York City. The group started by protesting and demonstrating outside of museums and art galleries such as MoMA, but they quickly transitioned into street-art to garner more attention from the public, and soon were being featured in well-known institutions. They use humor and factual evidence within their pieces to start conversations, engage the audience, and get their point across. The Guerilla Girls and many other organizations have been created to continually create more awareness surrounding these issues both within society and within the art community.

<https://www.guerrillagirls.com/our-story>



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Some other feminist artists

Kara Walker, <http://www.karawalkerstudio.com>

Lorna Simpson, <https://lsimpsonstudio.com/>

Frida Kahlo, <https://www.fridakahlo.org/>

Mickalene Thomas, <https://www.mickalenethomas.com/>

Engku Iman, [https://www.timeout.com/kuala-lumpur/art/introducing-engku-
iman](https://www.timeout.com/kuala-lumpur/art/introducing-engku-iman)

Craft Activity:

Create a work of art inspired by Hiba Schahbaz. Schahbaz works primarily with paper, black tea, and water-based pigments. She depicts women's bodies while referencing self-portraiture, creating a space for herself and other women to tell their stories and reclaim their histories.

1. Using the template below, trace the template onto a sheet of watercolor paper.
2. Working from the back/background first, use tea and/or water color paints to fill in the background.
3. Next paint the next largest areas of the template.
4. Finally, paint the detailed portions.

Recommended Supplies:

Watercolor paper

Steep black tea

Watercolors

Paint brushes, 1 large, 1 medium, 1 small

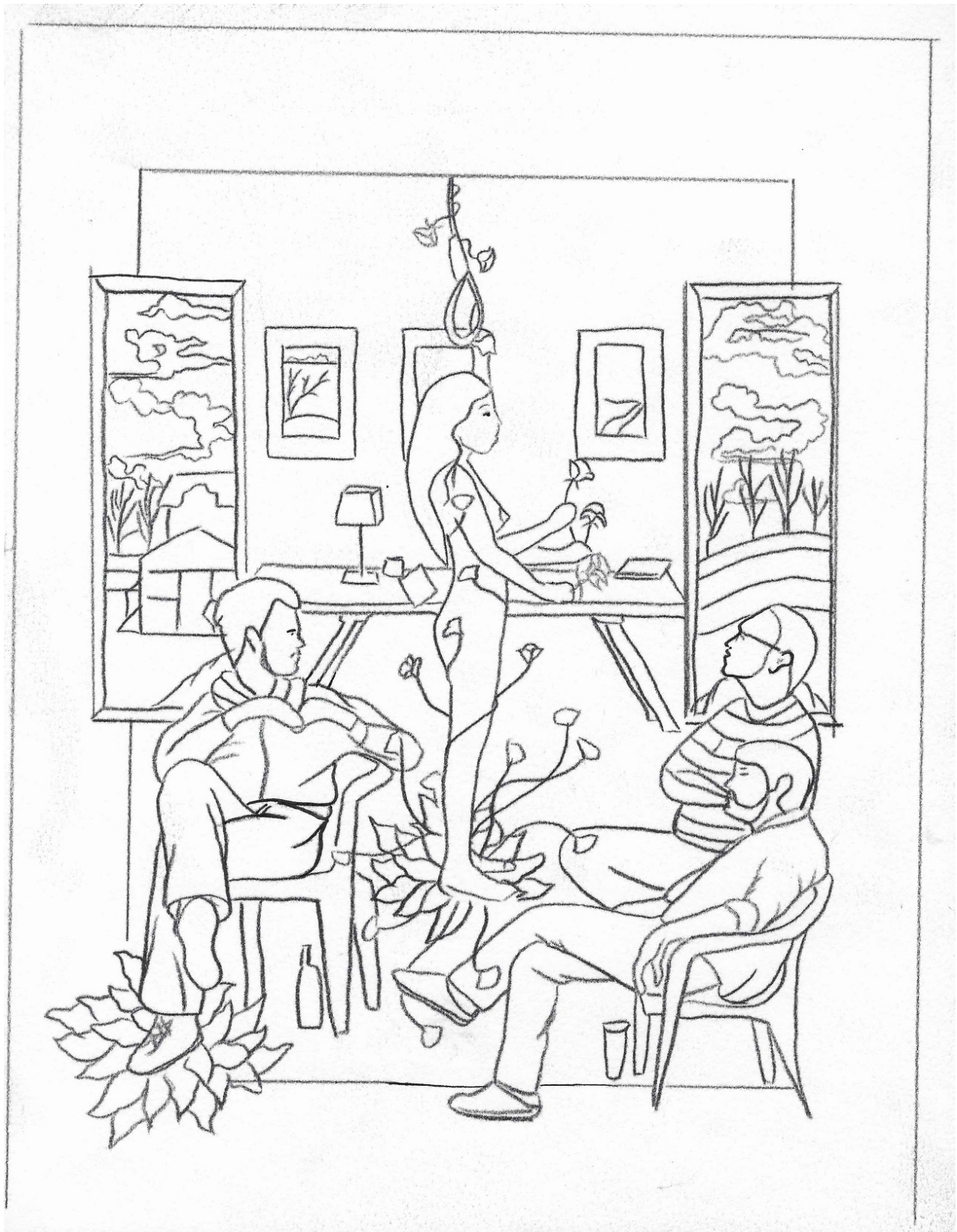
Template copied onto the watercolor paper

Use the image below as inspiration & template.



Paul W. Zuccaire
GALLERY

STALLER CENTER FOR THE ARTS | STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY



Hiba Schahbaz, *Circle of Friends*, 2014

