

The Taj

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My drawing, 'The Taj', was the manifestation of both my cultural roots and fascination for architectural beauty, and how these can be represented in art into one cohesive work depicting the Taj Mahal. I endeavoured to use art as a vehicle of cultural expression and pride linking to my heritage and looked no further than India's most iconic monument. Depicted in an unconventional angle, I wanted the composition to reflect the Taj Mahal's unique beauty in a manner that the viewer most likely has not seen before. Along the process of investigation, I was inspired by architectural artists such as Giuliana Flavia Cangelosi with her perspective of Italian architecture and Mahua Pal's Indian-inspired artworks, and the depicted intricacy of architectural beauty.

I initially established my interest in architectural drawings at the beginning of the unit and in its examination, I explored various styles in which architecture can be displayed. I refined my exploration to Indian, Urban, and Egyptian architecture. From there, I drew inspiration from personal links to my culture's history and thus refined it to Indian architecture. There were various historical monuments from which I could have drawn upon for my final artwork, but the Taj Mahal presented the obvious choice considering its synonymy with Indian culture. However, to combat the monument's cliched use as a symbol for Indian culture, I employed an angled orientation to explore the subtle complexities of the Taj Mahal.

For the artwork, I used a HB pencil to establish the initial composition of the structure and basic mid- tones. I then used a black fine liner to go over the artwork and depicted the minute details, from bricks in the tower, to flowers on the wall. This set up the basic outline and mid-tone of the piece. Furthermore, I used both black and white Staedtler Lumocolor pencils to reinforce both the shadows and the highlights respectively.

The purpose of this artwork was to challenge preconceived notions that one's culture must be viewed only from a certain standpoint. The unorthodox framing of the Taj Mahal suggests that the beauty of each culture lies in understanding its idiosyncrasies from different viewpoints and being able to share that with others. The use of brown paper is also indicative of this notion, unlike many conventional drawings being done on white paper. This also allowed for the accentuation of both highlights, shadows and the intricacies of the walls of the monument. The large negative space further enhances the focus on the structure and splendour of the building. The final piece is the demonstration of my personal drawing aesthetic in its use of fine detail, contrasting tones, use of compositional thirds, and a large negative space. The large size enhances the structured composition, drawing importance to the monument's intricate geometry.

I believe this artwork showcases the fulfillment of such ideas through the use of composition, visual elements, media, subject matter, and my unique artistic aesthetic.