

Shireen Taweel
Edge of the C
Learning Resource

About Shireen Taweel

Shireen Taweel is an artist who lives and works on Gadigal land in Sydney. She makes artworks using many different materials and approaches. Shireen's artworks are inspired by her own life and background as a Lebanese-Australian. In her **artistic practice**, Shireen explores ideas about culture and how it is understood through traditions, language and history. Shireen is interested in the ways that Arabic Sciences have contributed to **celestial navigation**, and how this knowledge has been shared or erased.



About Edge of the C

In this exhibition, Shireen explores the ways that people have used celestial navigation to move across land and sea. She created copper sculptures, prints, and drawings to imagine what the future of space travel and **migration** to other planets might look like. Shireen researched scientific instruments used for navigation and **astronomy** – the sextant, quadrant, and astrolabe – and has used these as inspiration for her artworks. To create the sculptures, she learnt the ancient making techniques of piercing and **engraving** copper. Shireen hopes that in the future, space travel can be something everyone is part of, no matter where they come from.



Glossary

Artistic practice: the ways in which an artist creates their art. It includes the ways they come up with ideas, how they conduct research, and the methods, techniques, materials and tools they use to create work.

Celestial navigation: using the observation of the sun, moon, stars and planets to find out our position and get from one place to another.

Migration: movement from one place to another. Human migration is the movement of people to a new place to live.

Astronomy: the study of everything in the universe beyond the Earth's atmosphere. It includes the sun, moon, planets, stars, galaxies, comets, black holes, and all other matter in the universe.

Engrave: to cut or carve a text or design onto the surface of a hard object.

Visual Glossary



Astrolabe: The astrolabe is one of the oldest scientific instruments, developed by ancient Greek astronomers around 150 BCE. It was later improved by Islamic scholars during the 8th–14th centuries. Sailors used it to find out how far north or south they were from the equator by measuring how high the sun or stars appeared above the horizon.

Astrolabe, possibly reproduction, engraved, brass, maker unknown, Persia, 1710



Quadrant: A tool shaped like a quarter-circle that was used between the 13th and 18th centuries. It helped sailors and astronomers measure the angle between the horizon and the sun, stars, or planets to help with exploration and navigation.

Navigation instrument, Gunter's Quadrant, portable, brass, invented by the English mathematician Edmund Gunter (1581-1626), made in [England, 1700s]



Sextant: A navigation tool that allowed sailors and explorers to measure angles between the horizon and sun more accurately than earlier tools. This helped them find their position while at sea. It is still used today as a backup to electronic navigation systems.

Sextant, brass / ebony / glass, possibly made by George Spurs, England, c. 1818

Focus Artworks



Shireen Taweel, *Calculations for Movement: instrument three*, 2024, hand engraved and pierced copper



Shireen Taweel, *Devices for Seeing*, 2022, engraved and pierced copper, silver, patina treatment



Shireen Taweel, *Astro architecture I,II,III*, 2022, copper engraved unique prints



Shireen Taweel, *Astro architecture II*, 2022, copper engraved unique prints



Shireen Taweel, *Sacred Architecture and the Celestial Body*, 2025, pierced copper, silver



Shireen Taweel, *Sacred Architecture and the Celestial Body (Detail)*, 2025, pierced copper, silver



Shireen Taweel, *Mapping Astronomy*, 2022, graphite on paper

Questions for Discussion

- What tools do you use to navigate or find your way to and from places?
- How did people in the past navigate to new places?
- If you were to travel to a new planet, what would you bring with you to remind you of home?

Extension Activities

English- The title of this exhibition *Edge of the C* is a play on words. Create a list of words starting with the letter 'C' that can be used to describe Shireen Taweel's artwork.

History- Investigate the ways that people have used navigation to connect with other people and places. Research how the development of navigational tools contributed to global navigation.

Visual Art- recreate your prototype from the make activity using another medium or material. Think about the ways you can use colour, texture, line, and shape to communicate your ideas.

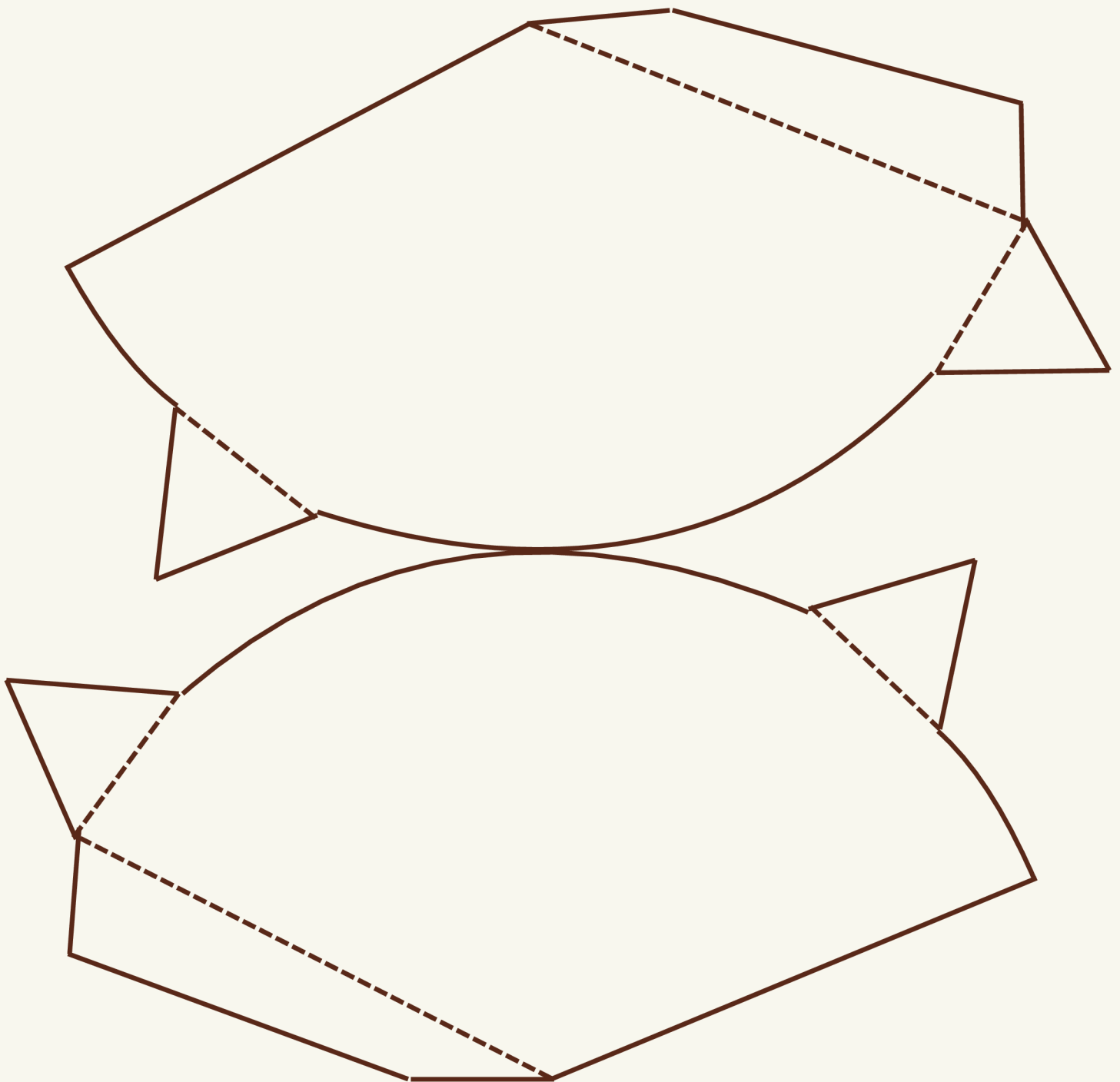
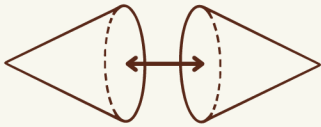
Mathematics- Create nets to construct other three-dimensional shapes. Think about how Shireen would have constructed her sculptures? What would these shapes look like as nets?

Make

Create a prototype for a new scientific instrument used for navigation and travel.

Draw details and features onto the shape below.

Cut around the solid lines, fold on the dotted lines, then use glue or tape to assemble.



Images

Cover:

- 1.Shireen Taweel, sacred architecture and the celestial body (detail), 2023, hand pierced copper, silver solder, image taken by Document Photography, images courtesy the artist and STATION gallery.

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- 1.Shireen Taweel headshot, image taken by Tugba Demir.
- 2.Shireen Taweel, instrument three, 2024, hand engraved and pierced copper. Image taken by Document Photography, courtesy of the artist and STATION gallery.

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- 1.Powerhouse Museum Collection. Purchased 1962. Photographer Marinco Kojdanovski.
- 2.Powerhouse Museum Collection. Purchased 1986. Photographed by Vanessa Pitt.
- 3.Powerhouse Museum Collection. Gift of E Hunt, 1933. Photographed by International Conservation Services.

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- 1.Image taken by Document Photography, courtesy of the artist and STATION gallery
- 2.Image taken by Silversalt Photography

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- 1.Image taken by Document Photography, images courtesy the artist and STATION gallery
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- 1.Image taken by Silversalt Photography
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