

Mehendi

Body Art of South Asia

Mehendi is a popular form of body art which has been in practice since ancient times in the South Asian region. Designs are typically created with the paste of powdered leaves made from the Henna plant. Mehendi is often used for special events and celebrations – like weddings.



The Henna plant is also called *lawsonia inermis* (that's its scientific Latin name). It is a short tree with small white flowers.



A common pastime among friends in South Asian countries is drawing Mehendi on each other's palm.



Henna paste is used for making Mehendi designs. After the thick paste dries, it can be washed off, leaving a bright orange color.

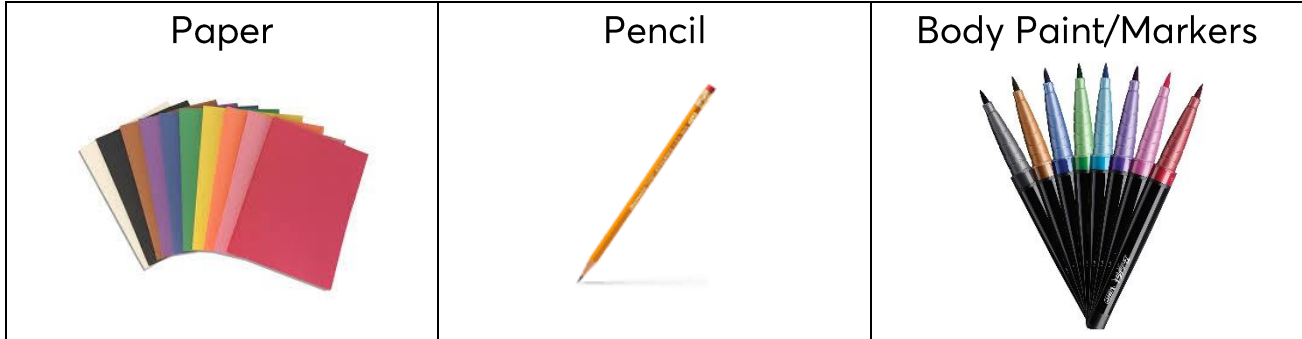
Inspiration for common designs can be found in art from the region. Take a look at these close-ups of artifacts in the Penn Museum's collection. Take a few moments to look closely at them. What do you notice about the designs? How would you describe them?



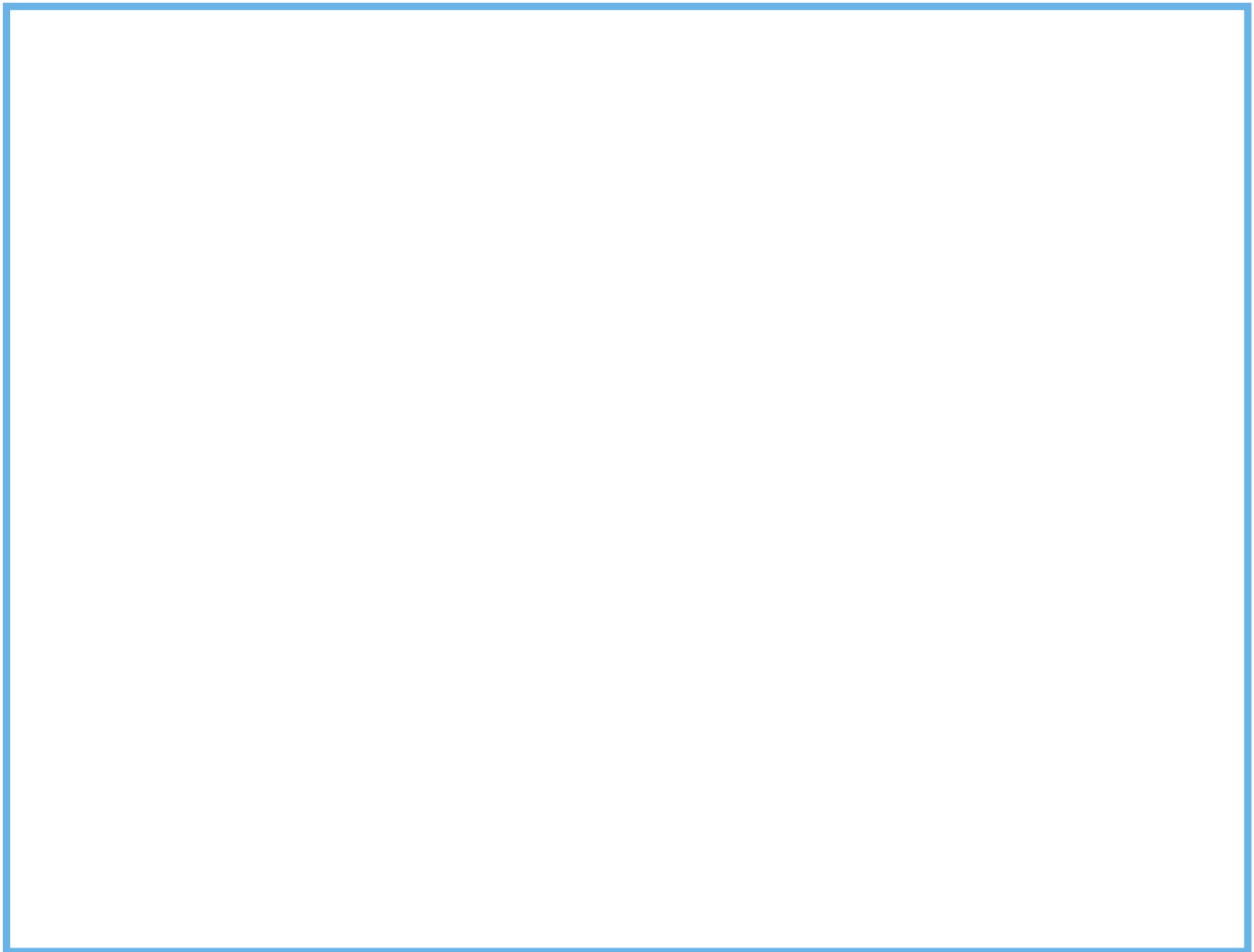
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MATERIALS:



STEP ONE: Begin by drawing your own design



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STEP TWO: Transfer your design from paper. Make sure to cover the surface you are working on, to protect it from spills. Ask an adult for assistance when using body paint or markers.

