

# Studio Saturdays: Paper Spirals

*White, Turquoise, Green, Gold, Yellow & Blue* by Hadieh Shafie



Hadieh Shafie

*White, Turquoise, Green,  
Gold, Yellow & Blue*, 2012

Ink, acrylic, and paper with printed and  
handwritten Farsi text *Esheghe* (love)

Image courtesy of the artist and  
Leila Heller Gallery, New York.

Hadieh Shafie is an Iranian-born artist who incorporates Farsi text and repeating patterns into her work. Farsi is also known as the Persian language and is one of the languages spoken in Iran. Shafie came to America when she was 14 in 1993. She is drawn to the Farsi word for love, *esheghe* (eh-SH), as she sees love as a search for meaning, understanding, and belonging—things she herself searched for after her move. Her art is also rooted in her childhood memories of decorating chick-pea cookies with her grandmother and of her grandmother putting folded prayers for protection into the pockets of her clothes, two other acts of love.

Shafie's artwork is as much about the finished piece as it is about the process of making it. She hand-rolls strips of paper (each one has *esheghe* written on it) to create each part of the work. These rolls make the writing into a pattern that builds on itself, like how love grows and spreads between people. Even though the words cannot be seen after she rolls the strips up, they are still there. Just like the way people's love for each other exists even when they are not together, Shafie's work represents that promise of shared love.

Today, we'll be making our own roll inspired by a word of your choice. You can use any word that you feel represents you. This can be a word that describes you (an adjective, ex. intelligent), a word that is important to you, or any word you like. For example, my word is education, because I'm an educator and I think education is very important! Think about words that you can connect to your memories, feelings, personality, or experiences.

## THINK LIKE AN ARTIST

- 1) Why did you choose your word?
- 2) What do you think Shafie is trying to teach people who see her art?

# LIST OF MATERIALS

- 3 Sheets of Paper

\*You can use colored paper in different colors OR you can use white paper if you do not have colored paper or wish to follow a more complex process more similar to the artist's.)

Glue Stick

Sharpie

Ruler

Scissors

Q-Tip

Colored Markers (if using white paper)

## INSTRUCTIONS

Take your ruler and make 1-inch markings along the long edge of your paper (regardless of if you are using white or colored paper). Line up your ruler's straight edge with the markings to create lines along the entire sheet.

Write your chosen word on each strip of paper. It will be much easier if you write the word before you cut your strips. You can use any kind of writing tool for this, like a pencil, marker, or pen.

Do the same for all three sheets of paper and then carefully cut out your strips.

### IF USING WHITE PAPER:

Take your markers and color the edge of each strip in different colors. You can lay it down on a sheet of paper to color the edge or hold it between your fingers and edge it that way.



Once you have your strips ready, take your q-tip with the cotton ends removed and use it to help you start rolling your first strip. You decide whether to roll the spirals with your word hidden or exposed, like Shafie does in her work.

Use your glue stick to connect the end of one strip with the beginning of the next and keep rolling as if it is one long strip.

You can keep using the same color for this section or switch up the colors to create interesting color patterns.

Seal your rolls with additional glue to make sure they do not unravel.