# **Masterworks from The Museum of Modern Art** Artists & Prints

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Afloat. 2001. Screenprint, Sheet: 34<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 23<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (88.3 x 60.5 cm). PUBLISHER: Editions Fawbush, New York, and Diane Villani Editions, New York. PRINTER: Axelle Editions, New York. EDITION: 35. Virginia Cowles Schroth Fund, 2001



Pakistani, born 1969

Trained in Pakistan at the National College of Arts, Shahzia Sikander defied current artistic trends and mastered the ancient art of miniature painting, relying on idioms from both Indian and Persian traditions. When she moved to the United States in 1993 to attend the Rhode Island School of Design, ultimately settling in New York, Sikander began integrating personal and contemporary symbols outside customary miniature painting, while also giving this centuries-old tradition renewed relevance. Varying greatly in scale and medium, Sikander's recent work emphasizes its physical, often labor-intensive formats, from jewel-like paintings and narrative scrolls to wall-size installations and digital montages. Her work continually challenges convention in both formal structure and content, crossing artistic and cultural boundaries—Hindu and Muslim, East and West, past and present, handicraft and digitization.

With a strong academic background in printmaking, Sikander created her first published print in 1999 with Deitch/Steinberg Editions in New York. Initially making a screenprint, she has since experimented with etching, photogravure, drypoint, and chine collé, often using a computer to reprocess and layer her imagery digitally. Working with a variety of workshops—Noblet Serigraphie, Burnet Editions, Crown Point Press, and Axelle Editions among them—she has completed twenty-five prints to date, including two portfolios.



For *Afloat*, Sikander returned to screenprinting, creating a bold, ethereal work inspired by her installations of painted murals layered with translucent drawings. She incorporates her recurring motifs, including a headless female figure with trailing tendrils and a smaller female figure in profile. The emanating, ornamental dot patterns relate to geometric shapes, in particular the circle, which has spiritual significance in the East. Although *Afloat* appears to comprise multiple overlapping sheets of paper, it is actually printed on both sides of one sheet of semi-transparent Thai Mulberry paper using gradations of color that achieve the look of layered translucency. J. H.