

# Thinking Tantra

Art [📍 Drawing Room](#), Bermondsey

📅 Until Sunday February 19 2017

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Shezad Dawood, courtesy the artist

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**TIME OUT SAYS** ★★★★★

Type 'Tantra' into Google Images, and up pops a lot of queasy erotica. Luckily, there's none of that here. Instead, there are gorgeous nineteenth-century drawings from India, works by Indian artists from the '60s, '70s and '80s, and pieces by ten international contemporary artists interested in tantric drawing. Loosely defined as a body of beliefs and practices that can allow a person to conjoin with cosmic forces, tantra sounds pretty mystifying, but its artwork serves the practical function of aiding meditation.

There's a nod to the erotic in Prem Sahib's minimalist take on male lumps and bumps and Prafulla Mohanti's undeniably vulval study in blue from 1980. But the tone is more contemplative than titillating. (It's clear the linking of tantra with sex is a Western obsession, anyway). Among the early, anonymous works from India is a chart of sacred stones, and a mind-boggling page of mantras, featuring hundreds of tiny squares containing bits of script. These are followed by symmetrical compositions in rich colours on silk from the '60s, delicate pencil drawings, simple, folksy images of symbols, and works by contemporary artists including Sahib, Shezad Dawood and Richard Tuttle.

There's a raw, even transitory, feel to much of it, from the drawings on found paper to Tuttle's rough plywood sculptures. Altogether, it can be a little underwhelming but that ephemerality is also the point. Up close, many of the pieces are hypnotic – whether it's those sacred stones, or a dense constellation of pinpricks by Tom Chamberlain, or Alexander Gorlizki's painstakingly detailed patterns. Whatever tantra is, it seems powerfully connected to consciousness. Fittingly, the show ends with a green neon by Sahib that gently lights up and dims in imitation of a person breathing.

**BY: LAURA ALLSOP**

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## DETAILS

**Venue name:**

Drawing Room

**Contact:**

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## DATES AND TIMES

December 2016



 Drawing Room

 11:00am

 Drawing Room

 11:00am

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