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MEER SIR ACADEMY

MFA Art History Entrance Exam Syllabus

Comprehensive Topic Wise Guide

Indian Art • Western Art • Modern and Contemporary Art • Aesthetics

Document type	Entrance examination syllabus and preparation outline
Academic level	Master of Fine Arts entrance preparation
Coverage	Five units covering Indian and Western art history and aesthetics
Prepared for	Students of Meer Sir Academy

This guide reorganizes the supplied syllabus into a clear study sequence. Candidates should study periods, movements, artists, major works, materials, stylistic features, patronage, contexts, and critical concepts—not names alone.

Syllabus at a Glance

Unit	Area	Core Coverage
1	History of Indian Art	Sculpture, architecture, painting, regional schools and court traditions
2	Modern and Contemporary Indian Art	Colonial encounters, modernism, abstraction, figuration and new media
3	History of Western Art	Ancient civilizations through Realism
4	Modern and Contemporary Western Art	Impressionism through conceptual and new media practices
5	Aesthetic Theories	Indian and Western theories of art, beauty and experience



Preparation focus: chronology, stylistic identification, terminology, visual comparison, artist–movement associations, important works and institutions, and the social and intellectual context of art production.

Unit 1 History of Indian Art

Study the chronological and regional development of Indian sculpture, architecture and painting, with attention to materials, iconography, patronage and stylistic change.

History of Indian Sculpture and Architecture

- Indus Valley period sculpture
- Mauryan period sculpture and architecture
- Sunga period sculpture and architecture
- Satavahana period sculpture and architecture
- Development of rock cut cave architecture
- Kushana period sculpture
- Gupta period sculpture and architecture
- Vakataka period sculpture and architecture
- Evolution of Indian sculpture in the medieval period, from the Chalukyas to the Cholas in southern India
- Development of Indian sculpture and architecture in western and central India: Solanki dynasty, Gurjara Pratihara dynasty, Paramara dynasty and Chandela dynasty
- Development of temple architecture: Dravida, Nagara, Vesara, Bhumija and Odisha styles
- Development of sculpture and painting in eastern India during the Pala and Sena periods
- Development of brick and terracotta temple architecture in eastern India
- Development of walled cities and secular architecture such as forts and stepwells
- Sultanate period architecture
- Mughal period architecture

History of Indian Painting

- Ajanta murals and their later development in the medieval period
- Development of the mural tradition in India: Alchi murals and south Indian murals
- Western Indian school of manuscript painting
- Sultanate period painting
- Mughal manuscript painting
- Rajasthani painting
- Deccani painting
- Pahari painting
- Company period painting



Unit 2 Modern and Contemporary Indian Art

Trace the transition from colonial art practices to Indian modernism and contemporary visual culture. Relate artists to movements, institutions, collectives, media and historical context.

Colonial Period and Early Modernism

- Introduction of oil painting and easel painting; British painters in the colonial period; Company painting
- Popular art forms in the colonial period: Battala prints, Kalighat painting and related practices
- Raja Ravi Varma and contemporaries such as Pestonji Bomanji
- Revivalism: E B Havell, Abanindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose
- M V Dhurandhar, G K Mhatre and Vinayak Pandurang Karmarkar

The Thirties

- Rabindranath Tagore, D P Roy Chowdhury, Ramkinkar Baij, Benode Behari Mukherjee, Amrita Sher Gil, Jamini Roy and Gaganendranath Tagore

The Forties

- Calcutta Group and Bombay Progressive Artists Group
- N S Bendre, K K Hebbar, Sailoz Mookherjea, Chittaprosad Bhattacharya, Somnath Hore, Zainul Abedin and Pilloo Pochkhanawala

The Post Independence Period and the Fifties

- Nation building and the establishment of academies, art institutions and cultural bodies
- New artistic networks, pedagogy and debates on national and modern art

The Sixties

- Development of abstraction: Akbar Padamsee and Ram Kumar
- Neo Tantricism: Biren De and G R Santosh
- K C S Paniker, the Madras School and Choramandal Artists Village
- S H Raza and Nasreen Mohamedi
- Krishen Khanna; Delhi Shilpi Chakra; Kanwal Krishna; Devayani Krishna; Satish Gujral
- Sankho Chaudhuri, K G Subramanyan and Krishna Reddy

The Seventies

- Group 1890 and development of the Baroda School: Gulammohammed Sheikh, Bhupen Khakhar, Jyoti Bhatt and Vivan Sundaram
- Continuation of abstraction: J Swaminathan, Prabhakar Barwe and Jeram Patel
- Figuration: Bikash Bhattacharjee, A Ramachandran, Jogen Chowdhury and Jatin Das
- Development of women's voices in art: Arpita Singh, Nalini Malani, Nilima Sheikh, Mrinalini Mukherjee, Meera Mukherjee, Madhvi Parekh, Gogi Saroj Pal and Anupam Sud



The Eighties

- Development of figuration in painting and sculpture: Dhruva Mistry, K S Radhakrishnan, K P Krishnakumar, N N Rimzon, Rekha Rodwittiya, Pushpamala N, Navjot Altaf and Arpana Caur
- Indian Printmakers Guild and Anita Dube

The Nineties and Later Developments

- Installation, video art, digital art and performance art
- New Mediatic Realism
- Artist initiatives and alternative spaces: Khoj, Open Circle, 1 Shanthiroad, Sarai and Sandarbh

Unit 3 History of Western Art

Understand the development of European visual culture from early civilizations to nineteenth century Realism, including changes in form, technique, patronage and worldview.

Ancient Civilizations and Classical Art

- Art of early river valley civilizations
- Egyptian civilization
- Mesopotamian civilization
- Greek art
- Roman sculpture, painting and architecture

Medieval Art

- Early Christian art: painting and architecture
- Byzantine art: painting and architecture
- Romanesque art: painting, architecture and sculpture
- Gothic art: painting, architecture, sculpture and stained glass

Renaissance to Realism

- Renaissance: Florentine, Venetian and Northern Renaissance
- Mannerism
- Baroque and Rococo
- Neoclassicism
- Romanticism
- Realism

Unit 4 Modern and Contemporary Western Art

Study the major movements, artists, media and ideas that transformed Western art from the late nineteenth century to contemporary practice.



Impressionism and Post Impressionism

- Impressionism: Édouard Manet, Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Pierre Auguste Renoir, Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt
- Post Impressionism: Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Paul Cézanne, Henri de Toulouse Lautrec and Suzanne Valadon

Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Movements

- Pointillism: Georges Seurat
- Symbolism: Odilon Redon
- Pre Raphaelites and Art Nouveau
- Auguste Rodin
- Fauvism: Henri Matisse
- Expressionism: Edvard Munch, Oskar Kokoschka, Egon Schiele, Wassily Kandinsky and German expressionist movements
- Cubism: Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso
- Development of photography as an art form
- Futurism in Italy and Russia
- De Stijl, Suprematism, Constructivism and Bauhaus
- Dada
- Surrealism
- Constantin Brâncuși and Alberto Giacometti
- Mexican mural movement

Postwar and Contemporary Art

- Abstract Expressionism
- Pop Art
- Op Art
- Minimalism
- Post Minimalism
- Conceptual Art
- Later developments: performance art, installation, video art and new media art

Unit 5 Aesthetic Theories

Prepare the central concepts, thinkers and texts in Indian and Western aesthetics. Focus on definitions, arguments, comparisons and their application to works of art.

Indian Aesthetics

- Rasa theory: from the rasa formulation in Bharata Muni's Natya Shastra to rasa dhvani in Abhinavagupta's Abhinavabharati; commentaries and positions of Bhatta Lollata, Shankuka and Bhatta Tauta
- The concept of dhvani in Anandavardhana's Dhvanyaloka



- Vishnudharmottara Purana, with special study of the painting section known as the Chitrasutra
- Shadanga or the Six Limbs of Indian painting

Western Aesthetics

- Art as imitation: Plato and Aristotle
- Illumination and the sublime: Plotinus and Longinus
- Medieval aesthetics: Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas
- Immanuel Kant: disinterested pleasure and the sublime
- G W F Hegel: the historical approach to beauty
- Benedetto Croce: the concept of intuition
- Friedrich Nietzsche: the Apollonian and Dionysian
- Psychoanalysis and art: Sigmund Freud
- Formalism: Roger Fry, Clive Bell and Clement Greenberg

Recommended Preparation Approach

- Build a master chronology linking periods, dynasties, movements, artists, institutions and media.
- Prepare visual identification notes for representative sculptures, buildings, paintings, prints, photographs and installations.
- For every movement, revise its dates, location, formal features, major artists, representative works and historical context.
- Compare related traditions, such as Nagara and Dravida architecture, Mughal and Rajasthani painting, or Cubism and Futurism.
- Revise aesthetic concepts through short definitions, key texts, principal arguments and applications to specific artworks.
- Practise objective questions as well as short analytical answers based on comparison, chronology and visual interpretation.

Candidate Advisory

This document structures the syllabus supplied by the learner. Candidates should verify the examination pattern, eligibility, portfolio or interview requirements, and any updates in the admitting institution's current official notice.