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MEER SIR ACADEMY

MFA Curatorial Practice Entrance Exam Syllabus

Comprehensive Topic-Wise Study Guide

Indian Art • Western Art • Aesthetics • Museum Studies

Document type	Entrance examination syllabus and preparation outline
Academic level	Master of Fine Arts entrance preparation
Coverage	Six units covering art history, aesthetics and museum studies
Prepared for	Students of Meer Sir Academy

This guide reorganizes the supplied syllabus into a clear study sequence. Candidates should revise chronology, visual characteristics, artists, works, institutions, theories and curatorial concepts—not names alone.

Syllabus at a Glance

Unit	Area	Core Coverage
1	History of Indian Art	Sculpture, architecture, painting and regional traditions
2	Modern & Contemporary Indian Art	Colonial encounters, modernism and new media
3	History of Western Art	Ancient civilizations through Realism
4	Modern & Contemporary Western Art	Impressionism through contemporary practices
5	Aesthetic Theories	Indian and Western theories of art and beauty
6	Museum Studies	Museums, galleries, collections and exhibitions

Preparation focus: chronology, stylistic identification, terminology, visual comparison, artist–movement associations, significant works and institutions, exhibition contexts, and interpretation.



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, Gurjara-Pratihara, Paramara and Chandela dynasties
- Temple architecture: Dravida, Nagara, Vesara, Bhumija and Odisha styles
- Sculpture and painting in eastern India during the Pala and Sena periods
- Brick and terracotta temple architecture in eastern India
- Walled cities and secular architecture such as forts and stepwells
- Sultanate period architecture
- Mughal period architecture

History of Indian Painting

- Ajanta murals and later developments in the medieval period
- Mural traditions: 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 and easel painting; British painters in colonial India; Company painting
- Popular colonial art forms: 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 V P 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 Mookherjee, Chittaprosad Bhattacharya, Somnath Hore, Zainul Abedin and Pilloo Pochkhanawala

Post-Independence 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 the Baroda School: Gulammohammed Sheikh, Bhupen Khakhar, Jyoti Bhatt and Vivan Sundaram
- Abstraction: J Swaminathan, Prabhakar Barwe and Jeram Patel
- Figuration: Bikash Bhattacharjee, A Ramachandran, Jogen Chowdhury and Jatin Das
- Women's voices: Arpita Singh, Nalini Malani, Nilima Sheikh, Mrinalini Mukherjee, Meera Mukherjee, Madhvi Parekh, Gogi Saroj Pal and Anupam Sud



The Eighties

- 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
- Alternative spaces and initiatives: 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 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 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
- 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 Bharata Muni's Natya Shastra to rasa-dhvani in Abhinavagupta's Abhinavabharati; positions of Bhatta Lollata, Shankuka and Bhatta Tauta



- Dhvani in Anandavardhana's Dhvanyaloka
- Vishnudharmottara Purana, especially the painting section known as the Chitrastotra
- 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: intuition
- Friedrich Nietzsche: the Apollonian and Dionysian
- Psychoanalysis and art: Sigmund Freud
- Formalism: Roger Fry, Clive Bell and Clement Greenberg

Unit 6 Museum Studies

Understand the museum and art gallery as institutions for collecting, conserving, interpreting and presenting culture. The first three themes reproduce the supplied syllabus; the remaining points expand them into practical preparation areas.

Core Topics

- History and evolution of museums
- Concept, definition and purpose of a museum
- Concept and role of an art gallery

Suggested Preparation Areas

- Types of museums and galleries: public, private, university, community, commercial and non-profit
- Core museum functions: collection, acquisition, accessioning, documentation, research, conservation, interpretation, exhibition and education
- Provenance, cataloguing, condition reporting, storage, handling and preventive conservation
- Curatorial research; exhibition concepts; selection and sequencing of objects; display, labels and interpretive texts
- Audience development, accessibility, public programmes and museum education
- Museum ethics: ownership, restitution, copyright, representation and cultural sensitivity
- Digital museums, archives, virtual exhibitions and the use of new media

Curatorial Preparation Focus

- 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.



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- For each work, note creator, title, date, medium, collection or location, style, context and interpretive significance.
- Practise comparing related traditions and movements through form, patronage, material, ideology and display context.
- Design sample exhibition concepts with a title, theme, object list, spatial sequence, label text and target audience.
- Revise aesthetic ideas through definitions, key texts, arguments and applications to particular artworks.
- Follow major museums, biennales, exhibitions, cultural debates and issues of heritage, repatriation and representation.

Candidate Advisory

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