

preliminary syllabus 8/07

[ARTH 501-401/ SAST 502](#)

Fall 2007

Halpern–Rogarth Curatorial Seminar: Contemporary India —  
“*Beginning Modernisms: South Asia, ca.1906–2006*”

Professor Michael W. Meister, 308 Jaffe

Class Coordinator, Beth Citron

Liaison at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Department of Indian and Himalayan Art, Dr. Darielle Mason, Stella Kramrisch Curator

Thursday 3 – 5, and scheduled visits to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and other field trips.



This Curatorial Seminar will draw on the exceptional resources of the Philadelphia Museum’s Department of Indian and Himalayan Art, focusing on the growth and definition of modern and contemporary art movements in the 20th century. Building on and interacting with the extraordinarily rich visual cultures of South Asia, a number of experiments with modernism are represented in the PMA’s South Asia collections that have never been exhibited. These will be supplemented from public collections in the US—in particular, the exceptional Herwitz collection at the Peabody-Essex Museum, Salem MA—to organize an exhibition for the William P. Wood Gallery at the PMA, tentatively scheduled for July 2008, concluding with and helping to situate a major recent acquisition of the PMA, a large paper lithograph and collage by Atul Dodiya, *Sabari and Her Birds*.

**Required background reading:** Mitter, Partha. *Indian Art*. Oxford University Press, 2001. [available at Penn Book Center]

de Duve, Thierry. *Look, 100 Years of Contemporary Art*. Ludion, 2001. [copies at the special price of \$11.95 are available for this course at Penn Book Center]

Met Timeline of Art History, Modern Art in India:  
[www.metmuseum.org/TOAH/hd/mind/hd\\_mind.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/TOAH/hd/mind/hd_mind.htm)

## Recent exhibition listings:

Tate Modern, Amrita Sher-Gil exhibition:  
<http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/shergil/>  
and the Haus der Kunst Munchen:  
[http://www.photography-now.com/institutions/veran\\_17052011.html?PHPS ESSID=7fe710047dfb225360324faa60d3b976](http://www.photography-now.com/institutions/veran_17052011.html?PHPS ESSID=7fe710047dfb225360324faa60d3b976)

Peabody-Essex Museum, Salem MA: Gateway Bombay:  
<http://www.pem.org/exhibitions/exhibition.php?id=66>

Bodhi Gallery: Atul Dodiya, Wet Sleeves: [http://www.bodhiart.in/about\\_atul.html](http://www.bodhiart.in/about_atul.html)

Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh: New Installations:  
<http://www.mattress.org/index.cfm?event=Exhibitions> and  
<http://www.mattress.org/index.cfm?event=Exhibitions&c=Upcoming>



Atul Dodiya, *Sabari and her birds*

## Selective reading for reference and research [on reserve]:

- Bean, Susan S. *Timeless Visions: Contemporary Art of India: from the Chester and Davida Herwitz collection*. Salem, MA: Peabody Essex Museum, 1999.
- Borden, Carla M. *Contemporary Indian Tradition: Voices on Culture, Nature, and the Challenge of Change*, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989.
- Dalmia, Yashodhara, ed., *Contemporary Indian Art: Other Realities*. Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2002.
- Dalmia, Yashodhara [et al.]. *Indian Contemporary Art: Post Independence*. New Delhi: Vadhera Art Gallery, 1997.
- Dodiya, Atul. *The Wet Sleeves of My Paper Robe (Sabari in her Youth: After Nandalal Bose)*, 2006.

- Guha-Thakurta, Tapati. *The Making of a New "Indian" Art: Artists, Aesthetics, and Nationalism in Bengal, c. 1850-1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Jain, Jyotindra. *Kalighat Painting: Images from a Changing World*. Ahmedabad: Mapin, 1999.
- Kapur, Geeta [et. al.]. *Amrita Sher-Gil*. Bombay: Marg Publications, 1972.
- Kapur, Geeta. *When was Modernism: Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India*. Tulika, 2000.
- Mitter, Partha. *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations*. Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Robinson, Andrew. *The Art of Rabindranath Tagore*. New Delhi: Rupa, 1989.
- Sokolowski, Thomas W. [et. al.]. *Contemporary Indian Art*. New York: Grey Art Gallery, 1985.
- Tagore, R. [et. al.]. *Santiniketan: the Making of a Contextual Modernism*. New Delhi: National Gallery of Modern Art, 1997.

**Readings for weekly discussion will be posted on Blackboard:**

Sept. 6: Introductory: read Metropolitan Museum Timeline of Art History (Website above); skim through Mitter, *Indian Art*, and read carefully pp. 198–239.

9/13: look thoughtfully through de Duve's *Look*, and be prepared to discuss his categories in class.

9/20: this will be our first visit to Philadelphia Museum of Art's Indian and Himalayan collections to look at objects both on display in the William P. Wood Gallery and in Departmental storage. Read Mitter pp. 107–141, as introductory background for the current exhibition, *The Book of War: The Free Library of Philadelphia's Mughal Razmnama Folios* (co-curated by Penn art-history graduate student, Yael Rice):

<http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/267.html>