

Introduction

In so many ways, artworks provide us with insights into the preoccupations of their makers, and the times they live in. Modern and contemporary art from India opens windows into a rapidly changing society, especially from the late-19th century to the present day. Through these artworks we see how artists have navigated social, historical and political challenges, while coming to terms with their own personal and professional identities. Artists' practices can help us trace evolving relationships with tradition, colonial systems, nationhood, globalisation and advances in technology. While providing us with a sensitive entry point into modern history itself, these works also touch upon issues we recognise around us today. These include ideas of labour, womanhood, love, death, queerness, worship and so much more.

I'm Beth Citron, and I'm an art historian specialising in modern and contemporary Indian art. While engaging with the breadth of this subject is a lifelong undertaking, I've designed this short course to provide an entry point into an ever-evolving area of study. Over eight lessons, we're going to examine a varied selection of artists, mediums, cross-cultural exchanges, significant institutions and movements. We'll be looking at how art responds to complex histories and contemporary politics, and ways in which artists experiment with techniques and ideas.

Whether at local museums and galleries, or elsewhere in our own daily life – in person or virtually, engaging with art in any way can help us understand complex ideas, grapple with the reality of our contemporary times and even find moments of solace. By building a foundational vocabulary as well as learning to 'read' artworks, I hope you will develop an appreciation for the richness and relevance of India's visual culture in our world today.

Thank you for choosing to take this course – let's begin our journey.

This document is part of an online course on Modern & Contemporary Indian Art. Click [here](#) to access.

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