



## Curating a South Asian Art Gallery with Siddharth Shah Video Transcript

*Siddharth Shah, Curator of South Asian Art at Peabody Essex Museum, taught the second virtual seminar for the Mittal Institute's 13 current Visiting Artist Fellows. He brought the artists together to learn more about curating galleries of South Asian art and his work to promote South Asian art internationally. In this excerpt from the course, Shah discusses the South Asian exhibit at the Peabody Essex Museum.*

### Speakers in This Video

- **Siddharth Shah**, Curator of South Asian Art, Peabody Essex Museum

### **BEGIN TRANSCRIPTION:**

**Siddharth Shah:** It's quite special to have a gallery in a museum that has modern and contemporary South Asian art. We have a permanent gallery devoted to this — and we're the only museum in the United States that has a permanent gallery devoted to modern Indian masters and we're hoping to broaden it to non-Indian art as well.

This was a section where I spoke about women revolutionaries — not just revolutionary women like Bandit Queen (Phoolan Devi) and you can see Amritha Sher-Gill in the corner. But also, revolutionary artists like Nalini Malani and the work that they did.

I also talked about how the female body is so important in the history of Indian art; even the earliest temples or Buddhist stupas have the beautifully adorned female body, but that in modern India it's not just the woman as a decorative object, but it's the woman as an embodied, powerful figure with sexual agency, with her own dreams and images of herself — and so we kind of go into that here.