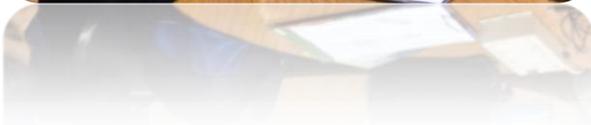


MEET A MUSEUM DOCTOR

National Museum, New Delhi



WELCOME NOTE

Dear Teacher,

Welcome to the National Museum (NM). NM which houses more than 2, 00000 objects, believes in encouraging different visitor groups utilise and interpret its collection in diverse ways and context. Similarly, NM's conservation workshop for children is a starting point to facilitate and enhance scientific learning in classrooms and follow it up with museum visits.

This resource is divided in two segments including Pre and during the visit segments. But we do encourage teachers to include activities that could be made part of post visit segment. And activities may be developed based around museum visit.

The workshop offers a unique opportunity to explore how a huge range of objects from different time periods of history are cared for and preserved in museums. It therefore looks at conservation at museum environment.

We hope you and your students have an enjoyable and interactive session in the classroom with our pre visit material.

How to book a session?

The workshop will last for 2 and half-hours and is scheduled for the 3rd Friday of every month. In order to be part of this, please book a session at least 1 week in advance.

Maximum number of participants per session would be 20.

Advance booking is essential. Book a session by sending email to Ms. Rige Shiba, Assistant Curator, Education at rige.shiba6@gmail.com

Department of Education
National Museum, New Delhi

Workshop Details:

Name: Meet a Museum Doctor.

Facilitators: Team Education & Conservation with Yuva Saathis, YMPs and YMCs

Total Participants: 20 only

Class: VI-VII

Duration: 2Hours 30 minutes

Date: 3rd Friday of Every month

Time: 10:30 AM to 1:00PM

Pre visit:

1. What is museum conservation?

Museums house some of most important and beautiful objects in the world. But they are not mere objects; they have fantastic and amazing stories hidden inside them about who created them, how they were used and how they were lost through the folds of time! It is these stories that create our history. So it is very important to keep art objects safely. Museum conservation is the science of keeping museum objects healthy and beautiful so that they do not get lost.



2. Who are conservators?

Conservators are like doctors. But they are doctors for museum objects- paintings, sculptures and manuscripts. Museum objects are made up of many types of materials such a stone, metal, wood, paper, cloth, fibres, gems and now even modern materials like plastic. Conservators understand how these materials deteriorate and how they must be cared for.



3. What causes decay and deterioration? And how do we tackle this in National Museum?

Decay is an unfortunate process that can eventually lead to the complete destruction of objects. The moment art objects are created by artists they start deteriorating. It is very similar to us human beings. When we are born, we are young and lively and gradually we become old and start ageing and eventually we die. In the same way objects are created, they grow old, they decay and die. Decay can be caused by many things- polluted air, too much water vapour, too much heat, even too much light can sometimes harm objects. At the Museum conservators and curators take a lot of care in how objects are displayed in the gallery, how they are stored and how they are handled.



- **Light**

Light is important to see things. However sometimes the harsh rays of sun or even from artificial sources of light such as tube-lights and bulbs can damage objects. Fading can occur, too much exposure to light can also damage delicate organic materials internally at the molecular level. Exposure to light is carefully managed in Museums and when required galleries are lit very dimly to allow visitors to see objects but also protect the objects from fast deterioration.



- **Environment**

Our environment is crucial for our survival. There are life-giving gases in the environment such as Oxygen which keep us alive. However there are many other gases in the environment which are harmful. Too much exposure to such gases like Carbon monoxides, sulphides and oxides can seriously damage objects and cause their quick ageing which is not good for the museum objects. These harmful gases can be created through industrial wastes and also by vehicle exhausts.

- **Human Beings**

While human beings are responsible for preserving their culture and museum objects, on many occasions they have damaged them out of hatred and anger. For example in 2001, the nearly 1700 year old Buddhas in Bamiyan (in present day Afghanistan) were destroyed by militants and more recently militants are destroying the museum objects in Mosul, Iraq. But

damage can occur even by over-handling of objects by well meaning people. Too much handling of an old manuscript can cause the paper to become weak and brittle.

- **Insects and pests**

Insects find food everywhere- in paper, cloth, paintings and wood. They do not understand what an art object is and what is not, so they attack anything that seems like food to them.

We will know more about these problems in detail when you visit the Museum.

4. Types of deterioration as seen in museum objects?

Here is a small list of deterioration to Museum objects, actually there can be hundreds but a few are listed here for your understanding

1. Breakages and chips in stone or metal
2. Eating away of wood by insects
3. Corrosion of metals
4. Fading of colours in paintings and textiles
5. Brittleness and yellowing of paper
6. Flaking of paint from paintings and wood panels
7. Tears and loss of strength in textiles

