

# Evolution of the Pristineness and Contemporariness in the Miniature Art of Rajasthan

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## Abstract

The dynamics of art and artisanal crafts have, without a shadow of a doubt, witnessed significant expansion in recent years. There has been a significant paradigm change in how people feel about the process of making art and putting it on display. Nevertheless, despite these changes, the fundamental and innate qualities of creative works have stayed the same, and this is something that must be emphasized, in my opinion, since it is so important. The inspiration that went into the making of miniature art has not been lost to the passage of time. Although it has been exposed to more contemporary forms of practice in Rajasthan, it has not abandoned its roots. This research is a concerted effort to locate the first, unmodified form of tiny art, to ascertain the significance of that art, and to trace its development up to the present day. This study is an effort to revitalize miniature art in the context of the contemporary creative realm. This research will attempt to illustrate how miniature art was an integral part of the larger creative world, as well as how it has evolved while still retaining its defining characteristics. This study will also look at how miniature art evolved while still retaining its defining characteristics.

**Keywords:** Art; Contemporary; Creative; Miniature; Rajasthan.

## Introduction

Recent years have seen a significant change that cannot be denied in terms of the appearance of ancient art. This revolution is the result of the dynamics of the art world suddenly altering in a very different way. One of the most expressive and nontraditional approaches to visual art is the practice of miniature painting in Rajasthan.

It is possible to trace the roots of miniature painting all the way back to the Deccan area of India during the Mughal and Rajput periods, which was

a time when the art form enjoyed its greatest level of popularity. These paintings are wonderful examples of the incredible creative intuition possessed by Indian painters. They are a wonderful addition to any art collection.

Even after all this time, we can't get enough of the intricate brushwork, the dramatic use of color, and the deeply embedded message in the painting.

During the reign of the Mughals, miniature art thrived and spread beyond Rajasthan to the Rajputs and the Deccan. Miniature art was practiced in a variety of schools, including the Rajput School, the Mughal School, and the Deccan School, each with its own particular style. Due to the strong relationship between the Mughals and Rajput's, Rajput, Persian, and European art forms were combined in miniature paintings.

The history of miniature art in Rajasthan is extensive and colorful. It has transitioned from the ancient to the contemporary era via a succession of adjustments and modifications in almost all of its elements and has done so with the highest elegance and beauty.

## **Objectives**

The fundamental objective of my thesis is to make a determined effort as an artist to convince everyone of the beauty of traditional Indian miniature painting. My objective is to conserve and protect the aesthetic value of this art form and to regain its former esteem. Through this study, I earnestly and humbly implore you to preserve the beauty and atmosphere of our ancient art forms and educate the public about its splendor. I hope that this study will inspire the faculty administration and also the instructors to adopt this new form of teaching in Miniature painting with a Contemporary touch – which a student may approach – as a successful teaching technique that will be advantageous to them in the long run. The objective of the research is to assist students in enhancing their academic proficiency, developing employability skills, implementing a career plan, and participating in a professional route.

## **Origin**

Miniature paintings are hand-painted with extreme precision. Limning refers to portraiture on copper, ivory, or vellum. Miniature paintings are an ancient Indian art form that was prominent under the Mughals and Rajput's and in the Deccan region, where it generated several schools for

its study and creation. Paper, wood, marble, leather, ivory panels, walls, and fabric can be used for these artworks.

A Miniature artwork must be less than 25 square inches or 100 square centimeters and 1/6 the original size. Hamza Nama and Tutinama are examples. Bhimbetka Rock Shelters contain 30,000-year-old artwork. Animals, dance, and hunting are their subjects. Thus, India's art is Neolithic. Along with human growth, artistic traditions were encouraged, as the Ajanta and Bagh Caves in Madhya Pradesh show. Miniature art began in the 17th-century Himalayas. The phrase "Rajasthani Schools of Painting" refers to the styles of painting that were popular in the princely states and thikanas of what is roughly known as Rajasthan including Mewar, Bundi, Kota, Jaipur, Bikaner, Kishangarh, Jodhpur, which were majorly developed since from the fifteenth century till date.

These were influenced by late-8th-century murals. Firstly, made on palm leaves, then paper. Krishna Leela (Lord Krishna's Sport), Raga Raginis (Musical Melodies), Nayika Bheda (Many Classes of Love Heroines), Ritu Charita (Seasons), and Panchtantra were the main subjects of miniature art. The paintings depict monarchy, nobility, the typical man, women's beauty, etc. Different ragas began to mark the seasons, linking music and art. Bhairava, Malava, Sri-Raga, Hindola, Vasanta, Dipaka, Megh.

### **Historical Perspective**

Miniature paintings have made an enduring effect due to their better beauty. It is one of the few surviving forms of art. Indian miniature paintings captivate the viewer's attention with their grace and beauty. These paintings depict the opulent lifestyle and supremacy of the kings, providing a look into their world.

Palm leaves are depicted on fabrics, paper, stone, and modern ivory panels. Uniquely, Rajasthani miniature paintings depict the regal lifestyle and the tales of Lord Rama and Radha. The combination of India's social, religious, economic, and political climates produced these schools.

Several artworks represented the contributions of kings and queens to their domains and people. Frequently, Jain scripture paintings have exaggerated features, vivid hues, and bold lines. Mughal art includes cultural, religious, and traditional Persian elements. Traditional Indian art and the Indus Namak style combine to produce a magnificent kind of art. During the reign of Akbar, paintings depicted royal life and advances in philol-

ogy.

Later, perspective shading was included into European and Mughal art. The miniature painters of the Mughal court abandoned Aurangzeb's court for princely mansions and Rajput patrons. Malwa, Mewar, Bundi, Kishangarh, Jaipur, and Udaipur were centres of miniature art production. This was contained into manuscripts and albums. The miniature paintings of the Rajputs showed Lord Krishna's love and devotion, as well as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

***Artist: Syed Shakir Ali***

Master Craftsman Padma Shri Syed Shakir Ali of Jaipur is a notable Mughal-style miniature painter. He was conceived in 1956. After graduating high school in 1978, he began painting at the age of fifteen. He sought the instruction of eminent painters Ram Gopal Vijayvargiya, Ved Pal Sharma, and (Bannu) to study Mughal and company painting techniques as well as traditional art. In 1981, he began to display his artwork in exhibits and performances.



**Fig.1: Spiritual Power of Woman, Watercolor,tempera on paper, 16x20 inches**

On January 26, 2013, the President of India awarded Shakir Ali the Padma Shri Award. He has also repaired historic paintings at the City Palace in Jaipur and the Prince of Wales Museum in Mumbai, both of which contain a collection of his works.

In the *Fig.1*,Shri Syed Shakir Ali told that the painting reflects not just the whole period of Sufism but also the vital role that women played in the propagation of Sufism as well as the theory that underpinned it. The

fusion of Indian and Mughal aesthetics is well captured in the painting, which, without a doubt, is an outstanding example of the genre. He explains that the image is meant to reflect the coming together of Islamic and Hindu traditions. The painting used a perfect combination of pastel colors which are undoubtedly appealing and eye catching. The painting is made of such fine brush strokes, elegant and sophisticated lines and a creative mind that is par excellence.

The women have an inherent rhythm in her body with which she is seen to dance ecstatically. She is seen to be dancing happily in her spiritual ecstasy. The painting portrays various sorts of animals having vices and virtues showing their emotions, feelings and aspects that a woman possesses for example women can take a form Durga and Laxmi in one woman.

The pioneer of Sufism Dervesh, and other Sufi saints are revolving around the woman showing that woman is at the center stage of all the cosmic energy and spirituality. The woman is seen to lure the saints. Women undoubtedly possess all the exceptional qualities that the almighty has bestowed upon mankind such as virtues and vices. The painting has its underlying theme to the fact that a person in divine ecstasy gains spiritual power as that of God and the woman is synonymous to the fact.

In my opinion as a viewer, the painting depicts Meera bai, a devotee of Krishna, dancing with her mysticism in a graceful rhythmic manner and the ecstasy that she feels on the inside. In addition, various traits of the peacock that are associated with Lord Krishna are shown in the painting. The backdrop of the picture is split into two halves, with numerous planets portraying cosmic components on one half and Sufi saints expressing the core of Islam on the other. Both halves are connected by a bridge.

The spirituality associated with both the Bhakti and Sufi Movements along with an underlying Mughal influence and realism is shown across the whole of the painting. It is well known that Meera bai was an important figure in the Bhakti Movement and that she devoted her whole life to unswerving devotion to Lord Krishna. She did this throughout her entire life. Saints of the Sufi order are linked with the Sufi Movement in Islam. This movement, in which Sufis such as Moinuddin Chishti played an important part in resurrecting the Islamic notion, is also known as the Sufi Movement. Therefore, the artwork that was made by Syed Shakir Ali is a combination of the Bhakti movement and the Sufi movement as well as their effect on mankind and the world.

*Artist: Nathulal Verma*

Nathulal Verma is an artist par excellence. He has had an extensive career in the field of art and has received numerous honors as well. He has painted undoubtedly one of the most iconic and exemplary art pieces which will surely serve as an inspiration for the next generation artists.



**Fig.2: Badalta Parivesh on Silk, Medium Tempera, 12x8 inches**

Nathulal Verma in this painting has with great ease, try to bring contemporariness to the forefront. He has depicted a natural scenic beauty in the background with a lush green tree taking the hold of the background. The tree is shown to be full of lush green leaves and yellow flowers protruding out of the tree and hanging onto the walls shown beneath them. Below the trees, there is a wall painted in red and 2 girls walking on the footpath.

The two girls seem fairly young and are shown to be dressed in a fairly modern style with one girl wearing a green T-Shirt and jeans along with modern block heels. The other girl is shown wearing a white kurta-pajama and a yellow dupatta with which she has covered her face. At some distance, there is a lady shown who seems to be fairly middle aged wearing a seemingly traditional outfit. The two girls are walking on a zebra crossing and around them there are numerous birds flying as well as sitting. The painting has, thus, showcased us the prevailing circumstances under which humans livewhere the air is highly polluted. The whole painting is an apt description of how the humans have destroyed the gift that nature has given us. It shows us the harshness humanity has perpetrated on

nature, as a result of which nature has undergone such a serious depre-  
dation.

*Artist: Khush Narayan Jangid*

In *Fig.3*, Khush Narayan Jangid has done an excellent job of encapsulating the modern world in which we all now find ourselves living. It is evidently clear that the painting is a blend of ancient elements such as the underlying theme along with a fresh element of contemporariness that is reflected in the small things that the artist has incorporated. This is evidently clear due to the fact that it is evidently clear that the painting is a blend of ancient elements such as the underlying theme.



**Fig.3: Lockdown 3, 22x28 inches, Acrylic on Paper**

The backdrop of the painting is a relaxing brown colour, and it is done in a conventional, old-fashioned way. Artist Khush Narayan Jangid stated to me that this artwork has a number of old royal windows, which we refer to as “*jharokha*.” These windows are distinctive to the Rajput style of construction and are shown in the picture. In the backdrop, you can make out several birds that have been given a black paint job, as well as the corona virus.

In addition to it, there are animals such as cows and dogs in the backdrop.

A number of individuals were shown within the windows engaging in a wide variety of activities. For example, one individual was seen praying in front of a 'Shivling' while another was shown working on a laptop computer.

The whole of these events serves as a reflection of the time period in which we now find ourselves, particularly following the breakout of COVID-19. This image depicts a possible future in which the Corona virus has spread over the whole earth. The image illustrates how people are confined to their homes while animals are shown roaming freely outside and across the city.

The difficulties that humanity endured during the COVID Crisis are brilliantly captured in the artwork that was created by Khush Narayan Jangid, which is a prime example of the genre. The COVID Crisis had forced people to stay inside their houses for an extended period of time, which in a sense gave animals the opportunity to roam freely in the open air and enjoy their freedom. This idea is shown in the picture in a way that is extremely clear and concise.

*Artist: Tejpal Singh Shekhawat*



**Fig.4: Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati ji with Nandi, Acrylic on Paper**



Tejpal Singh Shekhawat communicated that in this miniature painting, he has taken subjects related with mythology as its underlying theme. He has effectively captured and taken into consideration, a detailed mythological element of Lord Shiva. He has made his whole work in an aesthetic sense capturing the essence of the life of Lord Shiva. The painting includes Lord Shiva, Goddess Parvati, Lord Ganesh and Nandi.

In the *Fig.4*, Asharam Meghwalji depicts Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Lord Shiva is painted in their own unique style. He is painted blue with a yellow lower and a lotus in one hand. He is painted above Goddess Parvati and is shown to be looking down upon her. Above Lord Shiva, Nandi is painted wherein he's painted in a white color long with all the ornaments on his head and face. Goddess Parvati is painted just below Lord Shiva. She is wearing an extremely exquisite yellow dress along with magnificent ornaments. Below Goddess Parvati, Lord Ganesh is depicted. Though depicted small, he is depicted with utmost precision wearing a beautiful dress along with various ornaments. Goddess Parvati is seen to be feeding Nandi with one hand in a bowl. All of them are shown in an aesthetically mystic sense

The whole painting undoubtedly gives us a glimpse of the mythological aspects revolving around the life of Lord Shiva. The painting is painted with utmost delicacy with a fine use of colours and strokes. The sketches of all the characters are painted with utmost precision so much so that even the minute details of each one of them are made properly. The painting undoubtedly is one of its kind in exhibiting mythology in an aesthetic sense.

*Artist: Asharam Meghwal*



**Fig.5: Meghmalhar, Water tempera on paper, 12x16 inches, 22 July 2022**

Artist Asharam Meghwal told about his painting that this miniature painting is different from other miniature paintings because in this painting absolutely astounds the imagination, pleases the eyes and rejuvenates the soul to the spectator. This painting will surely grab the eyes of the viewers with its excellent aesthetic beauty, thought provoking creativity and the mind-boggling precision in the sketches and brush strokes. The painting depicts, at the center stage, a woman dressed in an ancient yellow dress wearing beautiful ornaments on her hands, face, wrist, neck etc. the creativity that AsharamMeghwal has portrayed is that in one painting he has tried to incorporate beautifully and effortlessly, a series of other characters as well. In *Fig.5*,The woman is holding a lotus in both hands. Inside her lower dress, a painting of an ancient monument is depicted. Upon her waist, the artist has incorporated two peacocks and over her arm, a horse is depicted in a hidden manner. The background is given a grey color and around the girl a yellow circular structure is painted. Inside that, an ancient tower or '*minar*' is shown and a man is seen sitting on the path.

The painting is absolutely a masterpiece in true sense. The painting shows such thought provoking and creative mental backing, that it surely will draw anyone's attention. The painting is absolutely stunning with the fine use of brush and line strokes. The painting has very graciously synchronized all the elements inside the woman without out shadowing the woman herself. This is precisely the beauty of this painting. AsharamMeghwal is truly a genius to have made this painting with this level of creativity, precision and expertise.

## **Conclusion**

There are several techniques and approaches that may be employed to illustrate the grandeur of Miniature art. The handcrafted item's worth and aesthetic appeal have been shown by the passage of time. It is flawless in terms of beauty and purity, and the artists who mastered this art form are above reproach. The minute details that may be obtained via miniature painting astound the human imagination. However, it could not withstand the assault that time brought. Not only have individuals forgotten about it, but history has as well. This incredible work of art, which bestowed artisanal marvels onto human societies around the world, has been forgotten for a very long time.

The lost skill of miniature painting must be rediscovered immediately. It is essential that the present generation learns about the achievements and remarkable traits of their forefathers in this field of employment. There

are still innovative individuals working in this industry, but they have not yet made a reputation for themselves. In an effort to give the pure miniature art form a more contemporary perspective, they have adapted to contemporary ideas and worked toward fusing them with the art form. They have maintained their unwavering resolve and faith in this art form, and they continue to promote the magnificence of miniature art, the oldest and most revered style of Indian painting.

In addition, this research aimed to demonstrate how Miniature art has taken on a more modern form while retaining its artisanal and aesthetic qualities. The primary objective of the research is to resurrect the fundamental elements of contemporary miniature art and to educate the general public on how the authentic elements of miniature art have been preserved and safeguarded in modern times.

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#### **Interview with Miniature Artists:**

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