



Interrelationship Between Art, Artists And Indian Mythology: A Study

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Abstract

Art has no language, art is beyond any religion or caste. Art reflects the personality and emotions of every human being. An artist introduces his emotions to the society by exhibiting his art. **Art** is an unquenched thirst and is also an infinite ocean in itself. No artist, writer or even a poet can express it in his creations. The creator of the universe has created this universe and presented his art in such a beautiful manner that human civilization has not been able to discover the infinite possibilities hidden in it till date.

When man was wandering in search of himself and was searching for the art of living in the world, the artist within him woke up or we can say that he meditated on his mind and created God in his mind. He changed his way of seeing the beautiful world and he gave it the form of art which comes from god-like thinking. The "**Vishnudharmotra**" Purana provides information on various subjects like dance, music, pindal, grammar, architecture and sculpture etc. "The origin of art is believed to have been from the creation of the heavenly Apsara **Urvashi** by **Lord Vishnu**. It is said that Vishnu had made her idol on his thighs and since then art originated. Vishnu taught this art to **Vishwakarma**".¹

Who made artistic models of the creation of the entire universe according to his prescribed rules.¹ India is also one of those models. India is a land where beliefs matter a lot. This belief is widely reflected in Indian art and it can be said that it has given birth to the style of **mythological** art. Here art specifically means '**Indian painting**'. We often see these artworks using religious images and motifs as inspiration, with the aim of elevating the mind towards spirituality. We can also research further and find out that these symbols have been added specifically to enter the public psyche. Many Indian artists have used their beautiful imagination to create depictions of **gods and goddesses** in **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata**, mythology in their own style. These people used to decorate pottery as well as make realistic models of animal, bird, human and idols of

gods and goddesses in them. This type of material has been obtained after excavation at prestigious places in India.² We often see these artworks using religious images and motifs as inspiration, with the aim of elevating the mind towards spirituality. We can also research further and find out that these symbols have been added specifically to enter the public psyche. Many Indian artists have used their beautiful imagination to create depictions of gods and goddesses in **Ramayana and Mahabharata, mythology** in their own style.³ These people used to decorate pottery as well as make realistic models of animal, bird, human and idols of gods and goddesses in them. This type of material has been obtained after excavation at prestigious places in India.

Keywords- Mythology, Art, Artists, Gods and Goddesses, Ramayana

Introduction

An **artist's** relationship with his art is the same as that of a child with his mother. It is very clear that the power that drives us all, which we call God, is the greatest artist who has carved the plants, trees, humans, mountains and everything on this earth in different and beautiful forms, just as a sculptor carves his emotions in the form of a sculpture.

A poet has rightly said:

“Any Beautiful theme comes in a small packet

When this small packet is opened then the whole world becomes beautiful”

Every artist presents his feelings to the society through his different medium. And the praise given by the society is his real reward. Artists are the precious gems of our society. Actually, there is an artist hidden inside every human being and the one who is able to express his feelings through art is called an artist in the true sense. That is why artists have the status of an artist different from the common people of the society. Just as a sadhu remains absorbed in renunciation to merge with his **God**, in the same way an artist remains absorbed in his art. In the words of the artist, only an artist can understand the feelings hidden in the artwork of another artist and also appreciates it with a true heart. The epics contribute to the shared **cultural heritage**, and their stories are constantly repeated and reinterpreted in various art forms, ensuring their relevance across generations. Our creation is the most beautiful and exquisite example of art around us in this universe and every artist is deeply influenced by this nature and is completely immersed in this essence of nature. The depiction of **mythology, gods, goddesses** and heroes has been a central theme in Indian art for millennia. Here is an overview of how Indian mythology has shaped the history of painting in India. The depiction of gods, goddesses and epics in Indian art is central to its **objectives**, which include spiritual expression, moral education and cultural preservation. These elements are not merely decorative, but are integral to expressing the deeper meanings and values inherent in Indian culture. Indian art often has a didactic or educational purpose. Through visual storytelling, the art serves to educate the viewer about religious, philosophical, and moral concepts. In modern Indian art, Indian artists such as **Sobha Singh, Raja Ravi Varma, M.F. Husain**,

and **Tyeb Mehta** have continued to draw upon mythology for inspiration. **Raja Ravi Varma**, in particular, is known for his realistic portrayals of Hindu gods and goddesses, which have become iconic representations in Indian culture. **Sobha Singh**, an artist and humanist, looked upon religion from a wider perspective, beyond the boundaries of a particular faith. While he had unflinching faith in the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev and other Sikh Gurus, he was equally respectful to all religions.

Objective

One of the main purposes of Indian art is to provide a medium for spiritual expression and upliftment. By depicting **gods, goddesses** and epics, artists aim to connect the viewer to the divine and eternal truth expressed by these figures and stories. Indian art serves as a medium to preserve and express India's rich cultural and religious traditions. By engaging with the images and stories of gods, goddesses and epics, artists strengthen a sense of cultural identity and continuity. Indian mythology has a vast range of gods, goddesses and epics, which have provided a profound source of inspiration to artists throughout India's history. This relationship between mythology and art must continue to grow, keeping ancient stories alive in **modern times**.

Study of Literature

Art of Ancient Times

The history of painting can be said to be as old as the history of mankind. Another excellent example of this is the cave paintings of India. These images from prehistoric times, especially the Mesolithic period of 30,000 years, exemplify the strong relationship of Indian sentiments with nature. Cave Paintings Some of the earliest examples of Indian art are found in prehistoric cave paintings, such as those at **Bhimbetka** in Madhya Pradesh. These depict scenes of hunting and daily life, but they also include early religious symbols. A seal discovered at **Mohenjodaro** shows a human figure or a deity sitting with legs folded. This figure, referred to as **Pashupati**, is wearing a three-horned headdress and is surrounded by animals. On the left side of the figure is an elephant and a tiger while on the right side a rhinoceros and a buffalo appear. A female figure found which was worshipped as the **Mother Goddess**, and other terracotta figures have been found in Mohenjodaro.⁴(Plate-1)

Vedic period texts

The Rigveda mentions a picture of the fire god made on leather. This picture was hung during the yajna and was wrapped up after the yajna was over. In the same Rigveda, the descendants of sage Bhrigu are considered to be skilled in wood work. The Rigveda also mentions female figures on the door frames around the yajnasalas. These goddesses were the symbols of dawn and night.⁵**Vishnudharmottar "Chitra-sutra"** is the authoritative work on pictorial art in India. Most of the medieval texts like "**Abhilashitartha Chintamani**", "**Shivatatvartanakar**", "**Silparatna**", 'Narad Shilap', 'Saraswati Shilap' and 'Parjapati Shilap' are from the south.⁶ The history of painting of this period can be inferred from literary works - Vedas, Mahabharata, Ramayana or Puranas.

Art of religious caves

Gandhar style - In the initial period, the Hinayana branch of Buddhism was strong. Under the '**Hinayana Buddhism**' religion, till about 200 BC, no pictures or statues of Mahatma Buddha were made. To propagate religion or to show the existence of Buddha, the practice of depicting his symbols like umbrella, crown (turban), foot-wears (charan padukas) , Bodhi tree, throne etc. became popular, but the image of Lord Buddha was not depicted.⁷

Mahayana Buddhism emerged as soon as **Kanishka** became the emperor of the **Kushan kingdom**. As a result, images of Lord Buddha started being made in the form of statues or paintings and there was no religious restriction on depicting Buddha. Buddha's statues were made during the Kanishka period. The style of these statues was more Greek. This type of statue was made in **Peshawar** (Purupur), Rawalpindi, Taxila etc.

The sculptures in the **Jogimara caves** of this period mainly depict religious themes of Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. However, there are also places where the paintings were secular. This includes the oldest painted caves of Chhattisgarh, otherwise one has to depend on literary references to estimate the paintings of this period.

Buddhism emerged in the Indian context and the **Ajanta caves** depict the life of Buddha in the form of many paintings, images and other decorative representations. These paintings mainly belong to the Mahayana sect of Buddhism. The life of Buddha is depicted in the form of many paintings, sculptures and other decorative representations. The thirty ancient cave temples of Ajanta are carved out of the hills. In this cave, excellent paintings of Vajrapani and **Padmapani Bodhisattva** are depicted. The expressions of infinite kindness and compassion have made these paintings world-famous. In the painting of Padmapani-Buddha, the size of Lord Buddha is large, and there is flow and power in the lines. Ganas are drawn on both sides of Buddha and Lord Buddha is adorned with long garlands. (Plate-2)

Other cave paintings of the 6th century BC inspired the Mahabalipuram legend. **Badami Caves** The Badami region of Karnataka is quite famous for its collection of temples. The murals in these caves were inspired by the mythological stories of Hinduism. There are also images of other religions like **Buddhism and Jainism**. This **8th century** Jain cave temple contains rock art, Jain images, relics of saints and more. Jain monks living in the cave created these paintings, which are similar to those in the Sitanavasal caves. The most interesting part of these paintings is their amazing association with Brahmi inscriptions. This cave **Armamamalai Caves** is located in the Vellore region of Tamil Nadu.⁸

Art of the Medieval Period (6th to 13th Century)

Western **Chalukya Period** (6th to 8th Century A.D.) After the Vakatakas, the Chalukyas were Vaishyas and powerful kings who occupied the throne of the south. After Palakasen his son Kirtivarman, father of the famous Pulakesena II ascended the throne and was succeeded by Mangalesa (younger brother of Kirtivarman). Mangalesa was very fond of art and built many beautiful temples and caves in his capital. Among these Cave 4, also called the Cave of the Vaishnavas, is the most beautiful. It has very impressive

stone sculptures of Trivikrama, **Narasimha**, **Virata**, Bhogibhog Agnasana and Varaha, considered to be incarnations of **Vishnu**. The Chalukya flag bears the image of the deity Varaha, which symbolizes how Varaha lifted the earth with his strength and protected it. Similarly, the Chalukya kings had the distinction of handling the burden of their vast empire with ease.⁹

Temple Art: The medieval period saw the flourishing of art in the form of frescoes and reliefs in the development of temple architecture. Paintings of this period are heavily influenced by Hindu mythology, depicting stories from the **Ramayana**, the **Mahabharata** and the **Puranas**.

Chola period (9th-13th century) in South India saw the creation of astonishing bronze sculptures and frescoes, especially dedicated to Lord Shiva. A prime example is the **Brihadeeswarar Temple** at Thanjavur, whose frescoes depict scenes from the Hindu epics. The work of the early Chola painters is mostly found in the **Brihadeeswarar Temple** at Thanjavur, which must be called a treasure trove of pictorial art. The first Chola painter's work depicts the battle scene of "**Tripurantaka**". The gigantic body of Shiva is riding a chariot with Brahma driving the chariot as the charioteer. Shiva is in Veerasan Mudra. All eight hands have weapons in them and are showering arrows with huge bows on the army of attacking giants. The entire army of demons appeared in great glory, without any fear, crying and refusing to fight, without caring for their frightened wives, attacking Shiva with open hair and dangerous weapons.¹⁰ Western Middle Ages (11th to 15th centuries A.D.) Images before the **Rashtrakuta period** are either lost or not yet found, but after the thirteenth century images from the Vishnu temple at Madanpur in Lalitpur district of Uttar Pradesh, Jain images in illustrated **manuscripts** such as the Kalpasutra, illustrations in Sindh Hem miniatures, ancient palm-leaf illustrations accompanying the Kumara Pala Charita and Kalakacharya Katha and later paintings on paper, and later similar illustrated Pala manuscripts from eastern India are pre-eminent examples of miniatures contemporary with the Mughal period.¹¹

Mughal Period (16th to 18th Century) Miniature Painting

Mughal Miniature Painting The Mughal emperors introduced Persian influences into Indian art, leading to the development of miniature painting. Initially focusing on courtly themes, Mughal miniatures also included Hindu **mythological** themes under rulers like Akbar and Jahangir. In Ain-i-Akbari, Abbul Fazl writes that - "The Emperor showed a great interest in painting from the beginning of his youth and considered it a means of entertainment and knowledge. Akbar commissioned paintings not only from Persian but also from Hindu epics - '**Mahabharata**', '**Ramayana**', and '**Yogavashti Ramayan**' etc. and got them translated into Persian. At the same time, incomparable paintings were also made on the great poet Keshav's '**Rasikpriya**'¹² Mughal emperors also got portraits of contemporary sages and saints etc. made. Akbar had special respect for sages, saints and religious men. He used to participate in their satsangs and the religion 'Din Ilahi' was the summary of Hindu, Jain, Christian and Muslim religions like this. At this time many portraits of Tulsidas, Kabir, Sheikh Phool, Sheikh Salim Chishti etc. were made which show the faith of Mughal rulers in sages. Apart from Muslim sages, many cenotaphs of many Hindu saints like, **Vallabhacharya**, **Sur**, **Tulsi**, **Meera Kabir** etc. were made.¹³

Rajasthan and Pahari Schools Parallel to Mughal art, Rajput courts developed their own styles, such as the Mewar, Marwar and Pahari schools of painting. These focused extensively on Hindu **Mythology**, especially the life of Krishna, as seen in the "**Rasleela**" and "**Bhagavata Purana**" series. Looking at the large murals in the palaces of Jaipur and Udaipur, one can imagine how well the painters of this art must have created such large murals. Rasleela and the love images of Radha Krishna are very attractive subjects. The Narada Pancharat, written in the sixteenth century, describes **Shivaji's** palaces on Mount Kailash which were decorated with images of Krishna Leela. Coomaraswamy's statement that "the main entrances and walls of large and beautiful palaces were usually decorated with such paintings"¹⁴ seems to be correct.

Pahari Painting (1600 AD to 1700 AD)

The life of Krishna is very close to the simple, ordinary **Mythology** life of India, that is why Krishna is considered to be a very beloved deity of India. In fact, Krishna's rebellious childhood and life in the cowherd were related to farmers, forests, cowherds, gopis, animals and birds and were very similar to the poor people. Vaishnavism was not limited to the plains of Rajasthan and Northern India but also reached the hilly areas and became the main basis of inspiration for Pahari painters. The ideology and devotional spirit of Vaishnavism is visible in the paintings of Basohli style. Pictures of **Vishnu** and his ten incarnations are found in this style. Two copies of Ramayana painted in this style are also found, out of which one copy is painted in Basohli and the other is painted in Kullu. **Ramayana** and **Bhagwat Purana** became the main painting subjects of these painters due to Vaishnav sect.¹⁵

Colonial period (18th to 20th century)

Company Painting Under British rule, Indian artists began to work in accordance with European tastes. However, depictions of Indian **mythology** continued, with a blend of traditional and European styles. Company style paintings also depict Hindu deities, but these paintings were less for religious purposes, rather the Europeans got the paintings of the local deities done with their knowledge of the culture. Paintings on religious themes were more in South India than in other centres of Uttar Pradesh. The Banaras centre also painted Hindu deities, including elephants performing Jalabhishek of Lakshmi, Shiva and Parvati with Nandi on Mount Kailash, Hanuman carrying Sanjivani booti, **Hanuman carrying Rama** and Lakshmana on his shoulders, Hanuman worshipping at Rama's feet, Krishna grazing cows, **Krishna killing Kansa**, **Krishna lifting Govardhan mountain**, Shiva's form Bhairav riding a dog, Chandra riding a deer, etc. Pictures of gods and goddesses were usually made on mica and glass. Fanny Park has written that among the sets from Banaras, the sets of Hindu gods and goddesses were purchased the most.¹⁶

Bengal School of Art In the late 20th century, the Bengal School of Art emerged as a reaction against Western academic realism. Artists like **Abanindranath Tagore** drew heavily from Indian **mythology**, reviving and celebrating themes from the Mahabharata, Ramayana and the Puranas. Kalighat painting is believed to have originated in the **Kalighat temple** in Kolkata in the 19th century. This painting mainly depicts Hindu gods and goddesses and characters from traditional legends of the time. In ancient times, the painters of this art used to sing and narrate the depictions of various gods and goddesses to the people

through this art in the form of Pat Chitra. They used to make these paintings on cloth and palm leaves. The specialty of these paintings was that they have been depicting from India since ancient times, such as Ramayana, Mahabharata etc. In this painting, the depiction of different sections of society in Bengal from time to time, such as women, entrepreneurs, laborers, etc. is mainly found.¹⁷

Mythology work by Indian Artists in the Modern Period

Indian artists in the modern period made significant contributions to the depiction of mythology, blending traditional themes with modern styles. Some of the prominent artists and their contributions include These artists not only preserved Indian mythology through their art but also reinterpreted and revived these ancient stories, making them relevant to the cultural and social contexts of the modern period. Their works continue to inspire and influence contemporary art in India and beyond.

Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906) Although Ravi Varma was active in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, his work had a lasting influence in the 20th century. He is famous for his realistic portrayals of Hindu gods and goddesses, bringing mythological stories to life with European techniques of realism. His paintings have become ideal representations of many Hindu deities. The repeated demand for copies of his paintings led the Diwan of Travancore, Sir Madhava Rao, to suggest that Varma reproduce some of his paintings as prints. Although earlier the paintings were sent to Europe, mainly Germany, to be lithographed (a print technique that uses metal plates coated with water and oil), Ravi Varma instead decided to set up his own printing press in Maharashtra in 1894. His brother, Raja Raja Varma, who was his partner in this venture, helped him hire a German technician as well as purchase equipment from Germany for this purpose. The Ravi Varma Fine Art Lithographic Press was set up first in Ghatkopar and eventually in Lonavala. Raja Ravi Varma, who emerged with a vast collection of paintings, drawings, watercolours and oleographs – classical and Western in style and technique – created a series of paintings in which he constructed the concept of modernity in the context of a mythical past.¹⁸

Nandalal Bose (1882-1966) A leading figure of the Bengal School of Art, Bose played a key role in reviving Indian traditional art forms. He often drew inspiration from mythology, especially Hindu epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana, which instilled in him a sense of national pride. His murals in the Haripura Congress Mandap are symbolic of Indian mythology and folklore. Thus he came in contact with Acharya Abanindranath Tagore and attained the highest position among his disciples. Kalaguru Abanindranath ji made Nandalal his favourite disciple after seeing the image of 'Siddhidaata Ganesh' drawn by him for the entrance examination. It was in the art school that he created some famous paintings - Swan in Siddhartha's lap, Sati, Shiva-Sati, Karna, Bhishma-Pratigya, Nataraja. Sister Nivedita has also praised this young artist a lot.¹⁹ In 1917, he was appointed the principal of the art centre named 'Vichitra' and 'Oriental School of Arts' established by Rabindranath Tagore. Seeing his artistic talent, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore invited him to the post of the head of the art department in Shanti Niketan in 1922. Nandalal Bose made copies of the wall paintings of Ajanta, Bagh etc. caves, due to which his fame also spread.¹¹ In 1924, he went to China where

he studied Chinese art. At the same time, he was also nominated to decorate the pandal of the Congress session. Bose made his experiments by remaining bound in the Indian tradition Tulsima in terms of subject and technique. His major paintings include 'Shiva's Vimana', 'Satti', 'Durga', 'Buddha and Mesh', 'Arjuna', 'Yudhishtir's journey to heaven', 'Veena Vadini', 'Gandhiji's Dandi Yatra', 'Santhal Santhalin', 'Uma's penance of separation', 'Megha', 'Uma' etc. 'Rupavali' and 'Shilp Katha' are his art books. The works he created in the last years of his life show extraordinary sketching. In his paintings, the line drawing has become the soul of the form. Critics have said about his works that - 'His works are a moment in the history of art, not a constantly flowing stream. His works do not have the ability to face modern expression. Nandalal Bose was awarded the national honour 'Padma Vibhushan'. In 1953, he retired from the art department of Shantiniketan but he continued painting and died in 1964.²⁰

Maqbool Fida Husain (1915–2011) M.F. Husain, often called the "Picasso of India", used modernist techniques to explore Indian mythology. His series of paintings on the Mahabharata is particularly famous, where he reinterpreted the characters of the epic in a contemporary style, blending the past with the present. Husain made several series such as Ragamala, Dance, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Rajasthan, Kashmir, Banaras, Mysore, Middle East, Self-Portrait, etc. the driving force of his art. In 1955-60, Husain brought out the different forms of his artistic identity through various series. Husain popularized the image of the modern Indian artist.²¹

S.G. Thakur Singh (1899-1976) As a prominent Punjabi artist, Thakur Singh's works often depicted mythological themes with a focus on Sikhism and Indian folklore. He created a unique visual language by combining the classical and the modern that resonated with both tradition and contemporary art forms. Thakur Singh has created a very beautiful image of Harmandir Sahib. In this picture, he has created a golden palace. The colour scheme is very artistic and imaginative by filling the background and surroundings with dark and blue colours. The colour blue symbolises peace. The use of light is very attractive. The clouds are also focused on the sky. The style is excellent and the scene is mesmerising. The scene makes us feel the gentle emotions of fine art and evokes peace and love in the mind of the viewer.²² "Thakur Singh painted many paintings. He exhibited his work titled 'Ganesh Puja' at the New Burlington Gallery London and the exhibition was inaugurated by the Duchess of Turkey. The exhibition was so lively and full of power that people joined in it. Large numbers of people were attracted to it and the gaze remained on it for a long time.²³ "Manikarnika Ghat, Banaras" is in the collection of His Highness Maharaja Udaipur. It is a work done in oils. It is 20"x28" and was executed in the year 1929. The ghat has a historical background. It is believed that Shiva was carrying the dead body of Sati on his shoulder and dropped her earring here. As a result of this this temple came into existence. Thakur Singh has studied the temple from this point of view. Tarakeswar temple is also seen from one side. The reflections on the surface of the water have been remarkably observed and rendered by the artist.²³

Jamini Roy (1887-1972) Known for his simple and bold approach, Jamini Roy drew heavily from folk art traditions, especially from rural Bengal. His depictions of mythological characters like Krishna and Durga

were stylized, yet powerful, capturing the essence of Indian myths with a modernist touch. Jamini Roy depicted a mythological story through the simplification of his style which was influenced by folk art and Kalighat patta paintings. He created a two-dimensional effect by applying flat colors and drawing a strong black outline around each form. Another notable artist who comes to mind for his typical Indian themes through his work is Jamini Roy.²⁴

It is important to understand Souza's religious values and imagination properly. Many of his paintings have religious themes. But he also considers religion a prejudice. He says that I paint religious themes because art flourishes only on the strength of art. Souza's entire world is present in his drawings - you will find everything - Christ, cross, women, Hindu gods and goddesses, faces, hands, heads etc.²⁵

K.C.S. Paniker (1911-1977) Panikar, a prominent artist from South India, often incorporated mythological elements into his abstract and semi-abstract works. His paintings were often inspired by Hindu mythology and Tantric symbolism, and merged them with abstract expressionism.

Tyeb Mehta (1925–2009) A major figure in modern Indian art, Tyeb Mehta's works often explored themes of conflict and duality, incorporating mythological references such as the figure of Kali. His interpretation of these myths was highly personal, reflecting the suffering and turmoil of modern existence. Tyeb Mehta often incorporated elements of mythology and Indian cultural themes into his work. His artworks are known for their bold use of colours, dynamic compositions and intense symbolism. One of Tyeb Mehta's most iconic paintings is the one depicting the battle between the demon Mahishasura and the goddess Durga. The painting is recognized by its clear, geometric forms and use of bright, contrasting colours. Mehta's depiction of this mythological scene is both abstract and powerful, reflecting the tension and violence of the myth.

Manjit Bawa (1941–2008) Manjit Bawa was one of the few artists of his time who used Indian colours such as bright pink, red, blue, sunflower yellow, green and purple. His paintings often feature Krishna, Kali and Shiva and tragic epics. Bawa was deeply spiritual and a follower of Sufi philosophy. Bawa often painted mythological characters such as Krishna and Kali in a contemporary, almost minimalist style, with vibrant use of colour and fluid forms. His work is known for its focus on Sikhism and Indian mythology, interpreted from a modern perspective.

A Ramachandran (1935-2023) conceived the 'Yayathi' mural while building a temple for Yayati, his personal hero. Yayati may not have the potential to become a god, but Ramachandran has built a wonderful temple for him, considering him his god. Ramachandran drew inspiration from Kerala murals in terms of colours. When he made countless sketches of the men and women of the Gaudiya Lohar, a nomadic tribe of Rajasthan, he felt the living presence of the paintings of Ajanta and Bagh caves in these amazing tribals. If one recalls the decapitated figures in Ramachandran's huge canvas 'Kali Puja' (1972) or the horrific imagination of the 'Gravedigger' painting (1977), the world of 'Yayathi' appears to be that of another artist. Ramachandran's paintings in the 'pre-Yayathi' phase gave a surrealist expression to the tragic condition and plight of man in modern society.

Sobha Singh (1901-1986) was a prominent Indian painter, known for his significant contributions to Sikh and Indian art. He is particularly famous for his paintings of Sikh Gurus, Indian saints and mythological characters. His work reflects a deep connection to his culture, religion and heritage, making him one of the most respected artists in Indian history. Created popular works *Guru Nanak Dev Ji*, his most famous painting, depicts the founder of Sikhism in a peaceful and compassionate mood. The Guru is depicted as a vision that has taken over the whole universe with the mind of Bala and Mardana. Both are meditating with their eyes closed in the foreground of the painting.²⁶ In these paintings, he has displayed not only his skill but also his in-depth knowledge about the subject. These paintings are endowed with deep emotions as well as an element of spirituality. Sobha Singh had a deep faith in the philosophy of Guru Nanak. In 1973, he painted events from the life of the Gurus. Apart from this he also depicted Guru Amar Das, Guru Hargobind, the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur who taught his disciples to fight against wrong and help the needy. He carried the swords of 'min' (power) and 'piri' (spirit), this is depicted through symbolic colours. The burning lamp symbolically presents the abundance of knowledge of the Guru. A powerful and majestic depiction of Guru Gobind Singh Ji the tenth Sikh Guru. A patriotic depiction symbolising Bharat Mata, the motherland. Sobha Singh also painted various mythological characters from the Hindu epics. His works often depicted scenes from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and other Hindu scriptures. His approach to mythology was both traditional and modern, blending detailed, realistic depictions with a spiritual and supernatural quality. Through his art, Singh aimed to preserve and celebrate Sikh culture and history, especially at a time when there was growing interest in reviving Indian cultural identity. Sobha Singh worked hard to develop his technique through which he was able to express himself. "Most of his paintings have spontaneity, evocative power and freshness. Sobha Singh had made a thorough study of the Sikh School of Art and other trends of art. He adopted its realistic technique to which he added the element of spirituality and the true character of his subjects."²⁷

The paintings of **Kirpal Singh (1923-1990)** are based on the foundation of Sikh history, thus this period covers the time of Sheikh Farid to the Indo-Pak war. His journey started with Farid's portrait, the Sikh regiment on UP Hill and the victory of the Sikhs. Childhood of Guru Gobind Singh, his philosophy and thoughts, the fight with the Mughals, the struggle for survival, the lies of the enemies, the separation of the family, Guru Gobind Singh sent Sahibzada Ajit Singh to the livestock area of Chamkaur Sahib, Guruji shot arrows at the Mughals from the fort of Chamkaur Sahib, Sahibzada Jujhar Singh fought with lakhs of Mughals at Chamkaur Sahib, the imprisonment of the Sanibzadas, the martyrdom of the princes, the fourth and last battle of Anandpur, the battle of Sirsa, Zafarnama, the meetings of Dinanagar, the division of Muktsar, the restoration of broken relations, the evangelistic campaign in Malwa and Saboki Talwandi, meeting with the spouse. His notable subjects were fresh copy of Guru Granth Sahib, poetry symposium etc.

Arpana Caur is a born in Delhi India in 1954. Arpana Caur is a contemporary Indian artist known for her paintings that often depict themes of spirituality, mythology, and social issues. She has created several works inspired by Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. One of her famous paintings of Guru Nanak shows him in a meditative pose, surrounded by nature, symbolizing his connection with the divine and the universe. The painting reflects Guru Nanak's teachings of humility, simplicity, and his deep spirituality. Although she has previously focused on Indian women, capturing the essence of their day to day activities inspired by social, cultural and spiritual themes, her focus has spread to many other aspects of life including the environment, spiritualism (Nanak, Kabir, Buddha, Yogi and Yogini and Sufi series), time, life and death, the coexistence of past and present in India, communal riots, nuclear issues, peace, etc. The use of vibrant colors and fluid lines is characteristic of Arpana Caur's style, which brings a sense of life and movement to the artwork.

(Plate-1)



Craven c.Roy : 1928-29“Mohanjodaro yogi (Pashupati seal)”Indian art a Concise history,Book Publish
 ,Thames and Hudson”

(Plate-2)



Ajanta, Cave 1, Wall painting of Bodhisattva Padmapani. GUPTA, PROBABLY LATE 5th c

(Plate-3)



Jamini Roy painting “Untitled(Ram Sita,Lakshman)

(Plate-4)



Sobha Singh painting “Guru Gobind Singh-with his horse”

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