

# A SURVEY OF RAJASTHANI MINIATURE PAINTING (15<sup>TH</sup> – 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

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## ABSTRACT

*One of the greatest cultural traditions of the world is Indian painting. Art has been long mixed up with archaeology in India and has intimidated the layman because of it the sustained joy that created it and gave it richly varied forms of expression through the ages has not so far been matched by a widely shared joy in appreciation. Miniature's History of Indian Painting as a project has been designed that will take into account all the important research data and will match the most scholarly work in its references, but in a fluent and engaging narration will also melt the material, the images reflected in it being always the varied visions of beauty in the tradition. On the basis of surveyed results among the eras of 15th to 17th century by visited the different painting schools, previous related data and analyze the data in aspect of this work we focused and provide relevant information about miniature painting, some are based on Mughal and Mewar Painting. In this thesis work by surveys we provide the result of Rajasthan Miniature painting.*

## INTRODUCTION

The name miniature is derived from the Latin word minimum, red lead is a painting of ancient or medieval illuminated manuscript; the simple decoration of the early codices having been miniated or described with that pigment.

Apart from the Western and Byzantine traditions, there is another group of Asian traditions, which is generally more illustrative in nature, and from origins in manuscript book decoration also developed into single-sheet small paintings to be kept in albums, which are also called miniatures. These include Persian miniatures, and their Mughal, Ottoman and other Indian offshoots.

Moved by the charm of Nature around, man has expressed his appreciation in the works of art produced by him. This goes back to a time when he was still primitive. Art had a soft influence on him. Indian paintings are one of the forms of Indian art. Indian paintings like India are vast, different, remarkable and unique. Be it the mural paintings of Ajanta, Ellora, the Buddhist palm leaf manuscripts, the Jain texts or the Mughal, Deccan and Kangra discipline of miniature painting. Indian paintings provide an aesthetic continuum that extends from the early civilization to the present day.

Indian painting has a very long tradition and history in Indian art. The earliest Indian paintings were the rock paintings of pre-historic times, the petro glyphs as found in places like Bhimbetka some of them from before 5500 BC. India's Buddhist literature is replete with examples of texts which describe palaces of the army and the aristocratic class embellished with paintings, but the paintings of the Ajanta Caves are the most significant of the few survivals. Smaller scale painting in manuscripts was probably also practiced in this period, though the earliest survivals are from the medieval period. Mughal painting represented a fusion of the Persian miniature with older Indian traditions, and from the 17th century its style was diffused across Indian princely courts of all religions, each developing a local style. Company paintings were made for British clients under the British raj, which from the 19th century also introduced schools along Western lines, leading to modern Indian painting, which is increasingly returning to its Indian routes.

Indian paintings provide an aesthetic continuum that extends from the early civilization to the present day. From being essentially religious in purpose in the beginning, Indian painting has evolved over the years to become a fusion of various cultures and traditions. Buddhist and Jain art in the styles of Pal, Gujarat, Apbhransh-Rajasthani, Mughal and Pahari have ever kept intact the traditions of Indian painting since the 2nd century A.D. till the present day. In this series of paintings Rajasthani art, adopting the traditions of Ajanta has developed its own unique cultural perspective and history.

Rajput paintings of India were also done on the walls of palaces, inner chambers of the forts, havelis, etc. Colors used for the painting were derived from minerals, plant sources, conch shells, precious stones, gold and silver, etc.

The interaction of developing lines, meeting at various points in time and at different evolutionary levels, has made the historical reconstruction a challenging task for the author and an absorbing experience for the reader. The reviews "The author infects the reader with his own enthusiasm. Where others have been busy counting the trees, he concentrates on the beauty of the woods.

Rajasthani painting, the style of miniature painting that developed mainly in the independent Hindu states of Rajasthan in western India in the 16th–19th century. It evolved from Western Indian manuscript illustrations, though Mughal influence became evident in the later years of its development.

Rajasthani painting differs from the Mughal painting of the imperial ateliers at Delhi and the provincial courts in its bolder use of colour, an abstract and conventionalized conception of the human figure, and an ornamental treatment of landscape. In keeping with the new wave of popular devotionism within Hinduism, the subjects principally depicted are the legends of the Hindu cowherd god Krishna and his favorite companion, Radha. To a lesser extent there are illustrated scenes from the two major epics of India, the musical modes (ragamalas), and the

types of heroines (nayikas). In the 18th century, court portraits, court scenes, and hunting scenes became increasingly common. Like Mughal art, Rajasthani paintings were meant to be kept in boxes or albums and to be viewed by passing from hand to hand. The technique is similar to that of Mughal painting, though the materials are not as refined and sumptuous.

Miniature's History of Indian Painting has been designed as a project which will take into account all the relevant research data and match the most scholarly work in its references, but will melt the material in a fluent and engaging narration, the images reflected in it being always the varied visions of beauty in the tradition. The first volume dealt with mural painting from Mughal and Mewar times onwards.

In this Paper Painting is a space for the critical deployment of ambiguity, with failure and unknowing. We should also focus in using painting to defend itself, make statements or draw conclusions, and to open spaces for reflective thought, where a multiplicity of positions can be recognized, particularly as a means of resisting the imposition of a fixed narrative. In terms of an art-historical conversation, we must connect to some strategies of miniature painting because they can be used in India today as a means of addressing this country's history.

## **RELATED WORK**

In the annals of Indian history, this territory had ever belonged to brave men and dedicated women. Different tribes, their way of living, style of dress, and cultural charm are unique and colorful. In one direction are the impregnable forts of Ranthambor, Chittor and Jaisalmer, while in another are the ancient and artistic temples of Dilwara, Ranakpur, Mandore, Paranagar and Badoli.

In a third direction tall palaces and other buildings, symbols of feudal glory, exist. In still another are huts built according to folk art style and belonging to Bhil tribes, Meenas and Girasias. Public figures decked out in colourful costumes are another highlight of this state. Architecture, iconography, music, literature and paintings of this region possess significant characteristics. Rajasthan is undoubtedly a glorious land of artists.

According to Coomaraswamy, Rajasthani painting spread widely from Bikaner to the border of Gujarat and from Jodhpur to Gwalior and Ujjain. Amber, Aurachha, Udaipur, Bikaner and Ujjain had earned the reputation of being centres of artistic activities. But contrary to this view, RaikrishanDass opines:

Dr Swami had classified traditional Indian painting in two parts, the Rajput and Mughal styles, but there is no substance in identifying it as Rajput style. Even though the Rajputs were a ruling class, the cumulative effect of such a clan could not influence the style of art which had different centers in the whole country.

Basil Grey comments: "Rajputana has been a centre of diverse princely indigenous states, but the expansion of Rajasthani painting had taken place from Bundelkhand to Gujarat and states ruled by Pahari Rajputs, that is why the name Rajput painting seems plausible." Vachaspati Garrola had recognised only Rajasthani painting under the auspices of the Rajput style of painting, which seems to be more ambiguous.

According to these arguments, all paintings of the Rajasthani School could be placed under the Rajput style. The region termed Rajputana under British rule has after independence been named Rajasthan with little variation. Before the advent of the British this whole state could have been known by a single name, but no substantial evidence could be produced to uphold this view. Only Col Tod named this region Rayathan or Rajasthan. But British officers often used to call it Rajputana. Hence we treat Rajasthani painting as that style which is an eternal heritage of this state. Many connoisseurs of art who had given this style various names like Raikrishan Dass, Ram Gopal Vijayavargia, Karl Khandalawala, Dr. Moti Chandra, Kr. Sangram Singh and AnandaCoomaraswamy deserve special mention here.

Details regarding the place of birth of Rajasthani painting, and the time and history of circumstances concerning its development, are not yet known. By having compiled books pertaining to many styles of Rajasthani painting different scholars have unfolded the history of the 17th century and its aftermath, but their earlier history is riven with contradictions. Art expert Herman Goetz observes: "Hardly a year or half passes but new findings about Rajasthani painting thoroughly alter our old conceptions. Particularly, the latest knowledge about Mewar paintings has raised many question marks." Tibetan historian Tara Nath (16th century) refers to an artist named Shri Rangdhar who lived in Maru Pradesh (Marwar) in the 7th century but paintings of this period are not available. The period from the 6th century to the 12th century was a great landmark in the history of Rajasthan. From the 8th to the 10th centuries this province was termed Gurjaratra, hence with the development of art and other vocations painting might have flourished here. Among available compilations, pictorial Kalpa-Sutra authored by Bhadrabhou Swami in V.S. 1216 is the oldest available artistic text of India."

In Rajasthan the first available pictorial text (on palm leaves) is Savag- Pailikahan Sutt Chunii (Shravak Pratikraman Sutra Churni), compiled in the reign of Cubit Tej Singh at Ahar (Udaipur). Glimpses of his decorations are enshrined in intricate carvings in the temples of Nagda and Chittor." Another important text is Supasnah Chariyam (Suparshvanath Charitam) which was painted and compiled in the reign of Mokkhal at Devkulpatak (Dilwara) in V.S. 1480 (A.D. 1422-23).

In this text the influence of the Gujarat and Jain styles on Rajasthani paintings is discernible. In the continuity of this style Kalpa-Sutrii of 1426 deserves special mention. Its style of draping costumes is similar to that of the images of Vijaya Stambha of Maharana Kumbha. Around A.D.

1450 one copy of Geet-Govind and two of Bal-Gopal-Stuti had been painted in Western India. This is the first pictorial text of Lord Krishna which comprises the first seeds of preliminary Rajasthani painting.

In 1451 Basant-Vilas painted in the Apbhransh style, whose famous background script was compiled by Acharya Ratnagiri in Ahmedabad, makes special mention of the origin of Rajasthani painting. In the history of Mewar, Maharana Kumbha (1433-1468) had been highly acclaimed for having patronized poetry, music and architecture. That such a great lover of the arts remained indifferent to painting is not plausible. But in the absence of proof no concrete conclusion could be inferred. Only a glimpse of frescoes could be visualized in the ruins of the fort of Kumbhalgarh and the palace of Chittorgarh of that period.

After analyzing the abovementioned pictorial texts from the 12th century to the 15th century, it could be established that such paintings contained the seeds of the Rajasthani styles of painting. The basis of most of these paintings is Jain texts. In these paintings faces are savachashma, noses resembling that of Garuda, tall but stiff figures, highly embossed breasts, mechanical movements and poses, clouds, trees, mountains and rivers are depicted. Red and yellow colours have been used frequently.

It is difficult to tell where preliminary Rajasthani painting flourished in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but on the basis of other pictorial texts it may be stated that the amended form of Rajasthani painting of that age had developed with some distinct features. AdiPuran, decorated with 417 paintings, was a text in the Gujarati style compiled in 1540. It was a beacon in the annals of Indian painting.

Although influenced by Apbhransh style, this text, symbolic of Rajasthani painting in respect of colour drawing, physical structure, depiction of nature, dress, expression of sentiment, enjoys a prestigious position. Avadhi poetry Mrigvati (decorated with 250 paintings) and pictorial lorchange belong to this category of text. In the pictorial texts of Sanghrani-Sutra (1583) and Uttaradliyan Sutra (1591), mention was made that a revised form of Rajasthani painting had been created.

In pictorial Chorpancha-Sika and Geet-Govind texts of that age, this school of painting was appreciably represented. Regarding Rajasthani paintings, two very significant texts are available. They are based on the Bhagwad.

The first in 1598 and the other in 1610 had probably been painted somewhere in Rajasthan. It then developed the shape of Rajasthani painting with its special characteristics that had emerged. Rag-Ma1a24 pictures painted by Nasiruddin at Chavand, capital of Maharana Pratap, are the first available specimens of paintings solely created on the soil of Rajasthan. Traditions of the later period are noticed in the Mewar School.

On the basis of these facts we are submit that the birthplace of Rajasthani painting was only Rajasthan, and Medapat (Mewar) was its centre of growth. In reality the Rajasthani style was a new development of the Apbhransh style. In other words, in place of the process of decline taking place in the 9th-10th centuries, a phase of development had begun in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This revival might have taken place in Gujarat and southern Rajasthan (Mewar). Other leading scholars identify Mewar with the origin and growth of Rajasthani painting. Dr Goetz also firmly holds this opinion.

Those tracts come under the hill states of Mewar, Banswara and Eder in southern Rajasthan which were ruled by the Suryavanshi dynasty from ancient times. These rulers continued to carry the torch of Indian culture even after the disintegration of the 'Gupta Empire. Hence these rulers had absorbed the high traditions of Ajanta and Ellora up to the medieval age.

Some scholars recognise the Gujarati style as the mother of Rajasthani painting and its guiding spirit. Pramod Chandra says: "Gujarat was a principal centre where Rajasthani painting acquired its prominent status." Shri ManjuLalRanchhorDassMajumdar observes: "The Gujarat style gave birth to the Rajput style, that rare beauty visible in drawings of mountain, river, sea, fire, cloud, tree in the Rajput style originated from the Gujarat style."

In regard to the impact of Jain art, many scholars stress the view that it made a significant contribution to the growth of Hindu-Rajput art. Jain art was responsible for incorporating creeper foliage in Indian painting. Later, having surrendered the traditional heritage to the Rajput style, Jain art was lost in oblivion. DrYajdani comments: "Jain art does not represent the best art of its period." Hence it is argued that it might have surrendered its traditions to the Rajput style, but it would be a great blunder on our part to admit this view.

The origin and development of Rajasthani painting, like many other schools, did not take place in one area, nor was it cultivated by only a few artists. In all ancient towns and religious and cultural centres of Rajasthan painting blossomed and flourished. Royal courts, religious centres, rulers, feudal lords made a valuable contribution to the growth of Rajasthani painting, which reached its pinnacle of glory in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries after having enriched the styles and substyles of other erstwhile states, as a result of which its coordinated shape came into existence.

In regard to the classification of Rajasthani styles, scholars hold divergent views. Artists of different states who painted in their own styles conform to local conditions. The distinct characteristic of painting thus produced has been termed the style of that particular region. In this way, several styles came into prominence in Rajasthan, notably the Mewar, Marwar, Kishangarh, Bundi, Kota, Jaipur, and Alwar schools had achieved great ascendancy.

DrMoti Chandra mainly recognizes the Mewar, Bundi and Kishangarh schools. Scholars like Dr Goetz, Karl Khandalawala, Ram Gopal Vijayavargia, KumarSangramSingh added more styles and substyles pertaining to Marwar, Bikaner, Kota, Jaipur, Uniara and Devgarh etc. In 1969

I worked on the authenticity of Alwar style.

From the point of geographical and administrative conditions, Rajasthani painting may be studied after classifying it in four parts. In actual practice it has four principal schools in which many styles and substyles flourished and influenced each other:

- The Mewar School comprising Chavand, Udaipur, Devgarh, Nathdwara, Sawar styles and substyles.
- The Marwar School comprising Jodhpur, Bikaner, Kishangarh, Jaisalmer, Pali, Naugore, Ghanerao styles and substyles.
- The Hadoti School comprising Bundi, Kota, Jhalawar styles and substyles.
- The Dhundar School comprising Amber, Jaipur, Shekhawati, Uniara, Alwar styles and substyles.

Having placed the styles and sub styles of the whole of Rajasthan within the purview of the above schools, a detailed study of them could be undertaken. In the medieval age it was quite natural for the small and big states of Rajasthan and the neighboring states to influence each other in the domain of culture.

15<sup>th</sup> century is supposed to the time of revival of Hindi literature and Painting literature, music, Art, Architecture all saw a new dawn in this period. Paintings on Krishna legends, religion, Ragnala and Ritikala poetry etc., done during this period but it was the refined and purified form of the same, which originated in Gujarat and Mewar as a new school. This was called as Rajasthani, Rajput or Hindu School.

The beginning of the pure Rajasthani style has been fixed between the latter half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the early part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, probably around 1500. The Rajasthani style emerged from the Apbliransh style in Gujarat and was influenced by the Kashmir style in the 15th century. Some such paintings have been found in which the impact of the Mughal style is nowhere discernible.

The Mughal Empire in the 17th century continued its conquest and territorial expansion, with a dramatic increase in the numbers, resources, and responsibilities of the Mughal nobles and manşabdars. There were also attempts at tightening imperial control over the local society and economy. The critical relationship between the imperial authority and the zamindars was regularized and generally institutionalized through thousands of sanads (patents) issued by the emperor and his agents. These centralizing measures imposed increasing demands upon both the Mughal officials and the local magnates and therefore generated tensions expressed in various forms of resistance.

The century witnessed the rule of the three greatest Mughal emperors: Jahangir (ruled 1605–27), Shah Jahan (1628–58), and Aurangzeb (1658–1707). The reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan are noted for political stability, brisk economic activity, excellence in painting, and magnificent

architecture. The empire under Aurangzeb attained its greatest geographic reach; however, the period also saw the unmistakable symptoms of Mughal decline.

Political unification and the establishment of law and order over extensive areas, together with extensive foreign trade and the ostentatious lifestyles of the Mughal elites, encouraged the emergence of large centres of commerce and crafts. Lahore, Delhi, Agra, and Ahmedabad, linked by roads and waterways to other important towns and the key seaports, were among the leading cities of the world at the time. The Mughal system of taxation had expanded both the degree of monetization and commodity production, which in turn promoted a network of grain markets (mandis), bazaars, and small fortified towns (qaşbahs), supplied by a highly differentiated peasantry in the countryside.

## MINIATURE PAINTING

In this paper work we provide the result of Rajasthan Miniature painting by the survey on it. The most known and famous paintings of Rajasthan are the miniature paintings. They date back to the 11th century. Painted on handmade paper with mineral and vegetable colors, these paintings are full of colorful depictions. There are as many as seven painting styles of the miniature paintings themselves. Initially, the miniature painting styles were used for the purpose of manuscripts for text illustrations. Later on, they started depicting the life and time of the royals.

Miniature painting is indeed the hallmark of these paintings - the intricate and delicate brushwork, which lends them their unique identity, requires much patience and skill on the part of the artist making them. It is indeed difficult even to create a normal painting or portrait, so one can imagine just how much more difficult it would be to create a miniature painting. Miniature painting is an ancient art in India and there were many schools of the same, including those of the Rajputs, Deccans and the Mughals.

The sixteenth century was creatively speaking fruitful for Indian painting. The art of miniature painting came into great prominence both under the Mughals and the Muslim kings of the Deccan and Malwa and under the Hindu Rajas of Rajasthan.

The Mughals were instrumental in introducing elements of Persian tradition in contemporary painting as well as subsequent styles of Indian painting. The credit for introducing Western elements in drawing and painting in the Indian style also goes to the Muslim kingdoms.

Deccan miniatures and wall paintings, on the other hand, do not seem to have influenced Pahadi paintings. The only thing linking both schools appears to be use of sprays of pink flowers common in Deccan miniatures and in Chamba miniatures and wall paintings.

Paintings in India can be traced back to second century B.C. the pictures were done in varying media- caves, palace walls, leaves, wood, paper, cloth, etc. They are found all over the country

from the South to the North and also in neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka and Tibet. The earliest paintings in India date back to the Ajanta caves from second century B.C to 5th century A.D. The bagh caves in Madhya Pradesh and the Sigiriya in Sri Lanka date back to the 5th century A.D. The Sittavansal caves in South India are from the 7th century, followed by the Ellora caves of the 8th to 11th centuries.

Thereafter the miniature paintings started taking form in India. Initially they were done on Palm leaves and later the work was done on paper. The Eastern school of miniature paintings which dates from the 9th-12th centuries depicts the Mahayana Buddhist deities. The art is characterized by simple compositions and subdued tones. In South India, the Brahadeswar temple has depictions of paintings done during the Chola era of the 11th century.

The work from the Western school of miniature painting transitioned from palm leaf manuscripts to paper. Initially the work depicted the extended eye further away from the cheek and used very simple brick red background. Later paintings showed use of blue and gold pigments as well, or mentation used is also very elaborate in these paintings.

With the disappearance of the projecting eye, the development of the profile face, the gradual elimination of the angular features and with changes in ornamentation and drapery, the miniature paintings entered into a new phase. Thus the Rajasthani School of miniature painting started in the 16th century. This covers a large area from jaisalmer and Bikaner in the west to Kata and Bundi in south-east rajasthan and to Datia and Orchha in North Madhya Pradesh. The principal centers of this art were Udiapur, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner. A local school of Art founded by Maharaja Samant Singh was started in Kishangarh, few Kms from Ajmer. Colour – harmony was projected with a rare genius and the painters depicted nature according to their conventions. They were inspired by their immediate surroundings. For instance, the paintings from Jodhpur had a fine depiction of Mango trees, an inspiration that the artists drew from their local topography.

With the Mogul influence in miniature paintings, focus shifted to the portraits and richness of colour effects of the Mogul era. Mogul art flourished under Akbar, Shah Jahan and Jahangir. Abkar started a translation of the Indian Ramayana along with other manuscripts like the Akbar Nama. Mogul art specializes in Court and Palace scenes. Experiments on rich colour schemes and varied expressions happened during this period.

## **SURVEY**

The clear motive of the work is achieved in this paper. Firstly, collect the previous data on Miniature painting and other painting patterns and then examine the data in practical aspects. Then, detect recurrent successive patterns their interested domain and all the data or results are discussed.

There are the some following schools and their miniature analysis which we are considering in our paper work:

- **The Pala School**

The Pala painting is characterized by sinuous line and subdued tones of colour. It is a naturalistic style which resembles the ideal forms of contemporary bronze and stone sculpture, and reflects some feeling of the classical art of Ajanta. A fine example of the typical Buddhist palm-leaf manuscript illustrated in the Pala style exists in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, England.

It is a manuscript of the Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita, or the perfection of Wisdom written in eight thousand lines. It was executed at the monastery of Nalanda in the fifteenth year of the reign of the Pala King, Ramapala, in the last quarter of the eleventh century. The manuscript has illustrations of six pages and also on the insides of both wooden covers.

- **The Western Indian School**

The Western Indian style of painting prevailed in the region comprising Gujarat, Rajasthan and Malwa. An enormous number of Jain religious manuscripts were commissioned from 12th to 16th centuries by the princes, their ministers and the rich Jain merchants for earning religious merit. Many such manuscripts are available in the Jain libraries (*bhandaras*) which are found at many places in Western India.

- **The Mughal School**

The Mughal style evolved as a result of a happy synpaper of the indigenous Indian style of painting and the Safavid school of Persian painting. The Mughal style is marked by supple naturalism based on close observation of nature and fine and delicate drawing. It is of a high aesthetic merit. It is primarily aristocratic and secular. The Mughal style was further influenced by the European paintings which came in the Mughal court, and absorbed some of the Western techniques like shading and perspective.

## CONCLUSION

Miniature painting is alive and well, and a visit to Bikaner or Amber would reveal the guild tradition behind the painting. From the lowest apprentice who is in charge of applying the broadest of washes, to the grand master who applies the exquisite details such as eyelids with a brush the thickness of a human hair everyone has a hand in its creation.

Now that's a sizeable assembly line for a miniature product. It's a process based on the division of labor, combined with a philosophy of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. This, in 1913, saw the Model-T propel American culture into the Ford era.

The evolution of Indian Miniatures paintings started in the Western Himalayas, around the 17th century. These paintings were highly influenced by the mural paintings that originated during the latter half of the 18th century. During the time of the Mughals, Muslim kings of the Deccan and Malwa as well as the Hindu Rajas of Rajasthan, this art flourished to quite an extent.

Infact, the Mughals were responsible for introducing Persian tradition in the Miniature paintings of India. The credit for western influence can be ascribed to the Muslim kings

Today, tiny is too big a word to describe how small miniatures have become. Any self-respecting graphic artist can create a painting on his or her desktop and, with the right printer, reproduce many perfect 'originals' the size of a stamp or smaller, with nary an eyelash out of place.

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