



## THE INVIGORATION OF MODERN INDIAN PAINTING: SINCE COLONIAL INDIA

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**Abstract:** After the mark of the 19th century, the seeds of modern visual traditions have been observed by numerous art critics; but there is no firm opinion, which can be considered particularly as 'Modern'. The various styles of paintings have been intended during Colonial India as a rebellious development of Indian art and culture. There are several unique things that have transcended over the time and culture to stake their legitimate socio-cultural values. For quite a long time, these paintings have commanded the eye of art lover as well as onlookers. Indian artists have created brilliant artworks that have taken to the globe by storm. This research paper is an attempt for an in-depth debate about the different form of painting and its practices in its historical, cultural, developmental and technical context. The qualitative methods have been used to describe the phenomenal development of modern Indian Painting.

**Keywords:** Modern Indian Painting, Raja Ravi Varma, Avant-Garde art in India, Colonialism in Indian Art

### I. INDIAN ART: AN OVERVIEW

After the arrival of the East India Company, Indian art has been channelized through various academic institutions, as art colleges. These art colleges have contributed a lot to give Indian art a new paradigm for its development. On the contrary, their European academic module of art training has not been accepted entirely by all, but their role cannot be neglected in the improvisation of Indian paintings. Moreover, some of the critics who were writing about Indian art have criticized the colonial period for degrading artistic representations of India. Keeping in view of the objectives of the study, the researcher took note of systematic and truly longitudinal experimental studies offered by veteran artists, historians and litterateurs that fastidiously tracked changes in the field of art in India over time.

In this context, the writing of Garimella, A. (1997) cannot be avoided, who declared that historical writings and educational as well as institutional practices of the colonial era where the most cause to degrade its quality and to politicise its roots when describing the feminine art. Garimella further commented that the Indian Nationalist movement is additionally answerable for this degradation, as a result of their art was a response for such political construction and paintings are well equipped by them to construct an authentic nationalism. Thus, art has become a medium for political agencies, during which the importance of ancient art has lost its identity and therefore the new production has lost its novelty. The projection of women showcases the physical or ideal roles of a woman yet after the mark of the modern situation was totally changed. Within the domain of recent paintings, the name of Raja Ravi Varma cannot be forgotten; whose feminine imagery dominated the Indian art scenario until the contemporary spell (Kumar, 1999). He is likewise considered as the father of Indian Modern Painting; he is first individual who introduced oil on canvas his utilized technique with western technique. Additionally, he used oil colours in his paintings and well-handled colour tone where beautiful and skilled handling in his artwork with mythological theme and introducing a beautiful calendar look. Veteran artist Raja Ravi Varma had been formalizing the techniques and tools of Western paintings in the order of Indian mythological subject matter. In the context to female artists, the significant methodology has been considered through the paintings of Sher-Gill. The conflict between the subjective and therefore the objective is unmarked through these paintings. The first female artist of the Nineteenth Century's Indian art scenario is considered Sunayani Devi, who represented the folk primitive series of her paintings and contributed to the realm of women empowerment and expertise through paintings.

### II. FORMATION OF BENGAL SCHOOL

The first significant 'movement' to stir-up Indian art scene that was introduced by Abanindranath Tagore the acclaimed personality of the Bengal School of Art. The body of artwork spawned by him and consequence the illustrious artists who pursued him those are his brother Gaganendranath Tagore,

dedicated student Nandalal Bose, Surendranath Ganguly, Kshitindranath Mazumder, K. Venkattapa, Asit Kumar Haldar, Samarendranath Gupta, Benod Bihari Mookherjee, and Mukul Dey and others, had an everlasting impact on the Indian art scene. With its centres in Calcutta metropolis and Shantiniketan (Kala Bhavan), this movement exerted an enormous influence on the art schools of the sub-continent. Indian art scene activated by nationalistic fervour and therefore the hunt for an Indian identity that may be an assorted, the mission of the Bengal School of Art to revive the traditional art India among the spirit of a patriotic yet as nationalistic setup (fig. 1).



Figure 1, Abanindranath Tagore (1905), 'Bharat Mata' [Painting]. Retrieved 10 October 2020 from <https://www.swadesi.com/news/bharat-mata-abanindranath-tagore/>

### III. EMERGENCE OF AMRITA SHER-GILL

The emergence of Amrita Shergill brought a sort of modern dimension in Indian art, as she was the scholar at Gauguin School, known as Ecole de Beaux of Art, located in Paris. Of course, it is injected an auxiliary inspiration to Indian modern art. Her emerge to the then Indian art scene, it is a gift to India, the exceptional issue is that she has shown an emotional response to her rural theme. She had been formalizing the Post Impressionism art movement techniques and tools of within the order to conglomerate Indian village life in her subject matter. An elegant type of content she was created in her art it enabled to inspire the then Indian artists in their instant setting. Principally the technique is concerned, that is one thing totally different, however, as per the theme that's Indian, such purpose of reading most of the issue is understood still as common to all or any, however, her personal motivation or self-initiation overall likings to this country that is her father's birthplace given her an extra spirit that is assumed provocative and alter her to project Indian rural life in an exceedingly totally different perspective. She emerged the Indian scene as a trespasser, nevertheless, inside these few years she has coped up with the gorgeous rural Indian life and its culture, bit by bit, she was galvanized and driven to depict her themes from new views. Throughout a keen visual observation alongside a clever method of inventive portrayal, that has enabled her to be discovered that from the unbelievable primeval time.



Figure 2. Amrita Sher-Gil (1940). Haldi Grinders [Painting]. Retrieved 20 September 2020 from <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/haldi-grinders-amrita-sher-gil/4gEWMfC1UAEwuQ>

#### IV. A REVIVALISM IN COLONIAL INDIA

From a researcher's point of view whatsoever the political sentiment rising around the movement, it had been compulsory at that crisis, to revive the artistic pride of its utmost proponent did not believe in art methods or orthodoxy to any classification - traditional or external. They worried on personal trialled exploration and compassion to the urges of a living atmosphere. Each investigated and trialled with an utterly different communication sense of modality- Japanese, Persian, Chinese and, among the suit of Gaganendranath Tagore, even artistic movement front - to hunt out their relevant type of expression. And for the part they plunged into theology, myths, the idealised past, and generally in Gaganendranath even tight social contradiction in terms. Nonetheless, to reject its artists as mere gospels, and its art as watery and excessively sentimental 'idealistic naturalism' - kind of art juxtaposed by Amrita Sher Gil, one fact needs to reveal that the Bombay Progressives group the metropolis cluster - would be to lustre over their real involvement to 'modernism' in Indian art (Contemporary, 2020).

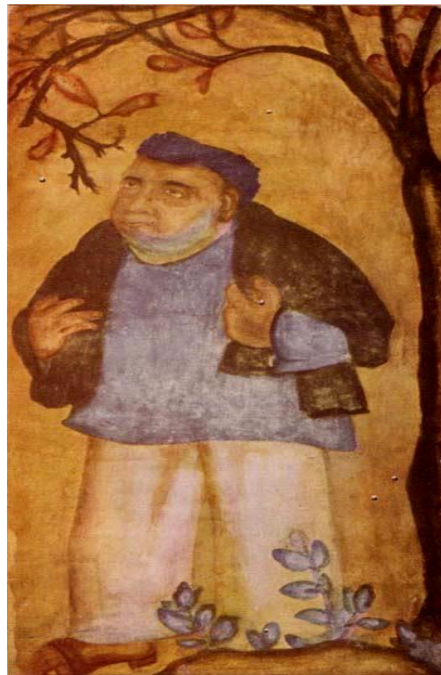


Figure 3. Binodebehari Mukherjee (19432). The Tree Lover' [Painting]. Retrieved 25 September 2020 from <http://www.contemporaryart-india.com/Artists/ArtHistory/>

## V. THE CALCUTTA GROUP

Nonetheless the foremost radical modification came later, with the formation of the Calcutta Group in 1943 artists were practicing against a background of war, famine and widespread social, political and sectarian violence - in India in the nineteen forties of the last century. Some acclaimed artists like Sunil Madhav Sen Gopal Ghosh, Paritosh Sen, Rathin Maitra, Subho Tagore, Nirode C Majumdar et al., communicated their dissent in their own distinctive voices. Here to quote Sundaram Tagore, among Indian artists the primary to reply in unison to international modernist values was the aim of Calcutta group. They tried to launch associate front for the modification in the art scene. In the year 1953 the urban Calcutta Group broke up, because of the members of this group after they began to leave one by one for Paris to practice and to be proactive in the artists make-believe dream place.

Those artists were not unified by one aesthetic, these artists wanted to flee the bounds of each 'colonial' educational art and therefore the 'nationalist' revival of the geographic area faculty. As per wants to speak their ingenuity in a very trendy idiom, they looked towards the up-to-date worldwide art scene for searching revelation (Dalmia, 2001).

## VI. INDIAN TANTRA ART: AN UNIQUE MOMENTUM

Indian Art has the prominent involvement of the visual language in the sphere of myriad Pictorial art or visual art images through its various phases in the arena of cultural practice. The history of Indian Visual Arts has a prosperous existence in contemporary art form. Since the sixth to the sixteenth centuries AD, ritual manuals identified as "Tantras" were being shaped with detailed directions on the use of mystical chants, magical charms, and sexual rites. Visual art form originated from, which is an intense practice of rituals and customs. The religious as well as spiritual practice that the prescribed flouting of taboos, the impartiality of essential thinking the tantra motif and freedom of expression found its artistic impressions with the implementation of various symbols in art like the lingam and yoni which is the confluence of *Shrishti* accumulated in sculptures and scroll painting of ancient India. Indian art and its myriad form have a fascinating history and brings to the fore a range of viewpoints, issues, debates, and methods. Indian art scenario strengthens with myriad visual artists like KCS Paniker, Biren De, J Swaminathan and Ghulam Rasool Santosh and others were inspired and influenced enormously by Indian tantra philosophy. Therefore, was born a neo-tantra art, a form that explores broadly appealing to the aesthetic and visual implementation or non-figurative abstract mode of expression, but not based on the scriptures.

## VII. RAJA RAVI VARMA: A ONE-MAN ARMY

Raja Ravi Verma is considered as the father of Indian Modern Painting; he is first individual who introduced oil on canvas his utilized technique with western technique. Additionally, he used oil colours in his paintings and well-handled colour tone where beautiful and skilled handling in his artwork with mythological theme and introducing a beautiful calendar look. Subsequently, after the feminist approach of Sher-Gill, various female artists have embraced feministic philosophies in their canvases and Indian modern artworks have been separated into two methodologies. The primary methodology had a place with the Objectification of the female by male artists, and the subsequent one had a place with a subject-oriented topic by a female artist (Bhattacharya, 1994). These methodologies are not totally dependent upon the philosophies of both the artists, yet it additionally had a place with the philosophy of its onlookers. As creation of art, every individual has the privilege to paint according to similarity, however the creation may become questionable when it belongs to somebody (the woman and her body, which is just having a place to womanhood).

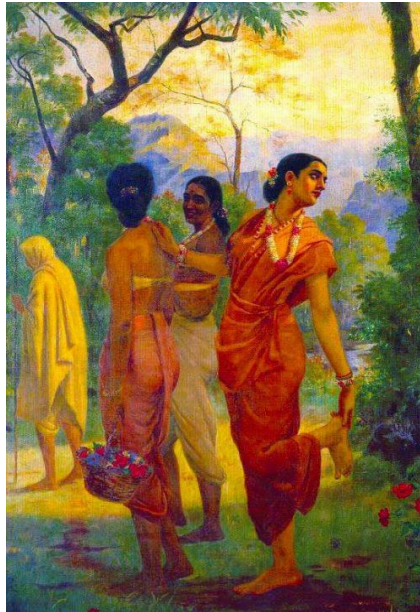


Figure 4. Raja Ravi Varma. 'Shakuntala' [Painting]. Retrieved 24 September 2020 from <https://kalantir.com/blogs/art-of-the-month/shakuntala>

#### VIII. THE BOMBAY PROGRESSIVES

In Indian art scene one can notice another progressive art trend after Bengal School and the Calcutta Group, majestically the Progressive Artists appeared with a brand-new approach; their art would notice new admirers. Tate Art Gallery Great Britain, as a part of the 2018 exhibition "All Too Human: Bacon, Freud, and a Century of Painting Life," ignored an entire space showcasing 10 of his worthy artworks. Later that year, the Asia Society in New York included many of Souza's works in "The Progressive Revolution: fashionable Art for a replacement the Democratic of Republic of India," a show dedicated to the Progressive Artists' cluster, and a stirring reminder of Souza's headlong charge into the end of the day. We were bold enough and crammed with full of fire, Souza told the times of Republic of India in 1989. Artist Souza also said we are constructing a modern Indian Art with an explosion!

The analysis is based on a critical inquiry regarding the abstract approach of eminent Indian progressive artists Francis Newton Souza. Here it is about to mention that the domain of the study is visual arts, i.e., popular Indian style of painting. Of course, the criticism and in relation of criticism with the creative person has also been explored throughout this paper. This paper aims to determine the ideology of the creative artists concerning the planning and the justification of the creative individual regarding constant design through some narrative. In up-to-date Indian painting, the cluster named PAG includes a very contributory approach in respect of current encounters. Souza is one of the forefathers of this cluster and worked with another creative individual M. F. Hussain. Typically, his work has been compared with the noted Spanish painter and sculptor Picasso.

Altogether, he is mentioned as a rebellious, at the same time a creative individual and even the artworks have a revolutionary approach among the context of a theme and application. F N Souza has written some essays shaping the crucial statement that is given by some major art critics of United Nations agency have conjointly been explored through some selected creative artworks of Souza. The study is often typically used additional for the understanding of art and criticism.

Krishen Khanna and Gaitonde among its last Progressive group members, did not last long. But some individual artists of this cluster created original and sensitive works, they were basically subtle tone handling, sharing no commitment to any social or creative ideology. Thus, they left no singular influence on the total art scene. However, like all original artists whose identities are basically fused with the culture to it, they belong, they might not sustain their 'cultural neutrality' for long. Sometimes and inevitably, the Republic of India invades their creative consciousness – sign or image, theme, quotation, and color. As India's cosmopolitan hub is Bombay, went on to contour many eminent personalities at the side of K.K. Hebbar,

Tyeb Mehta, Akbar Padamsee, Sudhir Patwardhan, Jehangir Sabavala, N.S Bendre and a great deal of recent times, Atul Dodiya and Jaideep Mehrotra.

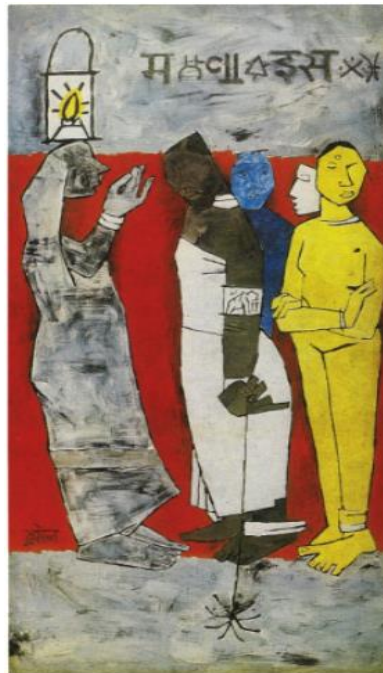


Figure 5. Maqbool Fida Husain (1956). Between the Spider and the Lamp [Painting]. Retrieved 11 September 2020 from <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2013/modern-contemporary-south-asian-art-n08975/lot.2.html>

In 1948 F. N. Souza, Ara, Bakre, Gade, M.F. Hussain and S.H. Raza, among its founders were started practicing in Bombay. But not unified by one aesthetic, these artists wanted to flee the bounds of each colonial educational art and therefore the nationalist revival of the geographical area college (Subramanyan, 1987), needing to categorise their originality during very update their idiom, they looked towards the up-to-date international art scene for experimental exposure. Souza and Raza left the country shortly afterward. However, Hussain remained behind, assimilated influences from and experimented with every Western and Indian model to eventually develop a vividly emotional epicvogue that expressed the rich diversity of post-colonial India. At the same time, Baroda Group found in 1957, it was formed under the guidance of N.S Bendre. Most eminent artists of Baroda embody, Bhupen Khakkar, Gulam M. Sheikh, switch Parimoo, Rekha Rodwittiya, Jyotsna Bhatt and Vivan Sunderam. **This dynamic group evolved from an enormous prevalence in 1950 in an Indian art scene - the initiation of the school of Fine Arts in Baroda University.**

#### IX. THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMAN CHARACTERS IN MODERN INDIAN ART

In no explicit order, here may be a list of some foremost well-famed Indian paintings of all time – recognizable pieces from the ages which will never to be forgotten. One of the foremost iconic paintings of Abanindranath Tagore (the pioneer of the Bengal School of Art) is *Bharat Mata*. He depicts a saffron clad girl, dressed sort of a *sadhvi orsannyasini*, means a saint holding a book, sheaves of paddy, a bit of white material and a garland in her four hands (Vishwanathan, 2010). Enormously important, because of its emotional and historical value, the painting became vastly well-liked among the nationalist's movement in those days, particularly in the wake of Lord Curzon's decision to bifurcate the Bengal. Mysteriously, Sister Nivedita, an art lover as well as a great admirer of the painting, needed to hold it from Kashmir to Kanyakumari to spread a nationalist fervour among the individuals of the country. One of the foremost iconic paintings of Abanindranath Tagore (the pioneer of the Bengal School of Art), *Bharat Mata* depicts a saffron clad girl, dressed sort of a *Sadhvi or Sannyasini*, means a saint holding a book, sheaves of paddy, a bit of white material and a garland in her four hands.

*Shakuntala* is an epic painting, painted by celebrated Indian painter, Raja Ravi Varma, depicts Shakuntala, a vital character of Mahabharata, deceit to get rid of a thorn from her foot, but of course searching for her husband or lover, Dushyantha, whereas her friends call her bluff. Later stage many Indian painters,

sculptors and printmakers who regularly portrayed women as a subject in exotic/political/ideal structure Raja Ravi Varma are, Abanindranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore, Jamini Roy, Nand Lal Bose, F. N. Souza, M. F. Hussein, Jatin Das, A. Ramchandran, Amrita Sher-Gill, and numerous women contributed similar mission through their works of art, for example, Anjolie Ela Menon, Arpita Singh, Gogi Saroj Pal, Bharti Kher, Nilima Sheikh, Nalini Malini, Jayasri Barman, Rekha Rodwittiya, Arunima Bose, Sheela Gowda Shilpa Gupta, Seema Kohli and some more.

## X. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Indian art never lost its Indianness and Indian artist since the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC adhered an essence of the Indian soul. Indian artists taciturnly proved an excellent, as their efforts were and beautiful their imagination, many cases they were concerned, no inclination of any new educated request, no literary or visual grant, no philosophical or recorded investigation but overall it blinks an Indian heartbeat; their purpose was restricted to just making alluring banners, and magazine art, manuscript illustration on notable regulation or enthusiastic topics, improving just on the magnificence of the structure and style. It was Swadeshi movement, which was by then a standard power in all strolls of national cultural and social life. Like in different fields, in the art field as well, Swadeshi group was pointing towards rediscovering the indigenous feeling of aesthetics, reviving the traditional imaginative hypotheses, and advancing from that point, and dismissing the outlandish. The philosophy, scholarly information, and philosophical system originated from such researchers like Shri Ananda K Coomaraswamy, Shri Aurobindo, and the great as well as genuine Hinduphilic British artist, researcher Dr. E B Havell who helped in the plant the twig of the Indian nationalism movement in art.

## XI. CONCLUSION

An initiative of any art and culture movement aims to grant strength to the spirit of a nation. The movement to induce or eliminate alien influences and to evolve a language that's the root in our own culture was a great movement. Indian art and humanities said the ultimate word from Abanindranath Tagore to Alul Dodiya and one that historians have not taken note of. It absolutely was vital because of any nice modification in a very nation's civilisation begins within the field of art and culture. The movement started in the 19th century that is still existed until the day. Artist soul continually jingoistic they admit national pride. Our concern was to evolve not solely art as a profession to create a living, however, to try and do serious analysis to evolve a visual language for Indian modern art. It had to be rooted in our culture and all the points of reference had to be ours, however, it had to use modern techniques as well. There was some worthy purpose in painting like Indian miniatures, or like Ajanta and Ellora. We, however, had already passed those stages. Country's culture gathers strength owing to its core strength lies in its root that's tribal art, folk art, and its ancient root. Because of our Indian folk and tribal art, we tend to hand of these components, and that we havethem even these days. Whilst finalising this paper the researcher can say Indian modern art, similarly as modern conception of art, culture and philosophy is on the move around our folk and tribal components, one cannot wipe it out from his heart this reality that is the actual truth.

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