

## A STUDY OF INDIAN ARTISTS IN THE VIEW OF STYLE OF ART

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### Introduction

Since its humble beginnings, art has always been a result of man's intellectual and emotional connection with the world. Its primary aim is to produce a message which will either provoke an unexplainable consciousness within the hearts of its viewers or incite wisdom among the minds of the curious or the affronted. Due to its extensive role for man, art has long been studied in a variety of ways, with some scholars adapting the vantage point of mere aesthetics while some venture into comparative analyses.

The act of relating ancient art to modern art is not as simple as considering the time both were made. There is a more specific, more diverse method in seeing how the older works measure up to the newer ones.

Basically speaking, ancient art concerns the types of art created during the ancient societies. In this case, the term "ancient" refers to the earliest recording of man's history right down to the Middle Ages. A common denominator along the works conceived during this period is the reason for their creation. Adoration, may it be of a deity, a ruler, or an event, played a part in each society's formation of artistry.

Indian art dates thousands of years ago. Since about 3000 BC, artists painted in the subcontinent. Indian Art is known to be distinct with its soul enriched explosion of colors. Westerners often consider Indian art to be erotic and flamboyant. However, Indian art is much appreciated and admired for its traditional and cultural traits. But over a period of time, contemporary Indian artists took Indian art to another level. Most of these artists portrayed what was intrinsic to them such as their philosophies, emotions, culture and religion.

Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1951) the nephew of Rabindranath Tagore, known to be the father of Indian modern art, was the first person to give a twist to Indian art. He was the one who revised Asian styles and at the same time urbanized Indian Nationalism and Pan Asianism and ultimately founded a new school of art called as the Bengal School of Art.

### F. N Souza's Blunt Style

Francis Newton Souza is very well known for his blunt and crazy style. His style mainly reflected controversial and highly personal subject matters that revolved around religion and sex. His paintings primarily consisted of still life, nudes and images of Christianity. Most of his figurative paintings

were deliberately distorted and reflected a realistic style. Francis Newton Souza was always a rebel and his views very clearly reflected in his paintings.

One of the reasons for his blunt style is the profound languor of our society, which made F.N Souza to react violently and reach out with absolute directness in his works. He believed the society we live in to be artificial, narrow -minded and deadening. A society wherein everything had to be very rational and where instinctual emotion is a taboo. He found all this too forbidding and therefore his paintings reflect an outburst of his views and ideas.

The main purpose behind his works was to shock us with a pointed aim - meaning, to bring us back to the real life from our own being and react to the happenings in our surroundings. His works clearly reflected his rebellious nature, his salacious egotism and fearless nature. At the core of his creativity and expressionism, was a belief that the society's destructive facets should not be covered up but should be confronted with and aired to the society.

Whether it is, the hypocrisy of the church, the bureaucracy of the government, the corruption of the upper classes or the oppression of sexuality especially in a country that has a Khajuraho and that invented Kama Sutra. His focus was to uncover the underbelly of our society and existence. Souza's paintings reflect our torpid Indian life. It mainly revolved around the core of modern misery and squalor. Therefore, you would repeatedly find corrective saints and prophets and pregnant biblical personages appear in his works from time to time.

F.N Souza was an expressionist and his paintings were definitely blunt. There was a pulse and impulse in most of his creative works. His style although blunt, propagated courage to be in a leveling steam-roller society.

### M. F Hussain's Bold Style

M.F Hussain was one of the Indian Contemporary artists who loved to experiment with different painting mediums. He would use oils, water color and acrylics in his works. The themes of his paintings differed greatly, but most of it drew inspiration from certain topics such as the Mahabharata, Famous Iconic figures such as Mother Teresa. His paintings prominently featured women and horses and he became famous for it, especially during the earlier period of his career.

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M.F Hussain was considered to be a master of lines and colors. Most of his works took inspiration from the Hindu temple art and Cubism. He was famous for jumbling up elephants, monkeys, horses from the Hindu mythology and Indian folk art. Also he frequently painted women in his works, as he believed they are the givers of life and love. He had a great fascination towards some leading Bollywood (Hindi Cinema) ladies, such as Madhuri Dixit, Tabu and Amrita Rao. From actresses, to Mother Teresa to Hindu Goddesses, he painted whatever he thought was relevant.

M.F Hussain's works were generally out of the box and therefore controversial. He was very straight forward and bold when it came to his paintings. His nude paintings of the Hindu Gods and Goddesses got him a lot of flak, especially from Hindu religion groups. His naked painting on Bharat Mata was reprimanded and was a reason for him to leave the country.

But yet, he was a great inspiration to some. He encompassed all spheres of his life as subjects in his paintings. His style of painting was his own and very individualistic. He gave a modern twist to his flat two dimensional paintings. He never limited himself to one particular style or genre, or to one particular medium. You could even see glimpses of calligraphy in his works. He had learnt the art of calligraphy at a very young age and had practiced this art whenever he got a chance to.

Agreeable or not, M.F Hussain is one of the most famous Indian Contemporary artists. He was well known in the international art circle as well. His enigmatic and multi-faceted painting style with the use of bold and vivid colors attracted a lot of attention from both art lovers and the media.

### **Colors and Style of Amrita Shergill**

Amrita's initial works reflected the academic style in which she was taught. But later, she started experimenting and tried representing the non-western body in her paintings. Her paintings had a lot of Gauguin's influence. Most of her paintings reflected the rural side of India. She used an abstract style along with vivid colors influenced by European modernism to depict rural India. Her paintings showed tangible proximity of the figures in her paintings and extensive use of dark tones for the background.

When Amrita Shergill returned to India in 1934, she went on a never-ending journey to study and learn the traditions of Indian Art. She got majorly influenced by the Mughal art works and the Ajanta paintings. Her journey to South India led her to paint her famous South Indian trilogy - Brides

toilette, Brahmacharis and the South Indian Villagers going to market.

Apart from the Ajanta style, Amrita was also fascinated by the Paharari, Mughal and Rajasthani styles. The miniature Mughal, Pahari and Rajasthani paintings of the medieval era were an artistic revelation for Amrita Shergill. She loved painting women of rural India and their activities. Often in her paintings, you can find the confined lives of rural Indian women with jaded eyes and gloomy faces.

Amrita's paintings showed her typical fascination for the color red and white. The color scheme she uses in her paintings is vibrant, vivid, intense and glowing. In many of her paintings, one thing was prominent - an exception use of whites. According to her, the use of white would effectively liven up a painting and would illuminate the entire canvas. The use of whites in her compositions just adds a lot of drama.

After her southern expedition, her paintings became more grounded with everyday realities. Her later paintings were not overly romanticized or characterized by majestic poses, but were more relaxed and distant. Some examples are - The Swing, Woman at Bath and Woman Resting on Charpoy (all from 1940).

### **Violent Distortions In Tyeb Mehta's Paintings**

All most all of Tyeb Mehta's works have figures distorted through some violent activity. In almost all his paintings figures are invariables that are linked by some form deformation. The figure is either the victim of some violence activity or is participating in an act of violence. However, Tyeb Mehta uses mythological metaphors as a framework for his paintings. Therefore the figures in his works are often seen elevated to a mythical realm where violence seems good, as though it was an act of ultimate sacrifice or salvation so much so, that the central protagonist in his paintings displays anguish and demands for our sympathy.

In Tyeb Mehta's paintings, there are three noticeable factors - the isolation of the figure, the violent distortions of the form and the complex use of colors, thereby, providing a visual hold and an enigmatic mesmerizing presence. The violence and the deformed figures in fact provide a better insight to Tyeb's works. It allows his viewers to understand his interpretations of our political history, the affairs of our daily life and the events that occurred post Independence. Violence, anguish and terror seem to be conveyed in each of his works.

His compositions were born out of suffocation and angst against the violence and cruelty he saw in real life. He often contemplated and suffered on his own and all this would get produced to a significant image. His compositions were never crowded and this was deliberately avoided because his aim was to arrest the viewer's attention and understand the image for what it stands. The large backgrounds of colors devoid of depth or texture only enhance the central figure. His paintings capture the feel of intensive but subterranean activity, distilled by absorption and contemplation. Action and movement are conveyed in his paintings rather than depicted.

### **Bhupen Khakhar's Painting Style**

Bhupen Khakhar is remembered as a nonconformist and an iconoclast, a man who never abided by society norms and never shunned away from expressing his views. Whether it was social sectarianism or his own homosexuality, he translated them in his paintings. Throughout his oeuvre you can see real-to-life figures that display the very real aspect of their personas. He sketched a lot and this had basically helped him keep a record of his surroundings and observations. His inclination to the life of people in general gave an authentic feel to his works. He would sketch while travelling to small village towns and pilgrims, or just while day dreaming at home or his studio. His sketches portray his vulnerabilities at its best and are done with captivating simplicity and directness.

Most of Khakhar's works are figurative in nature that primarily focused on the human body and its identity. A homosexual himself, he mainly focused on the homosexual themes in his paintings. Many of his works also showed references to several mythological themes on the basis of his learning's of the Indian Mythology over the years.

Many of his early paintings were created from poster images of Hindu Gods and deities that were collaged and painted over occasionally with graffiti. He was very much interested in degenerate forms of art and it led him to explore artistic gatherings in hybrid traditions that function in the period between classical miniatures and European illusionism. In the later years, many of his paintings showed his hidden gay desires, the deprivations faced by homosexual men and also the repressions and deprivations faced by them in our society.

His paintings often violated the thin socially recognized line between the decorous and the obscene. In fact his works have been distinguished by a rare impertinence and lack of inhibition about

himself having no formal training in the field of art. He taught himself art and therefore evolved his own mode of art style.

### **Jhangir Sabavala's Cubist Style**

Jhangir Sabavala's style was mainly Cubist, where the subject in his paintings comprised of geometric and angular patterns. This was a style that was made famous by Pablo Picasso. Jhangir Sabavala was to a great extent, influenced by cubism and impressionism because of his many years in Paris. The Cubist style had become his signature style and gave his landscapes and seascapes an ethereal and fluid quality to them. His paintings such as "The Lost Tribe", "In the World's after Light" and "Green thoughts" in shades of green are just a treat to the eyes.

Most people knew him as a westernized painter and were ignorant of the fact that Jhangir Sabavala had a very deep knowledge of the Indian Landscape. He painted the Indian trees, rocks, waterfalls and ravines many a times.

In the era, when many of his fellow painters took to what was in vogue, Jhangir Sabavala chose to create his own individualistic style influenced by impressionism and cubism. He was one of those artists who brought the Cubist style to the Indian art scene. He definitely brought in Cubism with a twist reflecting his own personal style.

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