Haunting the History and Modern Art of Paintings in India

The main aim to haunting history of painting to understand the Indian history and role of paintings in the past. Paintings are significant to express the idea and the society with fiction or reality. ‘The function of the painting is to illustrate and documents as a historical record’ (Crill, and Jariwala 12). In addition, in pre-Mughal time, the centers of power and patronage grew into sizable centers that become synonymous with ‘schools’ or styles of Indian painting. While some artists travelled between patrons within these areas, their physical remoteness from the Mughal court contributed to a stylistic individuality visible in their art – they developed their own pictorial language world. In this context, the physical import of new materials and techniques and the adoption of artistic and aesthetic attitudes register acutely
when foreign influences are incorporated into the artistic statement (Crill, and Jariwala, 11-12-13). By 1930, the article entitled: “Miniature Painting in Western India,” Norman W. Brown elucidates the methods of painting. He describes the two methods of painting in the year 1400 existed: (i) palm-leaf and (ii) paper overlapped for some years. The subjects of paintings during the palm-leaf period are Jinas (Saviors), gods, goddesses, monks, kings, queens, patrons who had the manuscripts copied, altogether a very limited range. So, too, the postures of the subjects are limited. He describes the figures, these all other show the face three-quarters with protruding eyes. And the structure of body poses are like the bodies are broad shouldered and narrow-waited, as in sculpture of India. The breasts, both male and female, are full. The attitudes of the torso are reminiscent of the bent figures of sculpture. Dress, ornamentation, and even compositions are likewise of ancient descent. There is not a single instance of portraiture; only types are depicted, the personalities represented being indicated only by written names or cognizance. So, too, during the palm-leaf period there is no case of narrative illustration; the paintings never refer to events mentioned in the accompanying text.

The Mughal Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) was an energetic, domineering, and creative political figure. As a patron of the arts, the works he commissioned attest to his involvement with artistic production and his developing respect for technical and aesthetic quality (Beach, 1). However, the Indian has an art history, which associates with the emperor of Mughal, Rajput, Britisher, and Maratha. ‘Before the time of the miniature painting s in India of the Rajput and Mughal styles which date from the late sixteenth century on, there have been found in that country two styles of miniatures. One of these flourished in Nepal and northern
Bengal with dated specimens starting in the eleventh century; the other in western India and is now known to have existed in the early twelfth century’ (Brown, 34). The Indian portrait – and indeed Indian painting as a whole – is the sophisticated product of indigenous development and foreign influence (Crill, and Jariwala, 11-12-13). Especially, the Mughal and Britisher are carried their tradition with them and it has changed or influenced on Indian society. The people have accepted their ways of religion, food, art, or way of living life.

Crill, and Jariwala quote:

It is generally agreed that a portrait is the recognizable image of a known individual, and that if the artwork represents the sitter’s face accurately then it is regarded as a true likeness – a faithful representation of that person. The painting’s accuracy is dependent on the satisfaction of the sitter or its patron and corroborated by those who knew the subject. Indeed the painting or sculpture could be used to identify an individual, as an artwork it can reflect the sitter’s character, both physical and psychological. In the context of miniature painting, which forms a large proportion of the works (Crill, and Jariwala 11-12).

In the book entitled, The Indian Portrait, 1560-1860, Crill, and Jariwala (2010) define the rise of the ‘observed’ portrait, instigated largely by European influences, enabled the Mughal artists to address realism, and in turn brought about art as a psychological entity, revealing their friability and compassion or simply how they really looked. A quiet essential example of what is generally regarded as ‘Indian’ Art is to be found at the Ajanta caves, in Maharashtra, Central India where early examples of the sophisticated portrait (or centrally
sensitive likeness) are included in serene mural century AD. At Ajanta these seem to be an equal number of paintings apparently observed from life those that are idealized, or simply drawn from imagination to portray different types of people. Here, I can be inferred that not only the way of painting but also the physical or psychological representation of the painter behind the object of painting, which we called it as ‘the art of painting.’

Madanjeet Singh is a young Indian photographer who has gained a noteworthy reputation in recent years through his skilled and sensitive studies of Indian sculpture. In the present volume, which consists of thirty-two coloured reproductions of paintings in the rock-hewn Buddhist monasteries of Ajanta, he is dealing with a medium that is hardly susceptible to sensitivity of treatment, but which does demand a great deal of discretion in the choice of material. Al- though the murals in these caves suffered much damage during the millenium leading up to their discovery in 1819, and have deteriorated even further during the nineteenth century, a great deal still remains, as is evidenced by the fact that their full publication by Ghulam Yazdani (Ajanta, Oxford, 1930-56). (Skelton, 167).

Now in giving us his "broad outline," Madanjeet Singh has been faced with the dilemma that almost every detail of the highly important early paintings in caves IX and X has been rendered indistinguishable owing to damage caused by bees and human vandals. Thus, for the most part, they are not worth photo- graphing unless for study purposes. It is undoubtedly for this reason that he has excluded these early paintings completely from his selection. Nevertheless, as Yazdani has shown, there is at least one portion of this early work which is susceptible to reproduction in colour. In view of the fact that Madanjeet Singh's plates have
to duplicate those of Yazdani anyway, it is surprising that he has not included at least the same example as Yazdani, even if he could find no other (Skelton, 168).

Wall paintings such as the mural paintings at Ajanta, on the other hand, were intended for public consumption. These were rich in symbolism that would presumably be understood by the average viewer, who would be acquainted with their meaning (Crill, and Jariwala 13). The text of the Wall Painting section is ex-cellent and is particularly welcome for its pres-entation of definite information about the Chola frescoes of Tanjore and for the first ade-quate and readily available presentation of the sixteenth-century frescoes of the Lepakshi Tem-ple near Hindupur, important links between the early wall painting tradition and later min-iature production. The temptation to reduce the number of illustrations of the renowned Ajanta paintings was too great and one misses certain key pictures that would have made the present volume even more indispensable. The omission of the fifth century "modelled" com-positions from Cave II is particularly glaring (Lee 350).

It is important to make a distinction between the portrait that is observed from life and the stylised or stereotype portrait, in both forms, the intended function is worth considering. The stylized image has allusions to the ‘ideal’ representation, and an idea of physical or moral perfection that can be symbolically conveyed by a gesture, by the types of eyes and mouth or by skin colour (Crill, and Jariwala 13).

Susan Stronge is his essay, “Portraiture at the Mughal Court” defines in the late sixteenth century, a radical innovation in Mughal court painting was recorded by the historian of the
Emporer Akbar’s reign. Abul Fazl wrote his magisterial chronicle the Akbarnama between 1589 and 1596. Its third volume entitled the Ain-l-Akbari (Akbarian Ceremonial), described various court institutions, including the tasvir khana, or ateller of figural painting (Crill, and Jariwala 23).

The curious fact that Indian artists were trained in the useless craft of Western portraiture in the second half of the 19th century is of little significance here; however, an awareness of the time at which Western techniques and styles were introduced into the Indian cultural stream is important. The influences of this period are still alive and operative in the contemporary art scene. As a reaction to this foreign and artificially imposed style, as well as an adjunct to a growing nationalism and a genuine desire to create a new Indian art, some of the artists began reaching back into India’s past for stimulation and metaphor. At the turn of the century the paintings of the Ajanta caves and the Rajput and Mughal miniatures were re-discovered and amalgamated into a chauvinistic style (Roy, 226).

The article entitled: “A Short Report on Contemporary Painting in India” written by Roy C. Craven, Jr. Contemporary painting today is moving rapidly to-ward maturity (Roy, 226).

The painter’s condition in contemporary India suggest several needs which are presently missing from the current art scene. An important contribution, which might not only tend to improve the quality of works produced but add to the development of a greater understanding of art by the general public would be the emergence of a corps of qualified art critics (Roy,
20th century art pioneers (i.e., Aban-indranath and Rabindranath Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gill, Jamini Roy, et al.) and have worked their way through various chauvinistic antecedents as well as many schools and "isms" of modern art and now stand at a promising point of germination (Roy, 226). Most fifth-year painting students are also sadly lacking in information in the history of art, especially contemporary art movements, because most schools have no classes in history or theory of art (Roy, 228).

If the art scene in Lucknow lacks something today, it was not always so. From the 15th to the 19th centuries, India was home to a vibrant and lively tradition of miniature painting that lasted until the dissolution of the Mughal dynasty. As the Mughal Empire dissolved, the break way kingdom of Oudh, centered in Lucknow, attracted many painters seeking patronage and developed its own unique style of painting. After the Mutiny of 1857, the British made little effort to preserve existing artistic traditions in India and, without court patronage, Indian fine arts went into eclipse. Since Independence, Indian art has struggled to reform itself. Attempts to bring India art into the 21st century have, until the last decade, met with limited success (Connerney, 135).

The Celebrated author V. S. Naipaul characterized the state of contemporary Indian art in his 1979 book, India: A Wounded Civilization: The Indian past can no longer provide inspiration for the Indian present. In this matter of artistic vision the West is too dominant, and too varied; and India continues imitative and insecure, as a glance at the advertisements and illustrations of only Indian magazine will show, India, without its own living traditions, has lost the ability to incorporate and adapt; what to borrows it seeks to swallow whole
The twenty-first century totally disappear the art of painting because of the new technologies like camera, mobile, computer etc. are also responsible to deduct the value of real painting. People are crazy about the photography. The real essence of photography has left with past and people move forward with the new ways of technology.

References:


