

Facilitation of Rendering in Compositions of Indian Miniature Paintings

Abstract

The interest towards miniature paintings motivates academicians to research the art of miniature paintings. The East is an enthusiastic source of miniature paintings for academicians. The proposed submission documents how miniature artists follow the simplicity of creation by avoiding the strict use of proportion and perspective, complex human & animal anatomy - their postures along with other forms, continuous light & shade and by the use of precise colors and patternization in nature drawings and all. The miniature paintings are analyzed according to their consistent formal patterns and structural elements those are generalized beyond experience of individuals. The study focuses upon the creation of miniature paintings and traces the simplicity behind its aesthetic look. Simple and consistent methodology is used, i.e. study of the paintings and deep observation. The translation of art experience into descriptive language will explore miniature paintings towards researchers and academicians.

Keywords: Facilitation of Rendering, Proportion, Perspective, Anatomy and Postures, Precise Colors, Patternization, Structural Elements, Creation of Miniature Paintings, Aesthetic Look, Observation.

Introduction

Academicians and researchers are always looking for explore their respective fields. The current movement towards a greater global awareness is an influential factor that motivates Academicians and researchers to research the world for fresh thoughts. The painting occupies eighth place in the 64 traditional Indian arts. It is termed as Aalekhya in Sanskrit¹ There are varied forms and bases in painting and miniature painting is one of them. This is a study of miniature paintings executed only on paper that explores this invaluable art as simplest and intelligible art form in front of art lovers and learners.

An Indian miniature is exceptionally assimilative. It seeks its theme in literature, religion, history, music, folk beliefs and all other disciplines, its forms in architecture, sculpture, calligraphy and entire visible world, and its stylistic elements and aesthetics in diverse art traditions indigenous and extraneous. As Rai Kishandas, the noted art historian and authority on miniature painting, writes, "The Mughal School of painting form, as it were, the spinal column of the various schools of Indian miniature art. If the Mughal School had not come into being, the pahari and Rajasthan schools would not have emerged in the forms in which we find them."²

Objective of the Study

The India has been and still is an enthusiastic source of inspiration for many artists and researchers. The proposed submission documents one such example of how miniature artist followed the bold and intelligible style in creation of miniature paintings and traces the simplicity behind its aesthetic look.

This study of miniature paintings will discuss that how artists simplified the forms without strict use of perspective and proportion and makes them impactful, how they create charm in paintings by using precised colors without or with minimum use of light and shade, how they use patternization in draperies, buildings, carpets and other ornamental artifacts and especially in nature drawings in miniature paintings.

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Review of Literature

According to the SHODHGANGA, Artists used the limited space available in miniatures, to compose as many as figures and details as possible in depicting scenes, which had narrative significance. Design, perspective and composition were all made subsequent to an ornamental sense to transform them into a particular style with a movement and features. Above all it was textiles, jewels, crowns and the constantly reduced elements of nature like mountains, clouds and most importantly the work of women and men which gave the painters to experiment in a complex stylization that paved the way for the forms, which were almost abstract and appeal to the eclectic tastes.³

According to Mario Bussagli (1969) The miniatures were generally in accordance with the techniques of large mural paintings, the roles laid in texts and rule of proportions which were regulated by a precise system, measurement in order make the image in fragments and form a kind of physiological perspective.⁴

According to the website of Exotic India art - The Pigment are first blended and laid flat on the paper. No consideration is made of tonality, instead contrasting colors are used. Tendency to represent the minutest details, principles of maximum visibility and love for ornamentation were possible only when colors are laid flat. The floors, carpets, arms and Armour, utensils etc., are depicted with profuse embellishment.⁵

Methodology

1. A study of the miniature paintings of three main schools of Indian painting namely, Mughal, Rajasthani, Pahari and trying to tracing the simplicity of creation behind it's aesthetic look.
2. A visit to Albert hall museum, Jaipur to view the collection of miniature paintings.
3. Various books on miniature paintings and catalogues by authentic sources i.e. national museum -new Delhi , Prince of Wales Museum - Mumbai were studied from libraries.
4. Around twenty five paintings from each school were analyzed and studied in relation to their compositional aspects i.e. forms, colors, perspective, proportion as well as the patternization used in paintings.
5. Both visual and text information are compiled in a journal format. The journal included significant painting photographs from various schools.

Analysis

Miniature artists makes their paintings impactful by using the minuteness of detail but with the boldness of execution in a simplified way that is observed in miniature paintings are incomparable, their paintings surpass our conception. Boldness and ease of creation used in miniature paintings are quite evident that can be understand on the basis of below mentioned points:-

Forms

All the forms whether it is human figure or animal figure or any object, nature or any other form, the complexity of the drawing is avoided. All the forms

in the painting come alive showing that there was a close study of individual subject and object, that presents each complex object in a simplified form. Miniature art seeks to simplify the forms of its figures, which at times reveals the rendered mood in a better way. In the painting "prophet in the dream of a sheikh" done in mughal period, the expressions and body language of the resting sheikh are quite evident, though the painting is done in a very simplified manner with no heed or attention paid to the details of the sheikh or his background. The artist has captured the whole scenario using minimal lines and without perspective, light and shade and all. Simplified figure drawing of the posture of sleeping sheikh is quite evident, though the artist didn't drew complex lines to show the posture made by crossing legs and hands. (See fig.1)

Trees, creepers, animals, Krishna -Gopiya and meanders in river are presented in boldest and simplified form that creating the whole mood of painting successfully. This painting also proves one characteristic of the Indian miniature that is the outline within which every figure is enclosed. This can either be thick or thin, depending on the area and the period and on the degree of prominence the artist desired to give the figure. (See fig. 6)

Flat colors are mostly used. Shading is not nearly as pronounced in Indian miniatures. A thick line is used for emphasis or to model forms, and shadowing along the counters usually sufficed to depict depth. On a human face, shading served a bit more to convey expression than to give volume. Sometimes feathering is done. Feathering is essentially layering but using the flattened tip of your brush to break up the edge of the layer so that there is no hard line between one layer and the next. By painting like this, you will get a smoother transition and require fewer layers as you can leave a bigger step between one layer and the next. At later stages, in rare pictures, obviously by exceptionally talented artists, subtle use of highlights and depth can be perceived.

Figures are generally projected against a plain, contrasting background. The drawing of cliffs, buildings and trees are placed by leaving a distinct space for the main figure. Figures are generally projected against a plain, contrasting background.

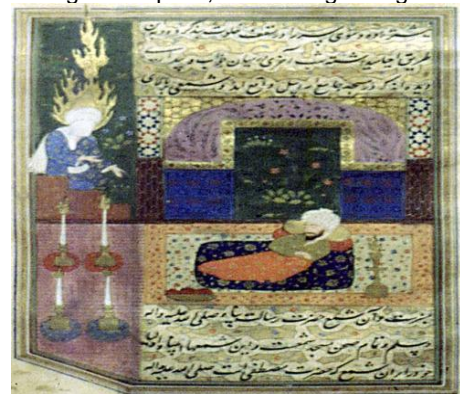


Fig. 1: The Prophet in the dream of a Sheikh, Mughal. Ca.1595. 18 x 12 c.m.⁶

Paintings have been executed in all over the country in all most the same technique. At places, the pallet is different due to personality of artist and area. Special colors have been abundantly used due to their easy availability in that particular area. In executing the paintings in northern area and central India, the same technique and colors have been used. Pigments are obtained from minerals and vegetables. Pigments those are obtained from Minerals are like white from white chalk locally known as khadia, black from kajal made by the help of sand lamp, shingraf that is obtained in form of stones, yellow ocher from ramraj, Indian red from hirmach /geru, green from terreverte, multani mitti as primer astar, blue from lajward and lapis-lazuli, light yellow from hartal varki, deep yellow from mainsalemerald, green from siloo. vegetable colors are like blue from desi neel, deep red color from palash flower, light saffron color from kesula flower, black that is obtained by keeping trifla (harad, bahera, amla) immersed in water in an iron pot, green color from the green fodder rajaka- eaten by animals, brown color from catechu kattha . Oxide or chemical colors are like white from lead and zinc, vermilion sindur by the processing of seesa, sambhar salt, suhaga shora, green color by the processing of copper powder and salt -ammonia, red color from krimidana -krimidana refers to that color which is obtained from a particular krimi or insect and is available in crystal form. And metal colors are (fine powder of gold, silver and lead) also used.⁷

Rajasthan is the great color belt of india .the same enthusiasm for color is to be found in the painting of the region. Rajput painters made as much use as possible of primary colors, which they managed to blend onto a single canvas. The outstanding rajput schools are mewar, jaipur, jodhpur, Bikaner, bundi, kotha and kishangarh. Brilliant colors such as lacquer red, saffron yellow, lapis-lazuli and cimson red are the colors of mewar. And the same, brilliant reds, yellows, ultramarines and oranges are used in marwar. Later, however, these had become considerably more toned down and subtle. Jaipur miniature is simpler and shows a lack of depth in both outline and color treatment. And Mughals are somber and subtle. Warm colors in marwar. Gold and silver were used for decoration on clothes, utensils, thrones, chairs and carpets .occasionally, the whole background was painted gold, silver being used to depict water and lotuses. The spectrum of colors range from brilliant yellow, red, blue and orange to delicate pastel shades in pahari⁸

Beside this, the order for the application of colors in all over the miniature schools was

1. Foreground and background
2. Body colors
3. Clothes and other articles
4. Gold or silver where required.

The final outline was drawn in at the very end. So a artist is not required to get bother about color selection. They use precise technique and fixed colors according to the school; they belong, which make them free from the hassles of choosing colors for their painting.

Proportion

Proportion is the relationship of two or more elements in a design and how they compare with one another. It is a Harmonious relation of parts to each other or to the whole⁹ Proportion is said to be harmonious when a correct or desirable relationship exists between the elements with respect to size, color, quantity, degree, or setting. By the use of proportion, the easiest way to depict distant object is to make them smaller. But in the painting of fig no.2, no proportion is used in the creation of peacock on the horizon. Artist had drawn that peacock quite big and sharp instant of making that small and fuzzy to make them proportionate. Although the various parts of lady figure are also not proportionate to each other but the abstract way, as artist presented that makes the mood of painting quite evident (see fig. 2). All the forms whether it is any object, an animal, a tree, flower, sky or human received attention with the depiction of minute details in these miniatures. Artist is free to use proportion. Sometimes artist used actual proportion and sometime it is imaginative or sometimes no proportion. In fact in a single art piece we have various proportions among all the elements to each other. The use of various proportions to illustrate different objects in the same composition was according to their importance or status. The king and two others riding on elephant should be small proportionately but artist had drawn them bigger according to their status and importance and reverse proportion is followed in the creation of soldier's lane at the bottom. (See fig. 3) Passion for details and story narration often obliterated or pushed back other aspects of aesthetics in miniature school of art.



Fig.2: Marwar ca.1650 a.d.¹⁰ Fig.3: Marwar School¹¹ Perspective

Perspective, in the context of vision and visual perception, is the way in which objects appear to the eye based on their spatial attributes; or their dimensions and the position of the eye relative to the objects. There are two main meanings of the term: linear perspective and aerial perspective. According to linear perspective as objects become more distant they appear smaller because their visual angle decreases.¹² And objects in the distance become obscured by our atmosphere, including humidity and particulate (dust, smoke, and pollution). This effect is called atmospheric perspective,¹³ that is rarely used in miniature paintings. In common speech, the words

perspective and viewpoint tend to be used interchangeably.

Perspective is an important part of any composition, as it gives an illusion of depth, a concept that makes the viewer that the painting goes deeper than the surface on which it has been painted. When painting a picture, the artist observes a re-representation of reality. This representation of reality the artist observes according to his or her own orientation and aesthetic conception. The orientation and aesthetic conception differs from age to age, from place to place and from person to person. But the accepted compositional formats had set ways of indicating depth.

The painters of miniature art schools through their acceptance of the set compositional forms depicted the aspect of perspective in a way that suited their decorative styles on the miniature formats. Multiple dimension perspective is used in miniature art schools. In the same composition, visual, isometric and two dimensional or flat perspectives are used. The use of several types of perspective to illustrate different objects in the same composition was queer indeed, but it was very much suitable for this type of painting and the overall effect is of a pleasant harmony. Since each object, whether, a tree, flower, a pot, architecture, animals or humans received attention with the depiction of minute details in these miniatures, the perspective of separate objects often varied.

The carpet, on which the prince or the queen sat, may be shown in flat perspective while the background may be showing some form of visual perspective. The flat perspective of the carpet allowed the artist to depict the design of the carpet in maximum detail while elementary visual perspective of the background gave some idea of recedence. Sometimes the architectural portions shown in the foreground had some sort of visual perspective. I say "some sort" as the individual portion of architecture may have a perspective effect which was not really visual perspective as it would be wrong to assume that the depiction would fall in the mathematics of visual perspective, but some recedence was attempted at times. In the bundi style nayak-nayika painting the artist has used perspective in different objects unknowingly and each with different vanishing point. In the building at the back of nayak and nayika, the right hand side wall is done using one point

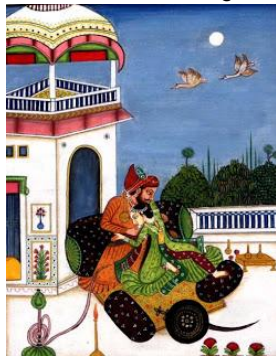


Fig. 4: Bundi Style, Nayak – Nayika ¹⁴

perspective with vanishing point somewhere, above the birds. The railing of the same wall has used one point perspective but vanishing point somewhere in front. The railing at the back has used one point perspective but vanishing point is somewhere in back, which has enhanced the depth of the railing. The carpet is painted using top view though nayak-nayika are drawn viewing from front. (See fig. 4)

It is quite clear that the artists of miniature art schools did not know the mathematics of visual perspective as we see in western art and in the art influenced by western art. These artists were more or less content with the decorative presentations of details in their paintings. This set mind form has been passed on from generation to generation in this repetitive form of art. The two dimensional or flat perspectives were widely used as it gave a large area for detail. Miniature artist developed a new command of perspective that is either less or more perspective or flat perspective that suited their decorative styles. In the multiple perspectives used in miniatures, painters tried to suggest space by depicting figures simultaneously at eye level and from above, the direct view and the hierarchical perspective, placing figures in their order of importance and giving a kind of bird's eye view of the scene.

The striving for harmony resulted in the depiction of individual parts of the body from different angles, with the legs and body in profile and the face in semi-profile and sometimes in reverse profile. Quite often the figures in the distance are not necessarily the smallest, and perspective is often used as a device for emphasizing atmosphere rather than obtaining verisimilitude.

Patternization

A pattern is a discernible regularity in the world or in a manmade design. As such, the elements of a pattern repeat in a predictable manner. Visual patterns are widespread in nature and in art. Visual patterns in nature are often chaotic, never exactly repeating, and often involve fractals. Natural patterns include spirals, meanders, waves, foams, tilings, cracks, and those created by symmetries of rotation and reflection, ¹⁵ those are clearly visible in miniature painting.

In miniature art, decorations or visual motifs are combined and repeated to form patterns in human clothing, building or surroundings that is designed to give decorous touch to the painting. Unlike Mughal miniatures, Rajput miniatures (Rajasthan and Pahari) are decorously enclosed within their frames and these frames are also stylized with symmetric or chaotic patterns that give a stunning look to any ordinary painting.

Nature drawing and painting in miniature art is also done in a patternized way. The landscape is highly stylized, and forests and groves are delineated by a circle of trees look like giant dahlias with either short, thick trunks or long, narrow ones. Other trees are oval in shape, with leaves kept firmly within their outlines, while still others are a series of fine stems with a linear depiction of leaves. Water is depicted by wavy lines that are indicated by means of white lines

drawn on a dark background, while trees and animals are often stylized. The green tone of the trees is enlivened with white, red, and yellow flower and spiked flowering plants give a most decorative look to the picture. A lotus pond is generally filled with lotuses using a fix pattern. A naïve quality is mostly discernible, especially in the use of perspective in patternization. The primary concern is design; realism did not seem to concern the artist. (See the pattern made on orange lahanga of a lady in fig.10) we find various types of pattern in the creation of miniature paintings like-

Symmetry



Snowflake sixfold Symmetry

Symmetry is widespread in living things. Animals that move usually have bilateral or mirror symmetry as this favors movement. Plants often have radial or rotational symmetry, as do many flowers, as well as animals such as sea anemones. Among non-living things, snow flakes have striking six fold symmetry. This radial or rotational symmetry is clearly visible in figure 5 (see the banana tree and bunches of leaves as dahlia flower at the back of human figures)

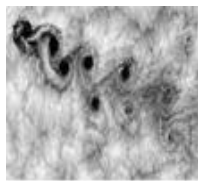
Spirals



Aloe polyphylla spiral

Spiral patterns are found in the phyllotaxis of many plants, leaves spiraling around stems, and multiple spirals found in flower heads such as the sunflower and fruit structures like the pineapple and this pattern is showing in figure 6. (see the tree on top left side near the cow in fig. 6)

Chaos, Flow, Meanders



Vortex-street

Chaos theory predicts that events and patterns in nature never exactly repeat because extremely small differences in starting conditions can lead to widely differing outcomes. Any natural patterns are shaped by this apparent randomness, including vortex streets. (See clouds in fig 7)

Waves, Dunes



Sand dune ripples

Wind waves are surface waves that create the pattern. As they pass over sand, such waves create patterns of ripples; similarly, as the wind passes over sand, it creates patterns of dunes. Such like a pattern is visible in river in figure 6. (see meanders in river).

Bubbles foam,



Foam

Foam and bubble patterns occur widely in nature, for example in radiolarians, sponge spicules, and the skeleton of silicoflagellates and this is widely used in miniature art. On the roof and on the wall at the back of king, the green section is covered with this foam texture. (See fig 8)

Spots, Stripes



Giant Pufferfish skin

Spotted or striped patterns are visible in nature, for example in the skin of mammals or the plumage of birds and such as dark pigments in the skin. Touch of this texture can be seen in fig no. 9.

Fig. 5: Disguised Akbar with Tansen Visit Swami Haridas Circa A.D. 1760, Kishangarh, Rajasthan ¹⁶

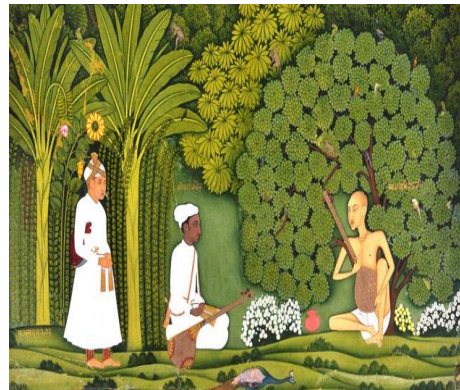
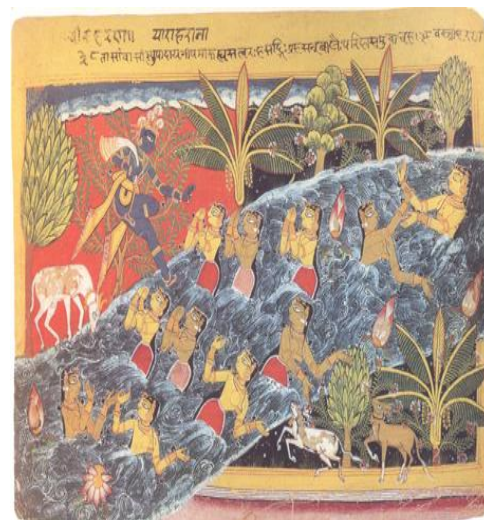


Fig. 6: the gopies beseech krishna to return their clothing delhi -agra area, ca.1560-65, 19.4x 25.7 cm ¹⁷



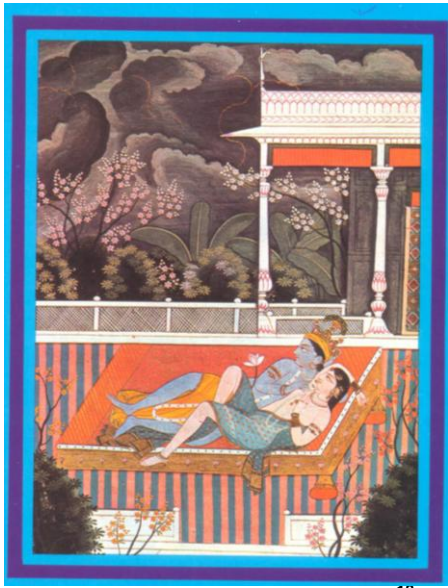


Fig. 7: kangra style, Pahari School¹⁸



Fig. 8 : Mughal school¹⁹



Fig. 9: the city and hill fortress of ranthambhor Jaipur style, early 19th century²⁰

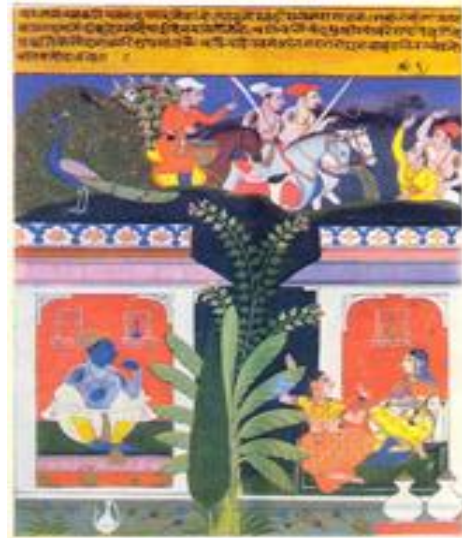


Fig. 10 : Mewar 1628 a.d.²¹

Findings

Artist creative skill and bent of mind play the key role in how he manipulates his thoughts and visualize his image of mind and discovers thereby his stylistic distinction, aesthetic merit and level of maturity. Like science, there can be no definite standard which could be uniformly found at all centers' of miniature paintings. In almost all the areas, the local specialities leave their mark on style and creation both. Every one executes his work in different way. In spite of these variations, a stage comes where all appear to look alike. And that is simplification in presentation and creation of miniature art.

Artists used various forms in paintings in simplified way. They use precise technique and fixed colors according to the school; they belong, which make them free from the hassles of choosing colors for their painting.

Most of the miniature artists focused their attention on depicting details and beauty. They were much attentive to the intricacies of the designs of jewels and drapes, and clothes or ornamental buildings; sometimes forgetting the crucial factor of realism that they considered less important. However the rich designs and ornaments all have been given a splendid treatment by the artists. in fact landscapes and nature drawings are also done in a decorous way but in a patternised style .once a pattern of a leaf, a tree, a flower or any motif of drape is decided, then they have to imply them mechanically only without constraints of compositional formats.

Conclusion

Facilitation of Rendering in Indian Miniature Paintings by avoiding the strict use of proportion and perspective, complex human & animal anatomy - their postures along with other forms, continuous light & shade and by the use of precise colors and patternization and stylization, creates a aesthetically sound miniature painting and it has been handed down from generation to generation helping to preserve those original compositions through the repetitive process. I would say that miniature schools

of art created pieces of art that have their own place in the cultural history of mankind.

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