

Pichwai Art – Introduction, Origin, Theme, Colour and Painting Process, Purpose

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ABSTRACT

The indigenous art and culture of India are recognized worldwide . One such Art is the captivating art of Nathdwara Rajasthan, called Pichwai. Nathdwara is a holy town in the Udaipur district of the Indian state of Rajasthan. The Shri Nathji temple is of course a great repository of art produced throughout the centuries by Nathdwara's artist groups. The town of Nathdwara, with its economy developed around the temple has flourished, more importantly, Nathdwara has become world famous for its tradition of pigment painted wall hangings known as pichwai's. The Nathdwara artists were renowned for the excellence and stylishness of their mural paintings. Although Nathdwara is best known today for the production of pichwai's, but the talent and adaptability of its artisans have led them to master whatever medium or style their patrons demanded, the Nathdwara artists found patroning and farther and farther a field.

Keywords- *Origin , Theme , colour and painting process, purpose*

I. INTRODUCTION

India's ancient Hindu religion, whose adherents comprise 83% of its population, accepts a supreme being of many forms and nature. Acting under direction of the supreme whole, a multitude of Gods and Goddesses in personified form are entrusted with universal administrative functions. Rajasthan is known for its historical hills, forts and palaces. The Rajasthani pilgrimage town of Nathdwara is well known for its Pichwai's (large religious paintings on cloth). Conventionally there are three kinds of Rajasthani paintings phad, pichwai and miniatures. Miniature are done specially on paper and phad and pichwai's are done on cloth. As it is 400 years old art its origin is in holy town of Nathdwara near Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Pichwai is a traditional Indian art which intricate paintings dedicated to lord Krishna, its names is originated from Sanskrit work "pich" means behind or at the the back and "wai" means hanging and are typically hung behind the idol of the deity of local shrines. Pichwai is recognized internationally, and Shrinath ji (Nathdwara) has devotees from across the globe and these beautiful pichwai's attracts the eyes of the devotees instantly.

Traditional pichwai's were expansive and they were supposed to hung behind the idols of the deity in temples only but now it is not restricted to the temples only now devotees can hung the painting in their homes also, as it was the

traditional art of India the traditional pichwai's were bigger in size but nowadays its size has also reduced. In a typical Hindu home one will invariably find a place rescued for worship. Through such worship the devotee becomes inextricably bound to the deities. The Vedic literature Hindusim's sacred scriptures contains epic histories.

II.ORIGIN

Udaipur, capital of the former kingdom of Mewar (now part of Rajasthan). Dating from the latter half of the seventeenth century, the Nathdwara tradition is characterized by intricate paintings and colourful wall hangings known as Pichwai's. They are made by members of the Pushti Marg sect, founded by Shri Vallabhacharya in the 16th Century. In 1669 the priest of Goverdhan hill temple shifted the Krishna deity to Udaipur to save the idol from the fear of destroying by Aurangzeb. The maharaja of Udaipur decided to erect a magnificent temple in the very place. The deity became famous as Shri Nathji, and in 1671 the area was named Nathdwara, the gate for Shri Nathji.

III.THEME

They draw inspiration from the Bhagwath Purana of often lord Krishna is depicted as a seven year old child, a form of Shri Nathji these textiles could be in the form of paintings, embroideries or even European machine made lace work. Popular themes include Lord Krishna as Shrinathji, (Fig-1 Rajasthan India Priests worshipping Krishna as Shri Nathji) the Ras Leela of Krishna and the Gopis, (Fig-2 Krishna and the dancing gopis) Radha – Krishna , cows (Fig-3 Rajasthan Festival of cattles) and lotus blossoms. Other popular themes include depiction of festivals such as Diwali, Holi, Janmashtami, Gopashtami, Nand Mahotsav, Sharad Purnima, Annakoot or Govardhan Puja.

IV. COLOUR AND PAINTING PROCESS

Pichwai painting were done in bright colours, at that time, readymade colours were not available artists had to prepare their own pigments from natural materials. The new apprentices were taught to make the colours – the first step in picture painting. Nathdwara pigments sources and the colours they produced are – Lapis Lazuli as aasmani , they produced red ochre from Geru, Dark red from Lal from Crimson or Scarlet Kusumba flower, Sendur – Orange Gulabi - pink, Rav sena –haldighati soil, Pilo and Gangoli (golden yellow) from dried cow urine, Hinglu (vemillion) from sulphied or mercury, Kesari- Saffron, Lilo- Bottle green, Neel Indigo, Safeda-white from zinc, white stone or lime paste, Sayahi –Black made of lamp black, Hadmacha-Reddish Brown (natural stone was powdered), Jangali gehro-Greenish Grey, Khansi (jamuni)- Plum (mixture of blue and yellow), Sava Pankhi – Parrot Green, Selu- Emerald green, Zangal- copper acetate or verdigris. The making of a traditional Pichwai consumes a couple of weeks that can even stretch to months. Originally Pichwai was painted on the handspun starched cotton fabric. The artisans would then sketch the art on that starched cloth. Then the decorative and beautiful images were created. The images were then ready to be painted with completely organic and natural colors, paints and even natural brushes. These colors were obtained from coals indigo, gold, silver saffron, zinc, and other natural sources, in brilliant colors or woven with hand

blocks. The bright and intense colors like yellow, green, black, red dominate the Pichwai. The ornate part would get the pure Gold as color. The borders are enhanced with crystals and other decorative elements. Shreenathji's image is given special features like a big nose, large eyes, and fat belly. The distinct features and expressions of the deity's face radiate the pleasant and divine feelings. The work of Pichwai artists is intricate, detailed and visually stunning. Artists use tools such as brushes made from goat tail hair, coconut shells to hold colours, charcoal made from tamarind twigs and more. Shades of red, gold and stone make up the Pichwai colour palette. Creating an authentic piece of Pichwai art takes several months and the immense skill of an artist who paints the smallest details with precision.

V. PURPOSE

The motif behind these paintings were to narrate the tales of the life of lord Krishna to illiterate people to aware them with god tales. The art of pichwai is particularly associated with Shri Nathji. serving as a backdrop lining the entire rear walls of the temple, these wall hangings are carefully painted to portray the pastimes of Lord Krishna. Different pichwai's are displayed for each festival (Fig-1 Rajasthan Festival of cattles) and then carefully repainted and preserved until the next occasion. This task is performed by a subcaste of adi gaur Brahmins known as chiteras who earn their livelihood by painting pichwai's and portraits of Shri Nathji. Traditional pichwai's were supposed to hung behind the idol of the deity in temples only but now it is not restricted to the temples only now devotees can hang the painting in their homes also. What we know of their physical characteristics also comes from the vedic accounts based on these descriptions, artists through the ages have given form and context to deities. Lord Krishna, also bluish in colour, carries a flute regional and cultural directions are also reflected. The purpose of these pichwai other than artistic, is to narrate the tales of deity and the ultimate purpose of the art is to create emotions in the observer or devotees. They are meant to generate bhakti ras in the viewers.



Fig-1 Rajasthan India Priests worshipping Krishna as Shri Nathji

For mountain of food festival



Fig-2 Krishna and the dancing gopis



Fig-2 Rajasthan Festival of cattles

VI . FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

India's heritage plays an important role in every aspect of Indian's and so as in art. Nathdwara after the town was established as the main pilgrimage site for the Vaishnav sect known as the main pilgrimage latter part of the 17th century. They work in a wide variety of different fields and media, including building construction, cut glass inlay (on walls), mural painting, wood and silver work, jewellery design and portraiture in addition to the ritual art for which they are best known . Their community preserves patronage patterns informative methods which were use and modes of workshop practice that were established over a period of several centuries. Although these traditions are rapidly being demolished in post – independence India, they linger on in Nathdwara. For this reason the town provides an ideal location for a researcher interested in the experiments of art in pre – modern India. In 17th century this painting style had lost its prominence but now again has gained the velocity and is sustaining renaissance with united efforts of various artists and foundations, who aim to revive and revitalize this rare craft. To make pichwai prominent for today, the artist has contemporized the art form without compromising its traditional touch. The traditional pichwai was very expansive

as they were huge in size and was only hung behind the deity, but as times goes by the size of the painting starting reducing, and the colours are also not organic, now artists are using synthetic colours and the paper is used as an alternative instead of cotton fabric. A Pichwai now belongs everywhere, now they are not restricted to the temples only but because of their beauty and brilliance they are now hung on house walls also, hence the artists of pichwai painting making it in smaller proportions. Pichwai is a sheer example of aesthetic, balance and beauty. The captivating art of Nathdwara has devotees from across the globe.

VII. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the pichwai is created to depict the tales of Shri nath ji another form of Krishna holding the Goverdhan. The Pichwai Paintings are undoubtedly one amongst the oldest and authentic traditional handicrafts of India with rich art history. The Pichwai paintings are quite mesmerizing and manage to capture the attention of the observer the moment they set eyes on it. The unique colour combination, the intense detail-oriented style, and the intricate manner of painting make the Pichwai paintings one of a kind. The paintings are said to evoke positive and joyous feelings in the observers.

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