

Preserving the Artistic Heritage of Kota Bundi Miniatures: A Pathway for Community Development

Abstract:

Buddhist paintings that flourished under the patronage of the Pala dynasty's kings and were carved on palm leaf scrolls are the historical origins of the ancient Indian miniature painting tradition. The most beautiful forms of culture, miniature art, and its artisans are the subject of this research. The research explains Indian miniature art and its intricate details with special focus on Kota Bundi miniature art. This exploratory paper presents the contemporary state of painters and their perspectives. The work would be crucial to comprehend the evolution of Indian miniature subject forms across time, as well as the challenges that artists have faced both then and now, as this might assist in the preservation of the art form.

It is an attempt to examine Rajasthan's traditional, authentic miniature paintings and the efforts being made to revive them. Documenting Kota Bundi's miniature work and exhibiting its distinctive features in terms of subjects, materials, colours, tools, and exterior embellishment techniques were the main goals. An additional primary objective was to investigate the socioeconomic background of the painters who practiced this art form. The present picture of the artist and their art form was also taken into consideration.

Key Words:

Kota miniature; Kota Kalam; Miniature Painters; Preservation; traditional art.

1. Introduction:

The essence of human existence lies in culture, acting as a compass to navigate the complexities of life, offering a framework for understanding the structure of human societies (Kuryazova, 2023). When it is possible to learn what culture (history, present, future) means, it may be possible to find out what meaning life can have for human beings. In this sense civilizations are special forms of cultural organizations. Societies are social forms enabling people to live together (Herbert Arlt, 2009).

Paintings serve as conduits for expressing ideas and emotions, employing a visual language with aesthetic qualities in a two-dimensional space (Kuryazova, 2023). A combination of reality, fiction and symbolism can be seen in the miniatures of the countries mentioned. Its images are solemn, full of joy and charm of life.

The origins of miniature art can be traced back to ancient times and have evolved significantly over time. The term "miniature" comes from the word "minium," a red lead used in early miniature paintings (The True Size of Miniature, 2023). Initially, the term related to the techniques used rather than the size of the art. Miniature painting is connected to book arts, where it helped to convey the story and meaning of the written word (Miniature Painting, 2007). Before the 10th century AD, the representation of the ancient tradition of Indian painting is often seen in the form of frescoes. Most of these frescoes are associated with Buddhism and in a minority with Jain art. The credit goes to the Pala, Jain, Gujarat and Apabhramsha styles of painting for a period of five hundred years from the 10th century AD to the 15th century AD. But in this regard, there is so much authentic material in front of us today, on the basis of which it seems more reasonable to say that this period of five centuries has not been a sign of inferiority in any part from the point of view of creation of painting. If we take the field of literature itself, then in the works of Sanskrit and Prakrit languages, poetry, drama, fiction, etc. such discussions were started regarding painting, which can be easily inferred by reading that scholars, kings and people. In general, there was a wide publicity of painting. 'Samarangansutradhar' of Raja Bhoja (1005-1054 AD) and 'Manasollas' (12th century) of Someshwar Bhupati are two such encyclopedic works of this era, in which, apart from many other subjects, the rules and regulations of painting have been highlighted in detail. By reading these symptoms, it is easily known that the prosperity of the painting of that time had awakened deep interest in painting in the contemporary society and also that hundreds of years before that faith in the usefulness of painting had started in India.

1.1 Manuscript Illumination: Miniature art is closely linked to illuminated manuscripts, which featured delicate paintings in religious texts (Russell, 2023). These manuscripts used tempera or watercolor on parchment and were often decorated with gold and silver leaf (Kuryazova, 2023). In India, the art of miniature painting originated from Buddhist manuscript illustrations during the Pala

period in Nepal and Eastern India around the 8th to 11th centuries (Ghosh, 2018). Jain manuscripts in Gujarat and Rajasthan from the 11th century also indicate the practice of such illustrations (Ghosh, 2018).

1.2. Development and Evolution: Over time, miniature painting evolved, revealing more than just its territory, including spiritualism, cosmological vision, and traditions (Agrawal & Ukande, 2022). The Pala dynasty is considered a pioneer of miniature painting in India, with the art form reaching its peak during the Mughal rule. Various Rajasthani schools of painting, including Kishangarh, Bundi, Jaipur, Mewar, and Marwar, further carried forward the tradition of miniature paintings.

By the 16th century, the term "miniature" was aligned with small size and reduced scale (Siegrist, 2010). Giorgio Vasari, a Renaissance art historian, mentioned Don Giulio Clovio around 1550 as exceptional for painting small things (Siegrist, 2010).

One of the most beautiful forms of culture, miniature art, and its artisans are the subject of this research. The origins of this art form and its development across time are examined by the researcher. The research begins with miniature art and its intricate details with special focus on Rajasthani miniature art. This paper also presents the contemporary state of painters and their perspectives. This work would be crucial to comprehend the evolution of Indian miniature subject forms across time, as well as the challenges that artists have faced both then and now, as this might assist in the preservation of the art form.

This study was an attempt to examine Rajasthan's traditional, authentic miniature paintings and the efforts being made to revive them. Documenting Kota's miniature work and exhibiting its distinctive features in terms of subjects, materials, colors, tools, and exterior embellishment techniques were the main goals. An additional primary objective was to investigate the socioeconomic background of the painters who practiced this art form. The present picture of the artist and their art form was also taken into consideration.

2. Research Methodology:

The data collection done in this research uses primary and secondary sources. For primary data collection, various techniques were used, including semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews and questionnaires. As for the interview process, interviews were conducted to obtain as much information as possible from key informants such as traditional painters, officials from government departments, and youth involved in the artform, either as artisans or business owners. Interviews are an important technique for collecting qualitative data (Yusuff, 2004). This interview allows the researcher to obtain information from the informant by asking questions according to a predetermined theme. The researcher obtains research information directly from the informant through the interview process.

The research involves reviewing existing literature, conducting interviews with artists and officials, and analyzing data to understand the current state of the art form. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including arts-related individuals, local government officials, local artists, community development officers, and community residents in the Kota Bundi districts. Informal, unstructured interviews were also conducted with local identities using snowball sampling.

Additionally, the use of snowball sampling for informal interviews could introduce bias, as the sample is limited to individuals connected to the initial contacts.

3. Aspects of Rajasthani Miniature Painting illustrations

From the jungle-covered hills of Kota in the southeast to the sand deserts of Jaisalmer and Marwar in the northwest, Rajasthan is a place of immense physical diversity. Palaces, fortresses, hunting lodges, pleasure pavilions, and artificial lakes were erected in unprecedented numbers on this location. These features provide the modern visitor with an exciting glimpse of the past while also providing a perspective that cannot be ignored, unlike the primitive earth rural areas that have embraced them for centuries.

Each province was ruled by a certain Rajput dynasty through dynastic influence. While at first only ruling chiefs patronized painting, by the eighteenth century anyone with land and a title felt it obligatory to employ painters. This produced a bewildering number of styles and sub-styles which do not necessarily follow political or family divisions. The purpose of this study is to investigate one group of closely related schools, centered on the states of Kota; and the works for which there is conclusive proof of attribution will be extracted and arranged in a relative order using dated paintings.

In addition to functioning as visual storytelling for Religious Tales, miniature paintings often use graphic note patterns to visualise the abstract beauty of Ragas. These paintings often portray Hindu deities and significant mythical events. Additionally, a lot of these pieces of art provide insights into the Royal Lifestyle by highlighting the bravery, accomplishments, and leisure activities of kings and queens. In addition to these particular topics, the tales shown in miniature paintings frequently serve as

Cultural Narratives, offering important insights on the historical settings and dominant societal ideals of their respective times.

Through the use of strong colours and fine lines, these patterns convey cultural and spiritual concepts in well to showcasing the painters' creative skills.

While these areas' paintings appear alike at first glance, they can be divided according to any number of aspects. These characteristics include bright colours, and a multitude of subjects; depictions of trees in landscapes, and the shape of the eye. Specifically the eyes in the Kishangarh, Jodhpur and Bikaner styles are "khajan" (circular) eyes; the eyes in the Jaipur style are "meen" (fish shaped); while eyes in Udaipur and Nathdwara styles are "mriga" (deer-shaped). In addition, these styles differ also in how they represent clouds. For instance, in Bikaner clouds have bands around them; in Nathdwara clouds are painted black; in Udaipur you see dense, blue clouds; in Jaipur, the clouds are blue and so on.

These and other examples allow one to distinguish between these styles. Thus, the beauty of these miniatures cannot be defined with just a few words or definitions. What is needed today is the encouragement and recognition of the artists working in these styles to ensure the preservation of these miniature paintings.

4. Historical evidences of Kota Bundi style of Miniature art

The Kota-Bundi miniature paintings, which come from the Rajasthani states of Bundi and Kota, are closely related in style. Originally a variation of the Bundi style, Kota painting gradually evolved into its own unique traits. The paintings make extensive use of the area's natural physical characteristics, such as mountains, rivers, flora and fauna (2024). The Bundi style is distinctive in its fusion of Deccani and Mughal art components (The Art of Bundi Miniature Paintings, 2021).

4.1 Conservation of Kota style of paintings and its techniques

4.1.1 Historical Context of Kota Painting

Kota was initially a part of the Bundi kingdom. In 1631, it was recognized as a separate independent state under Rao Madho Singh. Early Kota paintings (from around the 1660s during the reign of Jagat Singh) were quite similar to those of Bundi, as Kota artists initially drew inspiration from the Bundi repertoire.

Distinct Style Evolution: Over time, particularly during the reign of Rao Jagat Singh and later Maharao Bhim Singh I, Kota began to develop its own distinct style, especially in the depiction of animals and hunting scenes.

The period of Umed Singh I (1770-1819) is considered the zenith of Kota painting. Maharao Umed Singh I was deeply passionate about hunting, and this enthusiasm is vividly reflected in the art of the time. The focus on outdoor action, particularly *shikar*, became a hallmark of the Kota school. In the 19th century, under rulers like Ram Singh II, Kota painting saw a revival, with a broader range of subjects including worship, court scenes, and festivals.

3.1.2 Techniques of Kota Painting

Dynamic line work: The lively line work of Kota kalaam emphasizing the Kota style's hallmark strength and clarity.

Drawing and Coloring: Like other Rajput schools, Kota paintings were typically created using opaque watercolors on *waslis* (layered handmade paper). The process involved preliminary sketches, firming up the drawing with a brush, and then applying pigments layer by layer, often burnished to add luster.

- **Emphasis on Shading:** Kota painting is known for its marked shading, particularly the distinctive double-lid eye.
- **Depiction of Nature:** A notable aspect is the detailed and often realistic portrayal of the Kota landscape, including its rugged hills, dense jungles, and diverse wildlife.
- **Animal Representation:** Kota artists excelled in depicting animals, especially in dynamic hunting scenes. They captured the power of predators like tigers and lions, as well as the more delicate features of deer. Sometimes, a unique technique of spraying pigments was used, for example, to depict splashing water in hunting scenes.

3.2 Comparison with Other Rajput Schools

- **Bundi:** As the parent school, early Kota painting shares similarities with Bundi in terms of color palettes and some thematic elements (like *Ragamala* and *Barahmasa*). However, Kota developed a greater emphasis on hunting scenes and a more naturalistic depiction of landscapes and animals compared to the often more stylized nature in Bundi paintings.
- **Mewar:** Mewar painting, one of the earliest Rajput schools, often focused on religious epics and court life with a distinctive use of bold colors and specific figural types. Kota's focus on hunting and its unique naturalism differentiate it from the more narrative-driven Mewar style.

- **Jaipur:** Jaipur painting, which flourished later, often featured large-scale portraits and a wider range of themes, sometimes showing Mughal influence in its refinement. Kota's primary focus remained on the dynamic portrayal of nature and hunting.
- **Kishangarh:** Kishangarh is famous for its highly stylized and romantic depictions, particularly of Radha and Krishna, with distinctive elongated features. This is quite different from Kota's energetic and naturalistic approach to hunting and wildlife.
- **Bikaner:** Bikaner painting shows a significant Mughal influence in its elegance and more subdued color palette. While Kota also had some interaction with Mughal styles, its core remained rooted in the depiction of its local environment and the rulers' passions.

In essence, while sharing some common ground with other Rajput schools in terms of materials and general artistic traditions, Kota painting carved a niche for itself through its dynamic and often dramatic portrayal of hunting expeditions within its unique landscape, demonstrating a keen observation of nature and animal behavior.

Kota School of Paintings displayed a distinctive non-conformity, especially in figural and architectural representations. Kota artists pioneered landscape-centric compositions, making landscape the primary subject. Wildlife and hunting is prominently reflected in the paintings. Women of the court actively participated in these hunting-themed social rituals. Calligraphic detailing, distinct shading techniques is the key of Kota style of miniature paintings. Kota painting began as a simple variant of the Bundi style. The subtle differences the few remaining early works contain, however, continually reappear and develop in other paintings to form a very distinct stylistic category which, by inscriptional and historical evidence, we can relate to Kota. The most obvious single trait is the drawing of the eye, by an inner outline in black and an outer outline in red; an early, rough attempt at naturalism which later becomes, at Kota, a mannerism.

The Mukundgarh hunt observed to be the first painting in which Kota painters have established a stylistic identity and artistic interests significantly different from those of Bundi. Kota Ragamala is brighter and more varied, but at the same time less naturalistic. A light green, popular in both states, is more frequently seen at Kota, where it is most commonly used for architecture. A further difference can be seen in the increased filling of the surface with detail. The architectural cornice is made up of smaller and more heavily shaded units, thereby increasing its ornamental function. This is common treatment in the various Ragamalas we attribute to Kota, but is generally lacking in the series associated with Bundi.

Kota style has experimental and exploratory character, that Kota first established its artistic identity, less pretentious work following traditional and well-established patterns. In comparison to other miniature painting styles, Kota painting is quite contemporary and was significantly influenced by European Miniature paintings.

The hunting scene of Mukund Garh (1696 A.D) has adopted the human figures of Bundi style. Whereas the nature has been depicted in different Kota style. High and rounded rocks, thick bushes and high trees along with hunting sights are prevalent in the rustic vision of Kota as well as in the painting of the Kota style. Also the water ponds and the elephants and Horses along with a few people covering the animals at prey are normally illustrated in the miniatures and mural paintings alike. The women hunters are also depicted here. Earlier the swords and spears were painted as the weapons which in the later course were replaced by the modern guns. Yet there is an overall oneness of composition and identity amongst the myriad forms of trees, shrubs, foliage, rock, and animal and human forms. Simplified forms and magnification of details is a special feature. Clouds are shown this "flamboyant treatment. In the Kota style of painting, the "flamboyant treatment" of clouds typically means they are depicted as dramatic, dark, swirling masses often interspersed with bright, almost decorative, flashes of golden lightning. This characteristic way of painting clouds adds a sense of dynamism and visual interest to the scenes, particularly in hunting depictions which were a popular subject in Kota paintings. Instead of simple, static clouds, they are rendered with energy and a touch of the spectacular.

There is moreover now greater emphasis on ceremonial scenes, such as that of the durbar, the processions and festival.

5. **Artistic Production and Heritage:** Miniature painting is not just a craft but a significant part of Kota's cultural identity and historical legacy, linked to the former royal patronage. The unique Kota style, with its emphasis on hunting scenes and natural details, represents a distinct artistic tradition. Contemporary artists are custodians of this heritage, often inheriting skills and styles through family lineages. Their work contributes to the continuation and potential evolution of this artistic form.

4.1 **Materials:** The artists in the Kota style of miniature painting utilized a range of natural materials to create their vibrant and detailed works.

Paper: Usually they used handmade paper for painting. They called as “wasli” and used it doubled tripled layered paper for thickness.

For colouring the painting, they utilised the different stone powder.



Figure 1: Traditional colours used for Kota miniature paintings

Blue stone is locally known as Neela tota using for blue colour and usually it mixes with red colour for more brightness.

Orange stone is locally called as hansraj hinglu. This stone is the speciality of Kota Bundi style of painting.

Black stone powder is used for sketching locally known as Roshnai.

Angar neel powder for blue colour and also used to protect the painting from bacteria and insects.

Red Ochre often known as Geru used for red colour. These stone powder are used often mixed with Gum or raisin in order to prepare little sticky colours.

Arabic Gum: It was extracted in the form of tiny crystals from acacia trees. In none of the Sanskrit treatises is it mentioned. Its usage probably gained popularity after interaction with Persia. With the exception of zinc white and gaugoli, it served as a medium for all hues. Its application for blending lamp black is mentioned by Muni Punya Vijayaji. The acacia arabica (babul) tree exudes a straw in the dry season, which might be red gum, Indian, or Arabic. The hue is occasionally pale brown.

Gold and silver metals are used for decorating, ornamentation and to add richness.

Fine brushes made from the hair of squirrels were employed to achieve the intricate details characteristic of the style.

These colours are portrayed on cloth with specific themes and styles. Kota style emphasis on war scenes with bloodshed, hunting scenes where clouds style and colour are more radiant, Rajdurbar scenes where eyes of the characters are more natural, specific fine lines depicted in the attires of the females, Hindu God and Goddess portrayed with borders that are decorated straight lines.

6. Cultural economy of Kota: The cultural economy around miniature painting has also shifted. While patronage once came from royalty and temples, today's artists navigate a marketplace of collectors, galleries, and international exhibitions. This has led to new forms of collaboration, hybridization with other art forms, and a broader public awareness. Some contemporary works retain the meticulous detailing and narrative style of the past but might depict urban life, political satire, or reinterpret mythological stories in a modern visual language.

The cultural economy of Kota encompasses all the ways in which its cultural strengths are leveraged for economic benefit, while also recognizing the cultural value and the need for its preservation. The **cultural economy** refers to how Kota's cultural assets – such as its history, architecture (like the City

Palace and Jagmandir Palace), traditional crafts (like miniature painting, as we've discussed), music, dance, and local customs – contribute to its economic well-being. The cultural economy of a region, such as Kota, Rajasthan, is fundamentally structured upon the dyadic relationship between cultural production and cultural consumption. Cultural industries, encompassing artistic creation and the provision of cultural services, generate outputs that are subsequently engaged with and utilized by consumers (Mayer V, 2018). The economic status and overall well-being of artists within this system are significantly contingent upon the efficacy of the channels facilitating the supply of their creative output to the market. A robust cultural economy, therefore, necessitates a well-functioning infrastructure that supports market access, fair valuation, and effective distribution of artistic production, thereby fostering both cultural vitality and the economic prosperity of its creators.

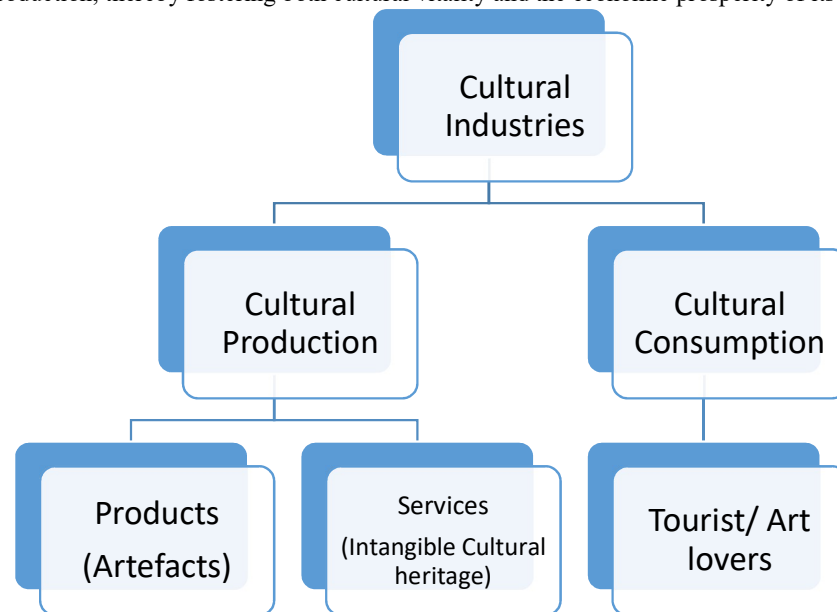


Figure 2: Elements of Cultural Economy
Source: Prepared by Author

The **channels of the cultural economy** refer to the diverse pathways and mechanisms through which cultural goods and services are distributed, promoted, and ultimately reach their consumers. These channels are critical conduits, bridging the gap between cultural production (the creation of art, heritage, and creative content) and cultural consumption (the engagement with and appreciation of these cultural offerings). Their primary purpose is to facilitate market access, enable exchange, and mediate the flow of cultural value.

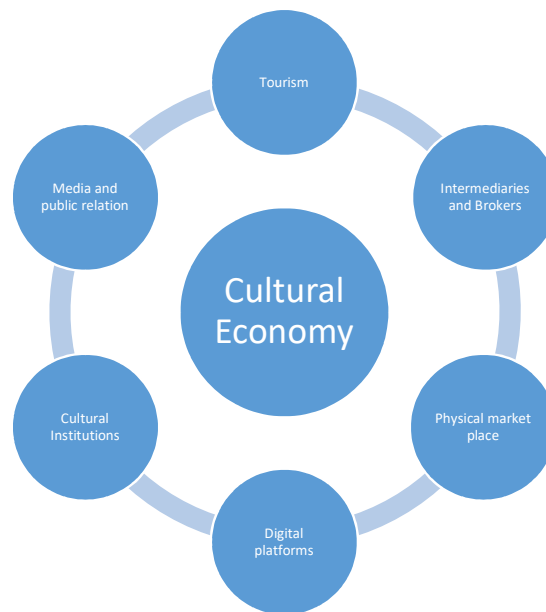


Figure 3: Channels of Cultural consumption

Source: Prepared by author

Effective and diverse channels are essential for the economic well-being of cultural producers and the overall vibrancy of a region's cultural economy. The efficacy of a cultural economy hinges upon a multifaceted network of key channels that bridge cultural production with consumption. **Physical marketplaces**, ranging from traditional art galleries and craft emporiums to local artisan studios and cultural festivals, serve as direct points of sale and engagement, allowing consumers to acquire tangible cultural goods. Complementing these are **digital platforms**, including online art marketplaces, e-commerce sites, and social media, which significantly expand artists' reach, enabling global distribution and direct interaction with a wider audience. **Cultural institutions** such as museums and heritage centers act as vital custodians and exhibitors of cultural assets, often generating revenue through admissions, gift shop sales, and educational programs. Furthermore, the **tourism infrastructure**, encompassing tour operators and hospitality providers, plays a crucial role by integrating cultural experiences into travel itineraries, thereby channeling demand to local cultural producers. **Educational and workshop programs** not only foster skill transmission and appreciation but also create direct economic opportunities for cultural practitioners. Finally, **media and promotional channels**, alongside various **intermediaries and brokers**, are instrumental in raising awareness, shaping public perception, and facilitating the commercial exchange of cultural products, collectively ensuring the flow of value and sustaining the livelihoods of those within the cultural sector.

7. Contemporary Artists in Kota:

The researcher met miniature artists Mohammed Lukman, who claims that his family roots belong to Iran, and deported his ancestor to Jaipur with Jahangir in 1600's A.D. Since then, their family traditional profession is to create miniatures for princely states. Previously, they were under the Jaipur state, later they shifted under Bundi state and then Kota state. Kota Royal state was fond of art and appreciates and encourages the cultural artist at their state. Before becoming Rajasthan state (1956), his ancestors serve and enjoy the royal patronage and created numerous masterpieces.

After shifting to Kota, they developed their own style which is different from Jaipur as well as Bundi. The pattern and theme are similar but every regional artist develops its own creativity so it reflects and develops an identity of region wise style art. During conversation with the researcher, Artist Lukman, confirmed that in present era, revival of art is very difficult. Young generation have less interest in pursuing their traditional artform as their profession. His father and he himself faced financial crisis because customers are neither knowledgeable nor interested in traditional artforms.

The miniature art took lots of time and techniques to complete where copying with minor defects overlooked by the customers and considers similar as authentic art form. It gives glitch to the artists to reach to the right customers and right remuneration of their art. The researcher visits to his workshop where few artists were preparing the miniature. All other artist were the relatives of Artist Mohammed Lukman. They were trained by Lukman ji. He himself started his painting at his early age(8-9 years).

They informed that this art took time to learn as compared to contemporary artform. There are certain techniques which have to follow with high level of concentration. Many young artists visit his workshop but due to the technicality and time consuming art, they skip and follow their own style of miniature which sometimes become harmful.

Authentic art is difficult to identify and bulk of similar but copied painting with many errors are circulating. These copied forms are cheap and less time consuming so it can be produce in high number. Those who understand art or miniature can easily identify the authentic one.

He informed the list of Kota miniature artist

1. Moh. Vaseem
2. Usmaan Sahab
3. Chobdar
4. Gopal Soni

Kota painting played a crucial role in the development of both Rajput and Indian miniature painting. kotah painting made its astonishing contribution not only to the Rajput style , but for that matter, also to Indian miniature painting as well. It excels in scenes depicting outdoor action especially those of the shikhar and episodes connected with it, showing a delicate sensitivity which is unique and distinguished from all other school. One can clearly see the great relan and joidvivre that the ruler had for this sport. There is rhythm and movement mingled with glamour, as the artist skilfully fills the painting with poetic enchantment. Simplified forms and magnification of details are a special feature. Yet there is an overall oneness of composition and identity amongst the myriad forms of trees, shrubs, foliage, rock, and animal and human forms.

The technique of applying subtle gradations of colour evidences a high degree of technical skill, while innovations such as the deliberate filling in of the painted surface with details betokens in ventiveness. Later, kotah painting adopted a more standard type of pictorial exposition as seen in the Baramasa series. Some miniatures from a Dhola Maru series dated A.D. 1762 painted at Nandgaon.(the name given to kotah by Maharao Bhim Singh I) now in the collection of the Rajasthan Research Institute, Udaipur, and an extensive Bhagavata series with paintings of very small format in the Government Museum, kotah dated A.D. 1759 painted at Nandgaon, and also an illustrated M.S of Madhumalti dated A.D.1772 in the Heras Institute Bombay give us an indication for the dating of both kotah and Bundi miniatures of the so called “white period” as belonging to (A.D. 1760-70). This nomenclature was given by the late William Archer in his book on kotah painting in the Victoria and Albet Museum, London.



Figure 4: Kota style of painting by Mohammed Lukman



Figure:5 Kota style of painting prepared by Luqman (under production)



Figure: 6 Kota style of Painting by Kota artist at traditional workshop



Figure 7: Kota miniature art



Figure 8: Miniature artist, Luqman ji explaining details about the Kota style of miniature art.

The researcher met the Kota miniature artist, Sambhu Singh Chobdar, learnt miniature art from one of the miniature artist, Satya Narayan, the Bundi style of artist, shared his experience that due to financial crisis, he attracted towards traditional art to adopt as profession but once he entered into it he has inculcate interest and learnt Kota style of painting. He also learnt the fine techniques from Kailash Soni, a miniature artist in Kota.

His son and daughter also pursue it as their profession. They learnt this form of art from their father.



Figure 9: Kota style of miniature preparing at home by siblings of Kota artist



Figure 10: Kota style of Miniature painting



Figure: 11 Bundi style of miniature art

Above two painting clearly depicted the two different facial features that discriminate the Kota Bundi style. This artist was very positive towards the future of miniature art. He was also not particular about the peculiarities and not bounded himself with specific techniques. He created art piece in less time. Then the researcher also met with young miniature artist, Dildaar Qureshi, nephew of Lukman, devoted his career in revival of this art form. In this process, he arranged workshops for Kota art lovers at Kota art gallery, another workshop in University of Kota for students. He discussed researcher that he believed that this art form can be a good career option. He is trying to create his team to conserve and restore the Kota style of art.



Figure 12: Art lovers of Kota are trying to learn the traditional art



Figure 13: Passionately teaching the techniques by Kota kalaam by miniature artist Dildaar Quereshi



Figure 14: Researcher is taking perspective of elderly women, learning Kota style of painting



Figure 15: Art is a passion, sometime profession and sometimes just happiness

8. Contemporary Adaptations and Revival:

There is a noticeable **revival** of interest in miniature art among contemporary artists. They are not only preserving traditional techniques but also experimenting with new themes, mediums, and scales. In order to address a variety of contemporary social, political, and personal themes within the complex miniature format, contemporary miniature artists are actively reviving this ancient art form by reinterpreting traditional storylines through contemporary perspectives. By adopting this creative method, they are able to go beyond conventional historic recreation and give widely recognised aesthetic and thematic conventions—like royal culture or legendary tales—deeply relevant contemporary meaning. These creators thus turn the small frame into a powerful platform for complex reflection on current social issues, political processes, sustainability issues, or intensely personal life events. This reinterpretation ensures miniature painting's continuous validity by expanding its conceptual reach and showcasing its timeless flexibility and capacity to reflect and engage with the complexity of the current era.

In a nutshell, Kota's current miniature artists are descendants of a strong cultural legacy who must contend with present socioeconomic issues. Although they have a strong foundation in the traditional Kota Kalam style, they are finding ways to maintain their practice through adaptation, family commitment, and additional assistance, ensuring that this complex art form will endure for the generations to come.

The Kota style paintings received patronage from royalty, illustrating royal life and their affinity for hunting. This support enabled artists to flourish, contributing to the evolution and prominence of the Kota style. The Kota style emerged in the late 17th century, influenced by the Mughal style that local artists adapted into their unique expression, initially focusing on religious and mythological themes. The 18th century marked the golden period of the Kota style, supported by the kings of Kota who promoted the art form. Paintings during this era depicted royal court scenes, hunts, battles, and regal life prominently. By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, British colonial rule diminished patronage for Indian princely states, impacting the popularity of local artistic styles. Economic and social shifts further contributed to the decline of the Kota style, resulting in financial challenges for artists.

9. Conclusion

The Kota style of painting, particularly its depictions of hunting expeditions, serves as a visual embodiment of Rajput valour and martial prowess. Characterized by its dynamic line work, a vibrant palette, and meticulous craftsmanship, this school represents a significant epoch within the trajectory of Indian art history, encapsulating a rich cultural and historical legacy that continues to hold considerable cultural value despite the passage of time and associated challenges. Furthermore, the discourse extends to the potential of public art as a catalyst for augmenting social capital and facilitating community development through the active engagement of citizens and the conservation and valorization of local and indigenous cultural expressions. Consequently, the imperative of preserving and promoting

indigenous art forms is underscored for their crucial role in fostering cultural, economic, and social advancement.

A multifaceted strategy is necessary for the effective preservation of cultural heritage, especially traditional paintings and artwork. Strong government regulations that actively assist artists and advance cultural heritage are part of this, guaranteeing the survival of these priceless customs. Artists and cultural organisations can prosper in today's marketplaces by incorporating innovative commercial practices including online sales and strategic branding, which can offer them viable economic models. Importantly, preserving skills entails concerted efforts to transmit customary skills and understanding to younger people via learning opportunities and mentoring initiatives. Technically speaking, using the right materials and following accepted conservation practices are essential to halting degradation. Lastly, to guarantee the longevity of paintings, it is crucial to safeguard their surfaces using the proper handling methods, protection of the environment, and protective layers.

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