Ragamala Paintings in the Modern Era: Revival Strategies for a Fading Classical Art form

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Abstract

There are two goals for this paper. One, to highlight a significant but little-known piece of art from Rangmala painting collections. The second is to make assumptions and comprehend the artistic activity of Rangmala in the modern era which has faded and show light. This is a very important time in Kutch history because the Jadejas of Kutch founded and fostered an academic institution to promote study and art that was unique in Western India. Also contributing to the distinctive style is the interpolation of works created as a result of the connoisseurs and students visiting this institute. One such interpolation that is the subject of serious analysis is the Kutch Ragamala Manuscript. I deviate from convention in this project to create a contemporary animation visual aesthetic. The project demonstrates how contemporary technologies may provide a recognizable yet consistent visual aesthetic while maintaining the visual language and richness of traditional painting approaches.

Keywords: Cultures, Colors, Classical Art, Indian history, Modern era.

Introduction

The heritage of Indian art reflects the history of the people. Indian history is well portrayed in sculptures and paintings. In the historical chronology of Indian painting, miniature painting is the second phase. The first stage displays a number of frescoes in temples and royal palaces, as well as Pitalkhora, Bagh, Ajahta, Ellora, Badami, Sittanavasal, Bhim Baithka, Brhadesvara Kanheri, Thanjavur (the city's major town), and Jogimara. Drawings of the manuscript are first done on a thin, horizontal script made of palm

leaves in the second phase. These drawings are less than three inches broad and at least one foot long. It was necessary to paint the palm leaf as tiny, minuscule images. It was made up of wooden volumes, Buddhist and Hindu texts, and Jain manuscripts. Kalpasutia and Kalkacarya Katha's paintings are among them. Western India has produced a large number of paintings. It was known as the Apabhramsa school and dates back five centuries. The most remarkable features are the corner faces in three-quarter profiles, the basic red-dominated patterns that echo the previous portraits, the projecting eyebrows, the eyes that emerge past the facial lines, and other accessories. However, the latter use blue and gold in a lavish manner. Sarangadhara, a painter from Western India, created a novel painting technique is cited by renowned Tibetan historian Taranath. Other pieces of evidence reveal this Srngadhara's name. We might infer that Siladitya, a Maitraka king of Valabhi in Saurashtra, patronized him despite the fact that he was born in Marwar. The fact that this Maitraka King reigned from 590 to 615 AD offers a crucial hint to the assertion made by Tibetan historian Taranath. Palm leaves adorn the wooden book covers that portray the Buddha's subject matter, early life, and the Eastern Indian school known as the Pala school (9th to 12th century A.D.). Over the course of three centuries, they were created at monastic institutions in Bengal and Bihar, most notably Nalanda. Nepalese and Tibetan paintings in North India, where they are being made today, exhibit the influence of the Pala tradition, which also spread to South-East Asia, especially Burma, Siam, and Java. The profound dedication that surfaced in the latter period of Mahayana Buddhism was reflected in simple compositions with sensual lines and subdued tones.

In India's cultural heritage, Ragamala paintings serve as a bridge connecting poetry, music and visual art. Ancient Indian texts and temple murals are where the tradition of miniature painting began. In order to convey different musical ragas in a distinctive manner, the emergence of the Ragamala genre blends lyrical, courtly, and spiritual themes. This book explores the history of Ragamala paintings, their eventual decline, and the ongoing efforts to revive this significant artistic heritage.

The holistic conception of the cosmos, which was seen as a cosmic symphony with a right balance of harmony among all the elements in nature, was firmly held in medieval Europe. It may be claimed that the blending of poetry, art, and music was most successful during the Romantic era, which was heavily influenced by Germany. Renowned German intellectuals such as Gauguin and van Gogh also "thought that painting promised to become more like music" (3). In general, the reciprocal impact of painting and music on one another has been examined in every artistic movement, from expressionism to orphism. However, the accidental approach to this painting and music interphase is predicated on specific criteria such as the mathematical computation needed for both kinds of art. To achieve the harmony of the tone, it became common practice to use the musicality of color or the rhythmic nature of the hues to give a painting life: For the spirit that values equality and

proportion, the sounds of instruments and the accents of voices with full numbers and less discord are more pleasing. This also applies to the picture, whose exquisite proportions and symmetry make up its whole attractiveness.

However, the whole concept of art is different in India than it is in the West. In the Rajasthani Ragamala Chitra Parampara, Sharma made reference to Bharata's Natya Shastra, a widely esteemed traditional treatise in India that illustrates the harmony between various performing arts and the meaninglessness of their separation. The primary cause of this dependency is the Hindus' belief in the holiness of words, which gave rise to the rich oral heritage of literature:

The romantic feeling has its roots in poetry, which was an oral art form in its earliest stages and gave rise to several other art forms. For songs were made when poetry was read with a certain meter and tune. The raga gained a specific emotional element, or khayal, when that poem was transformed into a bandish. When ragas were transformed into ragamala paintings, the lyrical imagination of a raga served as the inspiration. Additionally, natya, or dance theater, was performed when a song was sung on stage with gestures and movement. When that oral poetry was given a physical form, it evolved into sculpture, or shilpa. And then that exact verse served as inspiration.

It is necessary to comprehend the Sanskrit phrase "Sangeet" in order to appreciate the cultural significance of Indian art. With music at its core, this term encompasses all of the traditional artistic mediums, including dance, music, and poetry. Chanting the mantras throughout the Vedic era seems to be the origin of music in India. It is said that in addition to the four Vedas, there is a fifth Veda known as the Gandharva Veda, which offers a thorough explanation of songs and music. A compilation of mantras that were recited as songs during any kind of devotion, ceremony, or sacrifice is known as the Sama Veda. Since the Vedas were passed down orally for many years, it is a historical reality that certain changes may have been made to accommodate the demands of the times. Sadhna, which means achieving something greater than the ordinary, was the foundation of all art in ancient India. According to their characteristics, ragas or traditional melodic modes were thought to have the capacity to perform miracles. It is stated that the ragas Deepak and Meghmallar have the ability to create fire, heat, and rain, respectively.

Several scholars have studied the evolution of Indian miniature paintings, particularly those from the Deccan, Rajput, and Mughal schools of art. Some noteworthy contributions include: The effect of the Mughals on miniature painting is discussed by Beach (1978). Provides details on Indian textiles and their representation in miniatures (Goswamy, 1993). The geographic variation in Marwar painting styles is examined by Kennedy (1933). A detailed analysis of Ragamala painting tradition can be found in Ebeling (1973). Although a great deal of historical research has been done on the modernization and digital

adaptation of Ragamala paintings, there is still a gap in current studies.

The study employs a qualitative research methodology that blends historical analysis with contemporary case studies to carefully investigate the development and contemporary adaptation of Ragamala paintings. The method is made up of several key components. To give the study a historical foundation, archival research is first conducted to look at Ragamala manuscripts that are housed in various museum collections. Second, a visual analysis is carried out to look at the compositional techniques, color schemes, and stylistic elements that are present in Ragamala paintings in order to gain a better understanding of their artistic evolution. Insightful information regarding the perceptions of this art form, the challenges it faces, and potential strategies for its revival in the modern era can also be found through interviews with contemporary artists and cultural historians. Lastly, a comparative study examines both traditional and contemporary artistic practices and technological developments are altering the visual and thematic presentation of this traditional art form. This multifaceted method links historical study with contemporary creative discourse and ensures a thorough analysis of Ragamala paintings.

By providing an in-depth analysis of Ragamala paintings, this study closes the gap between the past and present, which is crucial for art historians, environmentalists, and digital artists. It first and foremost documents the historical and cultural aspects of these paintings, tracking their evolution and significance in relation to the greater body of Indian art. Future generations will be able to access and preserve the knowledge of Ragamala paintings as a result. The study also looks at how modern technology and traditional art forms interact. The advancements in digital technology have made it possible to preserve. Interpret, and exhibit Ragamala paintings and other classical art forms in new ways. By exploring these modern uses, the research contributes to discussions on the importance of traditional art in the digital era. Lastly, the researchmakeswell-considered recommendations for preserving and promoting Ragamala artworks in contemporary settings. Examples of these recommendations include the establishment of digital archives, the integration of Ragamala themes into digital animation and mixed media, and collaborations between modern digital designers and traditional artists. By offering viable revival strategies, this study ensures that Ragamala paintings will remain a timeless and evolving art form that captivates audiences worldwide.

Since both music and painting come from the deepest recesses of the heart and soul, they have been used as worship and pleasure media since ancient times. Scholars, poets, painters, and builders from both India and the West have tried to visualize music. While Matanga (ancient musicologist) in his book Brihaddeshi Matanga presented Raga, the Indian melodic modes with Meditative Poetry Ragadhyānas, the western scholar Growth related architecture with music saying “Architecture is merely frozen music”. Over the years, 'Ragamala' paintings developed as a unique genre of tiny Indian paintings that

portrayed Indian poetry and music with imagery in an effort to convey the spirit and shape of the raga in a way that still enthralls its audience.

The term "raga" refers to a musical mode that can elicit sentiments of joy or mood. The 'Ragamala' signifies the 'Garland of Raga' and refers to the collection of small paintings that are iconographic depictions of a collection of ragas. The main themes of these paintings are love, devotion, passion, happiness, and the celebration of life. They especially show the ragas of Hindustani (north Indian) classical music.

Dr. Mahendra Kumar Sharma has examined the Ragamala painting's key elements and determined how it relates to classical music. He contends in his work Rajasthani Ragamala Chitra Parampara that there are two forms to Indian classical music: devtamay (divine) and naadmay (sound with a certain frequency. Sound may generate energy, which means it can have some noticeable consequences, according to the principle of kinetic energy. It is stated that if the holy word Om is spoken correctly, with the ideal tone and frequency, it gains sufficient strength. The meaning of the Self and the world is included in the mere word. There could be some validity to the idea that music is heavenly.

When we trace the iconographic journey of Ragamala back to Brihaddeshi (classical Sanskrit texts on Indian classical music attributed to Matang Muni 6th-8th century), we discover that it started with Matang's creation of "Ragadhyana." The term "Dhyana" is derived from the verb "dhyai," which means to meditate upon, imagine, or call to the mind. Ragadhyanas were, therefore, brief Sanskrit melodies or lyrical poems intended to inspire reflection on the gods and goddesses connected to a specific Raga. These poems contained sacred passages that outlined the characteristics and qualities of a specific deity. The 13th-century work Sangita Ratnakar by Sharandev, which once more links each raga to a god, contains them after Brihaddeshi. Originally, Sudhakalasa (1324) used illustrations to describe musical modes in Saṅgitopaniṣat-saroddhara. Additionally, the drawings in the Kalpasutra book (1475) from the Jayasiṃhasurji collection of Indore depict certain ragas that correlate to the Saṅgitopaniṣat-saroddhara's dhyanas. According to the gender language used in the ancient raga/bhaṣa characterizations, this was the first known set of raga mala paintings, totaling forty-two paintings that described 'Ragas'. Thus, an in-depth comprehension of the Ragamala tradition's history may be gained by carefully studying the dhyana literature.

The two primary traditions of Indian classical music, Hindustani (North Indian) and Carnatic (South Indian), both have a lengthy history and a rich development. The Dhrupad genre is historically significant in Hindustani music as it is the oldest form of classical singing currently in use. This research review looks at the literature on Ragmalhar in the Dhrupad tradition, concentrating on the Malhar family of ragas.

The malhar is a key melodic pattern in Hindustani classical music that is associated with the rainy season. Sharngadeva's 13th-century Sangita Ratnakara and other historical works

describe early forms of Malhar, although they do not precisely categorize it as a seasonal raga. Over time, the notion of Malhar as a monsoon raga evolved, particularly in the medieval period. Both Damodara's (17th century) Sangita Darpana and Faqirullah's (17th century) Raga Darpan made reference to it.

The genre of Dhrupad sprang from the Prabandha Gayan tradition under the patronage of Emperor Akbar and flourished throughout the Mughal dynasty. Books like O.P. Mishra's Ragas in Indian Music (1990) and Bhatkhande's Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati (20th century) offer the most in-depth analyses of Dhrupad. The syntax and beauty of Dhrupad's ragas are examined in these publications. Scholars such as Ashok Da. Ranade (2000s) and R.C. Mehta (1980s) have emphasized the importance of Malhar in the Dhrupad system. In his research on the Dagar and Darbhanga traditions, Mehta highlighted the significance of the Malhar family—Miyan, Megh, and Gaud Malhar—in the repertoire of the Dhrupad singers.

Miyan Malhar is renowned for its grandeur and powerful evocativeness, and it is believed to have been penned by Tansen. Tansen's musical accomplishments, especially the use of Malhar to summon rain, are acknowledged in Abul Fazl's recordings and other Mughal court writings.

Megh Malhar: This variant is more straightforward and focuses more on the pentatonic structure than Megh raga. It was spoken in Rag Tattva Viveka by V.N. Bhatkhande. In the Kramik Pustak Malika, Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande analyzes Gaud Malhar, a fusion of Gaud and Malhar.

Malhar's Dhrupad compositions usually contain extended alap periods that establish the raga's essence before moving into a structured composition (Bandish or Pada). The meditative approach to raga development is addressed in the Dagarvani tradition, as investigated by Bonnie Wade (1979) in Khyal: Creativity within North Indian Classical Music. Wade claims that the Dhrupad version of Malhar has a strong emphasis on progressive growth, intricate microtonal shifts (Shruti), and controlled rhythmic elaboration.

Recent Studies on Dhrupad and Ragmalhar. The importance of Malhar in Dhrupad singing is covered in greater detail in recent works such as Rajan Parrikar's Swaranubhuti: Raga Aesthetics (2015) and Ritwik Sanyal's Dhrupad: Tradition and Performance (2016). While Parrikar focuses on the structural differences between Malhar ragas, Sanyal highlights how Dhrupad musicians continue to advance the genre through improvisational techniques.

The Ragamala album at the British Museum is made up of 34 exquisitely illustrated folios. William Watson (1815), an official of the East India Company who purchased the album in 1774 near Delhi, added descriptive notes in English to the images. One is for the morning raga Bhairavi Ragini, which is also frequently played at the end of a concert (Fig. 2). It shows a

woman worshiping a lingam, a symbolic image of the Hindu deity Shiva, accompanied by an attendant. Vasanta Ragini is depicted on another folio and can be performed at any time in the spring. In the forests of Vrindavan, where spring is always present, Krishna is shown joyfully dancing and performing music with the local gopi. A Rajput official under Mughal emperor Jahangir (1605–27) at the time, Raja Rai Singh (1541–1612) of Bikaner, Rajasthan, may have commissioned the album. Given their close relationship, the paintings' Mughal style and meticulous attention to detail can be explained by comparing them to a portrait painted at about the same period by Mansur (1624), one of Jahangir's favorite artists. It features the rudra veena, an instrument that is used throughout the Ragamali album, being played by famous artist Misri Singh (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Vasanta Ragini India, Rajasthan, Bikaner, c. 1610 Gouache painting on paper, 20.7 x 14.7 cm The British Museum (1973,0917,0.52)

Fig. 2 Bhairavi Ragini India, Rajasthan, Bikaner, c. 1610 Gouache painting on paper, 20.7 x 14.7 cm The British Museum (1973,0917,0.3)

Throughout the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, the cultural and political milieu of India was predominantly influenced by a multitude of rival powers. In the northwestern region of India, Rajput Hindu sovereigns administered territories within Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills. Ultimately, the Rajputs fell under the dominion of a Turkic dynasty that emerged from Central Asia in 1526, leading to the establishment of the Mughal Empire (1526–1857). In the southern expanse, the Deccan Plateau was under the governance of autonomous Islamic sultanates from the 1490s until 1680s. The intricate interplay among these three entities fostered the emergence of distinguished traditions in courtly painting, music, and poetry, deeply rooted in both Hindu and Islamic mystical concepts concerning the soul's quest for the divine.

Once more, the study of ancient scriptures and other classical and religious works demonstrates that personification is not just a property of heavenly characters. There is one male raga and six female raginis in each of the six categories

into which the ragas have been divided. Dr. Sharma's results indicate that the raga's gender has been determined based on taal, or beat. Ragas are identified as male if the taal is powerful enough and they have a tendency to rise to a higher pitch. It goes without saying that the structure's adherence to stereotypes reflects human society as a whole.

The ragamala painting's temporality is depicted through the symbols and is connected to the ragas' performance. These monoscenic paintings use the characters' expressions to convey the rasa, or spirit, of the ragas. The rasa in the Bhairava raga is shanta, or calm, whereas the rasa in the Meghmallar is linked to shringar. The portrayal of music is flawless in the second picture because to Krishna's love and devotion for Radha and his joyous dancing position in the former.Nothing can be more significant than the ragamala painting to demonstrate that visual art can tell a story in a more fertile way, imbibing the cultural codes and the mythic past of a region because it has established itself as a better medium of communication since the beginning of human civilization when language was not formed and acquired. Over time, the symbols may be revised and refashioned in accordance with the artist's imagination, and occasionally the patrons may have given instructions. We must approach each ragamala artwork with an open mind and an educated eye. When ragamala paintings were first seen, when they were given as presents, and when they were handed from hand to hand over long evenings following feasts and music, the idealized archetypes and divinities instantly evoked whole stories. (Glynn, et al. 36)

It wouldn't be out of place to state that the Ragamala painting is the shining example of the rich history of ancient Indian art. This specific trend not only demonstrates how much people enjoy classical music, but it also keeps it from being extinct. Thus, the claim that art tells stories, enlivens, and maintains culture is once more supported.

Raga is not an exception if understanding the word's etymology may make its meaning more compelling. The word comes from the Sanskrit word ranj, which has the ability to color the mind with its sweetness and tranquility. "A raga is that kind of sound composition which is adorned with musical notes, in some peculiarly stationary or ascending or descending or moving values, which have the effect of coloring the hearts of men," according to Matang Muni's definition of raga in his book Brihaddeshi (14). It is stated (though not proven) that the scientific link between sound and light is consumed by the rigidity of time required to conduct a raga.. It is important to paraphrase the following from a thesis on inflibnet that is published in the third chapter, "Indian Classical Music": Every intonation and vocal infection used in the Vedic chants and music was done so with extreme caution since they may have positive or negative consequences. More music and rhythm were found in the Vedas and Upanishads, which were also considered as a source of inspiration and healing. In order to get blessings of wisdom, power, and brilliance, people utilized these Vedic hymns to appease the presiding deities of various Vedic sacrifices, or yajnas. Only from this sama-gana did the seven notes—Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa,

Dha, and Ni—evolve, serving as the foundation for India's raga system.

Fig.3 Ragamala Paintings

The Cleveland Museum of Art houses a piece crafted circa 1700 in the Deccan, likely originating from Visakhapatnam, which illustrates three yoginis engaged in musical performance for a courtly patron, potentially a Sultanate or Mughal ruler. One of the yoginis is depicted playing the sarinda, while the other two sing and clap in accompaniment. While sarindas are typically constructed from modest materials such as wood, the instrument in the British Museum has been elevated to a lavish status symbol appropriate for royalty. Observable signs of use and restringing are present, as evidenced by the worn peg holes. Additionally, remnants of red and green pigments have been identified, suggesting that the instrument may have originally featured vibrant coloration. It would have been played utilizing a bow and would have rested upon the lap of the seated musician. The diminutive lower resonance chamber implies that it was intended for performance in an intimate setting, possibly alongside a vocalist.

The sarinda is adorned with intricate carvings. The apex of the handle showcases a dragon-headed creature clutching an elephant while consuming another. Flanking the sarinda, angelic winged figures, potentially kinnara or celestial musicians, are depicted holding shields, commissioned by a Mughal official who operated in the region from the 1680s onward after the Sultanate was subjugated by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (1658–1707). Zoomorphic priming flasks, or gunpowder containers, meticulously carved entirely from ivory, were a hallmark of the Mughal court, illustrating animals in combat and merging forms. Through intimate social assemblies, known as mehfil, members from the Mughal, Rajput, and Sultanate courts cultivated their appreciation of the arts and exhibited their discerning tastes while engaging all senses through musical and dance performances, poetry recitals, gastronomic experiences, and dialogues centered on art and spirituality. These assemblies were not exclusive to male court members; women also organized all-female mehfil. The sarinda, alongside the aforementioned Ragamala folios, was produced and appreciated in both Hindu and Muslim courtly settings, serving as a testament to India’s intricate and multicultural Indo-Islamic legacy. Collectively, they enable the articulation of one of the new gallery’s fundamental overarching themes: the unifying potency of the arts.

Ragamala paintings, which formerly a vital component of Indian cultural expression, are today dealing with a variety of significant problems that might jeopardize their survival. One of the primary issues is declining patronage,

since the royal and aristocratic support that once sustained these works has significantly diminished. Thanks to the financial assistance of these patrons, artists were able to dedicate years to mastering the intricate techniques required to produce these miniatures. However, the decline of royal courts and changing social structure have deterred artists from continuing to produce in this traditional manner.

Technology induced disruption is yet another serious problem. Through more efficient and lucrative alternatives to traditional hand-painted miniatures, the rise of modern digital media has revolutionized artistic expression. Digital art software allows artists to make their work much more rapidly and reach a global audience without being constrained by physical materials. Studying and practicing the laborious arts of Ragamala painting has become less popular as a result of this shift as it requires a lot of physical work and training that isn't always financially rewarding. The ignorance of succeeding generations contributes to the decline of Ragamala paintings. Due to changes in exposure and education, traditional Indian art forms are not as esteemed as they once were. Since modern audiences are drawn to current and western art forms, especially in urban areas, indigenous art traditions find it difficult to remain relevant. In the absence of targeted educational programs and awareness campaigns, Ragamala paintings face the risk of being forgotten since fewer artists and art enthusiasts are curious about them.

The market limits are still another major barrier. Because of the labor-intensive process and the requirement for resources like high-quality brushes, natural colors, and handmade paper, the production of Ragamala paintings is costly. Since digital prints and modern paintings are more widely accessible and more affordable, traditional miniature paintings have less competition in the commercial art market. In addition, the decline in demand for one-of-a-kind, handcrafted products is making it hard for many artists to earn a livelihood from miniatures alone.

Flat figures in profile and a vivid color scheme with a preponderance of primary hues are characteristics of the Chaurapanchasika style. Space is shown symbolically in this approach, which is not true to the actual location. The main goal of the painters' work was to depict the story; the paintings' highly stylized buildings and vegetation mainly function as a visual backdrop that supports the story and intensifies feelings (Wolpert, 2006, p. 379). On each folio, the verse that is shown is vividly displayed over a striking yellow border (iv). Based on the Western Indian style of painting, faces are shown in a conventional profile perspective with taut lines and large, wide eyes, sometimes known as "fish eyes."

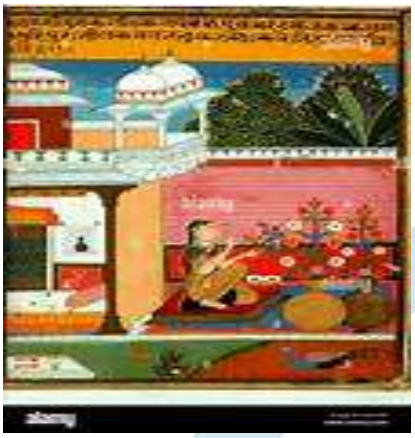

Figure 4: Painting from the Chaurapanchasika, probably Mewar, (c. 1525-50), Opaque watercolour on paper, (NC Mehta collection, Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Museum, Ahmedabad). Picture Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Even though the painting lacks perspective, its straightforward horizontal register arrangement suggests a sense of recession because to its rectangular surfaces. The foreground is occupied by the pond with the row of ducks and lotus flowers. The heroine and the linga shrine make up the middle ground; she is clearly distinguished from the intense red background that is employed in the painting's main action frame. A high, curving horizon in the distance is surrounded by rising hills and a blue-rimmed sky with clouds, which represent the atmosphere. Due to a lack of perspective, the figure is stationary and cannot move closer or farther away from the observer.

The Mewar court came to represent Rajput valour with rulers like Rana Pratap Singh (r.1572-97), who refused to submit to the Mughal rule and became a legend in the Rajput lands. He saw himself as the flag bearer of Rajput bravery and dynastic purity and expended resources to maintain the independence of his kingdom during his lifetime (Beach, 2008, p. 118). Around the 1600s, Rajput states were allying themselves with the Mughals, and Rajput painters and patrons were starting to actively engage with the Mughal style of painting (Aitken, 2010, p. 6).

To solve these pressing concerns, innovative approaches that blend the preservation of historical authenticity with the integration of modern creative techniques are required. Combining modern methods with traditional forms, promoting educational initiatives, and expanding into new markets through global outreach can all help to reignite interest in Ragamala paintings. Combining innovation and tradition can give this endangered art form new significance in today's creative and cultural context.

The 1605 "Chawand Ragamala" is the first manuscript from this region to have a colophon, making it a crucial document for tracking the history of Mewari painting (Andhare, 1987, p. 50). After Chittor was taken by Mughal forces in 1568, Chawand, which was built in a town south of Chittor, functioned as the interim capital of Rana Pratap and his successor (Beach, 2008, p. 42) (Guy, 2011, p. 98). Many academics assume that the king, Rana Amar Singh (son of Rana Pratap), or the nobility from his court are the patrons of the artist, Nasiruddin (Nasaradi), although the colophon does not specify. (Guy, 2011, p. 98).

Fig 5. Nasiruddin (artist), Painting of Asavari Ragini from a Ragamala series, Chawand, (1605). Painted in opaque watercolour on paper (Victoria and Albert Museum, London). Picture Source: Victoria and Albert Museum

Numerous studies on Indian miniature paintings have been conducted. Numerous articles on particular subjects related to Indian miniature paintings have been offered. To bolster the issue argument, the following reviews of the literature were done. The direct contributions of the Mughal Emperors to the history of miniature painting are extremely valuable. Thus, important reading in this topic includes Pringle Kennedy's 1933 The Great Moghuls, M.C. Beach's 1978 The Grand Mogul Imperial Paintings in India, and other books. The 1993 book Indian Clothes and Textiles from the Calico Museum of Textiles, written by B.N. Goswamy is a significant part of the history of Indian clothing. The comparisons and references from the magazine Marg by H. Goetz, published in 1958, Vol. XI, and the 1996 release of R. Crill's book Marwar Painting are of great use.

The manuscript's visual arrangement is consistent and may be separated into two sections: the left and right portions of the leaf. On the right side of the page are the paintings of the Ragas, each with its unique name written above the picture, such as *raag bhairav ni tasveer jaanba.* A concise synopsis of the visual iconography that is recommended on the left side of the page provides a clear iconographic description of these visuals. In the upper left corner of each page, the page number is written as Raga, while the number beneath it is written in figures. Below the iconographic description, the vacant area is visually filled with bird and plant motifs. Examining this manuscript as a work likely backed by a Kutch patron is crucial because of its propensity to use design to fill in blank spaces. These designs have a hint of symmetry, albeit not a strict mathematical one. It can be interpreted as an attempt to create a sense of visual balance, not through rigid images or patterns but rather through visually appealing natural elements, such as a flower-bearing plant stem with peacocks and parrots balancing on either side. One could say that this is the beginning of the inclination toward naturalism combined with design focus. One representation that stands out from the others in the format is the attempt to show two Ragas (Raag Sandhu and Raag Maru) on the same page. By splitting the frame in half, the two Ragas are represented on a single page: Raga Sandhu is shown in the upper half, and Raga Maru is shown in the lower half. Although it doesn't appear to be a deliberate endeavor, the painter must have placed Raga Maru later in the empty space that is often left for the floral design because the scribe must have overlooked it when gathering the text. This clearly indicates that the individual pictures were added after the text.

When Indians' spiritual lives were nourished by the Bhakti movement, a discernible shift occurred. People who were sick of the rigid Brahminical beliefs and customs saw a disruption in their sterile lives as a result of this one movement. The focus of bhakti, or the uncontrollable flow of love and total surrender to the Almighty, is Krishna and his leela. However, this requires the narrative events to be shown in order to fully see how the playfulness of the divine being with humans is nothing more than the path of bhakti. The bhasha kavya is credited as being the first to paint the Krishna-leela narrative scenes.

Devotion in northern India shifted to one single god, Krishna. The fervent rhymes of Mira Bai praising Krishna and the endearing poetry by Sur Das commemorating Krishna's youth and adolescence surely contributed to the shift in the ragamala painting style, as did several other works of this kind. (Glynn et al., 17)

The most popular raga among those connected to Krishna is Meghmallar.Meghmallar, another raga, has also been associated with comparable spiritual and socio religious meanings: Meghmallar is a knowledgeable and decent king. He is a talented dancer who gleefully indulges in life's delights. King Meghmallar, who has a somewhat gloomy complexion and brilliant, gleaming eyes, is elegantly attired in tiger skin and decked out in a variety of colorful decorations. He is surrounded by stunning young women wearing jewelry. To the thunderous clapping and drumming, the monarch joins them in dancing. The music and dancing create clouds of different hues in the sky. The rain is brought on by thunder and lightning as the shifting clouds get thicker.

The cinematic work *The Tale of How* (2006), helmed by the Blackheart Gang—a collective of musicians and performers—achieved substantial critical acclaim and was showcased at numerous film festivals and exhibitions. This animated piece comprises an intricate amalgamation of 2D illustrations, video recordings, and 3D artefacts that converge to create a visually captivating composition. The artistic methodology employed by these musicians closely parallels my own approach. They initiated the process by rendering characters and atmospheric elements using pen and ink before applying paint. To construct the environment, various layers were systematically removed and subsequently synthesized. The overarching objective was to cultivate a unique aesthetic influenced by Oriental artistic traditions. During the compositing phase, video clips depicting frothy sea waves were incorporated, along with diverse textures to achieve an appearance that is both aged and weathered. Tentacles, dodos, and other fantastical creatures were realized as 3D models. The shaders and textures applied to these models closely mirrored the illustrative style of the drawings, resulting in a seamless compositional integration. Each scene in the final composition consists of approximately 300 distinct layers (Blackheart Gang 2007). The visual style of this animation draws inspiration from traditional Asian art forms. The creators engaged in a collaborative effort regarding the graphics, which were developed in accordance

with the lyrical content and musical compositions, contrasting with the methodology employed in this study. A conventional editing style is utilized by the artists to facilitate transitions between scenes in this animation, which encompasses a vast spatial domain wherein much of the narrative unfolds. In my artistic practice, the world will be represented through a continuous composition. The second example concerns "Into Pieces," an animated short film directed by Guilherme Marcondes and premièred at SIGGRAPH's Electronic Theatre in 2006. The key component of animation in this movie is also illustration. First, the artist creates monochrome drawings, which are then hand-cut into paper cutouts. Several layers are created in an Adobe Photoshop TM document, and these two-dimensional layers are incorporated into a three-dimensional space. The layers are then animated after that. Sketches, a few photos, and 2D layers make up the final product Marcondes (2004). This approach to operations is quite similar to what I do. The artist possesses a distinctive drawing style that appears to be largely unaffected by traditional techniques. "Distributing the flat cut-outs in 3D space imparted the film with its characteristic 2.5D aesthetic," articulates the creator Ogden (2004). The third example is the animated movie "Printed Rainbow," which was created by Gitanjali Rao in 2006. More than 60 film festivals across the world have shown this movie, including the esteemed Cannes Film Festival and the Slamdance Film Festival. Within a traditional animation framework greatly influenced by Indian folk art, it incorporates Mughal miniature paintings, Bengali Kalighat artworks, street art, truck graphics, and matchbox cover images. A visually engaging experience is produced by the dynamic integration of these many artistic forms.

One of the biggest states in India is Rajasthan. The western and northern borders of West Pakistan are delineated by its eastern frontier. At the same time, other Indian countries occupy the remaining portion of the North, East, and South boundaries. Madhya Pradesh borders the east-south-east, Gujarat borders the west, and Punjab and Uttar Pradesh border the north and northeast. Since its founding, Rajput princes have held the majority of its ownership and governance. Rajwada was the local name; during British rule, it was called Raet'nam and then Rajputana. Prior to 1956, Rajasthan was made up of nineteen princely states; with the state reorganization act of 1956, it was renamed Rajasthan. The Rajputs were the kings of Rajasthan. The Ksatriyas, a martial tribe renowned for their patriotism, included the Rajputs. Rajasthan is a dusty and arid nation. In contrast, there is a strong representation of forests, forested valleys, mountains, and bodies of water in the paintings.

The resurgence of interest in traditional Indian art forms might also be attributed to globalization and the internet era. Artists now have additional avenues to display to collectors thanks to social media and online platforms. It is anticipated that greater awareness and appreciation of traditional arts would lead to Ragamala paintings regaining their rightful place in India’s rich creative legacy.

Through their experiments with digital technology, artists are reinterpreting Ragamala themes in mixed-media and animation styles. These initiatives ensures that Ragamala paintings are seen in new way by current audiences by fusing modern technologies with traditional aesthetics. Collaborations with modern artists include cross- disciplinary initiatives that incorporate Ragamala aesthetics into modern artistic manifestations. The addition of Ragamala elements to the creations of multimedia artists, fashion designers, and illustrators has given the traditional style a fresh, contemporary appeal.

The many states of Rajasthan were controlled by a particular hereditary Rajput family. A land (such as a Thikana, which is comparable to a barony) within the family's holdings was awarded to those who declined the crown. They might attempt to create a new state and assert domains elsewhere at the same time. By the 18th century A.D., everyone with property and rank felt obliged to pay painters, despite the fact that the rulers of these states had previously commissioned artists. This led to the emergence of numerous varieties and substyles.

Ragamala painting schools can be found in the districts of Marwar, Sirohi, Jaipur, Pali, Mewa, Bundi, Amer, Kota, Bikaner, Malpura, and Uniara in Rajasthan. Knowing the political and cultural context of these states can help one better comprehend the Ragamala paintings.

Ragamala paintings, which once played a vital and vital role in India's artistic heritage, have gradually declined in popularity in the modern day. These beautiful miniatures, which were once owned by royal courts and aristocratic connoisseurs, beautifully combined traditional Indian music and poetry with visual art. The decline in royal backing, the advent of modern printing techniques, and the shifting preferences of scholars and art collectors have all contributed to the traditional art form's loss of much of its original importance and prominence. The cultural contexts in which Ragamala paintings were originally produced and appreciated have long since changed, with the bulk of them now being housed in museums and private collections.

The absence of traditional sponsorship is largely responsible for the demise of Ragamala paintings. Under the patronage of royal courts, artists created intricate works of art throughout the Mughal and Rajput periods that had a solid basis in Indian musical and poetic traditions. When the colonial government arrived, many of these courts lost their authority, and the once thriving art traditions began to wane. The loss in popularity of miniature painting traditions like Ragamala was partly caused by the British colonial government's adoption of Western printing processes and creative styles.

The decline of Ragamala paintings can also be attributed to the development of creative materials and methods. More contemporary and financially feasible means of creative expression have supplanted traditional hand-painted miniatures as modern art movements and digital technologies have expanded. Since modern artists typically look for quicker and easier ways to make art, the labor-intensive techniques of

miniature painting, which need years of study and exquisite execution, are less enticing to them. It has become more challenging to locate painters who can accurately capture the spirit and style of this ancient tradition due to the disruption of the continuity of knowledge and skill needed to create Ragamala paintings.

Modern artists, cultural institutions, and art historians have endeavored to revive Ragamala paintings in spite of these challenges. Around the world, museums and art galleries have played a significant role in the conservation and display of these paintings as well as the renewed interest in their artistic and historical relevance. Global audiences now have more access to and awareness of Ragamala artworks because of online exhibitions and digital archives.

The visual language of Ragamala paintings has also been experienced by animators and painters through the integration of traditional themes with modern artistic approaches. To reimagine the splendor of Ragamala paintings for contemporary audiences, artists have blended traditional methods with computer animation, mixed-media art, and other innovative approaches. This blending of the old with the new may revive a fading tradition, making it more appealing to modern tastes and so more relevant.

Conclusion

In conclusion, despite the fact that Ragamala paintings are no longer as popular as they once were, their cultural and historical relevance is still very much present. The difficulty is in preserving and updating this traditional art form for the contemporary day in a sustainable manner. Ragamala paintings may be revived by fusing ancient methods with modern technology and educational programs, guaranteeing that next generations will continue to value and interact with this distinctive artistic legacy. Ragamala paintings' capacity to adapt and resonate with shifting creative and cultural settings is just as important to their survival as preservation efforts. It is essential to preserve the spirit of Ragamala while welcoming fresh opportunities for its resuscitation and reinterpretation in the contemporary world as we traverse the nexus of tradition and innovation. Ragamala paintings have lost some of their appeal to the general population, but their cultural and historical relevance has not. Campaigns to revive it through digital media, educational initiatives, and institutional support can sustain interest in this unique artistic form. It is possible to reinvent Ragamala paintings for contemporary audiences by fusing new technologies with ancient techniques.

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