

“Conversation with an Artist”

Special Project Report

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Visual Communication

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Introduction

“Conversation with an artist”, the project was essentially focused on understanding the approach of an artist so as to understand the uniqueness in his thinking process and his creations.

This project gave me an opportunity to study what we understand by the term culture and acknowledge its importance as an inspiration for any creation. My keen interest was to find out how culture is understood by different people and what makes it easier for them to express their creation in terms with culture as an inspiration and sometimes as a tool and also sometimes just unknowingly creating something which defines culture itself.

To begin with, my understanding was confined with the literal knowledge and formed definitions about culture, but as I continued with the project my understanding broadened with studying the artist “Kana Ram” and also analyzing people around me.

Culture as dictionary defines:

- the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively
- the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group
- the attitudes and behavior characteristic of a particular social group.

The books inform about culture mostly in a wholistic manner i.e. to say they narrate about the culture on a larger scale like that of a country, a society, a family, an institution etc. which in a way justifies the togetherness which is merely a structure formed under the name of culture. It shows how structures are defined with set norms and identities and are usually formed by a group of people presumed to have some common understandings and interests. The cultures then formed are usually defined by some individuals and followed by a group of people believing in them with some amount of knowledge and ignorance.

Culture to my knowledge, is something which is understood to its maximum capacity when a human being expands and grows with the physical and mental boundaries of being.

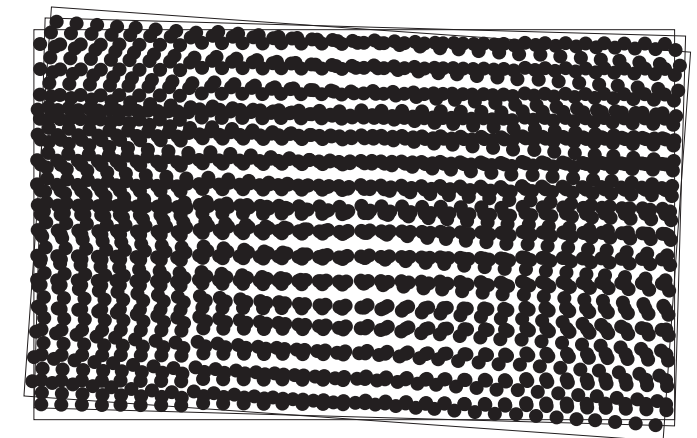
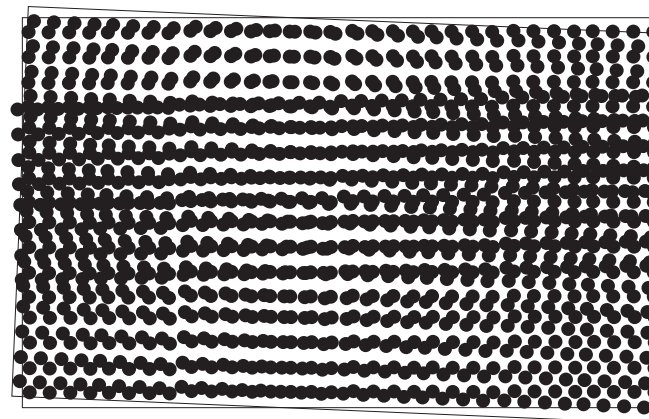
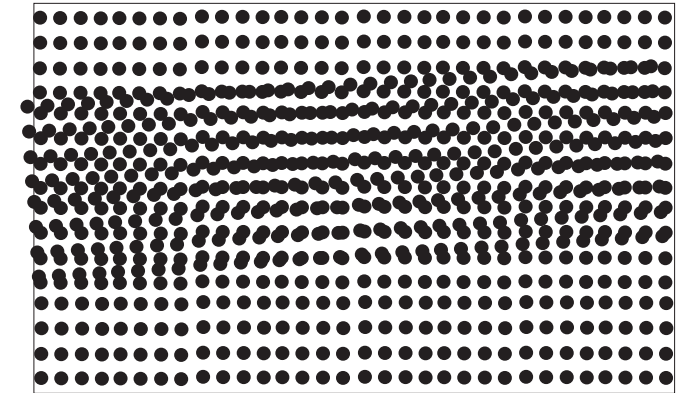
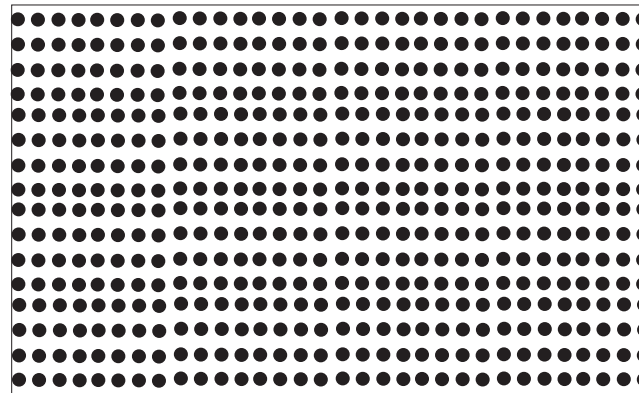
As a child our culture is defined with close boundaries, with the understanding of the family and the limited social circle one has and usually has a basic and simple pattern with which one can define it easily. As we grow this basic pattern develops layers one after the other making it more complex yet comprehensible. This complexity is unique to each person's experience and hence defines culture distinctively for each human being based on his experiences.

For e.g. I was born in a Hindu family, being in a relatively small town and a close knit society, I hardly noticed the differences till a certain age. As a part of school teaching when one understands that there exist different groups of people who have different religion and different pattern of living yet the teachings and understandings of all religions are same rather left me confused. The forced equations of everybody being equal but at the same time treated differently because of different way of living and religion perplexed me. I could clearly relate to most of the 'different' people leaving some differences behind and giving them terms like 'misunderstandings' and 'ignorance'. As I grew up travelling places and meeting new people all the time the term 'culture' confused me all the more. Someone defining it as "the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively" made me think when people are so different from one another and everybody is unique and individualistic then how are these common norms formed and accepted by a large number of people?

To my understanding culture is what people are, they live it and define it with their own experience and understandings and therefore everybody has a unique culture as everyone's experiences are different and distinctive yet there is a common pattern or a string of understanding that defines a united culture.

Two people from the same family would have common understandings but would have different experiences. The commonness defines the family culture and the unique experiences define the individual's culture.

Metaphorically, if we take the notion of the human experiences in the form of a fixed pattern of dots where with each experience the pattern becomes complex yet holding its simplicity and the basic understanding of its structure defines culture.



Culture and its influence

Culture, as simple and complex at the same time as it can be, supports one to comprehend his/her individual actions. Culture is a way of living and is formed by the experiences of individuals, it helps shift boundaries both physical and mental and define a unique approach towards life. Most human actions which are performed are based on prior experiences and understandings of self, which determine your present culture and help in the formation of future, are sometimes shaped without conscious efforts. Creations formed or achieved in such state are truly inspired by the unique individualistic culture and hence determines the uniqueness in approaches of different individuals as artists and designers.

To explain this further I would talk about the artist 'Kana Ram', his approach towards his work and how is he inspired by culture.

Artist: Kana Ram Lamoror

Kana Ram is an artist from Jaipur, Rajasthan.

Kana Ram studied Bachelor of Fine Arts Specialization in Painting from the Fine Arts University of Rajasthan, Jaipur in 1998, after which he did his Masters in Fine Arts in Painting from Kala Bhawan, Shantiniketan, West Bengal in 2000.

From this time onwards he also studied the Art of Enamelling for which he has participated in group shows and international exhibitions including the second International Enamel Triennale of Budafok, Budapest, Hungary in 2004.

Kana Ram, being born and brought up in Jaipur Rajasthan, is fascinated with the rich and colorful culture of the state. He believes his inspirations for his art works come from his own culture and from the people around him.

If asked his opinion on how does he define culture, he says, "Culture is something which is formed or defined from the togetherness of people". He believes 'love' to be the base of all human relationships and of different cultures. Most of his work is based on the theme "Love".

Artist Kana Ram does most of his work in the Enamelling, the medium which according to him is the most appropriate for him to express his feelings, imaginations and emotions. He started practising the art of enamelling in 1999 during his post graduation in Visva Bharati University, Shantiniketan under the guidance of professor Mr. Amal Ghosh.

To him the fusion of glass on metal is charming. The process of enamelling caught his attention the first time he saw it and from then on decided to explore the medium further, it had unlimited possibilities and he found it to be the most suitable medium to express himself.

Art of Enamelling

Enamelling may be described as the art coloring or ornamenting a metal surface by fusing various mineral substances over it. In metal decoration, enamelling is perhaps the most alluring and sophisticated. Earlier it was done only on gold, but now it is done on silver, copper and brass.

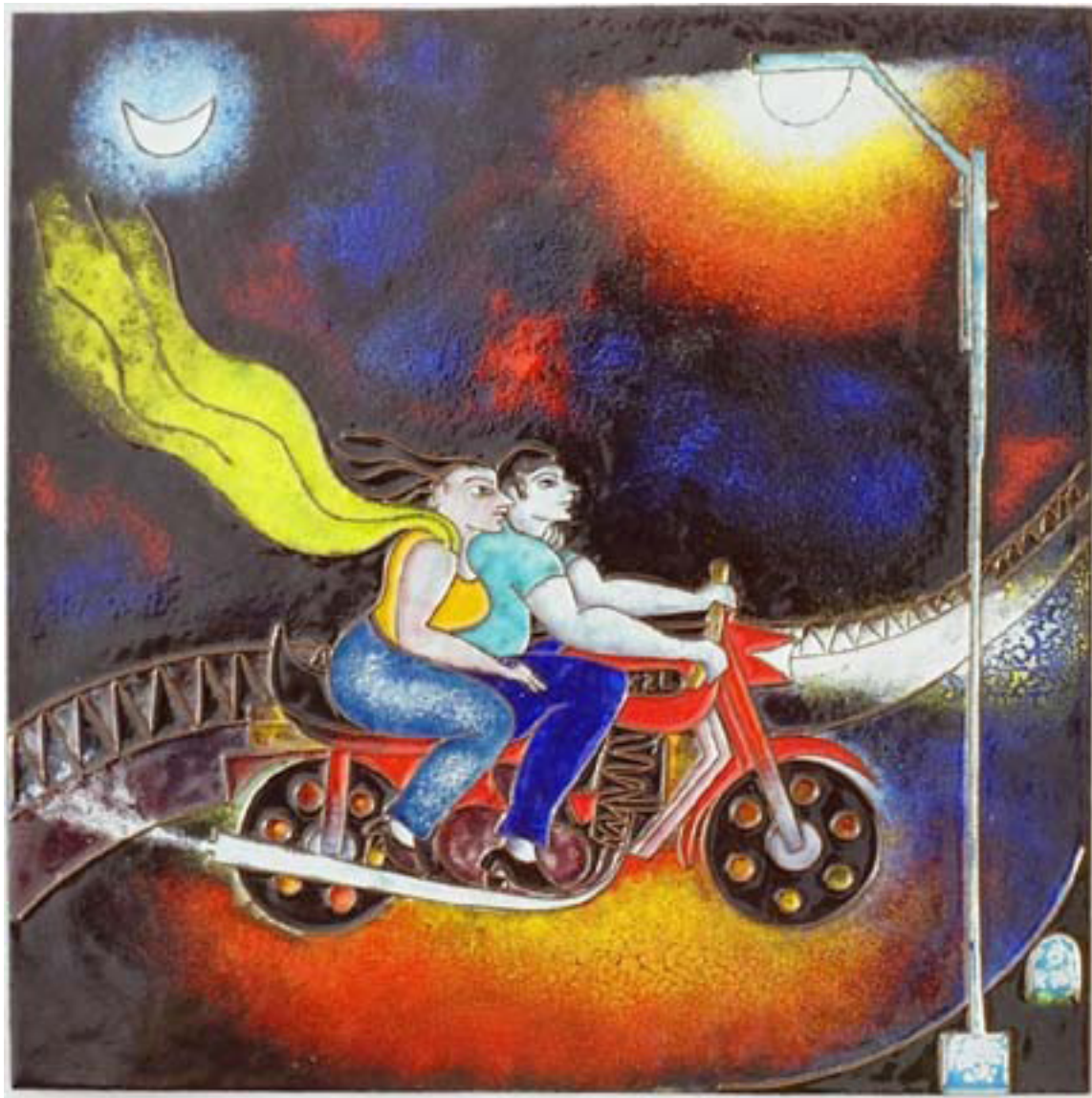
Enamelling is lavishly used in jewelry. Beads of many colors are made as ornaments. The most well known form of enamel in India is “Meenakari” of Jaipur.

The artist, while talking about his work described how the images from daily life inspired him and he combined them with his dreams to express his feelings. His creations are also inspired by the “miniature” paintings of Rajasthan which essentially narrated a story and showed all point of views to the story in a the painting itself. He uses loud colors in his art works. Colors, the part of the rich traditions of Rajasthan define the culture of people and there unique tastes which can be observed through there dressing styles.

Kana Ram is very conscious about his understanding of space and distribution of elements in it in his art works. His art works mostly express the emotion of ‘love’ combined with his imaginations where the idea of being a supernatural human being is beautifully expressed, the aura created around the figurine is such that it gives a feeling of awe. The use and spread of colors is also very carefully determined which absolutely supports the expressions. He also likes to exaggerate the figures in his art works according to the image they hold for e.g. the male and female figure shown together as a couple are made in a way that they determine or express the power of love.

The technique that he uses in most of the works is CLOISONNE. it needs lot of patience, time and is very laborious but he says it gives him a lot of pleasure.

Work of the artist



My Interpretation

Why does one view a painting? To see something beautiful? To read how an artist sees and feels the world? Yes, but more than that perhaps to see how the artist then translates it on canvas.

A strong Visual language can grab one's attention. In this painting titled "Lovers" the way every element has been detailed out is very impressive. Each element has its own space and importance for example the spread of the light coming through the lamp post has a defined space and expresses the need of less light over the couple so much together.

The colors used in the figures express the strong emotion of love and togetherness.



My Interpretation

In this painting titled "Journey of Lovers I" the artist is pushing his imagination to an extreme where the male figurine imagines to possess supernatural powers which will take him to his dream girl and impress her with his powers. The first part shows his dream girl whom he wants to impress with his powers, the second plate shows how he is able to draw her attention and impress her, the third where he imagines them to be together and the last where he realizes about his dream and watches himself in reality.

The color used on the imaginary motorbike is red depicting the strong emotion and the power. The background colors are also used very carefully determining the place and atmosphere.



My Interpretation

In "Journey of Lovers 2" the artist is depicting the playful nature of the boy where he first imagines of his dream girl then in the second part he imagines of getting his dream girl. The third part shows him dreaming of making love with his dream girl and in the end shows his excitement about the entire feeling he is going through.

In every part of the painting the emotions expressed on the faces of the figurines depict their present state of mind. The expression brings life to the painting and establishes a story within it.



My Interpretation

The painting "Nayika ka viraha" depicts a scene where the female figure in yellow is surrounded by her helpers. Here the way the figures have been established determine the importance and positions of them i.e. to say the female figures other than the one in yellow have been purposely disfigured to show the entity of woman with no beauty and one who are helpers and no one is mesmerized by them. Even the colors used are dull in nature to reflect on the lives of the helpers.



My Interpretation

“Golden Moment” this painting establishes of the one special moment that any two lovers go through when they express there love for each other without the fear of the world. The carefree expression is well established in the way the figures are placed. The backgrounds are very beautifully established with details of different places of their journey together. The way the hair of the female figurine is shown expresses the imagination of the artist trying to depict the lovers excitement.

My Experiments in the Art of Enamelling

