

# Indian Graphic Elements in Layouts

SPECIAL PROJECT REPORT

L. D. C. Library  
L. L. T. Bombay.

BY V. V. VIDWANS. (V.C.)



INDIAN GRAPHIC ELEMENTS

IN LAYOUTS

Submitted as partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the Degree of Master of  
Design in Visual Communication

by

V.V.Vidwans

Guide

Ravi Poovaiah

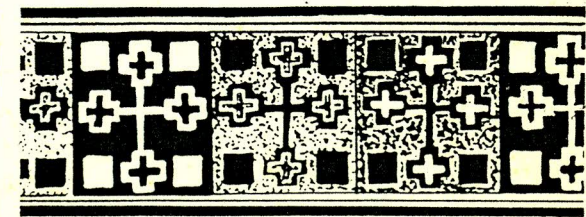
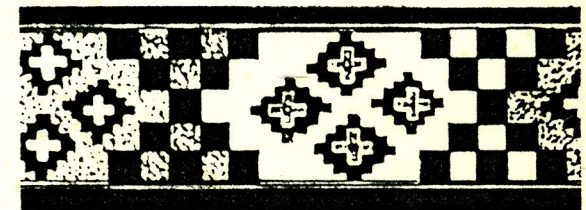
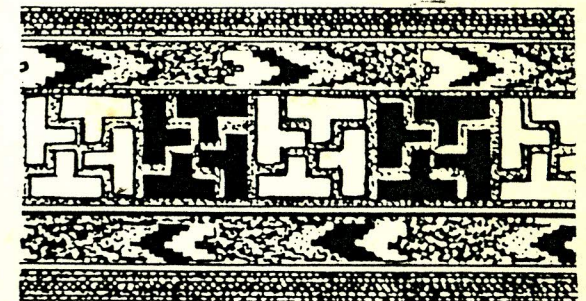
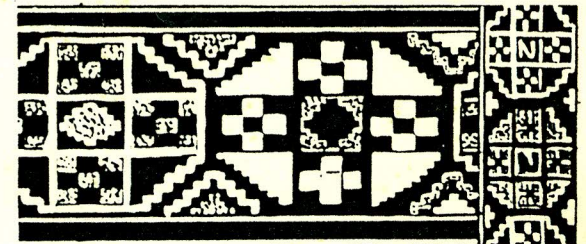
*Ravi Poovaiah*  
27<sup>th</sup> July 87

**L.D.C. Library**  
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Industrial Design Centre

Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Seminar, April, 1987

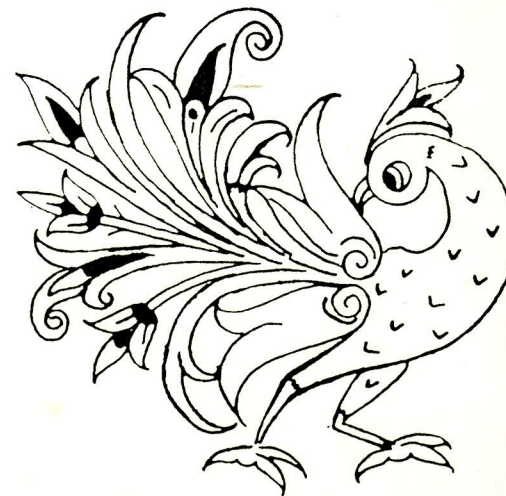




## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

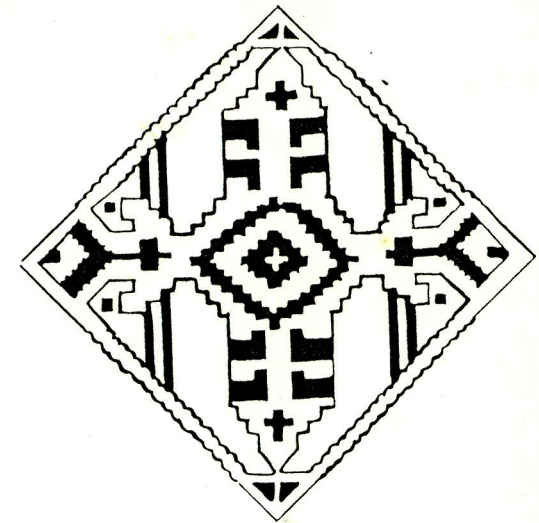
I am indebted to my guide Prof. Ravi Poovaiah for his guidance for this seminar presentation. I am also indebted to my colleagues and others who helped me in this work.

The help given by Mr. M.B.Joshi and Mr.Upadhayaya of IDC library and Mr. Mathai Daniel needs special mention.

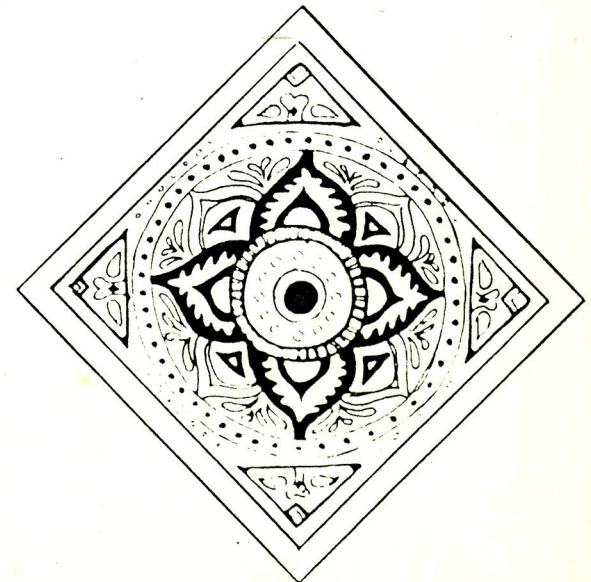


This study is an attempt to understand the true spirit of Indian art. When one reads the title of this paper, 'Indian Graphic Elements in Layout', one can not understand what it exactly means. So I am briefly explaining the aims and objectives of this paper. First of all I am concentrating on the study of composition and layouts in Indian miniatures. For that I will discuss the characteristics and the canons of Indian painting which are based on the specific philosophy and the way of thinking. Secondly I will try to answer the question, 'what makes the Indian images 'Indian'?', through the analysis of elements and principles of Indian painting.

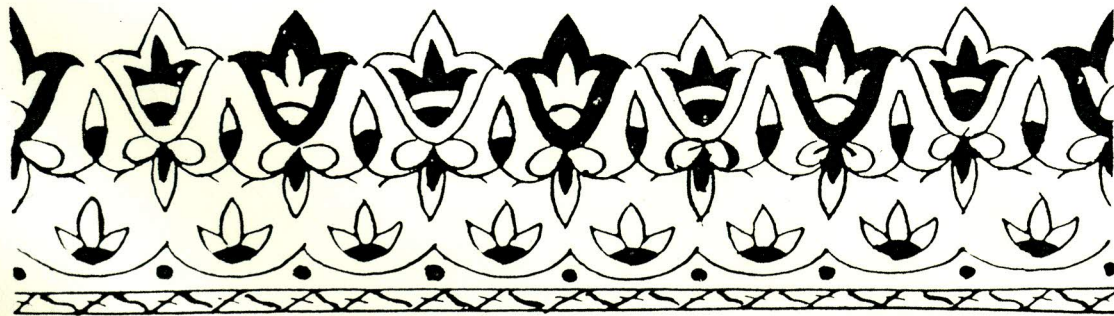
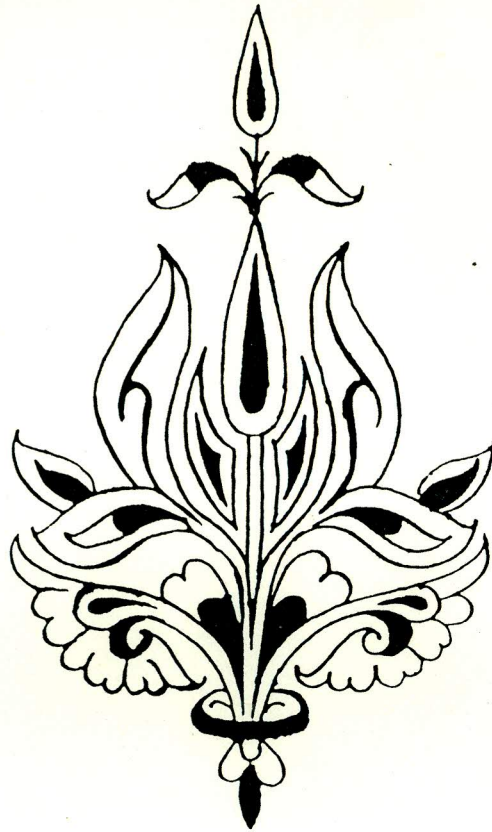
Todays Indian art is passing through a state of confusion. Todays artists and designers are imitating either Western styles or the traditional Indian styles without understanding the true nature of these art forms and obviously their output appears to be of second grade. Unfortunately today Indian's contribution to the global art is nil. So if one wants to cross this stage, this study will be helpful.



## INTRODUCTION







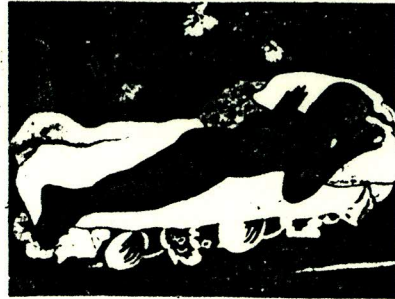
## ART

Art is a human activity which is spontaneous but controlled and involves skill as well as intellect. In a broader sense art means 'Being' but normally the usage of this word is limited to human activity. When we talk about design then this above definition sounds more logical. "Design pays more attention towards the planning and proper execution of means to create the end product." Traditional Indian art also believes in the same process. So study of art in Indian context seems relevant to study and understand the nature of art in India. "



## ART IN THE WEST

The world of art in West oscillates between realism and abstraction. Formal analysis says that the elements of material beauty dominates western art. Volume, broad masses of colours, forceful and dynamic lines or brush strokes, distortion of forms prominent use of oil colours on a large canvas, are some of the important characteristics of Western art. It is more secular than Indian art.

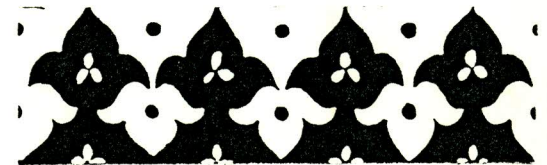




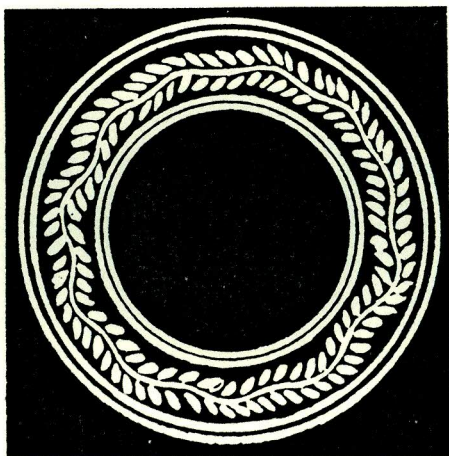


## INDIAN ART

The word 'Kala' i.e. Art, in India is derived from the word 'Sankhya'. It means observation, calculation, contemplation and expression. It is properly canonised and believes in a specific methodology as it is considered as a part of Yoga. Art is a ritual, Sadhana, used as the modest connective between the human and the Divine. It is the bridge between the Individual self and the cosmic collectivity and in this sense it is religious.



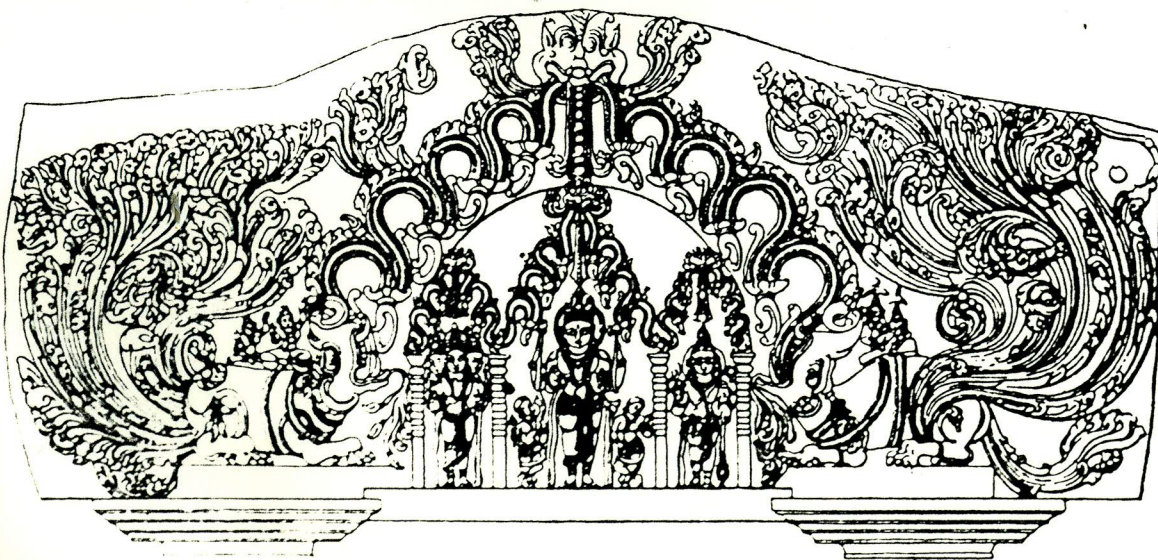




## PHILOSOPHY

'YOGAMKARMASUKOUSHALAM' is the motto of the philosophy of Indian art. As said earlier artistic creation is the supreme means for attainment of the infinite universal being. The aesthetics which emerged as a result of this is the theory of RASA. It has two aspects the first is RASVATTA; i.e. transcendental experience, the ultimate objective of art. It gave birth to symbolism in Indian art. The second one is the techniques of presentation.



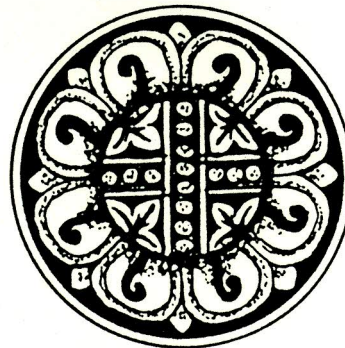
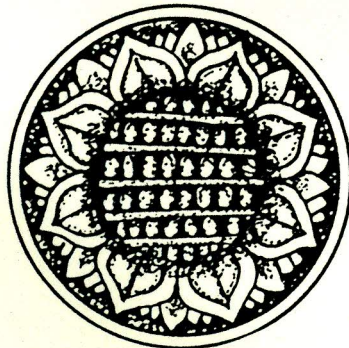
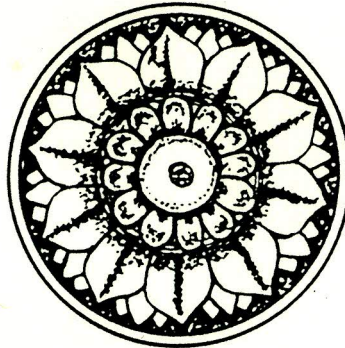


## SYMBOLISM

'PRATIKA PRIYA IVA HI DEVAH'

Gods love the symbols. The sublime symbolism practiced in Indian Art is a unique phenomenon in the history of semantics. Painting itself was considered as a symbol made up of subsymbols, which are pregnant images carrying meaning in them. Potential of this symbolism lies in giving birth to the concrete language of colour symbols, formal symbols, religious symbols etc. which made the Indian art 'UDATTA' sublime, exalted.

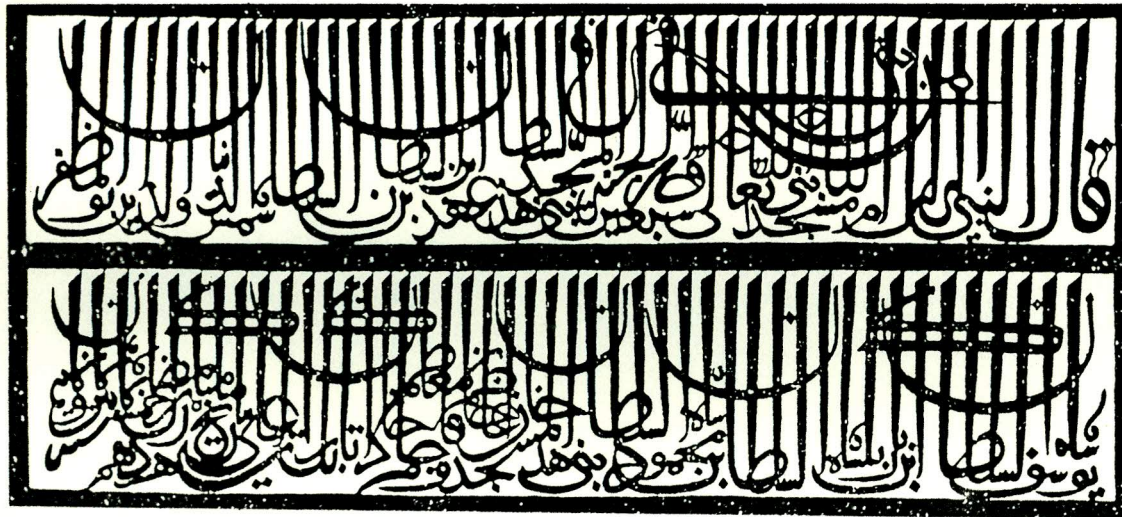




## MOTIFS

The theory of symbols gave rise the birth to the endless series of motifs in Indian art. This motifs are symbolic as well as decorative and used for both the purposes. These motifs are varyingly used in the work of art. For example motif of LOTUS is used enormously in various context, various forms and for various usages. Similarly the motifs of elephant, fish, peacocks, makara, and various other concepts are splendidly used in the borders or panels or elsewhere in Indian paintings.

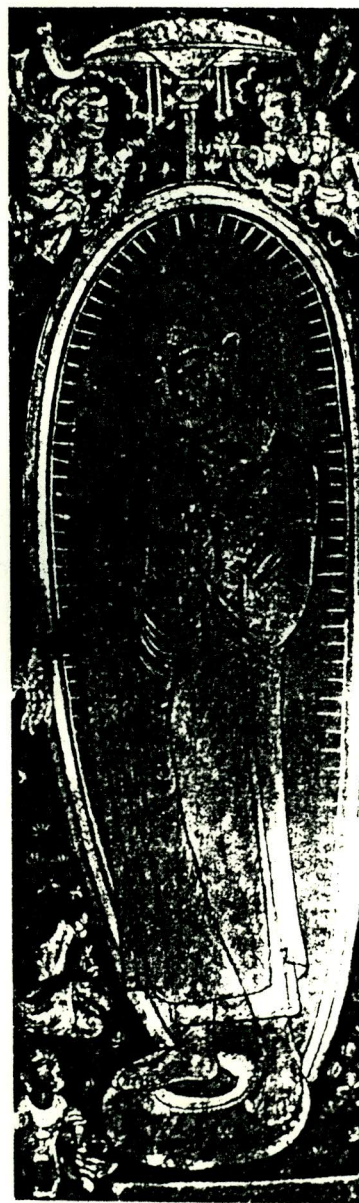




## INFLUENCES

Indian painting is not an exception to foreign influences. Though it was influenced by various forces, the spirit of Indian painting never died. It accepted the good things from other arts in style. It is influenced by religious themes, folk lores, literature and other arts like music. We have a series of Ragmala paintings which show the process of internalisation of such influences. Even Persian art elements are internalised in a similar fashion.





RELIGIOUS  
INFLUENCES







MYTHOLOGY

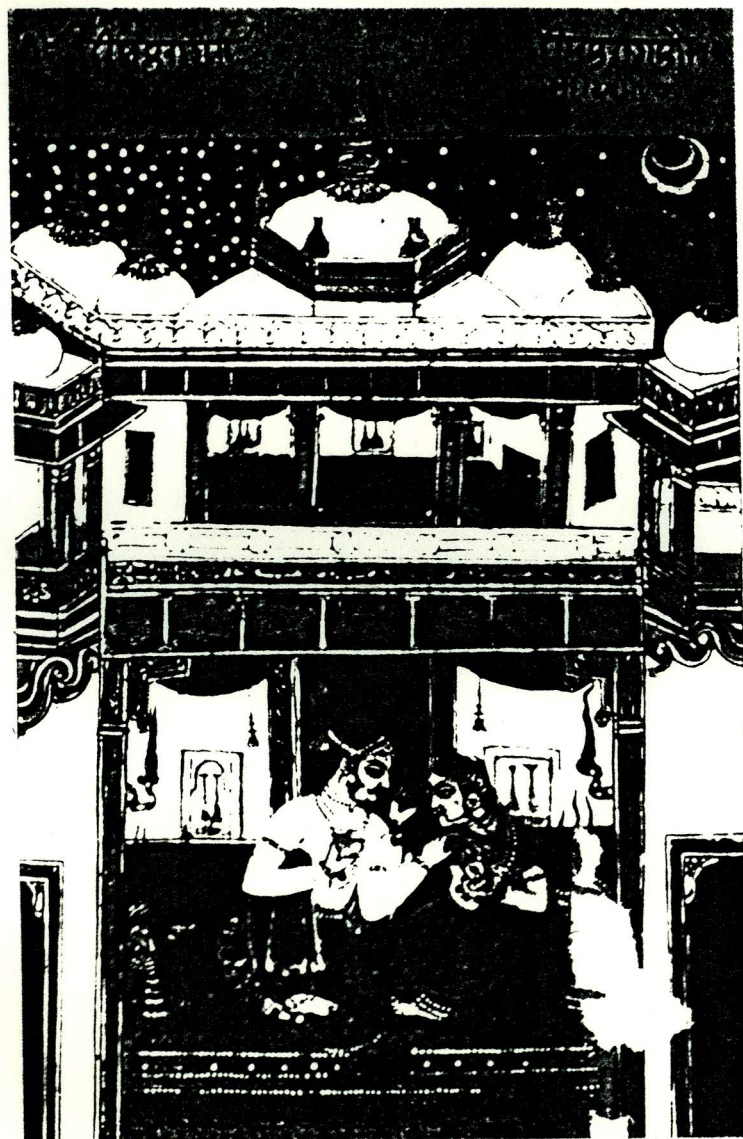




LITERATURE  
(GITA GOVINDA)







MUSIC





## TECHNIQUES OF PRESENTATION

Sentiments and moods i.e. the techniques of presentation and the form of art are well developed and properly concretised in Indian art. Once the artist has attained that transcendental state he naturally follows the laws or canons of visual language, the SHADANGA theory of Indian art. The theory of NAVARASA and the SHADANGA theory is the backbone of Indian Art.





रूपमेव प्रमाणाति  
भावलावप्ययोजनम् ।  
सादृश्यं वर्णिकामगः  
इति चित्रषडंगकम् ॥

## CANONS OF PAINTING

Canons of Indian painting are known as SHADANG or six limbs theory. It consists of

Rupabheda - differentiation between the forms.

Pramana - Specific proportion

Bhava - Expression

Lavanya - Charm, beauty

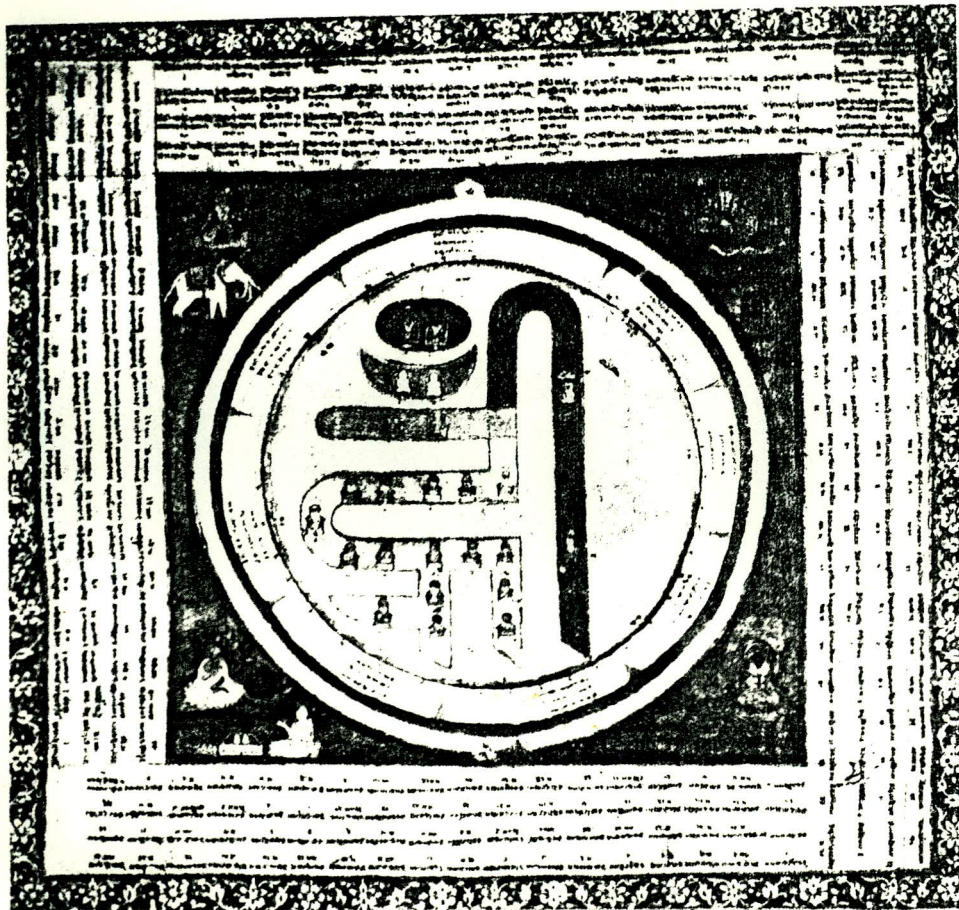
Sadrushya - Similitude

Varnikabhangam - Analysis of colours.

First the splendid appearance of these Hindu canons is visible in the Ajanta Painting.

Then these are transited to Pal, Jain, Rajput, Mughals and finally to the Bengal school miniatures.





## SPACE

The next few pages are devoted to the analysis of the characteristics of Indian miniature.

Space as an infinite expansion gets twisted and analysed in Indian miniatures. It becomes two dimensional here. The contrived space of the Yantras represent the multi-dimensional cosmos. Conceptual space in Ragmala carries the depths of time. The vibrant space of intermingling colours in the Rajput miniatures creates an exceptional beauty.





## PERSPECTIVE

When Leonardo and Raphael were establishing the laws of perspective in Europe the Indians were breaking the laws of perspective. Though they knew perspective they literally twisted it for pictorial needs. They used devices like birds eye view to achieve these effects. They broke the laws of aerial perspective with the use of special qualities of colours.





BIRDS EYE VIEW





## LINE

Contrary to Western art

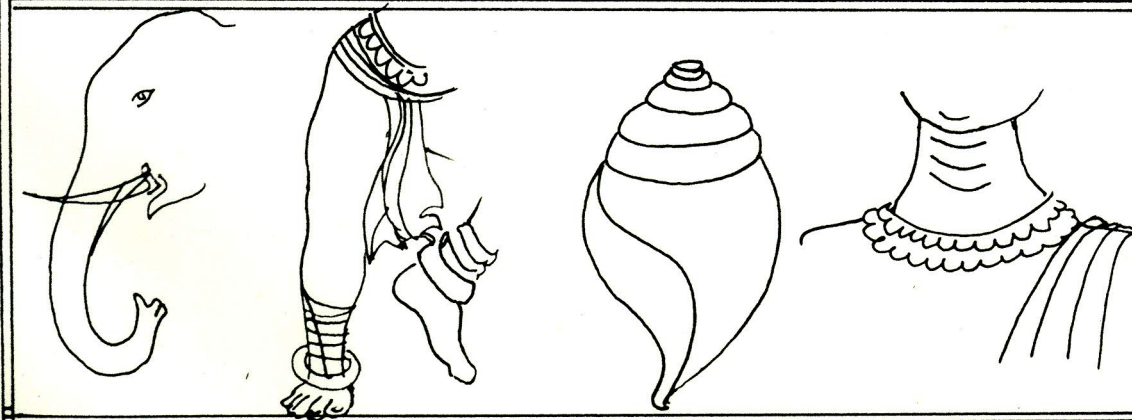
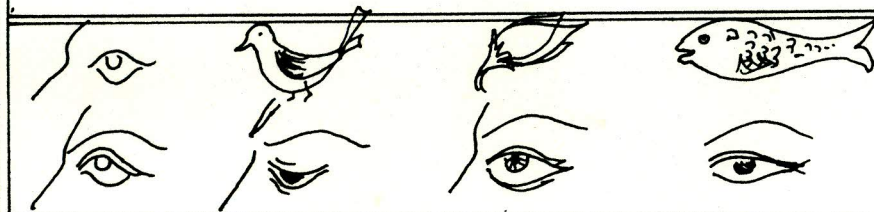
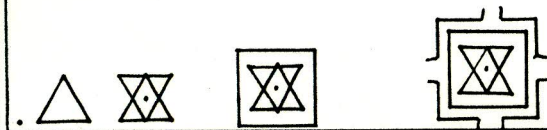
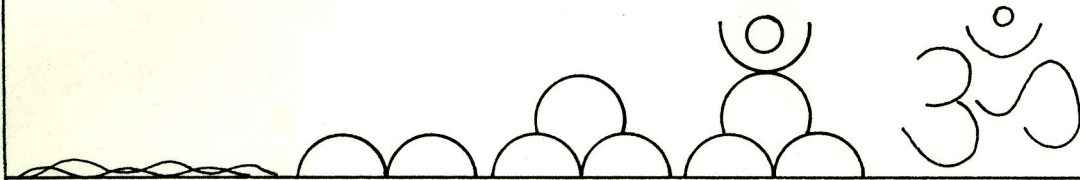
Indian art is called as the art of line. Indian art is an enchanting world of melodious elegant, musical lines. It carries lysis and lyrics of the visual song. The delicacy and the flow of Indian line has no parallel in the world. If line is an extension of the mental thought then the Indian line is a true expression and representation of the living culture of India.



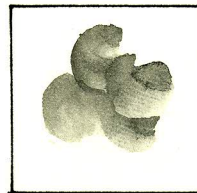
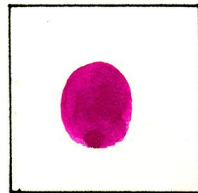
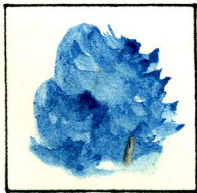
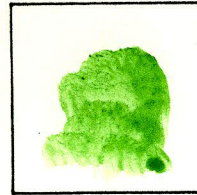
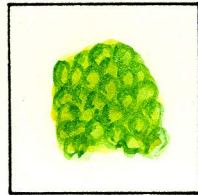
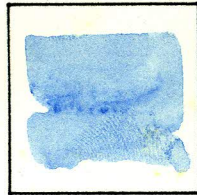
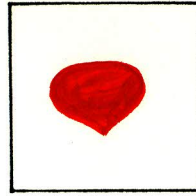
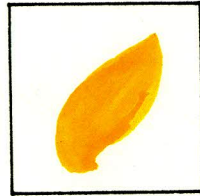
## FORM

Rupa means form.

It is an entelchi of the concept. Mostly Indian forms are derived from nature and not copied. A kind of analogy or similitude called SADRUSHYA is sought to create the forms. Some times these forms carries a symbolic message. These forms are always glorified, decorated and moulded according to the context. In Indian art context defines the form. Differentiation between forms is always relative and influenced by various thematic forces.







## COLOURS

Indian paintings are rendered in water colours only. Mostly the pigments are derived from the minerals ochers and vegetables. Lac dye, Carmine and vegetable colours like indigo are also used. Black was obtained from carbon. Many times gold and silver is also used in manuscripts and precious paintings as the colouring agents. Varnika-bhanga means the analysis of colours and skill in handling. The colours are skillfully schematised according to Rasa theory and symbolism in Indian miniature

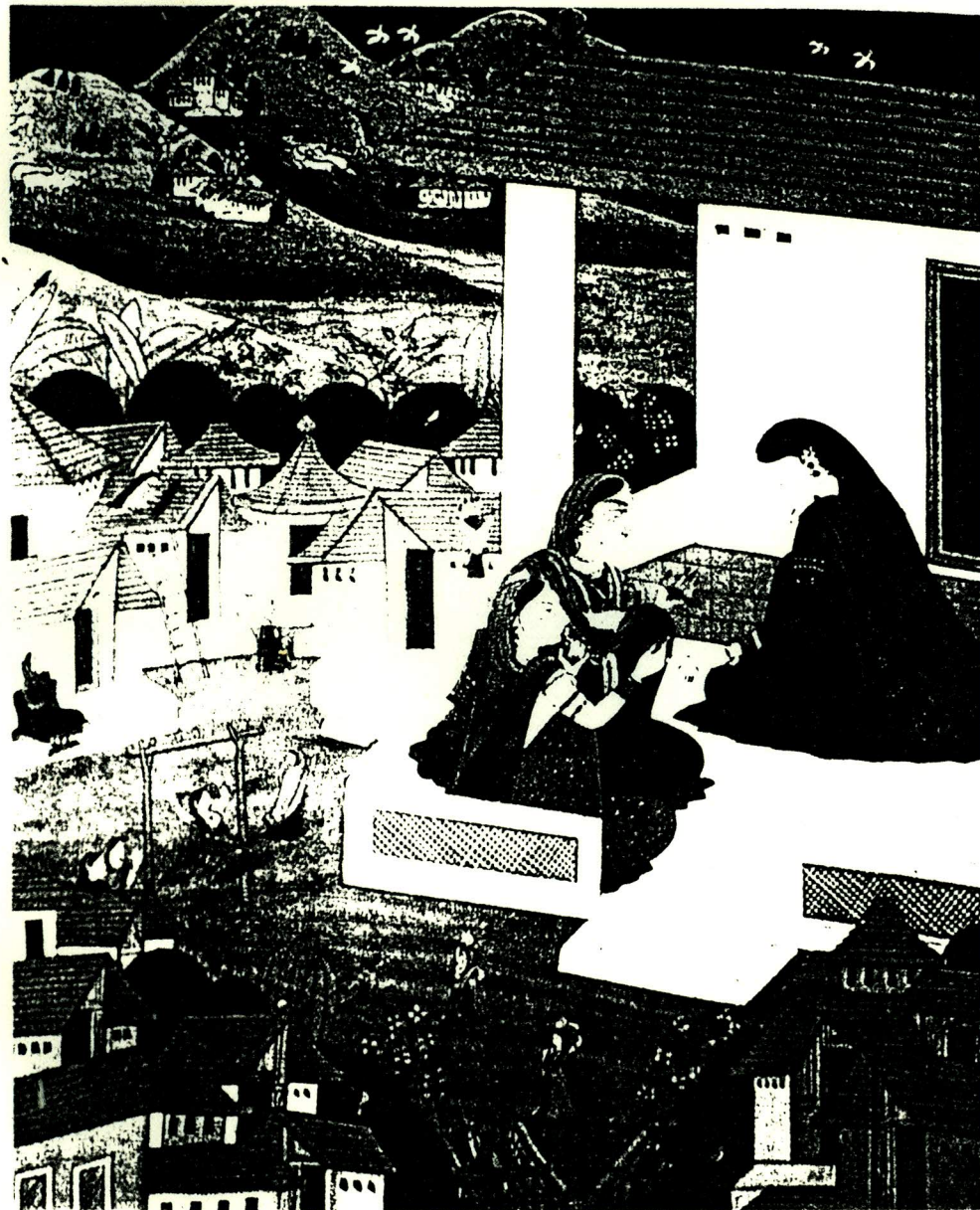




## TEXTURE

In Indian miniature texture differs in quality as compared to the Western concepts of texture. For the Western eye texture is non-existent in Indian miniatures. The flat application of colours as well as the use of tints tones and shades with varying gradation creates a kind of texture which has unreal qualities. The texture is an illusion of tactile sensation through visual vibrations in Indian miniatures.





## PROPORTION

Pramana means proportion according to Indian theories. Pra means specific and Mana means to measure. Pramana is a specific measurement in Indian miniatures the important figures are always shown larger in size. Buddha or Krishna are shown larger than the other human figures.

PRAMATRUCHAITANYA is a quality of the mind by which we perceive the due relationship between the objects and concepts. So conceptual proportion as well as the realistic proportion is found in Indian painting.





## RHYTHM

In Indian music or dance lysis is more prominent than the rhythm. In painting a specific quality of a pattern of the visual elements is repeated to achieve the lysis in painting. Reoeatation of motifs with small changes and variety creates the lysis. Lysis is more subtle than rhythm. Rhythm is quantitative while lysis is qualitative. Borders are examples of rhythm while the painted panels creates effect of lysis. LAYA is the synonium for lysis in Indian theories.





## EXPRESSION

The theory of RASA explains various sentiments and the concept like Vibhava, Anubhava etc. In painting expressions are shown in two ways. One is with the use of eyes face etc. to show the internal sentiments called BHAVAS.

While the HAVAS i.e.

external indications are shown through objects and other elements. In miniatures Pecoaks, Birds, Flowers, Garlands are used to show the HAVAS.

The combination of BHAVAS and HAVAS makes the Indian miniature more poetic.



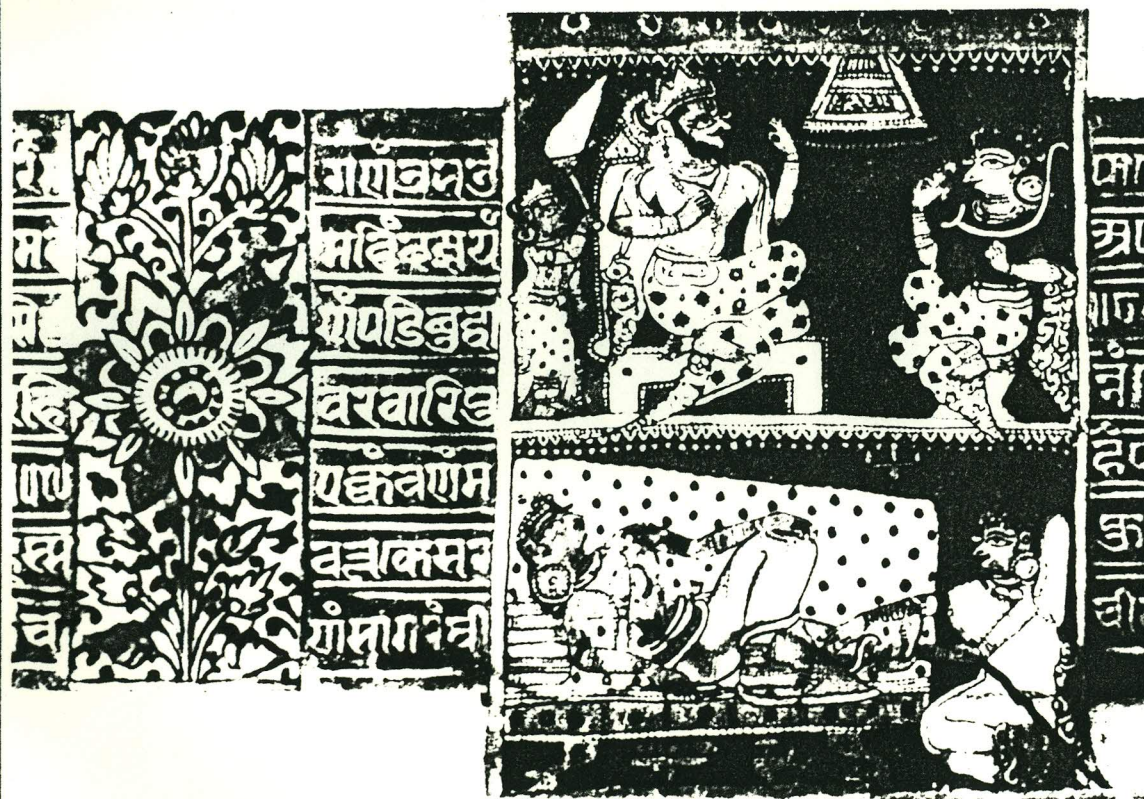


## COMPOSITION

### LAVANYAYOJANAM

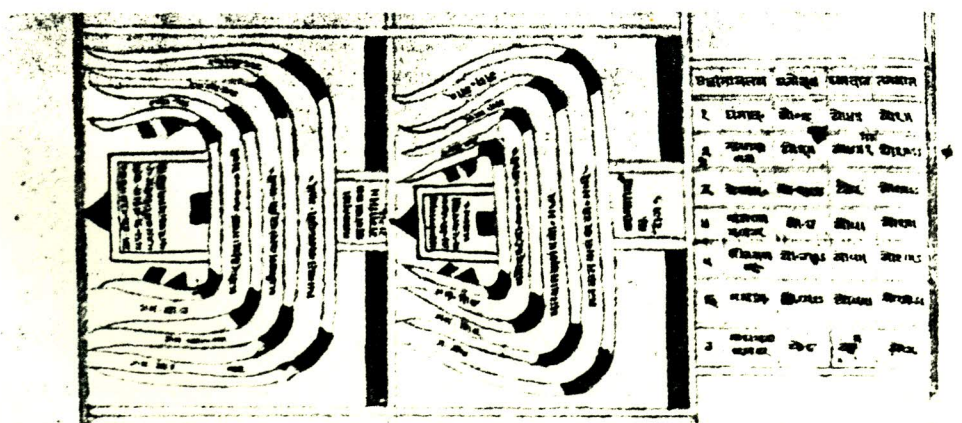
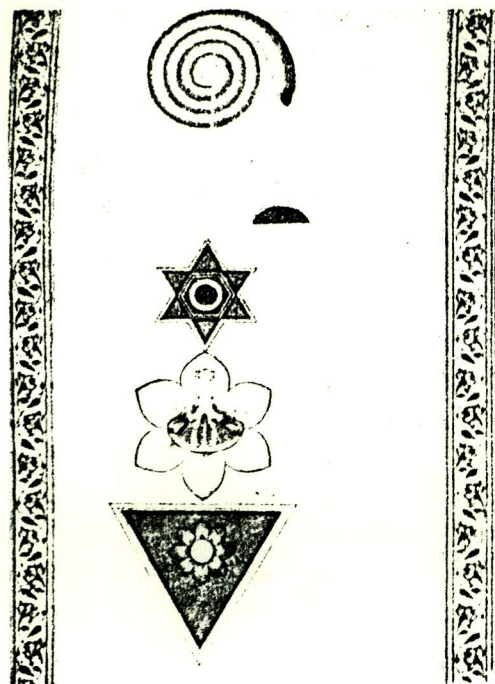
means overall composition and structuring of the layout according to SHADANGA theory the word LAVANYA is derived from the word LAVANA. LAVANA means salt. Salt makes the food tasty. Similarly LAVANYA makes the painting beautiful and charming. LAVANYA is the quality which gives the shine to pearl and the glitter to gold. In painting it is an overall effect of the intelligent use of the element and the principle of design which we have discussed.





JAIN LAYOUTS





TANTRIC LAYOUTS









The Indian way of thinking believes in the two levels of existence, the material and the spiritual. At the same time it also believes that these two levels are inseparable. Without the physical manifestation implicit spirit never becomes explicit and without spirit matter is dead. So Indianity of the graphic elements in Indian layout can not be understood without the knowledge of this specific philosophy. The graphic forms should carry the spirit in all its manifestations. If the graphic forms express the feeling of Sat i.e. truth, Chit i.e. spirit and Anand i.e. beauty then these can be called as Indian graphic forms. Though this definition of Indianity seems abstract everybody knows what it means. This type of study leads to the revivalization or the renaissance of the traditional art. But I am against the superficial revivalization which includes copying and imitation. I favour the art form which has universal appeal and which also carries the spirit of Indianity in it

## CONCLUSION



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