

VISUAL ANALYSIS OF HAND PAINTED LETTERING IN TAMIL

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ROHIT KARTHA
146390010

GUIDE : PROF. G.V.SREEKUMAR



INDUSTRIAL DESIGN CENTRE
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GUIDED BY, Prof. G.V.SREEKUMAR
IDC, IIT BOMBAY

PROJECT BY, ROHIT KARTHA
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DECLARATION

I declare that this written submission represents my idea in my own words, and where others ideas or words have been included, I have Adequately cited and referenced the original source. I also declare that I Have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not falsified, misinterpreted or fabricated any idea/data/facts/sources In my submission, I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the institute and can also invoke penal action from the sources from which proper permission has not been taken, or improperly cited

Name :

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Roll No :

Date

APPTOVAL SHEET

This Design research seminar project titled " Visual analysis of hand painted lettering in Tamil",
by Rohit Kartha is approved in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Design in
Mobility & Vehicle Design .

Project Guide

Chair person

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

INTRODUCTION

Hand painted street murals have been around for decades and are still found in and around the city of Chennai. Like Kolliwood, Marina beach, sambaar vada and filter coffee, hand painted Tamil typo has become an integral part of the culture of Chennai.

This project focuses on documenting, analysing and categorising various types of hand painted murals.

ஃ ay	அ a(h)	ஆ aa	இ ei	ஈ yee	உ vu	ஊ voo
க் ik	க ka	கா kaa	கி ki	கீ kee	கு ku	கூ koo
ங் ing	ங nga	நா ngaa	நி ngi	நீ ngee	நு ngu	நூ ngoo
ச் ich	ச cha	சா chaa	சி chi	சீ chee	சு chu	சூ choo
ஞ் inj	ஞ gna	ஞா gnaa	ஞி gni	ஞீ gnnee	ஞு gnu	ஞூ gnoo
ட் it	ட ta	டா taa	டி ti	டீ tee	டு tu	டூ too
ண் in	ண na	ணா naa	ணி ni	ணீ nee	ணு nu	ணூ noo
த் ith	த tha	தா thaa	தி thi	தீ thee	து thu	தூ thoo

ஏ ye(y)	ஏ yea	ஐ i	ஓ vo	ஓ vō	ஔ av
கெ ke(y)	கே kay	கை kai	கொ ko	கோ kō	கௌ kav
கெ nge(y)	கே ngay	கை ngai	கொ ngo	கோ ngō	கௌ ngav
செ che(y)	சே chay	சை chai	சொ cho	சோ chō	சௌ chav
கெ gne(y)	கே gnay	கை gnai	கொ gno	கோ gnō	கௌ gnav
டெ te(y)	டே tay	டை tai	டொ to(h)	டோ tō(h)	டௌ tav
னெ ne(y)	னே nay	னை nai	னொ no	னோ nō	னௌ nav
தெ the(y)	தே thay	தை thai	தொ tho	தோ thō	தௌ thav

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If you have ever been to the city of Chennai it is quite likely you would have come across a hand painted street art within the first 10 minutes of you being there. From the colourful walls outside the international airport to the centuries old colonial railway station to the numerous bus stands in the city, public spaces are a melting pot for hand painted street art which has come to be an integral part of the culture of Chennai.

From bold Tamil slogans to portraits of politicians, Chennai exhibits a unique culture of street art. While the majority of the art are of competing political parties fighting it out for the most elaborate and colourful creations, there are other genre of art too. Small general stores and barber shops still have hand painted signs and small scale industries still commission artists to paint their Ads on walls across the city

This project is a documentation of the different types of street art found in Chennai.





Chennai, once a city of hoardings

Restrictions on banners, cut-outs and other art work that so epitomised the city, have dealt a blow to the artists who specialised in them

There was a time not too long ago when hand-painted film banners, large hoardings and life-sized cut-outs saturated Chennai's cityscape. Two-dimensional movie stars, plastered across swathes of canvas, beckoning an imagined audience were a constant at every important traffic junction. Not many know that it was in an unassuming studio called Mohan Arts on General Patters Road that many of these attention grabbers were painstakingly put together.

The 2008 Supreme Court ban on all hoardings sounded the death-knell for an industry that once brought a degree of flamboyance to the city.

The last hand-painted work was a cut-out for the film Chandramukhi (2005). It was raised on Anna Salai opposite the Buhari Hotel.



ம.சி.இ.இ.இ.

There are currently over 1000 street painters commissioned to Paint political Ads and banners in the city of Chennai alone.











ஆனந்த் டிம்பர்ஸ்

அரவிந்த் செராமிக்ஸ்

உமா ஹார்ஹேர்ஸ்
UMA HARDWARE

பர்வின் டிரேடர்ஸ்
PARVEEN TRADERS

வெங்கடேஷ்வரா ஹார்ட்வேர்
VENKATESHWARA HARDWARE

† P.K. TRADERS †
பி.கே. டிரேடர்ஸ்
மளிகை வியாபாரம்

லக்ஷ்மி
லக்ஷ்மி
சிலகு கடை
SRI LAKSHMI PAWN BROKER
கோல்ட்ன்க்ளாஸ் பிளைவுட்
GOLDEN GLASS AND PLYWOOD
PVC DOORS

காவல் உதவி மையம்
சென்னை காவல்
T-12 பூந்தமல்லி காவல் நிலையம்
காங்கிரசு
காவல் உதவி மையம்
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காங்கிரசு

சோமன் கோ
சோமன் கோ
சோமன் கோ

ஸ்ரீ லட்சுமி
டிபன் சென்ட்ரல்
சைவ உணவகம்
ஸ்ரீ லட்சுமி
டிபன் சென்ட்ரல்
சைவ உணவகம்





Analysing hand painted styles of letters



அ
a(h)

The letter அ pronounced (ah) is the first letter of the Tamil alphabet.

Figure E shows the second letter of the Tamil alphabet which is very similar in form to the first. The only noticeable difference being an extra swash.



FIG A



FIG B



FIG C

1 2 3

The form of the letter has a total of three closed counters.

Notice the increment in the size of the negative space or closed counter of the letter in figures A, B, C and D



This specific style of the letter has only two closed counters because the connecting stem has been removed. Presumably for stylistic purposes. This however does not affect the identity of the letter and the letter can still unmistakably be identified as an அ



FIG E

ஆ
aa



FIG D



FIG 1



FIG 2



நா
na

நி
ni

ன
in

The letter **na** and its different styles seen on the streets of Chennai.

Figure 2 shows the proper way of writing the letter with 3 open counters and 3 closed counters. Figure 3 is painted in such a style that two of the open counters have become closed. This does not affect the identity of the letter drastically and the letter can still be identified as a **na**.

Notice the continuity of the stroke after the second loop in figures 1, 2 and 4. In figures 3 and 5 the last stem is drawn desperately and there is a disconnect in the flow of the letter.



FIG 3



FIG 4



FIG A



notice the difference in the size of the negative space or closed counter of the letter



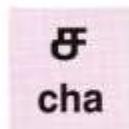
FIG B



FIG C

Some styles of hand painted typo maintain the line width of the letters, where some styles have varying calligraphic line width.

Figures A, B, C and D have uniform stroke width where as figures E and F have non uniform strokes.



The letter **च** (cha) and its different styles seen on the streets of Chennai.



FIG F



FIG E



FIG D

க
ka

The letter க (ka) and its different styles seen on the streets of Chennai.



Figure B seems to be a serif in comparison to figure A. The serif is identified by the protrusion at the vertex and the stroke at the end of the arm.



FIG F

The shape of the letter in printing and formal digital text has two closed counters and two open counters. When the letter is hand painted for hoardings and signboards the bottom right open counter is closed by connecting the outward arm to the body.



Future of street art in Chennai

New laws allow graffiti on public spaces to be legal and graffiti artists in the city need only to ask for permission from the proper authorities before they can start their work.



Modern graffiti work at Chennai's Egmore station

Abandoned walls, street corners and even the beaches in the city, reveal a colourful blend of political portraits, vibrant graffiti and even modern art, created by the street artists of Chennai.



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