

VISUAL ANALYSIS OF HAND PAINTED
LETTERING IN TAMIL

DESIGN RESEARCH SEMINAR
MVDSP-32

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2016

VISUAL ANALYSIS OF HAND PAINTED LETTERING IN TAMIL

DRS'16

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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

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APPROVAL 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

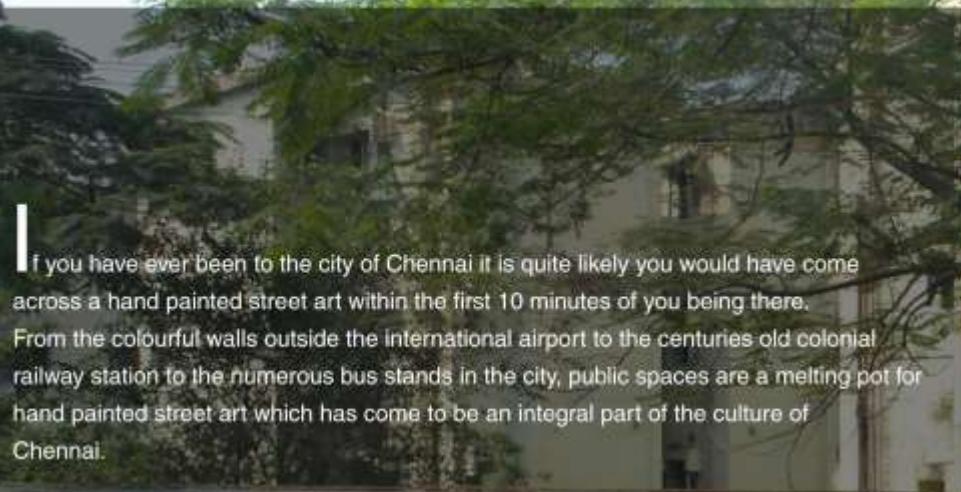
Hand painted street murals have been around for decades and are still found in and around the city of Chennai. Like Kollywood, Marina beach, sambhaar vada and filter coffee, hand painted Tamil typo has become an integral part of the culture of Chennai,

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

ஓ oq	ஓ a(h)	ஆ aa	இ ei	ய yee	உ vu	ஓஓ voo
க் ik	க ka	கா kaa	கி ki	கீ kee	கு ku	கூ koo
ங் ing	ங nga	ஙா ngaa	ஙி ngi	ஙீ ngee	ஙு ngu	ஙூ ngoo
ச் ich	ச cha	சா chaa	சி chi	சீ chee	சு chu	சூ choo
ஞ் inj	ஞ gna	ஞா gnaa	ஞி gni	ஞீ gnee	ஞு gnu	ஞூ gnoo
த் it	த ta	தா taa	தி ti	தீ tee	து tu	தூ too
ன் in	ன na	னா naa	னி ni	னீ nee	னு nu	னூ noo
த் ith	த tha	தா thaa	தி thi	தீ thee	து thu	தூ thoo

எ ^{டி} ye(y)	ய [ெ] yea	ய [ெ] i	ஒ ^{வோ} vo	ஒ ^{வோ} vo	ஒ ^{வோ} av
கெ ke(y)	கே kay	கை kai	கொ ko	கோ kō	கெவா kav
நெய் nge(y)	நேய் ngay	நெய் ngai	நோ ngo	நோ ngō	நெவா ngav
செ che(y)	சே chay	சை chai	சோ cho	சோ chō	செவா chav
நெஞ் gne(y)	நேஞ் gnay	நெஞ் gnai	நெநா gno	நெநா gnō	நெநா gnav
தெ te(y)	தே tay	தெ tai	தொ to(h)	தோ tō(h)	தெவா tav
நென் ne(y)	நேன் nay	நென் nai	நெநா nō	நெநா nō	நெநா nav
தெ the(y)	தே thay	தெ thai	தொ tho	தோ thō	தெவா thav

Quer- heitl.	Gut- heit	seit dem	Quer- heit	Gut- heit	Quer- heit
Qup heitl.	Gup heit	seup dem	Qup heit	Gup heit	Qup heit
Quer- heitl.	Gue heit	seuer dem	Quer- heit	Guer heit	Quer- heit
Qug heitl.	Gug heit	seug dem	Quug heit	Gug heit	Quug heit
Qup heitl.	Gup heit	seug heit	Quug heit	Gug heit	Quug heit
Quer- heitl.	Gue heit	seuer heit	Quer- heit	Guer heit	Quer- heit
Qug heitl.	Gug heit	seug heit	Quug heit	Gug heit	Quug heit
Quer- heitl.	Gue heit	seuer heit	Quer- heit	Guer heit	Quer- heit



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.



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















ஆனந்த் டிம்பர்ஸ்

அரவிந்த் செராயிக்ஸ்

இ.மா ஹார்ச்வேர்ஸ்

பாவின் டிரைவர்ஸ்

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GOLDEN GLASS AND PLYWOOD
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டிபன் சென்டர்
மசவு உணவுகம்
NO. 2/20, காலைப்பாக்கம், திருச்சிமலை





சௌமி, ராக்திருஷ்ணன், டி. வெந்தாவேநா
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திருவுருமகாரி, மீனாஷநாயகி, செந்தாஸ்வரமுத்துவமுத்துவம்
நாதநாதராம, பாப்ரயிசாம, சி. பெருமானராம, சுவர்முத்துவம்
நாம், குமாரி, காந்தி, சுதா, கா. குமாரி, கீ. குமாரி, கா. குமா

தினாந்திர கலைக்காலை ந் போகும் குடிமலையோம் உன் மூவதுவிய கார்க்கர் உன்னொடிட குருக்கிறார்.

நான் உள்ளூர் பயிர்களுக்கிடையில் சுற்று சுற்று வருகிறேன். நான் தாங்கும் பயிர்களுக்கிடையில் சுற்று சுற்று வருகிறேன்.

வாங்குப்பட்டு பார்த்துமிக்கவர்களே
நிலை எல்லாரும் என்றுத்தீவில்
வாருங்கள் நான் உங்களுமிகு
வேள்பாறுதல் தருவேன்...க 11-28

நீப்யமா, அதே, நான்
2 னான் கீன கிருக்கிறீன்;
திவங்காலிக, நான் 2 ன்
நேவன்; ரசா-41

நேசிய பசுமைப்படை
மாஞ்சின்க
மரம் வளமிப்போம்/
மணம் வளம்
பெறுவோம்!!

செஞ்சியுவை சங்கம்
+ இடல் நலம் காபிளோம்
சேவை செய்வோம்
நயுணர்வு வளர்ப்போம்



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



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



அ
aa



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

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

FIG D



FIG 1

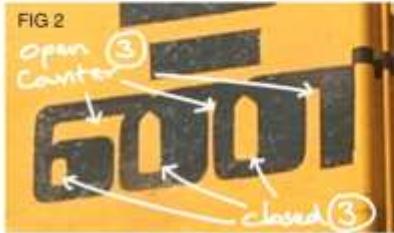


FIG 2



FIG 3



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 **ா**.

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 A



FIG B



FIG C



ஈ
cha

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

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



FIG F



FIG E



FIG D

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.

க
ka

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



FIG A

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 B

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.

FIG C



FIG D



FIG E



FIG F



FIG G



FIG H

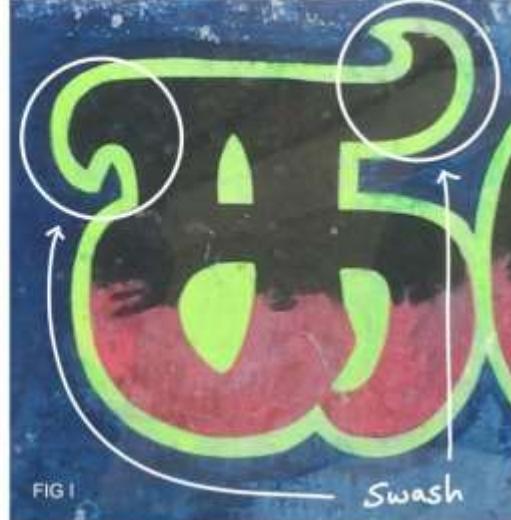


FIG I





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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