

## 4. History of Indian Arts

### 4.1 What is 'Art'?

### 4.2 Indian Traditions of Visual Arts

### 4.3 Indian traditions of Performing Arts

### 4.4 Art, Applied Art and Professional Opportunities

#### 4.1 What is Art?

It is a natural human instinct to want to share his experience, wisdom, and also emotions. When that instinct results in a beautiful creation, it is acknowledged as 'Art'. The artist's power of imagination, sensibility, state of emotion and his skills are the crucial factors at the root of artistic creation.

**Visual Arts and Performing Arts :** Artistic creations are of two types, 'Visual Arts' and 'Performing Arts'. The Sanskrit term for the first type is *Drik Kala* and for the second type, *Lalit* or *Aangik Kala*. Many examples of Prehistoric rock art have been discovered at many sites in the world. It proves that the origin of visual arts is as old as the stone-age man.

**Folk Arts and Classical Arts :** There are two distinct traditions of art, 'Folk Art'

and 'Classical Art'. Folk art is a tradition that has continued from the prehistoric times. The expression of folk art is a natural part of people's way of living. Hence its expression is spontaneous. Folk art is created by collective participation of the members of a social group. Classical art, on the other hand, is expressed within an established frame of consistent rules. It needs a prolonged training to master any form of classical art.

**Style in Art :** Artists tend to have their own method of working. It is known as the style of the artist. When a style is adopted by many artists over a prolonged period of time, it may become a tradition. Such tradition gets established as an 'art style'. Various art styles develop in every culture, which are characteristic of a certain period and region. Such styles are helpful in studying art history.

#### 4.2 Indian Traditions of Visual Arts (*Drik Kala*)

The art of painting and sculpting are visual arts.



**Maratha Style of Painting :** Maratha paintings is an example of art style. The style known as Maratha paintings began to develop in the latter half of the 17th century C.E. This style consists of coloured paintings and they occur as murals and also miniatures used in manuscripts. Murals of Maratha style can be seen in the old wadas at places like Wai, Menavali and Satara in Maharashtra. The Maratha style was influenced by the Rajput and European styles of painting.

Painting styles help us in understanding various things about the times in which it was developed such as the life style, attires, customs, etc.

### Art of Painting :



**The mural of  
Bodhisattva  
Padmapani**

Paintings are two dimensional, for example, sketches or paintings of nature, objects and individuals. They are done on various surfaces, such as rocks, walls, papers, canvas of different types and earthen pots. The mural of Bodhisattva at Ajanta caves is one of the finest examples of the art of painting.

**Folk styles of Paintings :** Rock paintings dating to stone ages have been discovered in many countries.

In India, there are rock painting sites in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The rock paintings in the caves at Bhimbetka are famous. Bhimbetka is a World Heritage site.

Rock paintings usually depict human, animal and geometric figures. However, the style of rock paintings seems to be changing according to the cultural changes from stone ages to the beginning of agriculture. The change is visible in the depiction of flora and fauna or it may be evident in the style of portraying various figures and also in the colours that were used. Black, red and white colours were used in the rock paintings, which were made from natural substances. With the help of rock paintings we can understand the knowledge of ancient people about their natural surroundings and also the way they exploited available natural resources.

The tradition of folk style of paintings closely resembles the style of rock paintings. Customs such as decorating the house walls and courtyards (Rangawali) by

drawing various figures and symbols or using panels of paintings to narrate stories helped to develop regional styles of folk paintings.



### Do you know ?



The traditions of Warli painting and *Pingul* or *chitrakathi* (चित्रकथी) in Maharashtra are among the finest examples of folk style of paintings. Jivya Somya Mashe, the artist in Thane district has played a great role in making the Warli style of paintings very popular. He has been honoured with a number of national and international awards for his paintings. In the year 2011, he was awarded 'Padmashree'.

### It is interesting to know :



The tradition of *Chitrakathi* (चित्रकथी) is mentioned in 'Manasollasa', or *Abhilashitartha Chintamani* a book written by the Chalukya king Someshvara in the 12th century C.E. It confirms the antiquity of this tradition. The tradition of narrating stories from Ramayana or Mahabharata with the help of wooden



puppets and paintings is known as, *Chitrakathi* or *Pinguli* tradition. The Chitrakathi pictures are drawn on a paper and painted in colours made from natural substances. It takes 30-50 pictures to complete the narration of a single story. These pictures are preserved very carefully and handed down from one generation to another. The artists and the government are trying to preserve the tradition, which is on the verge of extinction.

**Classical Styles of Painting :** The ancient Indian texts have explained various aspects of arts in great details. There are altogether 64 arts mentioned in these texts. The art of painting is mentioned as *alekhyam* or *alekhyavidya* in these.

It is said to have six main aspects (*Shadange*). The ancient Indian scholars studied these six aspects very minutely. They include : *Roopbheda* (Different shapes and forms), *Pramana* (Proportionate depiction of various features of an image), *Bhava* (Expressions), *Lavanyayojana* (Aesthetics), *Sadrushyata* (A resemblance to reality), *Varnikabhang* (Colour composition).

Agama texts of various religious sects, Puranas, and Vastushastra texts explain the arts of painting and sculpting in the context of temple architecture.

**Miniature Paintings in Manuscripts :** The miniature paintings in the early manuscripts show an influence of Persian style. The Deccan miniature style was developed under the patronage of the Deccan Sultanates. During the reign of Akbar, the Mughal emperor, the Mughal



**Mughal Miniature** style showing a blend of Indian and Persian styles was developed. **Western Style of Painting :** In the British period Indian artists came under the influence of European style of painting. An art school was established under the leadership of James Wales, a Scottish artist, in the times of Savai Madhavrao Peshwe in Shaniwar Wada in Pune. He had done a portrait of Savai Madhavrao and Nana Phadnavis. Gagaram Tambat, a marathi artist who worked with Wales deserves a special mention here. He



**Savai Madhavrao and Nana Phadnavis**



**Gangaram Tambat with his Guru**

had made drawings of the rock-cut caves at Verul and Karle. Some of his drawings are preserved in the Yale Centre of British Art of Yale University.

Exact portrayal of the object of the painting is characteristic of the European

style. A number of renowned artists were trained in the J. J. School of Art and Industry, which was established in 1857 C.E., offering courses in European style of painting. Pestonji Bomanji, an alumni of this school made replicas of Ajanta paintings.

**Sculptural Art :** Sculptures are three dimensional, such as images, statues, pots and objects with artistic embellishment. For creating sculptures either rock or metal



**Ashokstambh**

or clay is used. Rock sculptures are made by carving, metal sculptures are made with the help of moulds and clay sculptures are formed either directly with hands or by using moulds. The entire temple of Kailasa at

Verul is a unique monolithic sculpture (carved out of a single rock). The lion capital of the Asokan pillar found at Sarnath, is the national emblem of India.

**Folk Styles of Sculptural Art :**

The sculptural art is also as ancient as the art of painting, dating back to stone ages. Carving tools out of stone can said to be the beginning of sculptural art. The custom of making clay images for rituals has been prevalent in India since Harappan times. It has continued till today in many regions like Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Rajsthan, etc. The Ganesha idols, masks of Gauri, bull figurines made for the festival of *Bailpola*, wooden memorials, *Veergals* (memorial stones), the decorated clay storage bins, etc. are a few examples of the folk traditions of sculptural art.

**Classical Styles of Sculptural Art :**

The Harappan seals, stone and bronze statues tell us about the 5000 years old or even older tradition of the Indian tradition of sculptural art. It is said that the tradition

of carving out stone sculptures of larger size began in the Mauryan period with the Asokan pillars.

The Sanchi stupa was erected in emperor Ashoka's time. However, the beautiful sculptural embellishments of the stupa are supposed to be later additions. The sculptures at Bharhut are testimonies of the continuous development of sculptural art in India.



**Bharhut Stupa**

Buddhism was spread far and wide, in many countries outside India. The tradition of erecting Buddhist stupas began in those countries as well. The stupa at

Borobudur in Indonesia is the largest stupa in the world. It was built during the 8th-9th century C.E. It was declared as a World Heritage site in 1991.



**Borobudur Stupa**

**Indian Iconography :** The Gandhara school of art came into being in the 2nd century B.C.E. in Afghanistan and neighbouring regions. It had Greek and Persian influence.

The 1st-3rd century C.E., that is the Kushana period, saw the rise of Mathura school of art. The Mathura school laid the foundation of Indian iconography. Iconography is a branch of knowledge which includes everything about making





**Natraja**

of images of gods and goddesses.

The Kushana kings made use of images of various deities on their coins. During the period of Gupta empire the iconographic rules were formulated and standards for sculptural art were set. The art of making bronze images was developed under the patronage of Chola kings during 9th-13th century. Bronze idols of Gods and goddesses like Siva-Parvati, Nataraj, Lakshmi, Vishnu, etc. were made in this period.

**Architecture and Sculpture :** There are a number of rock-cut caves in India. The tradition of rock-cut caves originated in India in the 3rd century B.C.E. Technically the entire composition of a rock-cut cave represents a union of architecture and sculptural art. Its entrances, interiors with its carved columns and images are excellent specimens of sculptural art. The paintings on the walls and ceiling have survived in some of the caves till today. The rock-cut caves at Ajanta and Verul in Maharashtra were declared as World Heritage in 1983.



**Ajantha Cave – No. 19 Entrance**

The temple architecture in India began to develop around 4th century C.E. during the Gupta period. The temples built at the beginning of the Gupta period had only the sanctum sanctorum (*Garbhagriha*) and a veranda with four columns.



**Nagara Style**

The temple architecture in India had reached its peak by the 8th century C.E. This is easily testified by the magnificent composition of the Kailas temple of Verul. By the medieval period various styles of temple architecture had developed in India.

The styles of temple architecture are identified by the style of the tower (*Shikhara*). The *Nagara* style of North India and the *Dravida* style of South India are the two principal styles of Indian temple architecture. A blend of these two styles is known as *Vesara* style. The *Bhoomija* style seen in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra has a close resemblance to the *Nagara* style from the structural viewpoint. In the *Bhoomija* style, series of miniature towers are arranged, which become smaller toward the top. Hence, the tower appears to be continuously rising from the base of the temple to the top.



**Dravida Style Gopura**

**It is interesting to know :**

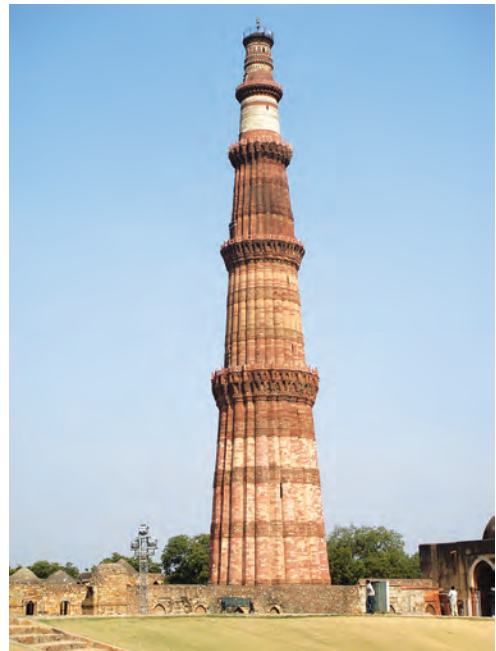
Temples in Maharashtra built in 12th-13th centuries are known as *Hemadpanti* temples. The outer walls of *Hemadpanti* temples are built in a star shape. In the star-shaped plan, the outer walls of the temple has a zigzag design. This results into an interesting effect of alternating light and shadow. The important characteristic of *Hemadpanti* temple is its masonry. The walls are built without using any mortar, by locking the stones by using the technique of tenon and mortise joints. The Ambreshwar temple at Ambarnath near Mumbai, Gondeshwar temple at Sinnar near Nashik, Aundha Nagnath temple in the Hingoli district are a few finest examples of the Hemadpanti style. Their plan is star-shaped. The *Hemadpanti* temples are found at several places in Maharashtra.



**Gondeshwar Temple - Sinnar**

In the medieval period, under the patronage of Muslim sultanates many styles of architecture, such as Persian, Central Asian, Arabic and pre-Islamic native Indian styles were blended together creating the Islamic architecture of India. Many beautiful buildings were created. The Qutub Minar at Mehrauli near Delhi, Taj Mahal at Agra, Gol Gumbaz at Bijapur in Karnatak are the world famous examples of the Islamic architecture of

India. The construction of the building of Kutub Minar started during the reign of Kutubuddin Aibak (12th century C.E.) and four floors were completed in the reign of Altmash (13th century). Construction of Kutub Minar was completed in the reign of Phiroz Tughluq. Kutub Minar is the highest minaret in the world. It is 73 meters (240 ft.) in height. The Kutub Minar complex of buildings has been declared as a World Heritage.



**Kutub Minar**

The Mughal emperor Shah Jahan built Taj Mahal in the memory of his queen Mumtaz Mahal. The Taj Mahal is looked upon as the paramount example



**Taj Mahal**



of the beauty of Islamic architecture in India. This world famous building has been declared as World Heritage by UNESCO.

The Gol Gumbaz at Bijapur in Karnatak was built in the 17th century C.E. This grand building houses the burial of Mohammed Adil Shah of Bijapur. Inside the dome, after which the building is named, there is a round gallery. Even a slight whisper by a person standing in this gallery can be heard everywhere and it somebody claps from here its echo can be heard many times.



**Gol Gumbaz**

During the British period a new architectural style arose in India. It is known as Indo-Gothic architectural style. Buildings like Churches, government offices, residences of top officials, railway stations were built in this style during the British period. The building of



**Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Railway Terminus**

‘Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Railway Terminus’, Mumbai is the finest example of the Indo-Gothic architecture and it is a World Heritage Site.

### **4.3 Indian traditions of Performing Arts**

#### **Traditions of Performing Folk Arts:**

India has independent and varied traditions of folk songs, folk instrumental music, folk dances and folk theatre, which are characteristic of every particular region. There exist many rich traditions of performing folk arts in Maharashtra also. They developed as an integral part of the religious festivals and social life. To name a few as examples, we may mention Koli Dance, Tarapa Dance, Dashavatar of Konkan, Powada, Keertan, Jagar-Gondhal, etc.

#### **Traditions of Classical Performing Arts :**

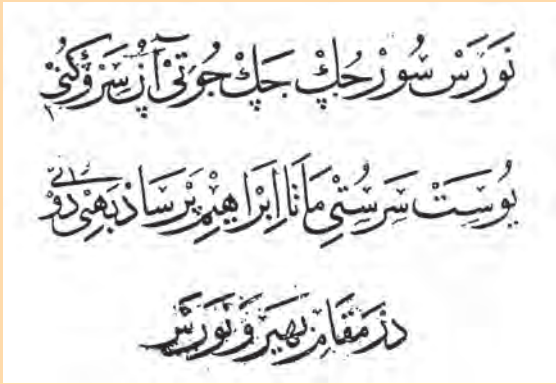
India has a rich heritage of Classical performing arts, too. The text of ‘Natyashastra’ written by Bharatmuni is supposed to be the earliest one discussing music and theatre. The nine moods (nine rasas), supposed to be fundamental in the presentations of Indian performing arts are: *Shringar* (love), *Hasya* (humour), *Beebhatsa* (repulsion), *Raudra* (terrible), *Karuna* (sad), *Veer* (heroic), *Bhayanak* (fearful), *Adbhut* (wondrous) and *Shant* (Peaceful).

Indian people came into contact with cultural traditions of other nations and that resulted into blending of many different streams in the presentation of Indian performing arts, enriching them over time. As a result many styles of presenting of classical vocal music, instrumental music, and dance came into existence. Various schools preserving those styles were also created.

There are two main branches of the Indian classical music :



Do you know ?



The ruler of Bijapur, Ibrahim Adilshah II wrote a text in Dakhani Urdu language, entitled ‘Kitab-e-Navras’. This text is about Indian classical music. It includes verses sung in the Dhrupad style and enables the audience to experience the joy of excellent poetry. This text is originally translated in Marathi by Dr Sayyad Yahya Nashit. It is edited by Dr Arun Prabhune. The translation of the verse printed on the cover of this text reads as follows:

“Oh, Mother Saraswati, you are the divine light in the world and you are complete with all qualities. If Ibrahim receives your grace (blessings), the poetry of the navras will become eternal.”

‘Hindustani music’ and ‘Carnatic music’. Similarly there are two forms of it : Classical (shastriya) and semi-classical (upshastriya). The semi-classical has included many styles of folk music.

A beautiful blend of all three forms of music, vocal, instrumental and dance can be seen in various Indian classical dance forms like ‘Kathak of north India, ‘Lavani’ of Maharashtra, ‘Odisi’ of Odisha, ‘Bharatnatyam’ of Tamilnadu, Kuchipudi of Andhra and ‘Kathakali’ and ‘Mohiniattam’ of Kerala.



Lavani - Maharashtra



Kathakali - Kerala

In India in the post-independence period various festivals of music and dance are organised with a view to make it accessible to common people. Many people attend these festivals, including Indians and foreigners alike. The ‘Savai Gandharva’ festival of Pune is a famous one.

Lately, we can see an inclination toward experimenting and creating fusion of various music styles, by trying to overcome the limitations imposed by a traditional style or school. Pandit Uday Shankar is a prominent name among such artists who created a new style. He successfully created a fusion of Indian classical dance and European opera. He



also included various forms of folk dance in his style. Thus the scope of the presentation of Indian performing arts seems to be constantly expanding. The same phenomenon is apparent in the field of Indian visual arts.

#### 4.4 Art, Applied Art and Professional Opportunities

**Arts :** Art history is an independent branch of knowledge. Various opportunities of research are available in this field.

(1) Art historians can work in the field of journalism.

(2) Art market is an independent field. It calls for special expertise to assess the exact value of an art object or to ensure that it is genuine. An expert with deep understanding of art history is required for this task.

(3) Heritage Management and Cultural Tourism are recently developed fields. In these fields students of art can find many professional opportunities. Museums and Archives Management, Library Science and Information Technology, Archaeological Research, Indology are some important fields in this regard.

**Applied Art :** The visual and performing arts are primarily looked upon as the means of entertainment for people. The artist performs primarily with this purpose. However, there is a scope to combine an artistic creation with utility value to make it economically viable. Thus an artistic creation with a utilitarian purpose is called applied art.

(1) Industry and Advertisement; Interior Design and production of ornamental object; Art Design of stage Backdrops

(Nepathya); Art Direction for Films and Television; Creating attractive Layouts of books, magazines; Calligraphy; Production of greeting cards, invitation cards, customised stationary, gift objects; etc. are the fields of applied arts.

(2) The field of architecture, photography are also part of applied arts. Nowadays, still and animated graphics created with the help of computers are used for various purpose. This is also applied art. Ornaments, artistic creations of metals, earthen pots with colourful designs, objects made from cane and bamboo, beautiful glass objects, attractive textiles and clothing, etc. all can be listed under applied arts.

Every field mentioned above requires a detailed planning and meticulous management at every stage of production. It is essential to employ, trained and skilled individuals at every stage. Some of the production processes of artistic objects have a history of certain traditions. The development of each productive process has its own history. Hence the syllabi of training courses of art design include the history of various industrial and cultural traditions.

There are a few institutions in India, which offer technical and occupational training in the above mentioned fields. Among them 'National Institute of Design' in Ahmedabad, Gujarat is a world renowned institute. This institute has introduced an online course since 2015.

In the next lesson, we will learn about mass media and history.



## Exercise

### 1. (A) Choose the correct option from the given options and complete the statement.

- (1) The arts of painting and sculpting are ..... .
- (a) visual arts
  - (b) performing arts
  - (c) folk arts
  - (d) classical arts
- (2) The ..... saw the rise of Mathura school.
- (a) Kushana period
  - (b) Gupta period
  - (c) Rashtrakuta period
  - (d) Maurya period

### (B) Identify and write the wrong pair in the following set.

- (1) Qutub Minar – Mehrauli
- (2) Gol Gumbaz – Vijapur
- (3) Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Railway Terminus – Delhi
- (4) Taj Mahal – Agra

### 2. Write short notes.

- (1) Art
- (2) Hemadpanti style
- (3) Maratha style of painting

### 3. Explain the following statements with reasons.

- (1) An expert with deep understanding of art history is required in the art market.
- (2) It is necessary to preserve the tradition like *Chitrakathi*, which is on the verge of extinction.

### 4. Complete the following table.

Temple Architecture Naagara	Naagara	Draavida	Hemadpanti
Characteristics			
Examples			

### 5. Answer the following questions in detail.

- (1) Write in detail about folk styles of painting.
- (2) Explain the characteristics of the Islamic architecture in India by giving examples.
- (3) What kind of professional opportunities are available in the field of arts?
- (4) Observe the illustration of Warli painting on p. 23 and write about:  
(a) Depiction of nature (b) Drawings of human figures (c) Depiction of occupations (d) Houses

### Project

- (1) Collect additional information of the World Heritage sites in India.
- (2) Observe the sculptors or image makers at work in your locality and interview them.

