Chitra

PARAMPARYAM

Book 1



for Tagore National Fellowship for Cultural Research

by Lakshmi Krishnamurthy

2019-2021 Batch; Ref. No. A-123/1/2021 dt. 11th January 2023



STUDIO

PARASPARYAS

© Lakshmi Krishnamurthy, 2025

No 3, 3rd Cross Street
Dr. Radhakrishnan Nagar
Thiruvanmiyur
Chennai – 600041
India
lakkikris@gmail.com
www.artbylakki.com

All images and interpretations are the author's own, except those specifically credited otherwise.

Cover Page: 'Patina' Real Gems, A Medley of Thanjavur (Natural Colours) and Glass Painting (Oil) Techniques. Without any attributes, She is Adhara Sakthi, an embodiment of Gnana, Ichha and Kriya Sakthi, symbolically represented by pink lotus - Lakshmi, white lotus - Saraswathy and Trisul - Sakthi . Seated on a lotus inside a Golden Water Pavilion covered with a Golden Pergola intertwined with flowering creepers (Symbol of Purity) with Abhaya and Varada gestures, radiates patina with the terraverte colour used (an admixture of blues and browns). With Ganga descending and Yamuna ascending and portrayal of sun, moon , makaras, water body and sky, Her Universality is established. Smoked mirror and real mirror at the back enhance the visualisation.

Chitra

PARASPARYAS

Evolution of Traditional Indian Paintings

From Bhimbetka to the 17th Century

A Research Compendium

Book 1



for Tagore National Fellowship for Cultural Research

by

Lakshmi Krishnamurthy

2019-2021 Batch; Ref. No. A-123/1/2021 dt. 11th January 2023

Paramparyam Series2, ‘Traverse Through Eons’ Ras Leela

Size:152.4 x 91.44 centimetres (60” x 36”) Tempera



This painting pays tribute to the Pan-Indian Art- Forms, beginning with the Pasupathi Seal of Indus valley, heralding the Divine Blessings of Shiva, travels to Bhil tribe for their everlasting faith in life after death, to the *Palaghatta* of Warli, wherein Devi is like a bundled up haystack vertically placed with due reverence for Nature and Pithori Devi, dancing down from heaven on Her Horse Mount to bless. Brahma has been added to complete the presence of Trinity to mark their continuous Creation, Preservation and Destruction Through Eons.

Focus is on Ras-Leela, time didn't matter, zone did not matter, wealth did not matter, while absolute surrender paves the way for union of *atma* and *paramatma*, with bliss transcending time.

Starting with the Phad influenced Radha and Krishna, the Leela dances through Ajanta Classicism to Lepakshi Idiom to colourful Miniature School to the bouncing Punjabi *Garbha* and in the middle is the vision of the artist, dancing in gay abandon.

In Nature again suggestive influences have been borrowed from tribal and classical schools.

The whole composition is aimed at reaching out with aesthetic appeal to the "Timeless Traditions, Enthralling Indian Art.

Acknowledgments



Any journey, artistic or otherwise, is shaped partly by the intentions of the traveller, and partly (perhaps even mostly) by the persons, places, and events along the path. So too my journey of discovery.

Foremost among them, I wish to convey my heartfelt thanks to the Minister for Culture and the fraternity of officers in the Ministry for granting me a Tagore National Fellowship for Cultural Research. The Fellowship is an honour and gave me the means and impetus to record all that I have learned and observed and studied over the past several decades.

The Kalakshetra Foundation, temple for the arts, like a galactic nebule giving birth to untold numbers of stars: to its farsighted and superb Directors, assisted so ably by staff and faculty, I bow my head in humble thanks. The Foundation created me; your support empowered me to capture 35 years of research into this compendium: 'Chitra Paramparyam' – the Evolution of Traditional Indian Painting Forms, from Bhimbetka to the 17th Century.

With pranams to 'The Temple of Fine Arts' Kalakshetra Foundation, a shrine par excellence, I would like to offer my gratitude in poetic language.

‘நுண்கலைகளுக்கோர் அம்பலம்’

வனமே கூரையாக ,

பரந்து விரிந்து , ஆழ வேருன்றி விளங்கும் ஆலமரமே, வெண்குடையாக ,

புஷ்கரணியைத் தழுவிவரும் மந்தமாருதமே சாமரமாக,

குழுமியிருக்கும் மாணவர்களே வாசமிகு மலர்களாக ,

ஆசிரியர்களும் , மற்றோரும் தீஞ்சுவை கனிகளாக ,

அன்றும் , இன்றும் , என்றும் ஆராதிக்க , முழுமுதற்கடவுளும் , நுண்கலைகளை

வெளிச்சத்திற்கு கொண்டுவந்த

முன்னோடியாய் விளங்கும் அத்தையும், ஆசீர்வதிக்க,

ஒரு பூசையே தினம் தினம் அரங்கேறும் இந்த ஆலயத்திற்கு,

என்றும் ஒரு மாணவியாய்,

என் பணிவு கலந்த நன்றியை செலுத்துவதில்

ஆறா மகிழ்வுடன்,

- லஷ்மி.

A Temple Eternal

Salutations rise with joy and grace,

To the Temple, a sacred, timeless place.

Gratitude flows in silent streams,

Bathed in light and golden dreams.

Beneath the sky, so vast and blue,

A crystal dome of the purest hue,

The sun bestows its gentle flame,

And Padma’s breeze invokes His name.

From Pushkarani's sacred shore,

The winds with holy waters pour,

Cool and moist with compassion's air,

A realm of Karuna, calm and fair.

The offerings come in colours bright,

In petals soft and scents of light.

The flowers—students—fresh and free,

The fruits—our staff—in loyalty.

At Vakrathunda’s lotus feet,

Where earth and heaven softly meet,

He rests beneath the Banyan wide,

Dharma’s shade, our noble guide.

Above, the leaves—a white umbrella,

Guarding all, the wise Athai, ever stellar.

Her voice, a star that lights our way,

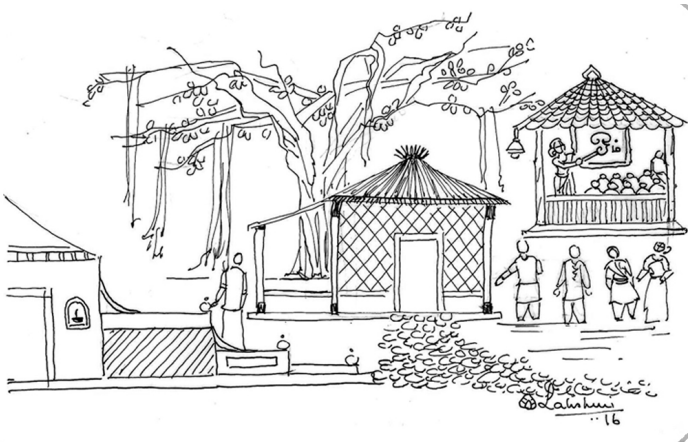
Through every dusk and every day.

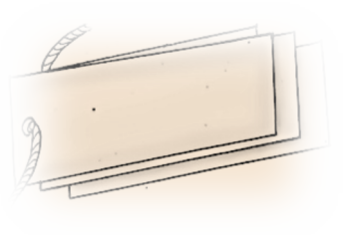
The Aradhanai, begun in grace,

Since thirty-nine, still finds its place.

And through all time, it shall remain,

An endless, ever- flowing chain.





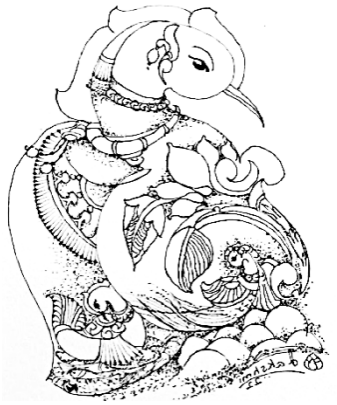
The Divine shows the way, and we are but followers. Along the path, the Divine has granted me the blessings of meeting numerous talented individuals and opened the doors of esteemed institutions who have freely shared their knowledge and insights.

Here is a collection of many such individuals, starting with my two Gurus and continuing in alphabetical order: ”Gurur Brahma, Gurur Vishnu, Gurur Dewo Maheshwara, Gurur Sakshat, Para Brahma, Tasmai Shri Guruve Namah “

- K.Sreenivasulu, Kalakshetra and Devaki Nandan Sharma, Banasthali Vidyapeeth for their invaluable guidance through every step of learning.
- Ajithan Puthumanna, Lecturer at Department of Painting, SSUS, Kaladi, Kerala.
- Dr Ashrafi S Bhagat, Art Historian and Independent Curator, Associate Professor and Former Head, Department of Fine Arts, Stella Maris college, Chennai.
- Bhawani Shankar Sharma, Artist, Former Chairperson, Lalit Kala Academy, Rajasthan, Jaipur and Virendra Sharma, Founder, Palai Art, Craft, Research Foundation.
- M.Chandramurthy Asst. Dir. Tamil Nadu Archaeological Dept.
- H.H.Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, The President of Paramarth Niketan Ashram and India Heritage Research Foundation, Rishikesh.
- Chitra Kala Parishad, Bangalore, Karnataka.
- Dr Deborah Thiagarajan, Founder and Director Dakshina Chitra Museum, Chennai.
- Dr V.L. Indira Dutt, Chairman and Managing Director, KCP Ltd., Chennai.
- INTACH, Chennai, Bangalore and Odisha.
- M.D. Muthukumaraswamy, Director, NFSC, Chennai.
- National Museum , New Delhi and Chennai Museum, Chennai.
- Narmada Prasad Upadhyaya, Retd., Madhya Pradesh commercial tax Appellate Board.

- Om Prakash Soni, Chitralaya Udaipur.
- Dr Padma Subramanyam, Director, Nrithyodaya, Chennai.
- Dr Padmaja Suresh, Chair Person, Aatmalaya Academy, Bangalore.
- Sathish Dayalan, Research Assistant for his diligence, patience and support throughout this endeavour.
- Dr Sheela Sridhar, Head of the Department ,Dance, Mysore University.
- SKN Temple Architects and Sculptors, Chennai.
- Sri Sri University, Odisha.
- Tilak Sharma ,Director and Secretary of Sanjay Sharma Museum and Research Institute, Jaipur, M.A.Vellodi, IFS. Senior-most civil servant of Government of India.
- Vijay Sharma, artist and art critic, Chamba, Himachal Pradesh.
- Sri S.B.P.B.K. Satyanarayana Rao and Smt. Rajarajeswari Devi, Sarvaraya Sugars, Ltd., Chennai.
- The countless students, artists, artisans, well-wishers, friends and others, who have stood by me and helped me along the way.
- Last but not the least, my family, whom I cannot thank enough for putting up with the passion for my art snowballing into crazy time schedules, absenteeism and more!

To all of you, my humble pranams.



List of Volumes

Book 1

Volume 1 Indian Art

Volume 2 Shadangas, (The Canons of Art)

Volume 3 Pre Historic Cave Paintings and Folk Paintings

Volume 4 Murals

Volume 5 Other Canvasses

Afterword – Book 1

Book 2

Volume 6 Research, Restoration and Documentation for Conservation

Volume 7 Teaching Modules

Volume 8 Data Collection for Documentational References

Volume 9 Repository of Painting Techniques

Volume 10 Conclusions

Afterword – Book2

Appendices

Book 1

List of Volumes with Chapters

Volume 1 Indian Art

Prologue

Chapter I: Origin

Chapter II: What is Indian Art?

Chapter III: Art as Yoga

Chapter IV: Classification of Paintings

Chapter V: Tools and Techniques

Chapter VI: Colour Symbolism

Epilogue

Volume 2 Shadangas, (The Canons of Art)

Prologue

Chapter I: Introduction to Vishnudharmottara purana

Chapter II: Shadangas and their Interpretations based on Vishnudharmottara purana

Chapter III: Evaluation of Visual Arts using Shadangas

Chapter IV: The Universality through a Comparative Study on Interrelationship to Music, Dance, Literature and Sciences,

Chapter V: Underlying Significance of Maths based on *Vedang Jyotish*

Epilogue

Volume 3 Pre-Historic Cave Paintings and Folk Paintings

Prologue

Chapter I Introduction

Chapter II Instinctive Bhimbetka

Chapter III Interactive Warli

Chapter IV Innovative Pithora

Chapter V Introduction of iconographic expressions- Chattisgarh and Phad

Chapter VI The flowering of other forms based on the climate, agriculture and geographical location.

Epilogue

Volume 4 Murals

Prologue

Chapter I: Definition of Murals

Chapter II: Fresco and Tempera

Chapter III: Pre- Historic Murals

Chapter IV: Beginning of Recorded History of Murals from Ajanta

Chapter V: Later murals

Epilogue

Volume 5 Other Canvasses

Prologue

Odyssey of Manuscripts

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Palm Leaves, Birch barks and Agar wood.

Chapter III: Kagaz (Paper)

Chapter IV: Thanjavur and Mysore Paintings

Chapter V: Glass Paintings.

Chapter VI: Mica. Similar technique is used as in reverse glass painting.

Chapter VII: Ivory, Marble and Granite (Surface needs to be smooth and the paintings are done with vartanas or stippling.

Chapter VIII: Ganifa Cards.

Chapter IX: Travelling Temple, Sandal wood and Teak

Chapter X: Silk (Tussar or fine silk) and cotton: Two layers are stuck together and the top layer burnished with agate or any other smooth stone. Could also be applied with a thin layer of rice gruel and then polished.

Chapter XI: Leather: softened and painted with natural colours, leather is mainly used for puppetry

Afterword – Book 1

Book Tapestry

Extracts from “Mythic Imagination” - A Critical Appreciation

Book 2

List of Volumes with Chapters

Volume 6 Research, Restoration and Documentation for Conservation

Prologue

Chapter I: Cognisance (Knowledge of awareness)

Chapter II: Explorations

Epilogue

Volume 7 Teaching Modules

Prologue

Chapter I: Design

Chapter II: Human Figures

Chapter III: Techniques on Varthanas (renderings) and Varnika Bhangas (science of Colour)

Chapter IV: Jewellery and

Chapter V: Textile designing

Chapter VI: Pan Indian

Chapter VII: Vision and Visuals

Epilogue

Volume 8 Data Collection for Documentational References

Prologue

Chapter I: Bharat Kala Bhavan, An Archaeological Museum, Benares Hindu University, Varanasi.

Chapter II: Chitra Kala Parishad, Bangalore.

Chapter III: Nitin, Deputy Director, INTACH, Chitra Kala Parishad, Bangaluru.

Chapter IV: M.G.Koti, Executive Director, DWIJA Conservation Society of Art & Cultural Heritage, Mysore (Digital conservation).

Chapter V: From Jaipur to Udaipur

Chapter VI: Dakshina Chitra Heritage Museum, Chennai, amongst others

Epilogue

Volume 9 Repository of Painting Techniques

Prologue

Chapter I: Cave paintings

Chapter II: Folk and tribal groups

Chapter III: Murals - Fresco and Tempera

Chapter IV: Other Canvasses

Epilogue

Volume 10 Conclusions

Prologue

Chapter I: Highlights of the mystical unravelling of Pan Indian Techniques

Epilogue

Afterword – Book 2

Book Tapestry

About The Author

Appendices

Prologue

Appendix I: The innovative Tools and Techniques that were created by untold generations of artists,

Appendix II: Folk and Tribal art, with its innocent inquisitiveness,

Appendix III: Murals with their regal splendour and chosen mediums to suit the soil with graceful lines,

Appendix IV: Miniatures in their colourful formalism,

Appendix V: A little introduction to time line of history before the beginning of recorded painting scenario in Ajanta,

Appendix VI: A few landmark techniques that enthralled artists and historians alike

Appendix VII: Guidelines for Jewellery and Textile Designing

Appendix VIII: To crown it all, a few chosen detailed narrations with illustrations available.

Epilogue

Chitra

Paramparyas



Volume 1

Indian Art



STUDIO

PARASPARYAS

© Lakshmi Krishnamurthy, 2025

No 3, 3rd Cross Street
Dr. Radhakrishnan Nagar
Thiruvanmiyur
Chennai – 600041
India
lakkikris@gmail.com
www.artbylakki.com

All images and interpretations are the author's own, except those specifically credited otherwise.

Title Page: 'Adithya Hridayam ' A Medley of Techniques - Copper Sheet Metal embossed frame work housing Glass and Thanjavur Paintings

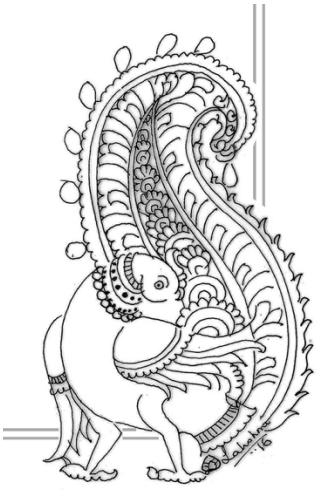
3' diameter encased in Teak wood frame 4' x 4'. Based on the Adithya Hridayam Slokas narrated by Sage Agasthya extolling the virtues of the Sun God to Sri Rama

Executed as a homage to Raja Raja Chola, using

The early and late Chola details for Aharya and Sheet Metal Embossing for the frame work

Thanjavur and Glass Painting techniques which evolved in the Culture Capital in later years.

List of Chapters



Prologue

Chapter I: Origin

Chapter II: What is Indian Art?

Chapter III: Art as Yoga

Chapter IV: Classification of Paintings

Chapter V: Tools and Techniques

Chapter VI: Colour Symbolism

Epilogue

'A Pan Indian Medley'

An Odyssey



'Lotus' (24 inches by 24 inches, Tempera)

This Lotus traverses from nature through Pitchwais (paintings on cloth/silk, Udaipur School), Raj Samudra, Kalamkari, *Katikabhumi* (Lotus Pond) in Chittannavasal and Ajanta to explode into the Artist's Vision of Pan-Indian Medley.

Prologue



Vakrathunda mahakaya Suryakoti samaprabha I

Nirvighnam kurumedeva Sarva karyeshu sarvada II

“rishimoolam, nadhimolam ariyakoodathu”

(The origins of great rivers and great souls is not meant to be known.)

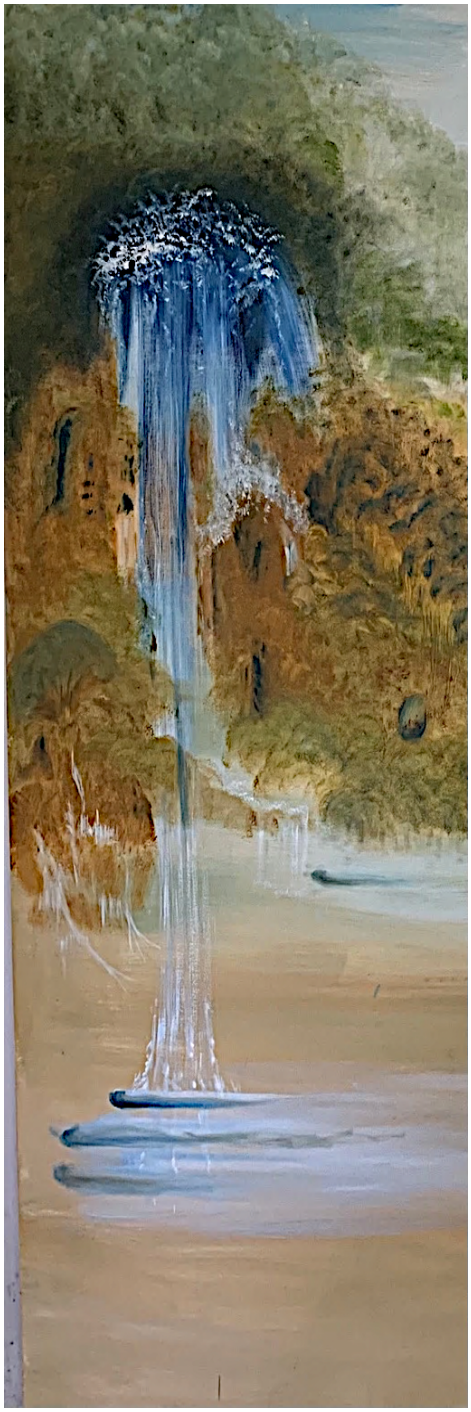
The “White Hole Theory” postulates a possible source of emission of all energy, all matter, light and all information in the universe. This concept idealizes the origin story of most traditional Indian knowledge systems. As per the traditions of the subcontinent, in the beginning of human history, chosen few were able to perceive divine truths and codified the Vedas, which were then passed on through generations of oral traditions.

Starting before history, running through subsequent folk and tribal settlements and into the recent historical eras, true depths of this knowledge is believed to have been intuited and further explored by successive generations of *rishis* (enlightened souls). These rishis thus contributed to the continuous evolution of Indian systems of beliefs, analytics, and expressions. Thus creating a veritable universe of interactions across people and ages, like many tiny rivulets gushing down through the ages, to merge and interact to become streams, rivers, seas and ultimately an ocean of knowledge and understanding.

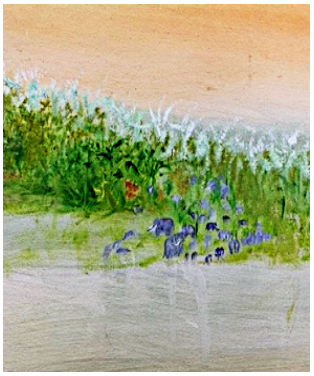
Today we have within our reach a vast ocean of rich details available like a phenomenal treasure chest, awaiting the interested student to dive in and explore its wonders: some may be dormant, others elusive. Yet, when experienced, it provides an unending wellspring of knowledge to absorb, assimilate and actualize

Paramparyam Series 1: Traversing through Eons, the Quest (15 feet by 6 feet, Oil on Canvas) The story begins in the twilight zone of human life on earth. The cavemen with their enormous brain, were intuited in honing in on development, by domesticating animals, by discovering fire, by settling down as Neanderthals, by forming village units, which developed into kingdoms, which gave way to the modern nations of the world and memory.

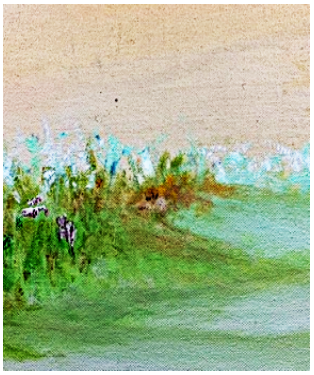














ஓவியத்தின் பயணம்



Hiuen Tsang, 7th Century Chinese Buddhist monk, scholar, traveller and translator.

துள்ளி எழும் புள்ளினங்களாகட்டும்
துவண்டு விழும் துளிர் இலைகளாகட்டும்
பனித்துளியில் சிலிர்க்கும் மலர்களாகட்டும்
மழலையின் மலரும் அரும்புகளாகட்டும்
மகிழ்வில் துள்ளும் இளைஞர்களாகட்டும்
காதலில் களிப்புறும் காதலர்களாகட்டும்
காரணம் எதுவாயினம் காட்சிகள் அரங்கேற
உள்ளத்தில் ஊறுது கற்பனை ஊற்று

ஆதிமனிதன் முழுநிலவில் நீரில் தன்முகம் காண
முதல் ஓவியம் அரங்கேறியது
சுடும் நெருப்பினைக் கண்டறிய கருப்பும் ஒரு காவியமாயிற்று
நாகரீகம் வளர வளர
கல்லும் முள்ளும் ஆயுதமாக வேட்டைக் காட்சிகளும் சித்திரமாயிற்று
நகைச்சுவையும் அதனுடனே தொடர
பூனையின் வயிற்றில் யானையும் வரையலாயிற்று
சிந்தனையும் இயற்கை வந்தனமும் ஒருசேர சேர
காட்சிகளும் பலவாறயிற்று

கலையின் பரிணாம வளர்ச்சி கண்டு
மண்ணையும் கல்லையும் பூக்களையும் இலைகளையும் வண்ணங்களாக்கி
புற்களையும் குச்சிகளையும், துணிகளையும் தூரிகைகளாக்கி
இரசவாதம் செய்த வித்தகர்களை எண்ணி எண்ணி
விம்முகிறது நெஞ்சம் வியக்கிறது அறிவு
சரித்திரம் விளையாடுகிறது.
அதன் ஊடுபாவாய் விளங்கும் கோட்பாடுகளுடன்

Translation The Journey of Art

In the chirping of the birds,

In the rustling of the leaves,

In the undecipherable babblings of the little ones,

In the laughter of youth in total abandon,

In the loving whispers of the young adults

One can feel the rhythm and music overflowing into a fountain head of creativity.

Probably, when the cave man saw his own reflection in moonlit waters and painted his image inside the cave intuitively, the journey began.

Reds, ochres and white were his colours.

Discovery of fire brought in black.

Hunting exposed him to anatomical drawings, while humour brought in picturisation of an elephant inside a cat's stomach!!



Research and nature worship brought in its wake,

The use of earth, stones, flowers and leaves as colours,

The use of grass, bamboo twigs and animal hair as brushes.

With the weaving in of history and culture, as warp and weft,

The scenes exploded continuously as a ceaseless tapestry.

Before you could even pay tribute to the creative artists,

They proclaim that ultimate bliss and peace are

The end products of both performing and visual arts and the Journey goes on ...

A Pan Indian Medley

'Lotus' (24 inches by 24 inches, Tempera)

The Odyssey

This Lotus traverses from nature through Pitchwais (paintings on cloth/silk, Udaipur School), Raj Samudra, Kalamkari,

Katikabhumi (Lotus Pond) in Chittannavasal and Ajanta to explode into the Artist's Vision of Pan-Indian Medley.



Chapter I

Origin



Mythological Origin

Hinduism

The celestial maidens – Apsaras – were trying to distract *Sriman* Narayana from His meditation. With the juice of a mango leaf, He drew a picture of a nymph, infused life into the picture and Urvashi emerged, as an epitome of *Samudrika Lakshan* (Parameters for ideal woman) *Viswakarma*, the Divine architect, was later instructed in the art and science of painting so that he might teach the art to the people on earth.

According to the Chitra *Lakshana* (a compilation based on pre-Buddhist tradition) during the reign of King *Bhayajit* people were supposed to have lived to a ripe old age. But when a brahmin lost his young son and blamed the king, to atone, he demanded Yama to return the youth and a fight ensued. Yama was defeated. Brahma, the creator, thereupon appeared and said to *Bhayajit* "Life and death accord with a man's karma. Yama is not to blame for what occurs. So now draw a picture of the Brahman's son". The King obeyed. Brahma imparted life into that picture and once again addressed the king "You were made capable of drawing this picture of Brahman's son only by my grace. It is the first picture in the world. So now go to the divine architect, *Viswakarma*, who will teach you everything of the science and technique of painting".



Buddhism

Thangka Painting (Tibetan Buddhist painting on silk or cotton based on Buddhist Iconography, Mythological Stories and /or Mandalas- Yantras) The tradition of Thangka painting which originated in India and spread to Tibet was greatly influenced by Art of Nepal At the time of the Buddha's life, his main patron, *Anathapindika*, with Buddha's blessing, sent his daughter to Sri Lanka to be married to the King of Sri Lanka.

The King of Sri Lanka (King of *Padna*) offered him many different jewels including a precious conch. In return, he requested the King to send him something unique. The King wanted to send a painting of Buddha and commissioned artists to paint. They were unable to capture the effulgent Buddha faithfully, as were dazzled by Buddha's brilliant rays of light. Buddha went by a lake to enable the artists to create His image by seeing His reflection in the water. The first painting of Buddha was painted on a large piece of cloth



By Author

Jainism

Antiquity is common to all the religious and historical archives/ traditions in India. While the *Lohanipur* Torso, dated to be from around 2nd CE. Is the earliest known *Jaina* Image in Patna Museum, the earliest painted palm leaf manuscripts dated 1060 from the *Oghaniryukti* are preserved in the Jaisalmer Bhandar. Metropolitan Museum has a set of book covers from the same period and is the oldest outside India.

The recitation and worship of the *Jananapuja* or the Books of Wisdom and the patronage of rich business community in creating huge temple complexes, metal icons and Illustrated Manuscripts with both the covers and folios painted has created a great repository of materials. The Chalukyan Kingswho ruled Gujarat, Malwa and Rajasthan were great patrons. King Kumarapala12th Century. Is credited with distributing hundreds of copies of Kalpasutras and founding 21 Bhandars or Monastic Libraries. Hhistorical Data is included in the Volume 11 – Appendices.



King Siddhartha listening to an astrologer about the Birth of his son Mahavira and the Baby Mahavira with his mother.



Chapter II

What is Indian Art?

The governing laws of Indian character – Indian civilization – are based on three concepts – the sacred, the universal and the ritualistic. Everything human can be related to the Divine.

Art appears not as an aesthetic fact but as a phenomenon inseparable from the life that it tends to illustrate. It is an image, perhaps an emanation, of the Divine. Art evolved in a religious 'climate' that prevailed throughout history, which provided the essential qualities. It obeys the established laws that are in perfect harmony with the Indian character, the cohesion beneath all her paradoxes and contrasts. The laws that govern Indian character are,

- Strength of tradition,
- Adhesion to rules and regulations and
- Tendency to bring diversity into unity.

The strength of tradition has made India into a religious museum. Changes are more by gradual absorption than metamorphosis. The inclination for regulation extends to all the fields such as *Silpa* (Sculpture) Sastra, *Natya* (Dance) Sastra and Kamasutra. "*Natyaveda* … will be richly endowed with in all the spiritual texts and it will demonstrate all types of arts and crafts" according to the *Natya* Sastra. The aim of Indian traditional art is to reach towards the formless by plunging through the metaphysical intonations. Beauty is the Truth – the quintessence of all branches of ancient Indian fine arts. It could easily be explained through Rasas(Evocation of the aesthetic flavour of a work of art as an indescribable feeling in the audience). "Rasa is the seed and fruit of the arts". (Natya Sastra of Bharata muni 2BCE – 2CE) (Page 2 Natya Sastra of Bharatamuni, Satguru Publications).

'Thiruppura Sundari' Tempera Painting 22 inches by 28 inches



Satyam: Inspired by the presiding deity in Thirukkazhukunram in Tamil Nadu made up of Navagan

Sivam: The position of the Ganapathi and Muruga Shrines with the Sun and the Moon to the right Inspiration

Sundaram: Ecstasy in Performance – Devi coming out of the sculpture to bless.

Anantam: Infinitude – The surrender of Pancha Bhutas or the Five senses, represented by the flowers and the portrayal of a plantain grove (the sacred grove of the temple), emphasising the





Application of Chandan and Kumkum and the installation of Sri Chakram before starting 'Ezhil Deviyin Soundarya Darsanam' Thanjavur painting, complete painting 6 feet by 4 feet, based on 27 slokas of Soundaryalahari by Adi Sankaracharya

"Indian genius produced a new art" based on the myths and legends, "the symbol and summary of which is the word rasa and which can be condensed in one brief formula that the poet (the sculptor or painter) does not express but he suggests". In short, Rasa can be the fluid which always has a momentum. Artists can create but the artwork needs to connect to the audience. If connoisseurs can enjoy the nuances, others should be able to enjoy the colours, designs or the concept, as "no man is an island". The creator is considered a seer who can perceive the beauty and harmony of the universe and pass it on to the receptor at varying degrees of perception. There are two theories. According to the Vedanta School, art procures personal pleasure to the receptor while as per the Sankhya School, art is an end in itself. Man makes Art to cultivate or culture himself.

By removing I, the *Aham* and the Ego, the awareness that the Divine or Universal elevates to Bliss, or *Peranandam*, happens. The beauty that enhances the performer and the performance through Sound of Silence, could be analysed through Satyam – the guiding spirit, *Sivam* – sources of inspiration, Sundaram – ecstasy in performance, *Anantam* – infinitude and Santham – silence.

In other words,

- Satyam is the perception of cosmic beauty through self-forgetful activity, made possible by the use of imagination or Pratibha, when contemplating common experience or observing typical facts.
- *Sivam* is the transformation by Pratibha of these observed facts and experiences into a general idea symbolizing the ultimate reality, or the perfection in perceived beauty.
- Sundaram is the conversion of this general symbol as the case may be into concrete material form.
- Anantam is the joy that evolves.
- Santham is the peace that ensues.

The vocabulary of gestures common to religion, theatre and visual arts is minutely classified according to subjects in Vishnu Dharmottara. Sculpture is inseparable from other techniques linked to ritualism. All forms of fine arts, whether they are performing arts or visual arts, one is inseparable from the other and their interdependence can be recognized. The relief and paintings seem to be faithful reproductions of theatrical scenes – that is, divine scenes mimed by human beings with all their gestures, attitudes and groupings. In turn, theatrical scenes reproduce a repertoire similar to that of sculpture with all the subtlety of its expressions. For example, in Ajanta the paintings seem to come alive from the walls like artists in a performance, according to Stella *Kramrisch*.

“Certain objects are to be painted in private houses, suggesting love, gaiety and peace, while the supernatural and the terrible aspects of life were reserved for the temples and royal audience halls” (Vishnu Dharmottara).

'Ecstasy'

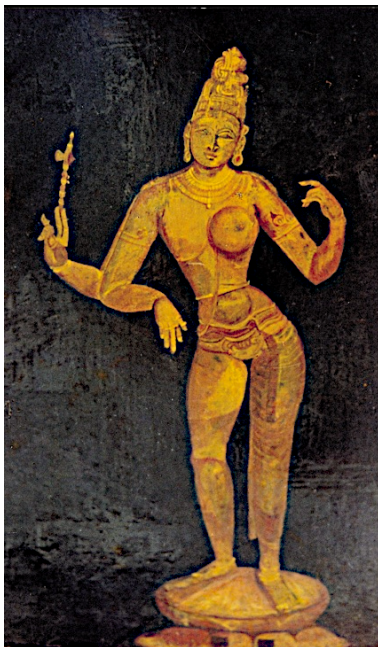
based on sloka 14 of Soundaryalahari by Adi Shankara, Tempera 24 inches by 24 inches by author



Colours, lines and a system of comparisons of parallel images and/or association of ideas are based more on the spirit of the subject than its external qualities (Natya Sastra). The 9th Rasa *Santham* has not been included as is the constant bhava (Bharatamuni's Natya Sastra).

Rasa	Associated Colour
Sringara – Love	*Shyama* – Green
Hasya – Humour	*Sita* – White
Karuna -Compassion	*Kapota* – Dove Coloured
Raudra _ Anger	*Rakta* – Red
Vira – Bravery	*Gaura* – Wheatish Brown
Bhayanaka – Fear	*Krsna* – Black
Bibhatsa Disgust	*Nila* – Blue
Adbhuta - Wonder	*Pita* – Yellow

'Ardhanareesarar' in Different Visualisation



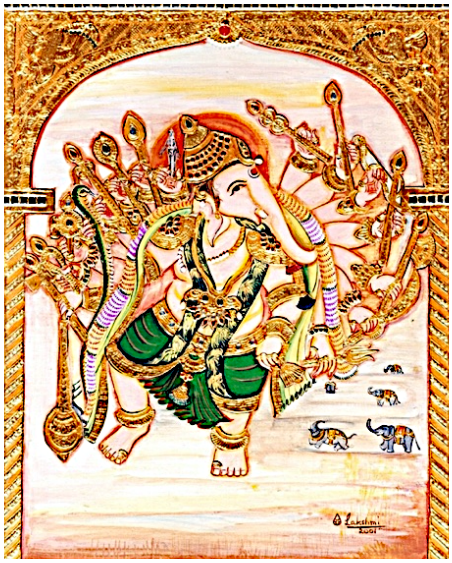
Water Colour on wood 8"x 10" Study based on a Bronze Statue



Based on Kerala Mural technique- 6"x12"

'Omnipotent *Viraganapathi*'–

Thanjavur 15"x 18"



by author

Despite the rigorous strictures over centuries, Indian artists could produce works whose variety, abundance, exuberance, prodigious vitality and masterfulness demand admiration-The Miracle of Indian Art.

Some of the iconographical peculiarities seem to have been created out of impulse either to diversify the One or to channelize the others towards that One.



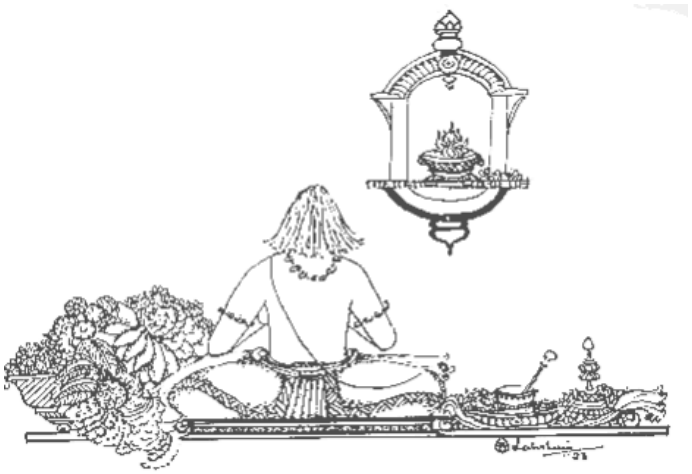


Chapter III

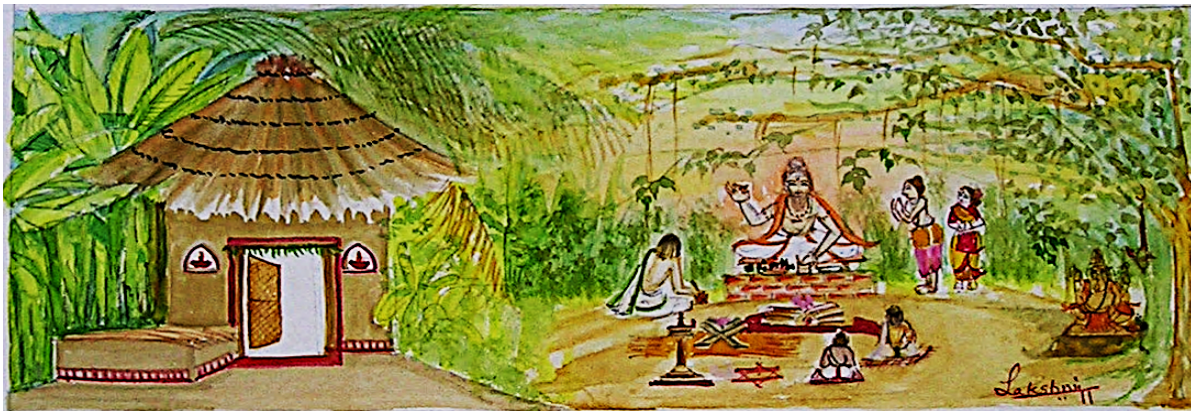
Art as Yoga

The concept of art is yogic, carried in so far as to overlook the differences between the subject and the object of contemplation to achieve harmony and unity of consciousness. From the fountainhead of knowledge assimilated, the vision unfolds waiting to be created. Carried out in the *Brahmamuhurat* (Before Sunrise) with total meditative concentration, the Yagna (Rituals) begins. Process of visualization referred to by *Sukracharyaa* and the Buddhist canons also explain this.

The worshipper, on an auspicious day, after a bath, sits facing East. He then recites the Dhyana Mantra describing the deity with total concentration. The scene unfolds as in a painting and/or sculpture. The vision is then transformed, offerings are made to this vision.











The creeper influenced the aura above Lakshmi arising out of ocean - detail from the author's Quintessential Elixir Series, Kerala Mural Technique, 24 inches x 24 inches (by author)

The Indian artist worked according to a mutual prototype, a transposition of reality, an aspect of the thing recreated and rethought. He did not reproduce the object seen but the object known. The aim of his art was to manifest and thus participate in the play of nature, whose forms it exalted and whose effects it suggested. “The painter should study the picture, mood of nature and depict the seasons he sees around him by the flowers and fruits on trees and the joy or happiness of men, animals and birds” (Vishnu Dharmottara 5 AD). It reproduced unseen but known objects. The artist’s personal feeling was never expressed. It is neither naturalistic nor idealistic nor subjective art.

Similar procedures are mentioned in Buddhist canons:

- Invocation of Buddha or *Bodhisatva*
- Offering of real or imaginary flowers
- Realization in thought – friendliness, compassion, sympathy and impartiality
- Meditation upon emptiness, for by the fire of the idea of the abyss, it is said, the five factors of ego - consciousness are destroyed beyond recovery. They are matter or body *rupa* sensations or feelings, *vedana* -perceptions of sense objects, *samjna* mental formations, samskaras - awareness of the mental aggregates, *vijnana* (from Brittanica Encyclopedia)
- Invocation of Divinity by utterance of the seed word *bija* and total identification with Divinity
- Recitation of Dhyana mantra
- Appearance of Divinity like a reflection or as in a dream

The work of art is completed before the work of transcription or representation is begun.

The artist never makes a stroke with his brush, without having previously seen it with his imagination … the externalization of a work of art implies a vigilant will which persists in not allowing certain visions, institutions or representations to be lost’ *Crose*.

“A man paints with his brains and not with his hands” *Michaelangelo*

The canons of art did not paralyse the artists, but provided them with an inexhaustible supply of modes of expression. Their imagination was free to create endless variations. A balance was maintained between the creative thought and the norms defined.

In short, Indian Art was

- produced in response to demand,
- in pursuit of beauty,
- an expression of personal experience within limits laid down,
- a combined and continuous effort by pupillary succession,
- incorporating changes in forms to suit theology.
- an integral part of daily life with similar nuances and details at any given period to suit the locale in terms of agriculture, climatic conditions etc.

Chapter IV

Classification of Paintings

Difficult-to-define moods and qualities of nature and their revelations in art could be understood only with in-depth perception of the myth, symbols and spirit permeating the Indian art form from time immemorial. The ingenuity and spontaneity in creating tools out of readily available materials like kusa grass, a bamboo twig or a broomstick to carefully plucked animal hairs, and/or the use of colours from vegetable and mineral sources is exceptional and need to be analysed in depth.

Classification of Paintings

A preliminary classification of paintings into permanent and impermanent paintings would facilitate an easy understanding of the tools required.

Impermanent Paintings

Impermanent paintings could again be *Dhulichitra* (using dry powder) or *Rasachitra* (the powders ground with water.









Dry and Wet Impermanent Painting







Dried leaves, grains, flowers , fruits and rice flour (dry or wet) are used to make designs and mandalas on the floor and/or walls (Kolam) along with earth colours and *Navadhaniyams* (grains) as decoration for specific rituals based on the guidelines in agamic literatures. Application of Mehendi on feet and hands and chewing pan to turn the lips red to match as part of Shringara for women have all been elucidated in poetry which are still being practiced. Tools are more often than not fingers. Sometimes rags dipped in the paste are used as store well to be squeezed out by fingers.



Drawing beautiful *Thoyyil* patterns using fragrant sandalwood From Art of India C.S.



Gudna is a form of tattoo practiced by Bhils and Gonds.A needle is injected with Lampsoot, harsinger flower juice and Kumkum later to add colour. Different parts of the body get different patterns.





Mehendi and pan highlighting



Reverse Glass Painting

20” x 24” Mother and Child

Permanent Paintings

Based on Concepts

- *Varnaka* and *Hastalekha* - Preliminary Sketches
- *Viddha* Chitra - Portrait Paintings
- *Bhava* Chitra - Emotional Paintings

Padaravindam Charanam Charanam Tempera,24" x24" - Based on Soundarya Lahari -a poetry by Adi Shankaracharya. The whole poetry eulogizes about the beauty and divinity of Her Feet making it an artist's dream to conjure!

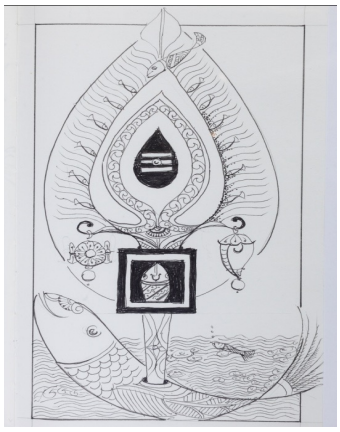


- Chitra *basa*:- Painting that resembles sculpture by *Varthanas* or shading

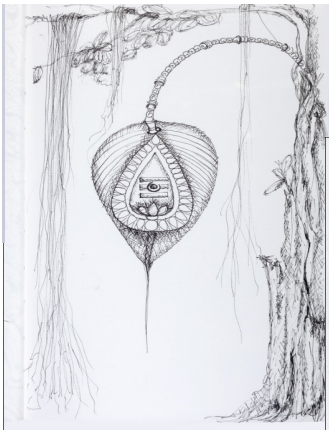
Binduja - Stippling



Raikikha – Fine delineation



Patra-Cross Hatching



- Chitra *pata* - picture roll on paper



"Golden Ambrosia" 10"x8" Opaque Water Colour on Paper



"Kumara Sambhavam" Tanjavur, Mysore and water colour on Paper

Paintings based on Canvas

Chitra *Palaka* - Paintings on wood

Srisailam being venerated as one of 52 *Sakthi Peetas* and Twelve Jyotirling *Kshetras*, a series of 4 paintings, inspired by Illustrated Manuscript Format have been executed on teak wood with natural colours and gold embellishments.

Size – 20 x 18 inches each.



- Paintings on silk, mica, ivory and sandalwood are all paintings done on different canvasses.

Painting on Sandal



Painting on Silk-Water



Oil on canvas -36” x48” Tie and dye par Excellence”



Courtesy Govt. Museum Chennai - Illustrated Manuscripts on Palm Leaf, Ivory, Mica and Thanjavur *Palagai Padam* cloth or paper pasted on wood for Thanjavur



Illustrated Manuscript on Palm Leaf



Painting Navaneetha Krishna 5”x5 on Ivory



Vamanavatara on Mica 4”x8

Raja Serfoji





Painting on Glass



Mysore Painting 6” x 8”

- Dantalekhana - Engraving with fingernails giving it a bas relief (tool)

Based on the analytical studies of Ananda Coomaraswamy, Stella Kramrisch and C. Sivaramamurthy a general overview of the use of the tools, pigments and techniques in executing wall murals (most popular art form) based on the Silpa texts (Vishnu Dharmottara, Silparatna etc) has been outlined.

Bhitti Chitra Wall Murals ,Canvas (Bhitti wall)

An admixture of brick, burnt conch shell, sand, watery preparation of molasses, a few drops of decoction of green gram and mashed banana fruit ground together to a creamy consistency is applied evenly on the walls cleaned with coconut fibber for temperas, coarsely ground lime [slaked and stored wet for a minimum period of six months at least] with marble powder or sand is applied to an eggshell thickness for frescoes. Lotus or mandara leaves are also introduced before the final application of plaster to control water seepage! Detailed discussions are expressed in later volumes.



Binders The binding medium can be of Vajralepa (animal) or *Niryasakalka* (vegetable) origin.

Vajralepa Buffalo skin is boiled in water until it turns creamy. Water is then evaporated. The remaining paste is rolled into sticks, dried in the sunlight and stored. These sticks are boiled in mud vessels with water when needed. It is mixed with white mud and is used for coating the walls and with colours for painting.

Niryasakalka Gums and resins from vegetable origin – for example Arabic, neem, bilva, wood apple, mahua, tender coconut water, alcohols and lac – when added to chalk powder are used to coat the walls, while mixed to colours are used for painting. Sometimes even *urad dhal*(Black gram dhal) paste was added for its gummy quality.

Chapter V

Tools and Techniques



From the snow-capped mountains to the windswept deserts, rain forests to sandy beaches, hilly plantations to fertile plains, the climatic variations are so expansive and agricultural practices so diverse precipitating an innovative need for different tools, palettes and techniques of painting. The ruling dynasties also had a great impact.

Embellishments

Gold leaves divided into fine leaflets are ground with sand and water. The top dirty layer is removed. The pressed gold paste mixed with *vajralepa* is used for painting. Boar tusk is used for polishing. (A wide spectrum of tools from seeds to agates are used for polishing.)

Stumps and brushes

Sweet smelling roots of *khachora* (Zedoary – White Turmeric) are mixed with boiled rice or brick powder. This mixture is mixed with dry cow dung and water and then rolled into stumps for outlining. Tamarind sticks burnt within a copper tube and charcoal are also used for outlining.

Brushes

Tulika is a thin bamboo rod with a small copper pin at the end. Feathers are attached to it while using for corrections. When soft hair from the ear of the calf or the tail of the squirrel, or the belly of the sheep is fixed with lac, it is called *Lekhini*, and is used for painting. Nine brushes are usually used for one colour. Varying sizes are made to suit different applications.

Chapter VI

Colour Symbolism

Awareness of the primary colours red, yellow and blue and the precipitation of all the others by mixing with each other and/or black and white held sway with their symbolism. Red as a sacred colour and as an insecticide served twofold purpose. All valuable objects and documents were always wrapped up in red cloth. The use of red and white stripes around the threshold again gave a clarity of vision, cleanliness associated with sanctity and with yellow turmeric added more antiseptic values - beauty in totality.





The *Chitrasutras* are loaded with nuances aplenty and a few are listed below-

Colour coding for vocations

White	Peace
Red	War
Yellow	Economics
Black	Service

Colour coding for Pancha Bhutas

Yellow	earth
White	water
Red	fire
Dark	wind
Crystal	ether

Colour coding for Rasas

Dark (Shyama)	Romance (Shringara)
White	Humour (Hasya)
Red	Fury, anger
Yellowish white	Heroism
Black	Fear
Blue	Loathe some

Colour making had also attained perfection with the awareness of dos and don'ts. For instance, red chalk powder could be covered with water for a day while red arsenic should not be covered with water. Visual clarity (e.g., by using white for waterfalls and blue for lakes and streams reflection of the sky) was effectively brought about by colour toning while excellent delineation was brought about with minimum of drawing the high water-mark of Indian painting.

Epilogue

The Whole presentation is just a tip of the iceberg encountered during the experimental navigation into the oceans of techniques. A list of reading materials has been outlined for further exploration

A brief summary of the existing scenario in different parts of India has been tabulated and are grouped together in the Volume 11 on Appendices, as an introduction to their dynamism.

