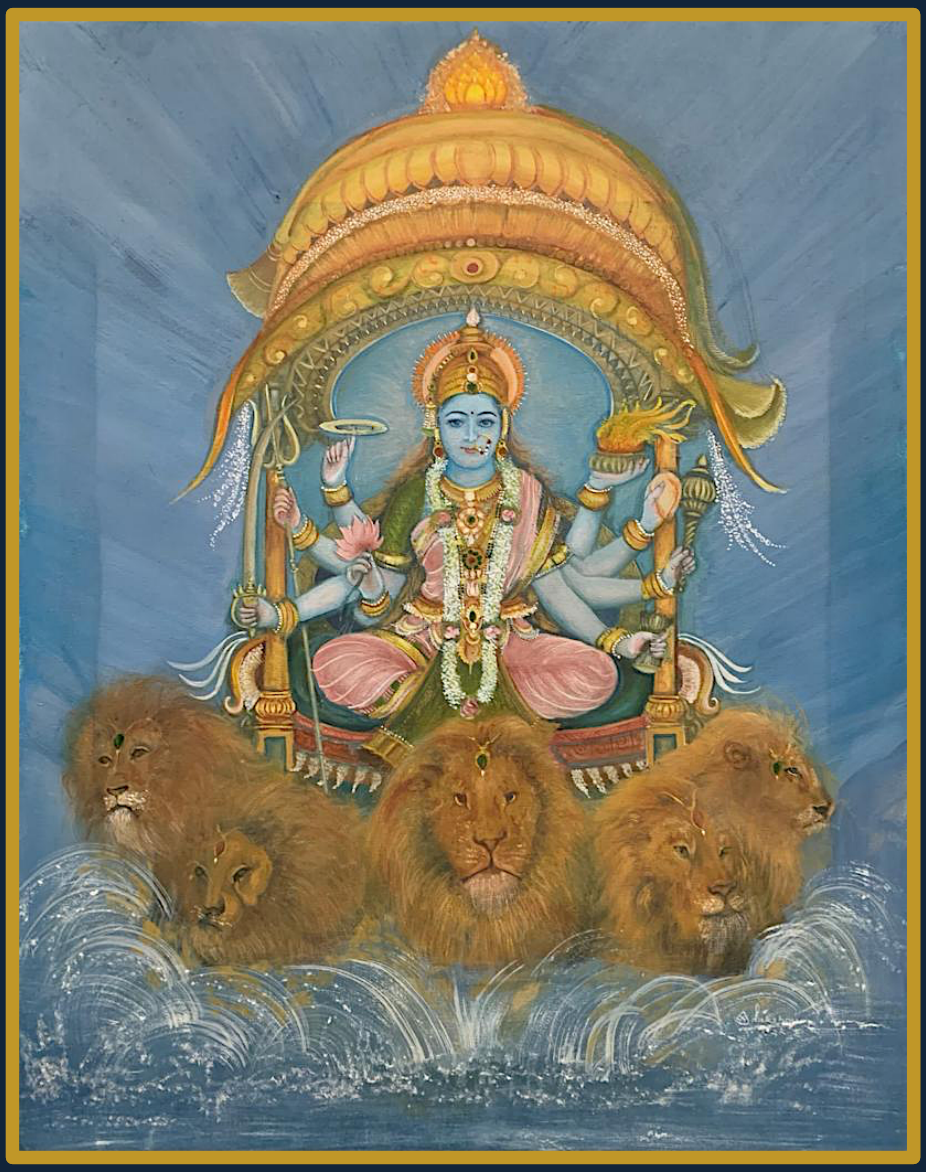
Chitra

PARAMPARYAM

Book 2



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

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

Cover Page: 'Durga' Oil on Canvas approx. 18" x24" She is omnipresent blue in colour encompassing the universe/cosmos at large, arising as a golden sun in chrome yellow chariot drawn by her vahanas, the sandy brown lions in their full glory, excited to be charioteered by their goddess.

Chitra

PARAMPARYAS

Evolution of Traditional Indian Paintings

From Bhimbetka to the 17th Century

A Research Compendium

Book 2



for Tagore National Fellowship for Cultural Research

by

Lakshmi Krishnamurthy

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



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Epilogue.



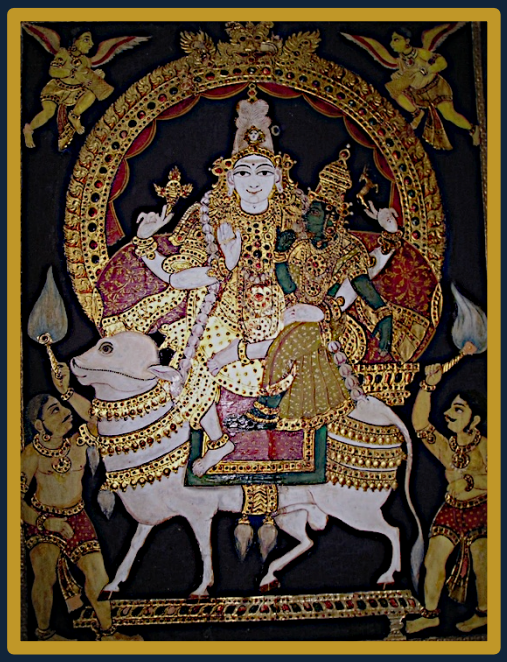
Watermark: One of the oldest residential University: Nalanda and the SEAL
In tribute to the largest and expansive University of yester years which has risen like a phoenix with the same name in recent years to transmit the continuous progressive nature of intrinsic values of culture and heritage to suit modern concepts and techniques.

Chitra

PARAMPARYAM



Before



After

Volume 6

Research, Restoration and Documentation for Conservation

Tile Page: ‘Thanjavur’ approx.. 18” x 24” Restored using natural colours, by author

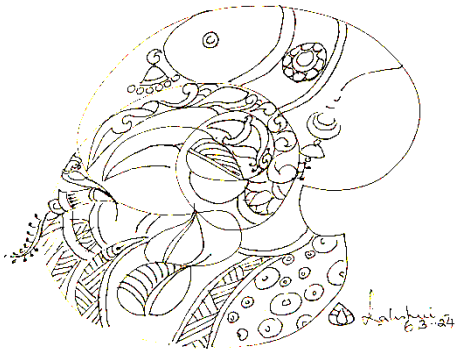
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Prologue

Respect, Read and Register

then the

Road to Revival and Restoration

will open,

The treasure trove of hidden secrets of yesteryears

That could be documented forever and ever!!

Basic guidelines needed are

- Adherence to aesthetics involved,
- Assurance of self-discipline in augmenting the quality of the work at hand, and
- Ascertaining the technique involved

are all bench marks to be followed ahead of beginning the actual process.

The general recommendations advised by INTACH personnel (while attending the Certificate Course on Technical Workshop on Conservation of Art Objects 1994 Organized by INTACH, Chitra Kala Parishad Bangalore) were

a. Should only be restored from further decay
b. Should be reversible
c. And every step before and the entire process till the finish should be documented

A few examples of restoration by author





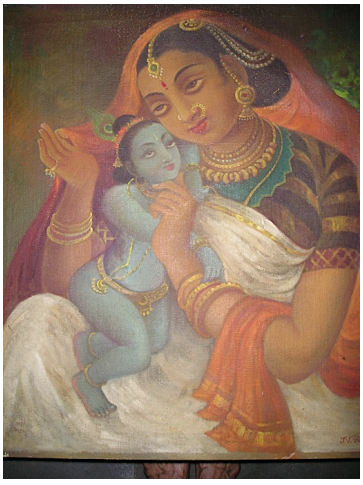
Photograph

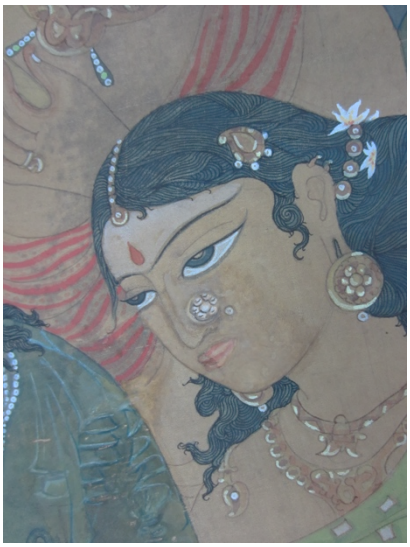
Before and after
Restoration using water colour renderings

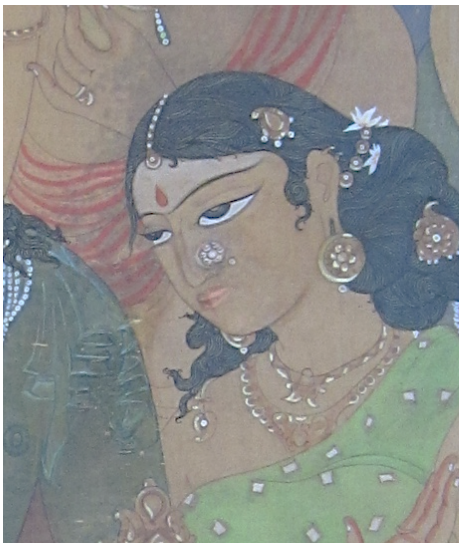
Painting

watercolour









Before and after –
Painting by Sri. Rajam
Using opaque watercolour and spot shading



Thanjavur Before and after
using natural colours



Chapter I

Cognisance (Knowledge of awareness)

There are innumerable journals available from time immemorial till date. With technological advances opening up newer and faster avenues in ascertaining the variety and quality of available murals/paintings for analysis, creating awareness of the culture and heritage becomes the basic need of the hour as caring "about art and culture isn't just an aesthetic fixation; it is the DNA of who we are" Rupika Chawla.

Culture is aesthetic and artistic taste inherited.
Heritage covers continuity in traditions, qualities and cultures of a society.

Any legacy, whether built or natural, or associated with persons, traditions and ways of life can be broadly called heritage. Heritage, whether cultural or natural, is an immense and irreplaceable source of life, inspiration, identity and livelihood as we all carry a bit of the past within us. Heritage helps us understand our culture and its diversity, and recognise the links between different peoples. Diligent protection of heritage would augment economy by promoting tourism.

The entire country is filled with so many layers of cultural sedimentation that even the visible ones are not given their much-needed attention not only to preserve, but to protect from vandalism.

Education at all levels seems to be the only solution.

- Academics at primary school level could outline the differences in the inscriptions, to identify
- English and mother tongue
- Alphabets
- Numbers

Inscription	English	Tamil
	Our heritage, whether cultural or natural, is an immense and irreplaceable source of life, inspiration, identity and livelihood; we all carry a bit of the past within us	அன்பே அழகின் முகிழ்வே முகிழ்ந்து எழுந்து சிலிர்க்கும் மலலே! இளந்தளிரே, தளிரின் நுனி பனித்துளியே! அதில் வானவில்லாய் ஒளிரும் அன்னையே! நின் பாதார விந்தம் சரணம்; சரணம்;
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	க கடலை உ உருண்டையை நு நுணுக்கி ச சமைத்து ரு ருசித்து சா சாப்பிட எ என்னை அ அம்மா கூ கூப்பிட்டாள்

6th to 8th grade

to differentiate between Ajanta, Vijayanagar Nayak Murals
As discovered in 1862 AD Watercolour Painting by William Simpson 1862. (Courtesy - Om Prakash Soni)





Ajanta Lyricism in Painting

Vijayanagara Nayak - Stylised

9th -12th Figures/Architecture from different periods



9th to 12th grade

Figures/Architecture from different periods and Guided Tours to sites like

Keezhadi, Roman Trail, Hampi.

On Job Trainings

Chapter II

Explorations

Exploration involves the act of discovery, investigation and curiosity-driven learning making it more dynamic and alive in expanding knowledge.

There is always a question as to what can be done after a course in Visual Arts. So many avenues are open especially after the introduction of technological innovations. But to create an awareness of the continuous practice available of Pan-Indian Art forms in their original glory along with their ingenious formats within the dictum, sustainability and economic sustenance, a few resources on different artists, museums and schools of Pan-Indian Art forms have been documented here offering

- Internship
- Workshops
- Research fellowship
- Conservation and Documentation courses

Responsibilities

'Charity begins at home' Our focus would be within India. The following examples would help understanding what we were doing wrong:

For example:

- World Tamil Conference I - in Thanjavur precipitated white washing of some of the murals on the temple walls
- Another one in Madurai had even the steps of Mariamman *Theppakulam* (had a lot of Nayak paintings) white washed

- Restoration of Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple murals was another fiasco
- Alagarmalai - *Vasantha* mandapam was used as a school with a blackboard painted over the murals!
- Graffiti almost always seem to be insensitive instinct over the centuries across the world over
- Snack wrapped in a miniature painting opened up the beauty and precipitated the wonderful collections of miniature paintings by Ananda Coomaraswamy and the awareness to cherish them in museums and private collections the world over

Born and brought up in Tamil Nadu my experiences are limited, but is common all over India and the whole world at large.

The idea is not to pinpoint any one, but there is a need to educate from root level across the departments of Education, Public Works, Heritage, History, Archaeology, Archival and INTACH to work in unison.

With the growing awareness, lots of institutions both private and public have started separate courses/internships on preservation along with Visual Arts, Architecture, History and Museum studies.

Resources

A whole list is available online. Select few are included for introductory purposes, as they take in interns/research scholars and offer multiple streams.

Institutions

01- Bassi Art and Craft Sathya Narayan - Kaavad Makers, Chitorgarh, Rajasthan - Only Kaavads

02- Benoy Bhel – Digital Conservation

03- Chitralayam, an art gallery showcasing Calendar Arts, Chennai

04- Chitrashala, Kalyan Joshi - Phad Painting and Research Institute

05- Chitralaya, Om Prakash Soni Bijoliya, Udaipur

06- Dakshina Chitra Heritage Museum offering internships on mediums and canvasses

07- Dwija Conservation Society of Art and Cultural Heritage, Bengaluru, offering several opportunities for students and emerging professionals including trainees and interns

08- Government Museum, Chennai

09- Government Museum, Jaisalmer - coterie of miniature paintings from 12th century

10- INTACH, Chitra Kala Parishad, Bengaluru - Variety of mediums and canvasses

11- Institute of Mural Painting, Guruvayur, Kerala only for Kerala Murals

12- Mehrengarh Museum, Jodhpur, variety of mediums and canvasses with particular emphasis to Miniatures (Mewar School of Paintings with subtle variations to mark different fiefdoms of Rathore)

13- National Museum, New Delhi - Variety of mediums and canvasses

14- Oriental Manuscript Library, Mysuru - Only Manuscripts

15- Raja Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation, Bengaluru - Only paintings of Ravi Varma and his contemporary artists

16- Saraswathi Mahal Library, Thanjavur - Variety of mediums and canvasses

17- Shree Sanjay Sharma & Research Institute, Educational Centre for Art, Cultural & Literary Heritage, Jaipur - Variety of mediums and canvasses

18- Shuvaprasanna, Kolkata

19- State Museum, Lucknow - Offering Annual Art Appreciation Course with special collections in Jain Art Gallery and Nawab Art Gallery

20- Tata Trusts - Post graduation in Conservation

21- Others - Pan Indian Classical and Folk Arts Specialists such as Warli, Pithora, Chitrakathi etc. to name a few.

Benoy K. Bhel Documentation of Art Heritage of India and Asia

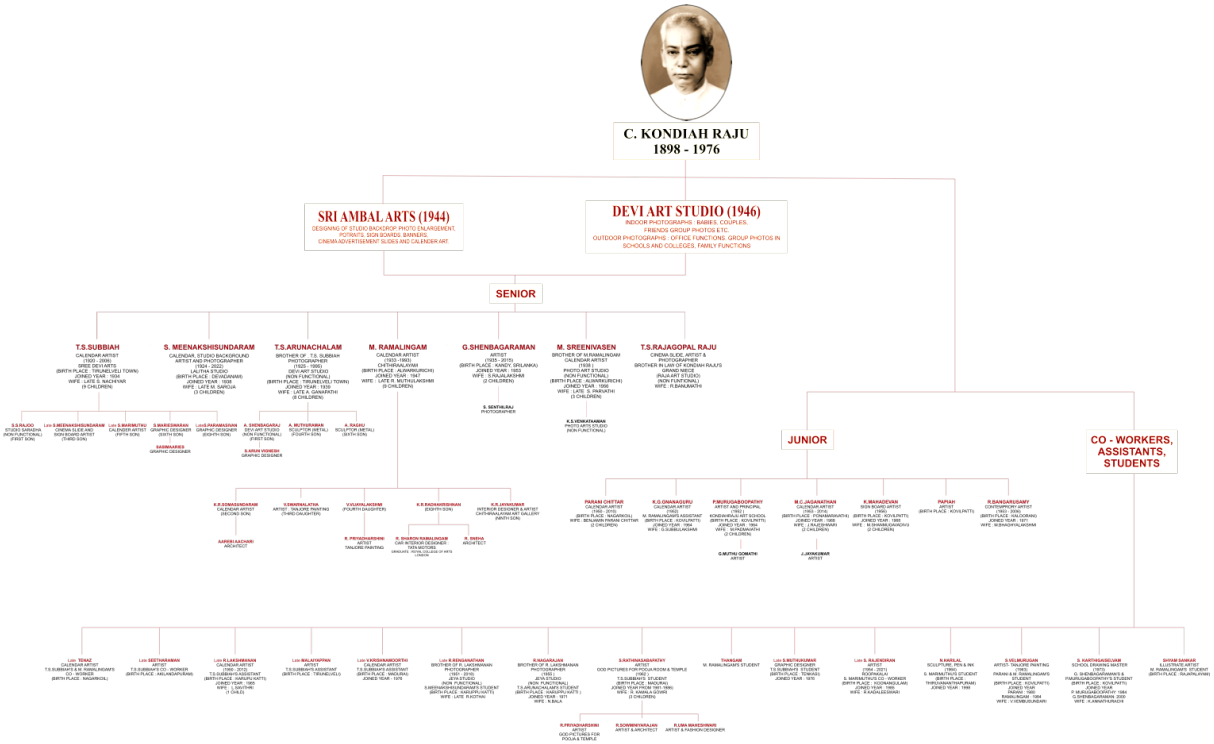


Digitalised restoration of painting in the caves of Ajanta and Badami

Chitralayam Art gallery showcasing Calendar Arts, Chennai

They are willing to help train, promote, restore, reproduce and exhibit for discerning artists.
After Ravi Varma, Calendar Art resurfaced with the paintings of Kondiah Raju of Koilpatti, who set the trend for creating the paintings of even the local deities. The first painting was for Ambal Coffee in 1953 which was printed in 4 colours. Unlike Ravi Varma's oil paintings, Sivakasi printers preferred poster/ tempera techniques. Jayakumar, grandson of Sri Subbiah and son of Sri Ramalingam- students of Sri. Kondiah Raju has established Chitralayam, an art gallery showcasing Calendar Arts, in Chennai, the first of its kind to have collected a number of original paintings of the great masters of this art and more with the help of families of Sri. Kondiah Raju, and his disciples. They are also willing to help train, promote, restore, reproduce and exhibit for discerning artists.

Genealogy of Sri. Kondiah Raju



Chitralaya Om Prakash Soni Bijoliya, Udaipur, Rajasthan. Variety of Canvasses and Murals

The artist is very spiritual and says, “I don’t look at painting as a profession” but “are mesmerising”. Often termed Ravi Varma of Rajasthan with his oil paintings running parallel to his miniature portraits, he is a researcher, revivalist, restorer, and a teacher who is willing to take in interns to learn the trade. A few highlights to show what he has to offer.

Revivalist but not a copier

The transparency of the cloth could remind one of Venus de Milo, a marble sculpture in Louvre in Paris.







Architecture

Paintings of the Bijoliya palaces and forts are testament to his extraordinary skills in the way he depicts architecture in his paintings, not the old Indian vertical format!

A shelter with artistic pillars - Bijoliya
20” x 16” watercolour



Miniature style but different interpretations





Narrative



Nature - A scene from Ramayana Nature at its best watercolour!!



Srinathji coming out of the cave in Govardan Giri to embrace Vallabacharya



Creative expression - Buddha Avatar
May be influenced by Ajantha Murals.
12” x 10” watercolour on paper



Restorer at



Blending natural colours







Maharana Bhupal Singh of Udaipur, painted on the wall of Bada Mahal, Udaivilas, The Oberoi, Udaipur -After Restoration





One of the oldest and rare pictures of Rana Prathap (1628-1650) restored by Om Prakash Soni

Ravi Varma of Rajasthan



The vase – European influence seen across India

Maharana Sajjan Singhji, Udaipur Oil on Canvas 21” x 46”

Reverse Glass Painting in Chennai Museum too; The texture and jewellery could relate to Ravi Varma’s



Coming from a hereditary jewellers’ family, sensitivity to details is both innate and creative!



Dakshina Chitra Heritage Museum, Chennai Variety of Canvasses and Murals

With a well-equipped Conservation Lab for different canvasses, offers internship course for 11 months. Some examples on preservation on different mediums have been included to highlight the avenues that are open to aspiring students.

Kind courtesy of Mrs. Deborah Thiagarajan, Founder, Director, Dakshina Chitra Heritage Museum and Sri. L. Amirthanandam, Conservator



Before

Conservation Report

Tanjore in Mysore Style





After

Date started: 04/03/2020, Conservator: Amir, Object: Tanjore painting (King and Queen)

Owner: Deborah Thiagarajan, Origin: Tamil Nadu, Date of manufacture: 18th century

Measurements: Height: 50 cm Width: 40 cm Depth: 5 cm

Materials: Jack fruit wooden panel base, gold leaves, pigments and frame

Description: A Mysore style Tanjore painting drawn on the jack fruit wooden panel. King and queen sitting on sofa in the middle of arches, wearing gold dresses and ornaments.

Condition: Good - The painting had been restored. Wooden panel had crack on top middle of the corner, water stain on top in the middle and bottom. Colours were missing in few places.

Treatment: Filled the crack with wood putty. Retouched with help of powder pigments on water stain areas and colour missing places. Date completed: 17. 06. 2020, Time: 60 hours,

Recommendations for care: Clean regularly

Conservation Report Reverse Glass Painting



Befor



Afte

Date Started: 06/02/2014, Conservator: L. Amirthanathan

Object: Saivite Painting (reverse painting on glass)

Serial Number: 597

Number: 217-97

Origin: Tamil Nadu, Date of manufacture: 1990, Measurements: L. 63.5cm, W. 49 cm, D. 2.5 cm (in frame)

Materials: Glass, enamel paints, gold leaf

Description: Reverse painting on glass representing four Saivite Saints, with wooden frame

Condition: Good/fair. The condition of the painting and the frame are good, but the glass is broken and being held in place with tape

Investigation: Found the frame damaged and inappropriate papers behind. A new frame has been ordered

Treatment: Removed from frame, cleaned front and back with distilled water. Break edges were cleaned with acetone and the break was repaired with epoxy resin. Loose foil secured with tape and paint loss matched with acrylic colours

Date completed: 07. 02. 2014, Time taken: 2 hours, Materials used: Araldite epoxy resin, acrylic paints, tape

Recommendations for care: Mount in new frame, display in moderate light and keep glass and frame clean

Conservation Report Patachitra



After



Before

Date started: 22. 03. 2021, Conservator: Amir

Object: Patachitra painting

Number: 48/2015 OR

Origin: Odisha

Date of manufacture: 20th century (2015), Measurements: H: 90 cm W: 57 cm

Materials: Cloth, natural pigments and acrylic colours

Description: A black Kali in her destructive form with conch and chakra in the hands and a white kali with snake above.

There is a Lakshmi inside with lotus in her hand

Condition: Paints are worn along the edges and a little on the inside right side

Treatment: Flattened the painting and removed the wrinkles. Retouched areas where colours had worn off with help of

acrylic colours

Date completed: 01. 03. 2024, Materials used: Acrylic paints, Time: 20 hours

Conservation Report of Photograph



Before



After

Date started: 10. 04. 2019, Conservator: Amir

Object: Print – Gandhiji, Origin: Tamil Nadu

Date of manufacture: 19th Century, Measurements: H: 12 cm W: 8 cm

Materials: Paper, glass, wood

Description: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was an Indian lawyer, anti-colonial nationalist and political ethicist who employed nonviolent resistance to lead the successful campaign for India's independence from British rule, and to later inspire movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. Mahatma Gandhi is seen wearing a white colour shawl. Amurthanjan pain balm advertisement can be seen on the left bottom corner

Condition: The print had water stain. Hard board was not there on the back side of the frame

Treatment: Removed the print from the frame and cleaned the dust and dirt with soft brush. Soaked the print in distilled water in 15 minutes to remove the water stain. Two layers of Japanese tissue were pasted with CMC adhesive as back support After drying the edges were trimmed on both sides and fixed in the same frame. Hard board was added on back side of the frame which was retouched with black acrylic colour

Date completed: 11. 04. 2019

Materials used: Distilled water, Japanese tissue and CMC adhesive, hard board, nails and acrylic colour

Time: 5 hours, Recommendations for care: Clean regularly, regular check-up

Conservation Report Painting on Paper of Sri. K. Sreenivasulu, Art Director, Kalakshetra.



Before



After

Date started: 08. 10. 21, Conservators: Anandu Manoj & Sandhya Kannan

Object: Contemporary painting – Measurements: H - 34.5 cm, W - 28.2 cm, Farmer with bull by Sri. K. Sreenivasulu

Origin: Tamil Nadu, Date of manufacture: 20th century, Materials: Paper, paint

Description: Contemporary painting of a farmer carrying a wooden *kalapai* (plough) with a white and black bull

Condition: The edges of the painting are torn and the colour has faded from some areas. The painting also has creases

Treatment: 4 layers of backing support were given with tissue paper and a mixture of CMC and water. After each layer dried, another layer was pasted on to it. After four layers, the painting was stuck to the backing. Whatever edges were missing was traced on to a paper of similar thickness and the edges were attached to the painting. Gaps were filled with a mixture of CMC, water and pieces of tissue. The edges were flattened using a heated spatula and sandpaper. The edges were painted and the faded areas within the painting were also filled in. The edges were given a worn look using paint. The painting was removed from the table and the edges were cut accordingly

Date completed: 13. 10. 21

Materials used: Japanese tissue paper, Carboxy-methyl cellulose, watercolours, Time: 5 days

Recommendations for care: Need to be framed and moisture should be avoided

Report on Conservation of Guruvayurappan Print



Before



After

Number: L-28/2013, Measurements: H: 42 cm, W: 28 cm, L: 42 cm

Date: 13. 10. 2017, Origin: Kerala, Date of manufacture: 19th century, Date completed: 16. 10. 2017

Conservator: L. Amirthanathan, Venue of the object: Dakshina Chitra Museum, Muttukkadu

Materials: Paper, wood; Description: Old Guruvayurappan print with frame. Guruvayurappan seen with sanku, chakra and umbrella standing on lotus with two lamps hanging in the front.

Condition: Affected by moisture as the print has got wet due to water leakage in the cardboard. Wrinkles have formed on the print. Only cardboard was used in the framed with iron nails. It had become acidic and the colour of the board had changed to yellow.

Proposed Treatment: Cleaning, flattening and remove the wrinkles

Treatment carried out: Cleaning with brush. Flattening the print – Take a plywood, place a butter sheet on it, then keep the print upside down by leaving 2" gap on all 4 sides. Now place a Japanese tissue on the print. Then apply maida paste covering fully, cut 4 strips of brown sheets (2" each) and paste it in such a way that it sticks slightly on the wood and then fill the rest on the rest of the paper. Let it dry for 12 hours. Cut the stripes on the edges. The wrinkles will be removed.

Place the print on the frame, on its place the acid free cardboard and keep the form board at the back. Then staple the edges at the back and then stick masking tape on it without gaps so that insects and moisture do not get inside. Materials used for conservation: Maida paste, Japanese tissue, acid free card board, foam board and masking tape

Time: 20 hours, Recommendations for care: Keep in stable environment, dust regularly

Conservation Portrait painting oil on canvas



Before



After

Object: Portrait Painting of Gentleman, Private collection (Sharath Nambiar), Origin: Kerala

Measurements: H: 134 cm, W: 80 cm Materials: Oil colours, canvas, wood, Date of manufacture: 19th century

Conservator: Amir, Date started: 20. 05. 2022

Description: An old portrait of oil painting drawn on the canvas. An old Brahmin Namboodiri gentleman, wearing *veshti* (dhoti), *thundu* (towel) and rings sitting on a chair. There is a water jug near his leg

Condition:

- The painting has not been fixed properly on the hard board. Painting fully craquelure
- the canvas is very fragile
- two holes at the middle right side are seen
- the paint layers were flaking
- the canvas was torn on right side
- and colours faded

Investigation: Artist sign written in right side with year
Treatment: Consolidated with mix of 1 gm Paraloid B72 to dissolve in 100 ml acetone and 500 ml ethanol spray on the painting surface. The paintings were removed from the hard board with help of steamer. A muslin cloth was given backing support to strengthen the canvas. Pasted the canvas on the hard board with help of fevicol. Filled holes and craquelure places with acrylic gesso. Applied white spirit base varnish on the surface. Retouched with help of egg and powder pigments. Date completed: 15. 11. 2022, Materials used: Paraloid B72, acetone, ethanol, muslin cloth, fevicol, gesso, white sprit base varnish, egg and powder pigments. Time: 160 hours. Recommendations for care: Avoid over exposure to light

Institute of Mural Painting established by Guruvayur Devaswom Board Kerala

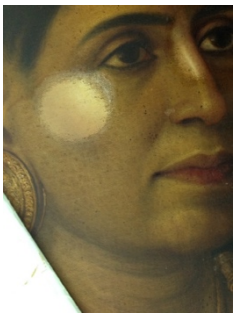
Only Kerala murals using the traditional process.
Mummudi Krishnan Kutty Nair removed the destroyed murals from the walls and pasted them meticulously on a canvas helping preservation after the fire which broke out in 1970 in the Guruvayur Temple. Using them as references he was able to create similar ones on the walls of the sanctum sanctorum. He then realising the need of the hour helped establish the Institute of Mural Painting, opening the traditional Kerala Murals to the world at large with the support of the Devaswom Board in Guruvayur.
INTACH, Chitra Kala Parishad deals with restorations of assorted mediums.

Raja Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation, Bengaluru

Only Raja Ravi Varma's and his Contemporaries' Paintings

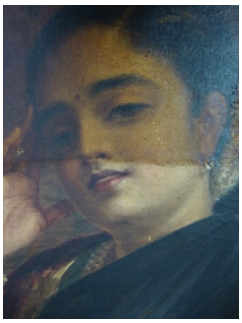
Rupika Chawla, one of the pioneers in the field of art conservation, is currently one of the working Committee Members and curator of Raja Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation, Bengaluru. Often quoted as a "Lead Authenticator, External Restorer and Conservator", she says, that "caring about art and culture isn't just an aesthetic fixation; but it is the DNA of who we are".
(from Tehelka Dec 21, 2012 Rupika Chawla - The Impressionist, in conversation with Revati Laul)

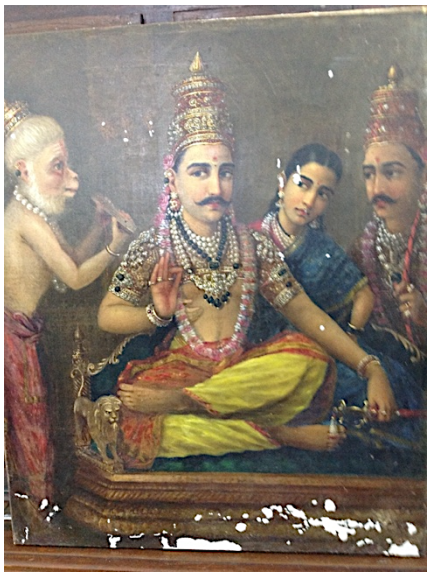
A few samples of her works in restoring some works of Ravi Varma Paintings for Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation: Courtesy: Raja Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation, Bengaluru.



For Restoration - Bombay singer face

Tear





Hanuman Discourse before and after Restoration



Shree Sanjay Sharma Museum & Research Institute, Educational Centre for Art & Heritage, Jaipur. Storehouse of amazing variety of mediums and canvasses.

Shree Sanjay Sharma Museum and Research Institute in Jaipur is an unfathomable repository of knowledge systems, systematically arranged and meticulously documented in six galleries. The collection encompasses a wide spectrum of subjects throwing open a whole new world of arts and crafts and a whole lot from smaller fiefdoms scattered all over Rajasthan, each with its own dialect.

1. Glass Painting and Porcelain Gallery - Art works from 15th to 19th centuries from
    - Shekawat
    - Ujjain
    - Thanjavur
    - Avadh
    - Tamil Nadu
    - China
    - France
    - Japan and other countries
2. Painting Gallery - Art Works from 15th to 19th centuries from
    - Jaipur
    - Kishangarh
    - Kota
    - Nathdwara
    - Bikaneer
    - Odisha
    - Bundhi
    - Lucknow
    - Avadh
    - Tibet

3. Textiles and Costumes gallery
    - Royal Costumes, Canopies and Turbans mostly from Jaipur

4. Manuscripts Gallery
    - Has an extensive collection on palm leaves, birch barks and different kinds of paper
    - Covers more than 200 areas of study
    - Written in Brahmi, Sharda, Tibetan, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Trihut, Bangla, Telugu, Gujarati, Marathi, Oriya, Gurumukhi and Devanagari

5. Cloth Painting Gallery, *Pichvais* from 17th-20th century – sourced from
    - Nathdwara, Kota, Gujarat, Mathura, Andhra Pradesh, Mewar and Benares along with
    - An unusual, beautifully hand crocheted Pichwai by a German devotee

6. Art Gallery exhibits on
    - Verses from Quran on canvas, Janvaj, Patchwork of Egypt, Philosophical paintings of Jainism, Woodcraft of Gujarat and Rajasthan, Genealogical Paintings on Jain Philosophies etc.

According to Shri Tilak Sharma, Director, their aim is to establish a University of Museology and make it into an exclusive one with as many avenues in specialisation as possible and make the museum part of it, enhancing research into Orientalogy, Manuscriptology with restoration, revival conservation and documentation courses, a sort of modern Ivy League institution catering exclusively to Art, Cultural and Literary Heritage of India.

A few pictures are enclosed to highlight the different schools of paintings from the Museum Collections. Courtesy: Tilak Sharma, Director, Secretary and Curator of Shree Sanjay Sharma Museum and Research Institute.



Thanjavur Glass painting, 1850 AD, Nanda, Yashoda offering butter to child Krishna.
53. 5 cm x 69 cm natural pigments, Water colours



Mysore Glass Painting, 19th Century, Queen Lakshmi Bai, Jodhpur
natural pigments, water colours.



Alwar School, 1830 AD
Well-dressed mistress, Painting on Paper
natural pigments, water colour.



Mysore school, Glass Painting, 19th Century, Gajalakshmi, 52 cm x 67cm
natural pigments, water colour



Gold Enamel on Glass with Kundan and Mina work.19th Century,
Decorative Moghul Flower,
Samod School,



Kota School 1880 AD, Noble Lady dancing, 15 x 22 cm, Painting on paper, natural pigments, water colour.



Nathdwara School, 19th Century, *Daan* Leela (The demand of Toll – milk, curd and butter) 187 cm x 120 cm, Pichwai on cotton cloth, natural pigments, water colour



The King of *Bundhi*, Ajeetsinghji with Chief Queen and female attendant, 1771 AD,
24 cm x 30cm,
on paper, natural pigments, water colour



An Illustrated Folio from Shrimad Bhagwatam, in *Persian Language*. Shri Krishna is taking rice from Sudhama's (*potli*) bag and prevented by Rukmini



Malwa School, 17th Century, Noble Lady playing Veena
18.8 cm x 11 cm, painting on paper, natural pigment



Gujarat School, 14th Century, Miss. Bhagwat, First Canto (Illustrated - Lord Vishnu and Shukdev Muni, 30 cm x 12 cm, painting on paper, natural pigments

Art Conservation

The emergence and evolution of the career of art conservation and restoration in India have undergone significant transformations since the early 1980s. Initially regarded as a niche profession, conservators were rare and often subjects of curiosity at social gatherings. However, contemporary developments, including cinematic depictions and heightened societal awareness, have contributed to the recognition and integration of conservation as a vital discipline within cultural heritage management.

The distinction between conservation and restoration is emphasized, with conservation prioritizing the protection of artifacts or buildings from further deterioration, while restoration focuses on aesthetic enhancement. Conservation is both an art and a science. Despite increasing market opportunities, particularly in the conservation of diverse heritage forms such as art, sculpture, paper, ceramics, and built structures, challenges persist. These include sporadic work patterns for individual practitioners like paper conservator Saloni Ghuwalewala, who has laboured to elevate awareness regarding the significance of paper preservation.

In recent decades, a notable shift towards conserving paintings and decorative arts alongside traditional monument preservation reflects India's evolving cultural landscape and burgeoning art market. Governmental and private sector support, exemplified by initiatives like the Ministry of Culture's grant to the CSMVS Museum for establishing an Art Conservation Centre, underscores the fact that "Conservation is a very alive profession with huge government support and immense private support trickling in," according to Anupam Sah, chief art conservator and consultant to the institute. (Ref – Economic Times Feb 20, 2011)

Creating a compendium manual of standardisation and a general introductory paper to create awareness about the values of heritage are two sides of the same coin, needing immediate action.

With many new avenues opening up under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, India, the choices available for Visual Art students are phenomenal.

Tata Art Conservation Programme

Tata Art Conservation Programme seems to have hit the nail on its head with elucidating guidelines. The initiative proposes to establish, develop and strengthen art conservation centres in five zonal locations across India, and create a cohort of trained conservators across India.

a. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS), Mumbai (Western Zone)

b. Mehrangarh Museum Trust (MMT), Jodhpur (Northwest Zone)

c. Himalayan Society for Heritage & Art Conservation (HIMSHACO), Nainital (Northern, Mountain Zone)

d. Anamika Kala Sangam Trust (AKST), Kolkata (Eastern Zone)

e. Museum of Art and Photography (MAP), Bengaluru (Southern Zone)

f. Academic Institution (TBD). It also aims at establishing a Master's degree in Art Conservation at an Indian University.

Epilogue

Locus Classisus

The whole exercise is to explore at least some of the exhaustive compendiums of varieties of styles, schools, and mediums available for conservation through chapters on guidelines, cognisance, academics, on job trainings etc., leading to a plethora of opportunities.

With innate aesthetics and an inquisitive mind, exploration into research, restoration, revival and documentation can trigger an avalanche of concepts for the discerning students creating an aura "to stay ahead" and have a "next idea waiting in the wings", Rosabeth Moss Kanter. And "Innovation is the ability to see change as an opportunity, not a threat", Steve Jobs could become the motto.



Ucchasrayas By Author