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RESURGENCE OF MINIATURE IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

In this research the researcher explores about Neo miniature, this term of miniature now spread in Pakistan. The origins of " neo-miniature " refer to a contemporary art movement that combines traditional techniques of miniature painting with contemporary themes, styles and subject matter. It is a reinterpretation and evolution of a traditional miniature art form with a long history in various cultures including Persia, India and the Mughals. Neominiature artists draw inspiration from the rich heritage of miniature painting, but infuse their work with contemporary elements, stories and aesthetics. They often deal with social, cultural, political and personal issues and deal with issues relevant to the modern world. This art movement became popular in his late twentieth century and continues to evolve today. It provides artists with a platform to experiment with new materials, techniques and concepts while preserving the intricate detail and meticulous craftsmanship of miniature art. The advent of neo-miniatures has allowed artists to bridge the gap between tradition and innovation, creating a unique fusion that appeals to both traditional and contemporary art lovers.

INTRODUCTION

With their subject matter, contemporary themes and ideas were added to the works of art by today's artists. Why did Pakistan's contemporary artists decide to adopt a new vocabulary in order to modernize the old art form rather than carrying on with it in the "traditional" form bequeathed by their forebears? By comprehending the "use of convention" in contemporary society and bearing in mind the lengthy and dramatic history of miniature painting, which was briefly mentioned in chapter one, this particular chapter attempts to provide answers to such questions. as was stated towards the end of chapter one. The Indian subcontinent's most modern painting style, Mughal Miniature, helps scholars grasp the changes that have taken place in this specific art form over time. One of the reasons the restored art form had to be altered and modernized was a

battle for survival and demonstrating the worth of a historic art form in a contemporary institution. Even at the time of its construction by the British, Mayo College was a fairly modern institution that was situated in the center of Lahore. The discussion that follows in the chapter expands on this important subject. (D.K., 2009).

Additionally, as Mughal patronage declined, influences from the Sikh School of Painting and Company Painting mixed with the Miniature Painting from the Mughal Schools' lineage. After coming into contact with the ideas from the Bengal School of Art, advanced by A.R. Chagatai, and also by the knowledge conveyed by the Bengali scholar Rabindranath Tagore, secular dogma infiltrated the Miniaturists' brains and then their art. (D.K., 2009)

LITERATURE REVIEW

For the purpose of perception and comprehension regarding the current research, named *Non-Imperial Subjects in Mughal Miniature Painting*, numerous books and articles have been consulted. However, they have not provided an in-depth and detailed explanation regarding the non-imperial subject of Mughal paintings, which is why the researcher has chosen to work on the theme. Many domestic and foreign authors have elaborated and published their opinions regarding the socio-religious context of Indian culture and artistic expressions in relation to the subjects of Mughal paintings. As a starting point, the researcher investigates the publications released under the editorship of Alexandre Papadopoulos, such as *Islam and Muslim Art*, which is one historical example. The historical changes relating to the formal and philosophical concerns of Islamic art have been thoroughly and in-depth studied by the book's author. To understand more, the scholar examined the post-Islamic Arab Painting: *Text and Image in Illustrated Arabic Manuscripts*. The author of this book has examined the key elements of Arab painting and how it was used to illuminate manuscripts. The researcher read Muhammad Agha, S.'s book *Art and Architecture in the Islamic Tradition* to get a sense of the influence of Arabic literary theory on Islamic painting and aesthetics, and they discovered a logical connection between the literary theory developed by al-Jahiz and Islamic art. (Agha, 2009).

The historical settings of Indo-Aryan migration and settlement on the Iranian plateau and India were the main subject of the researcher's study. He also studied *The Discovery of India* by Jawaharlal Nehru in an effort to comprehend the historical connections between Persian and Indian cultural traditions. In his book *The Tughlaq dynasty*, A.M. Hasan discussed the usage of Persian during the pre-Mughal Tughlaq dynasty, and in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, S. Pollock described the several advances connected to Persian in pre-Mughal India. The researcher was given the knowledge necessary to comprehend the relationships and inspirations of Persian art and its role in the creation of Mughal art in the book *Art of the World, The Art of Indian* by Vahed, R. (2017).

METHODOLOGY

But when examining art movements or trends, academics usually employ a variety of study methods. These could include: Review of the literature

Researchers can perform a thorough review of the existing literature, scholarly papers, books, exhibition catalogues, and other related publications to understand more about the history of traditional miniature art and its contemporary versions. This helps establish a strong foundation for understanding the context in which "Neo Miniature" arose. Surveys and interviews Researchers may consult with artists, curators, educators, and other professionals in the field to learn more about the birth and development of "Neo Miniature." Additionally, surveys can be used to collect data and opinions from a wider spectrum of participants and experts. (Creswell, 2017). Comparative Analysis: Researchers may compare "Neo Miniature" artworks with conventional miniature paintings and other modern art trends in order to uncover connections, contrasts, and influences. This can provide insight into the origins and unique qualities of "Neo Miniature." Themes, techniques, and artistic intents may all be examined by researchers when they analyses specific pieces of art or collections of works associated with "Neo Miniature" and provide critical interpretations. This can make the creative choices and advances of the movement easier to understand. It's crucial to keep in mind that research methodologies can vary based on the sort of study, the available resources, and the precise research objectives. Without particular references or sources, it is challenging to determine the exact steps taken to explore the emergence of "Neo Miniature." (Merriam, 2017).

DISCUSSION

In spite of having distinct identities and styles, a number of artists—including Shahzia Sikandar, Imran Qureshi, Aisha Khalid, Nusra Latif, Saira Wasim, and a few others—began working in a way that created a "group of Neo-Miniaturists" 35. A "movement" is described as a phenomenon that depends on a shared manifesto, which would be the ultimate purpose their art serves, according to the institutional definition of the term. According to this conception, the Pakistani "Neo-Miniaturists," or 21st Century C.E. miniature artists, became the leaders of a "art movement" that had merely arisen as a result of the (Welch, 2001). The ancient themes centering around the lives of the emperors were replaced by modern events as a result of the union of tradition and customary norms. A Neo-Miniaturist Movement was named by art critics all around the world at that time because this revolution in miniature painting, which was adopted by numerous artists at once, had taken the world by storm³⁶. Under this designation, Pakistani artists embraced it and asserted it as their own distinctive form of expression. Another success for the Miniaturists was the coining of the term "Avant Garde" as a result of their popularity among both the general public and the artists themselves. As they embraced their old colonial mediums and continued to use tradition as a method of innovation, neo-miniaturists were recognized as the forerunners of innovation in Pakistani art forms. (Arnold, 1997).

Following the partition of Pakistan from the subcontinent, the Mayo School was reorganized as the "National College of Arts" in the middle of the 20th century C.E. This organization was built on contemporary European concepts, which threatened to extinguish traditional art forms. According to legend, Ustad Bashir Ahmad, a direct student of Ustad Haji Sharif, who had learned all the intricate techniques and processes required in miniature painting from his instructor,

founded the official Miniature department at NCA. Ustad Bahir Ahmad is credited with preserving this genre until it was offered as a complete course and this practice was institutionalized by creating replicas of prior works. When the popularity of tiny painting is revived, another artist that should be considered is After returning from Europe, he was greatly influenced by the Mughal miniatures in the London museums. Although he was not a miniature artist, he is credited with being a "pioneer of miniature in contemporary idiom" since he started mixing miniature aspects into his contemporaneous paintings. (Goswamy, 2009)

Khalid Saeed Butt should also be mentioned as, although not having a degree in miniature painting, he studied the craft over time and developed his skills in accordance with the practises of the genre. When Butt taught miniature painting at the College of Art and Design, his students were inspired by the Mughal and Pahari styles of paintings, according to Nadeem Allam, who also mentions Butt. Punjab University. The artist Tahseen Khan, a contemporary of Khalid Saeed Butt and his colleague at the University, is another noteworthy individual in this context. She is one of the creatives and mentors who encouraged the new generation to experiment with the tradition using modern idioms. Her mood of work shows a contradiction to her contemporary artist as she would amalgamate her inspiration from the Mughal attires for her contemporary subjects (Beach M. C., 1997)

A thorough analysis of miniature history from the Mughals to the present reveals that British colonialism had the greatest impact on Pakistani modern artists, even after the country's division. It had had a significant impact on contaminating native miniature art forms, which caused the younger and middle generations of artists to be greatly influenced by European canons. These more recent ideas eventually contributed to the demise of the indigenous art forms. Later, when the artists distanced themselves from illogical notions and the vision of a utopian future with post-colonial values that would never have endured here for very long, such opposition was dispelled by the artists. The phrase post-colonial here refers to a period of invention that combined with an indigenous touch that occurred in the Asian subcontinent after independence from British domination. The persistence of relatively indigenous forms, techniques, and ideas begs the question of why Neo-Miniaturists did not entirely renounce tradition, or did they intend to do so? Was it not in their control to do so (Beach M. C., 2012).

Use of Convention

According to David Summers' description of convention in his article, "Convention is a metaphor used to characterize cultural traits, the use and significance of which are taken as given and the effective origins of which can only be found in the culture itself." Summers' meditation on convention is cited to illustrate the idea that the old art forms that were included into Neo-Miniature painting might be seen as metaphors that ultimately convey a deeper relationship between contemporary art and conventional art. For instance, Saira Wasim's artwork is primarily inspired by socio-political events in Pakistan, yet

the way that such miniature painting, which has its practical roots in the (Beach M. C., 2012)(fig .1)

According to Heinrich Wölfflin's description of Renaissance art, which Summers cites, the Italian Renaissance took the essence of classical art and crystallized it in conjunction with contemporary ways. It is important to understand that Neo-Miniature didn't develop as a result of some brilliant abstraction of aesthetic ideals, even though Summers claims that it is a combination of tradition and contemporary thoughts. Conventional practices in Neo-Miniature now raise questions about how tradition is handled and how much it has been reinvented in response. The use of accepted forms of painting today in the Miniature painting also refers towards a view point that is explained by F.E. Sparshott in his book "The Structure of Aesthetics" as,

"Of course, the work will frequently represent or imitate some original in some way, and when it does, its relationship to its alleged original cannot be ignored; even when it does not, the traces of purpose are there and must be taken into consideration." (Arnold, 1997).

If this idea of imitation is used in this situation, it immediately points to the need for convention in modern miniature shapes and structures. The artworks presented in chapter 4 represent seven Neo-Miniaturists, and as a result, seven radically distinct techniques of execution. Following Sparshott's position on imitation, it would also be accurate to say that imitation can sometimes be seen in the forms employed, the ways in which they are accomplished, or even in the very nature of the artwork itself. Therefore, it is not impossible to identify ancient methods in such a contemporary style of art; rather, in many cases, the use of traditional Miniature elements, which are sometimes open and obvious and other times hidden behind a curtain, shows a celebration of traditional methods. (Beach M. C., 2012).

When considering the distinctive canons of Neo-Miniature, it is necessary to assign the term "diversity" to a certain number of artists whose work is explored in length in chapter four. Over time, these artists allowed the essence of miniature to influence the form in which they would express their ideas, but the methods and procedures that served as their inspiration were a fusion of traditional and modern methods. In a conversation with the researcher, Ustad Bashir Ahmad revealed that Shahzia Sikander, a student of the traditional style of miniature, started all of her work using that approach but later chose other mediums because she wanted to create in a more globalized way. For instance, Sikander creates art using modern mediums like video animation, which serve as a showcase for her work. Similarly, Imran Qureshi, a well-known modern miniature painter from Pakistan, received his training from the traditional masters of the genre. Although he carried the basic medium with him throughout his early years, today he is a Miniature artist renowned internationally for his large-scale site installations that are startlingly enormous in appearance. It should be noticed that there are certain similarities among all the artists addressed in this study. The most remarkable of all is how they rely on their artwork to express how they feel about the environment they live in (Arnold, 1997).

A mother-child connection theory can be used to gain a better understanding of Mughal miniature in relation to modern contemporary form, or one would say from tradition to convention. This hypothesis is used by author Patricia Townsend in her article "A Life of its Own: The relationship between artist, idea, and artwork" to describe how an artist and his or her creation are similar to a mother and a kid. For instance, focusing on a mother's relationship with her child would help make this case against miniature painting. A mother merely acts as a role model, a creator, and an inspiration for her child. Similar to a child growing up in a constantly changing environment, this theory can be useful in understanding how Mughal Miniature plays the role of a mother to the development and nourishment of Neo-Miniature. Neo-Miniature absorbed the essence of its parental forms and later was prepared to accept other influences from all around. Therefore, it wouldn't be incorrect to say that there is a connection between the traditional and modern forms of miniature that cannot be disproved despite the fact that each ideal exists in its own right. (Beach M. C., 2012). The Neo-Miniature artists discussed in the paper are those who have received traditional training and are familiar with the Miniature painting spirit. They are also those who were raised in a contemporary environment with contemporary ideals and are therefore fully cognizant of contemporary ideals. These artists' place at the intersection of the old and new inspires them to combine these two extremes. The consistent usage of symbols in this interaction between Mughal and Neo-Miniature artists is a highly important aspect. The emblems of nearby or distant regions served as inspiration for Mughal artists, who incorporated them into their illustrations. (Goswamy, 2009).



Figure 1. Bichitr, Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to King 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18x25.3 cm

An illustration of one such picture from the Mughal courts is seen in figure 1, where the usually Western symbols of a cherub and a halo have been used. Therefore, it wouldn't be incorrect to say that contemporary Neo-Miniature artists have been imitating their forebears by taking many symbols from conventional Miniature rather than the West and employing them to symbolize various situations. The theory of using convention, which was covered in the earlier section of the chapter, is also supported by the relationship between the idea of conventionality and a contemporaneous one. The works of artists are further illuminated, and chapter four's study further elaborates this concept. (Merriam, 2017).

The relationship between Mughal miniature and Neo-miniature, which has also been examined, prompts the question of what distinguishes both of these ideas of the past and present. If the meaning of the prefix Neo, which was described at the beginning of the chapter, is clarified, it means something brand-new, extremely innovative, and distinct from the prehistoric, paleo forms. Second, the addition of the word "neo" helps to describe how the subject matter and occasionally the technique have distinguished themselves from their predecessors. The features that set Mughal miniature apart from Neo-miniature are suggested by Sumbal Khan in her article "Questioning Neo-Miniature" on the "At t@ Nukta" platform. However, if traditional and modern elements are combined, and a (D.K., 2009)

Despite everything, a look at the conceptual aspects of the art forms is also necessary to make that distinct line stand out. According to Khan, the Mughal Miniature was a type of art that was based on the principles of literature that are today more commonly found in the "autobiography" genre. How is Neo-Miniature a form of autobiographical art? As time went on and the idea of humanity made its way into art all throughout the world, the main concept underlying the name Neo-Miniature is the artist today (Ltd & 2009). It brought about a certain level of independence and respect for the artists. A Mughal court artist was not free to choose anything on their own. The urge to be represented, valued, and acknowledged has motivated today's miniaturists to seek for a setting free from constraints, which is why contemporary miniature is far more personalized and individualized than Mughal miniature. A significant number of artists have emerged as a result of today's artists' increased understanding of the need of choosing their own subjects, whether it is to express their own inner thoughts and feelings or to remark on larger social and political issues. (Merriam, 2017).

In addition, examining the distinctions between Mughal and Neo-Miniature points this research in the direction of the existence of a "form" in which both of these conceptions physically exist. A look at the past reveals that today's art form has left behind the art of manuscript illustration, which blossomed in Mughal courts, as it was previously described in the chapter about how artists today have chosen fresh mediums. Additionally, As modern thought processes of the artists began to appreciate the worth of art reflecting on problems that the world has been experiencing, the usage of symbols in Neo-Miniature painting became more adaptive. (D.K., 2009) Neo-Miniature art absorbed Mughal

Miniature motifs like the halo from Jahangir's portraits and the silhouette of the emperor Akber, but it also included sarcastic aspects. Neo-Miniature art stole symbols but gave them new meanings, in contrast to the Mughal Miniature, which is covered in detail in chapter 1 and adapted symbols from elsewhere and combined them with the same meanings they originally carried. For example, Akber's shadow in a Neo-Miniaturist picture does not always indicate that he is there, just as a halo in the paintings does not always indicate a devout being. Neo-Miniature emerged as a kind of art that was immediately well received throughout the world due to a number of factors. As the world reached the 21st century CE, information and technology had advanced to the point where artists in another part of the world could easily access the methods being used in the other. Such eras had a significant impact on art and artistic practices. According to Nadeem Alam's This exposure to the outside world also provided the tiny painters with a feeling of comparison with what other artists across the world have been up to, according to an article "Miniature Art: Made in Lahore" for Dawn News. Neo-Miniature eventually gained the attention it deserved on a worldwide scale by comprehending the circumstances the world is going through and tying the arts to the difficulties of living in such circumstances. As a result, the genre has become a global one. (Goswamy, 2009). The Neo-Miniaturists of Pakistan had now realised the significance of artworks derived from unique forms in the modern world, where a single human mind is valued globally for its contribution to society; consequently, such analytical approach of Neo-Miniaturists is what may have guided them towards the exploration of new possibilities within the contexts of traditional art forms. Additionally, the Pakistani culture gave rise to the trend of art galleries, which was already well-established around the world. These galleries gave artists a platform to express their ideas and helped to promote them. (Merriam, 2017).

The contemporary artists of Pakistan are described as having "fearlessness" by Salima Hashmi in her article "Art on Edge," where she also adds that the socio-political environment in which they work has made them more confident in speaking up without holding back or worrying about going unheard⁵⁰. The Neo-Miniature artists' works clearly display the element of fearlessness, which is present in each of their creations but is portrayed differently. Neo-Miniature art gained popularity due in large part to the fact that its creators were free to experiment and allowed themselves the leeway to master several mediums before adding their Miniature symbols into them. (Vahed, 2017).

These elements taken together gave the Neo-Miniaturists the support of the world. The gap that exists between the East and the West, with their distinct beliefs and ideas, also stimulates the movement of art throughout the world and increases its allure. Additionally, since miniatures have historically been among the easiest works of art to handle, this quality also acts as a transmitter of artistic beliefs on a worldwide scale. The Neo-Miniaturists took advantage of this chance to the fullest benefit of their artworks, transforming imaginative visual culture in the direction of existentialism by focusing on topics that address contemporary difficulties affecting the entire world, not just their own. (Welch, 2001)

Individual elements have contributed to the global necessity of viewing Neo-Miniature art as a work of both fine and marketable art. In an article for Dawn News, Nafisa Rizvi discusses the factors that have been a major influence on Neo-Miniature thought processes and makes it clear that, in the context of modern times, the very skill needed to produce painstakingly detailed paintings has fallen to second place and the preference has been given to other aspects. Neo-Miniaturists prefer conceptual art as the subject matter for their paintings; these concepts are based on the concerns that are emerging all over the world, making this style of painting seen with amazement both locally and internationally. (D.K., 2009).

In light of the concept of conceptual art that Rizvi articulated, it is important to comprehend why Neo-Miniature is related with conceptual art in such a way that it creates an uncomfortable atmosphere when combined with a traditional art form. As was already established, the Neo-Miniature artist executed the art forms he borrowed from or was inspired by without hesitation. The art has traits that are significantly different from its predecessors, unlike the Mughal Miniatures, which are thought to be the primary source of inspiration for modern artists. The contemporary form of miniature is aware of the realistic scenarios of the worlds, and such a form is not anxious in any way to represent their notions in conceptualized ways, where certain ideas aren't visible to the naked eye, but are present there for the eyes which can see. As a result, their works are frequently referred to as conceptual arts in comparison to the work of the old masters. (Welch, 2001).

Although the majority of Neo-Miniature's traits clearly show how the genre has become very independent and removed from the past, some traits continue to reappear that prove a tight connection between historical and contemporary times that give the impression of an impenetrable tight rope. According to Sumbala Khan, the Neo-Miniature Movement has received a great deal of support and appreciation from the international art world since its inception. As the eastern ethnicity has always been a source of exotic inspiration for the west, the international community has been urging these artists to use the "ethnic" aspects in their artwork. Although there is a contradiction in these demands placed on the artists and the artists' constant inspiration from and evaluation by the European canons, Neo-Miniature cannot be separated from the very ideal of "Miniature" because it requires this suffix to be recognized as an exotic, traditional form of art. (Goswamy, 2009).

Additionally, Nadeem Alam notes that the third generation of Neo-Miniaturists is currently growing and learning, therefore it is fair to state that the field of miniature today does not live in a vacuum. It is true that miniaturists today study miniature history during their learning period and are introduced to the past system, as was indicated in chapter one. As a result, because miniature art is still entrenched in the past, it has indigenous supporters who appreciate the traditional genre and language while also incorporating highly contemporary personal and collective world narratives. (Beach M. C., 1997)

The way that particular art forms, techniques, and ideas are seen by the spectators has always had an impact on how different artworks are perceived in

a culture or even on a larger scale. The use of recognizable objects and characters in the paintings serves as a sign of reassurance to local viewers of such art forms because they are always evocative of the past. Such assurance hints at a freedom derived from long-established traditional dogmas, which occasionally serves as a source of personal identity. Lavinia Filippi claims that the Pakistani modern miniature is currently being constructed in an interview with Quddus Mirza. Additionally, when such content is viewed by the international art community outside of its country of origin, It would be accurate to claim that conventional miniature painting at the time did not indicate any room for improvement when it was said that it was an art form that was at its highest peak during its period.t (Beach M. C., 2012). In the instance of the Neo-Miniature movement, an ancient technique has evolved to the point of independence where it has assimilated the modern materials put into it. Its value is also increased by the fact that it conveys powerful contemporary messages that make comments on global issues. The Neo-Miniaturists have always drawn the attention of the international market because they incorporate such a wide range of contemporary issues and media while remaining true to their beginnings. (Beach M. C., 2012).

If F.E. Sparshott is cited, he discusses the theory of "empathy" and claims that the works of art to which beauty is ascribed have certain impacts upon the viewers. What a viewer may perceive are certain stresses, strains, and movements that may be leaving a redemptive or life-enhancing impression. If this hypothesis is used, it aids in comprehending why Neo-Miniature has received such a warm reception from the international art world. (Arnold, 1997). According to this view, Neo-Miniature art evolved into a genre that acted as a positive and encouraging mirror for society. The inclusion of 'empathy' features, which imply affinity and kinship, is what made Neo-Miniature art so warmly received both locally and globally. Neo-Miniature is thought to have originated as a genre that took a traditional ideal and transformed it into a modern one that conveys concerns about contemporary situations, making it a genre that provides what the world needs from art. (Beach M. C., 1997).

CONCLUSION

Following the nation created by whites, the Neo-Miniaturist Movement's ongoing success since the turn of the 20th century C.E. has led to controversies over how miniature painting should be performed and interpreted in comparison to other, more traditional forms of art. The so-called "Traditionalists," who were the first-generation artists and direct descendants of the Mughal court artists, are the first of two groups that make up this split, which is sometimes described as having two sections. The concepts and standards that stated it was typical for conventional practices to be "modernized" were, and still are, a very strange concept for such earnest practitioners. In a talk with Ustad Bashir Ahmad, who views "the traditional ways as the most important aspect," the researcher learned of his shared opinions. Similar to this, it is mentioned in a dissertation on contemporary miniature that previous masters like him believed in their uncompromising commitment to the newer concepts that the young artists were learning as they interacted with the outside world, even after mastering the core conventional skills. Because they valued original thought and even attempted to persuade the ancient masters to accept experimenting as a natural part of the

creative process, David referred to this group of young artists as "modernists". Discussed expressionism theory in more detail, which has provided as a startling illustration of the direction that contemporary miniature painters have been heading. A conventional form that was inflexible in its principles may be changed into a radical form of artistic expression by this, according to legend⁵⁹. The miniature from Pakistan in the late 20th and early 21st centuries C.E. acquired resonance in the west due to the contemporaneity of art, whether it takes the shape of painting or another medium. Pakistani artists have demonstrated their steadfastness in a number of personal and demanding aspects of miniature painting, as well as their ongoing interaction with world trends.

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