

Painting. Raja Sawant Singh was a good poet also. He was also known as Nagri Das by which he became famous later on. He was a devotee of Krishna being follower of vallabh sect. He was a great lover of beautiful things i.e. Nature, Women, Music, Poems etc. He fell in love with a girl who served as a maid servant to his stepmother. This girl whose real name is not known, was called Bani Thani which means smart and well-dressed. She was a singer and had knowledge of poetry. They got married. They went to Brindavan and spent their life there. Sawant Singh died in 1764 and Bani Thani died a year later. Radha of Kishangarh or Bani Thani (well turned out) is the most beautiful painting of that time.

The pictorial Art of Rajasthan shows the sentiments of love and devotion with exuberant joy of life. Central theme is love. Love is conceived as the symbol of the union. The lovers were always presented as Radha and Krishna. The figure of Krishna stands for the divine-soul and Radha for the human soul.

The Rajasthan Art developed in whole Rajasthan a deep impact of effects. So Rajasthan Art is depicted in the same way in as Sub schools of Rajasthan i.e. Mewar School of Art, Kishangarh School of Art, Bundi School of Art, Jaipur School of Art, Jodhpur School of Art, Ajmer School of Art, Bikaner School of Art, Pahari School of Art etc.

SUB-SCHOOLS

Mewar School : The whole Rajasthan was affected by the attack of the Mughals but Mewar did not come under their control till the end. This was the reason that Rajasthani school flourished in its purest form in Mewar and later on in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Amber, Kota, Bundi, Kishan Garh, Bikaner and other places of Rajasthan.

Mewar contains elements of central Indian style which itself is a blend of Western Indian Gujarat-Jain manuscript school with Persian influences. The paintings have the dates and artist's names which proves that they are dated back to the 16th century starting from *Chaurpanchshikha* series. Proportions were not perfect but bold colors and angular features mark the native style. Projecting eyes got eliminated by more naturalistic drawing. The artists also painted Ragnala series in their formative years under the direct patronage of Rana Pratap followed by other literary and religious works in the most developed stages during the reign of Jagat Singh I. Sahibdin was the greatest master of mature Mewar style whose works are found in abundance. His style brought sophistication to the folk styled art.

Bundi School : This school developed in Kota-Bundi (unified state till the second quarter of the 17th century) and Jhalawar in the beginning of the 17th century under the Hara Rajput dynasty. The human figures resemble

Mewar but look more expressive due to shading and roundness on reddish brown complexion. Natural forms are also more realistic. Ragnala series dominate the formative period. During further growth in style, faces got refined and flesh became pinkish, water got stylized in white wavy lines and colors got richer. Barahmasa and Rasikpriya were added as themes. Climax was reached by the middle of 18th century after Mughal influence started showing in shading, finer lines of the face and receding lines for perspective. Deccani influence can be seen in cylindrical forms of women, gardens, fountains and architecture.

Jodhpur School : Jodhpur (Marwar), the largest state of Rajasthan was home to Rathore clan of Rajputs. Initial phase followed Jain style of painting because the patrons were Jain merchants. Then came Mughal influence as a result of a few matrimonial alliances with Mughal rulers where royal portraits were more prevalent. A true Jodhpur style came up in between 1760 and 1780 when rhythmic lines and jewel like colors showed up in compositions. Female figures had charming simplicity and beautiful long uplifted eyes. The peak of maturity was achieved during the early 19th century under Man Singh, a great patron and a poet himself. Illustrations based on *Siva Purana*, *Nalacharita*, *Durgacharita* and *Panchtanra* were painted in this phase.

Bikaner School : With its beginning after the 17th century, Bikaner school was completely under the mughal influence either because the expelled artists of Mughal courts took shelter here or because the rulers received paintings as goodwill gifts from the Mughals. Raja Rai Singh was particularly influenced by the Mughal art. One manuscript found in this era, *Meghdoot* is in *apbhransha* style.

The later kings Karan Singh and Anup Singh did some patronage but constant oppression of Mughals did not let art prosper. The subjects painted often originated from Indian mythology. Scenes from the Ragnala, Bhagavata Purana, and Rasa lila were painted.

The Bikaner style of painting had finer lines and a lesser range of colors than what are typically present in the Mughal artwork. Some developed form of Bikaner art can be seen in palace walls of Anup mahal, Sujan Mahal etc where Barahmasa and Ragnala were painted. All artists were muslim but painted Hindu themes skilfully, Rasikpriya and Varsha Vihar to name a few.

Kishangarh School : The estate (*Jagir*) which was inherited by Kishan Singh, the eighth son of Raja Udai Singh of Jodhpur is known as Kishangarh. This small state surrounded by Jaipur, Jodhpur and Ajmer saw a sudden spark of genius when art of other states was almost nearing the end during

the reign of Raja Raj Singh and later his son Raja Sawant Singh.

Sawant Singh was a scholar and an expert in Music, poetry and Painting. A devotee of Krishna and a follower of vallabh sect, he wrote over fifty books under pen name Nagri Das. He fell in love with a girl who served as an attendant to his stepmother. This girl whose real name is not known, was called *Bani Thani* which means smart and well-dressed. She was a singer and had knowledge of poetry. They got married and went to Brindavan to spend their life there. They both became a very popular subject for the artists and were portrayed as Radha and Krishna. Radha of Kishangarh or Bani Thani by Nihal Chand is the most famous painting of that time.

Apart from illustrations on Sawant Singh's work, the scenes from the court, royal portraits, Bhagvat Purana, Bihari chandrika, Nayak-Nayika bheda and Geet Govind were also painted. Beauty in depiction of women is a chief achievement of this school, Bani Thani being the prime example.

Jaipur School of Art : The Jaipur school reached its peak in the 18th century A.D when Mughal influence weakened after the rule was ousted. Before that under Jai Singh I, the close alliance with Delhi and patronage in art by Akbar remained deep rooted. Though artists tried to come out of the mughal influence with subjects from Hindu epics and the romances of lord Krishna, the effect remained. Later with Mughal expertise in limited colors and sense of space in the background, they were ready to make their own mark in bold compositions and use of stylization under Pratap Singh.

The subjects were life-size portraits, Ragmala, Lord Krishna and Radha, Rajput princes, camel fights, Pomp and ceremony of the royal court, the Bhagwat Purana, the Ramayana, the Mahabharat and the different amusing and erotic themes.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF RAJASTHANI SCHOOL OF ART

The art of Rajasthan is characterised by primitive vigor, bold outlines and brilliant colors. However the treatment of facial types, local scenery and technical details are different in sub schools. Some general features are as follows:

1. Diverse Sub-matter : The themes of the paintings were primarily the following three :

- (i) **Religious paintings** : Ramayana, Mahabharata, Radha Krishna, Bhagwat Puran, Durga Mahatmaya etc.
- (ii) **Literary Paintings** : Other than the above subjects inspired from Indian epics, devotional poetry, romantic poetry and Indian music were also their themes. Bhakti Sagar, Riti Kavya, Geet Govind,

Sursagar, Ragmala, Rasik Priya, Ramchandrika, Nayak-Nayika Bheda, Barahmasa, Panchtantra are the examples of the illustrated literary themes.

(iii) **General** : Court scenes, Battle scenes, portraits, night scenes, general life, ballads and folklores have been beautifully painted in Rajasthan schools of Art.

2. Linear Beauty : Since this art developed from western and Central Indian schools, bold lines are apparent in the initial phases. Later line became thin, rhythmic, soft and graceful in all sub-schools of Rajasthan.

3. Colour scheme : Colors bring out the effect of all emotions, for instance, red for anger, passion and fury, yellow for marvelous and blue for royal splendor. Mostly bright and glowing colours are used carefully in a harmonious contrast. The pure hues of red, yellow, blue, brown, white without mixing any other colour are used. In some paintings gold and silver colours have also been used. Background is mostly flat.

4. Two dimensional Paintings : Contours are defined with simple Lines, and flat colors are used in the background without any gradation. Perspective details, horizon or skyline are not of much importance to these artists leading to a plane two-dimensional effect.

5. Symbolism : Radha and Krishna have been depicted symbolically in the form of human soul and God. Krishna and gopies stand for devotion and romance. Natural elements, birds and animals are used as tools for portraying *Bhava* be it Ragmala, Barahmasa or any other romantic illustration.

6. Spiritual love : The pictorial Art of Rajasthan shows the sentiments of love and devotion with cheerful joy of life. Central theme is love which is conceived as the symbol of spiritual union. Radha-Krishna, Nayak-Nayika Bheda, Ragmala, Krishna-Gopies are a few themes which glorify the romantic element of Rajasthani art and the overall passionate character of its people.

7. Stylisation : Trees are ornamental, repeated shapes of leaves are painted in light and shade. Sometimes they appear only for ornamentation in the composition.

8. Human Figure : During the period of folk art influence, figures were all identical, they had round face with pointed nose and elongated eyes. Body is smaller in proportion to the face but improved in later decades. Men have robust body, yellowish skin and hair reaching till ears. Female figures are frequently painted. Their faces are brighter with shapely bodies and expressive faces. Human faces are shown from different angles, mostly faces are profile in *Ek-chashma*. However in Bundi there is light and shade on faces and expressions differ.

9. Depiction of Nature : Nature has been beautifully depicted in Rajasthani Paintings. Different Trees, Mountains, Water Springs, Floral Trees, and Lakes have successfully depicted the beauty of nature. Animals and birds came as Mughal influence. Though their execution is not very proficient initially but improved later. Nature also compliments as a tool for emotional expression. Clouds, birds, streams add to the idea of romance be it union or separation. Trees, creepers and flowers add to the romantic charm.

10. Depiction of Women : There is brilliant representation of feminine charm in different modes and moods. Women have soft faces. Face and neck are long with high sloping forehead, long pointed noses and well cut lips. Limbs are shapely with thin fingers. The metaphors¹ are drawn for feminine ideals - bodies are slim, flexible and tall like creepers; eyes are like wagtail (khanjan pakshi) or lotus and eyebrows are the shape of a bow.

Interestingly, they all resemble each other, apparently one face was duplicated for all. The women of Kishangarh deserve a special mention with a highlight of a lock of hair hanging near the ears adding to the feminine beauty. The 'Radha of Kishangarh' or 'Bani Thani' is world famous painting of Rajasthan. A postal stamp was also issued by the Indian Govt. based on this painting.

11. Ornaments and garments : Diamond and pearl studded jewelry in meticulous designs is commendable. The royal ensembles comprise of earrings, rings, armlets, bangles, elaborate forehead adornments and necklaces.

Garments in great variety are highly decorative. Ladies have been shown wearing Lehanga and Choli with Transparent Chunni. Males have been shown wearing high turbans and Jhabba (a bunch of threads). Pajama and Rajput style Patka is also there. Floral prints and stripes can be seen in ghagras.

12. Landscape or Seasons Painting : Landscapes have been beautifully painted in different seasons. Painting of Barah Masa is the depiction of various seasons during twelve months. Water is a mix of blue and black and waves are shown in white. In Bundi paintings, red band of sunset sky is seen along with blue. Sunrise in golden hues looks splendid. Perspective has never been a main interest but depth is achieved as styles evolved.

13. Effect of Folk Art and Mughal influence : Folk Art is prominent in all Rajasthani paintings before they got influenced by Mughal art in later stages. During the initial phase figures are smaller in proportion to the faces

¹ - symbols for comparison

but as they progressed, bodies became more robust and complexion became more Indian.

14. Night Scenes : Night scenes are painted in a very attractive way. Black or smoke grey colour of the night sky lends beautiful contrast to the white and yellowish golden colour of the Moon and Stars and colorful foreground of human figures.

15. Large Paintings : In comparison to other paintings of Rajasthan, the Kishangarh paintings are larger in size known as Pichwayi (Back Curtain). These were used for plays at the back, but in Bikaner school we find both miniature and wall paintings.

16. Hunting Scenes : Depiction of Animals and Birds being hunted has been done as the effect of Mughal School of Art.

17. General life : Art was not restricted to the royalty only, the themes of religious, romantic and social life had reached the masses as well. Daily life activities, festivals, village life, marriage procession etc were also painted.

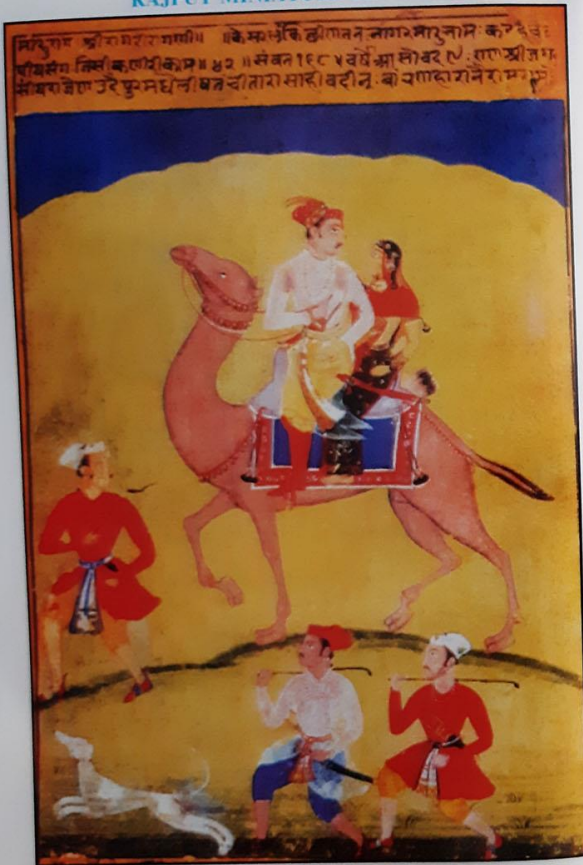
18. Crowded Scenes : In some paintings like 'Govardhan Dharan' (Krishna lifting Mount Govardhan) men, women and animals have been painted in large numbers.

19. Architecture : Palaces are domed, brickwork and marble both appear in buildings. White lattice in mughal style is also noticed at places.

SALIENT FEATURES OF RAJASTHANI SCHOOL

1. Diversity in themes *e.g.*, scenes of any activity related to Religion, Social, Court hunting, Nayak and Nayaka Bheda, Season (Barahamasa), Rag Ragni *etc.*
2. The powerful and rhythmic lines of this school are from old traditional Indian Art.
3. Glowing colours in deep harmonious contrast.
4. Variety of costumes of male and female of Rajasthan region.
5. Inspired from Indian epics, devotional poetry (Bhagti Sagar) Romantic poetry (Riti Kavya) and Indian music.
6. Human faces are shown from different angles.
7. Female figures are frequently painted.
8. Mostly faces are profile (side pose).
9. Classification of feminine charm in different modes and moods.
10. Some large paintings and wall paintings are only at Kishangarh, Kota, Bundi and Bikaner.

RAJPUT MINIATURE PLATES



14

NAME : MARU RAGINI (A)
 ARTIST : SAHIBDIN
 SCHOOL : MEWAR (Udaipur, Rajasthan)
 PERIOD : CIRCA 18th CENTURY A.D.
 MEDIUM : TEMPERA (Water Colour) ON PAPER
 COURTESY : THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, NEW DELHI

SUBJECT MATTER : Maru Ragini is a vertical painting from Ragamala series. It was painted by the painter of Mewar (Udaipur) namely Sahibdin.

DESCRIPTION : In this vertical painting, the king with his queen is riding on a camel.

Background is yellow but foreground is light green. Two male escorts are running along the camel-riding couple. In the centre of yellow background and green foreground, a band of sky with blue colour has been shown. The camel has been shown with full enthusiasm. One male attendant is leading the camel. A hunting dog is also running ahead of the two escorts. The sky is deep blue. The dresses of all the figures are in flat colour. Transparent white colour has been used in the painting. Camel is well decorated. The king is holding a flower in his right hand and looking at the queen. On the top of the painting Maru Shri Ragini is written. The samvat means circa 1885 century. It is a painting of Barah Masa. In the painting facial expressions are shown with Rhythmic lines. The colours are bright and natural, which tell the story of heroines and heroes.

15



NAME : RAJA ANIRUDDHA SINGH HARA
 ARTIST : UTKAL RAM
 MEDIUM : TEMPERA (water colour) ON PAPER
 PERIOD : EARLY 18th CENTURY A.D.
 SCHOOL : BUNDI (Rajasthani)
 COURTESY : THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, NEW DELHI.

SUBJECT MATTER : This art-work is a portrait of bravery. The prince Raja Aniruddha Singh Heera is sitting on the back of a running horse who is making a power show.

DESCRIPTION : This Rajput miniature from Bundi School of Art (Rajasthan) is in decorative Mughal style. The prince, Aniruddha Singh is seated on the back of fast running white horse, holding the horse's reins in his left hand. He is holding a white flower in his right hand close to his chest. The dress of prince is of transparent white, light orange, coffee brown colours and orange pajama. The face of the king is shown in profile.

The background is painted in deep Blue-Black. The entire composition is based on the prince and his running horse. Figure is Ek-chasm (single eye), two front legs of horse are uplifted and it is balancing on its hind legs only. Prince's cap and dress are well decorated. Transparent light, coffee colour and orange is used in his dress. The tail of horse shows the fast speed of the running horse.



NAME : CHAUGAN PLAYERS
 ARTIST : DANA
 MEDIUM : TEMPERA (water colour) ON PAPER
 PERIOD : CIRCA, 18th CENTURY A.D.
 SCHOOL : JODHPUR (RAJASTHAN)
 COURTESY : THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, NEW DELHI

SUBJECT MATTER : Chaugan Players is a horizontal painting in which two princesses are playing Polo with their four maids.

DESCRIPTION : The princesses are sitting on the back of two different horses in the upper section of the Painting and are facing each other. While the other four horses in the lower section with the maids are running in opposite direction, but the faces of maids are on the same side where princesses are looking. Figures have been perfected against red, yellow, ultramarine and orange background. All six Polo sticks are covering the ball.

All ladies have high rounded foreheads, faces are profile. The eyes of ladies are elongated upto their temple. Their skirts are spread on the horses back like bells in a stylised manner.

The composition is against a flat green background. Colours are very bright. A light green landscape shows harmonious contrast to the painting. All the dresses are in contemporary Rajput costumes and well ornamented.



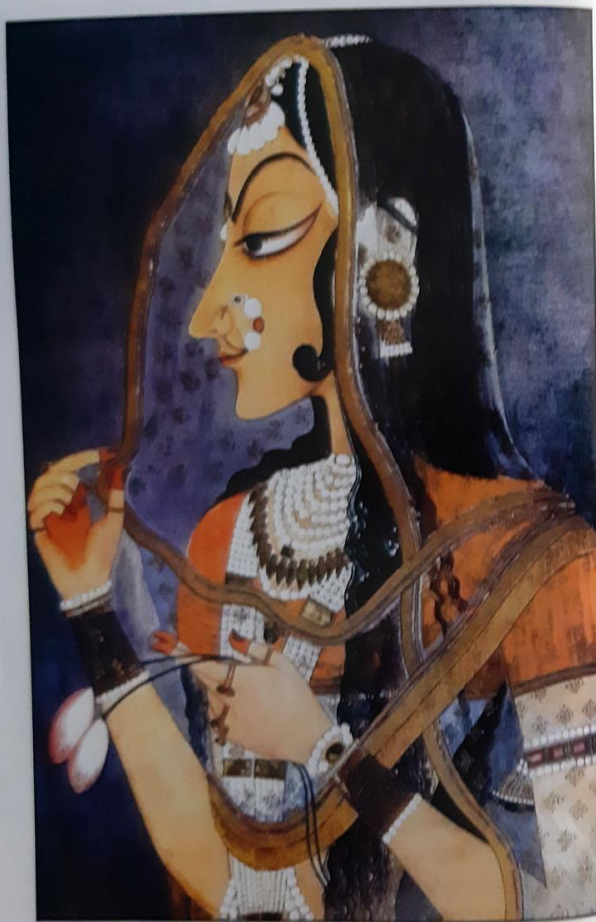
NAME : KRISHNA ON SWING
 ARTIST : NURUDDIN
 SCHOOL : RAJASTHAN (BIKANER)
 MEDIUM : WATER COLOUR ON PAPER (Tempera)
 PERIOD : 1683 A.D.
 SIZE : 20 × 14 cm
 COURTESY : THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, NEW DELHI

SUBJECT MATTER : This painting (miniature) painted by NURU-UD-Din is based on the Rasikapriya poetry of Keshvadasa. The most widely illustrated work of medieval Hindi poetry. One day Krishna, takes with him on the swing a gopi other than Radha. This behaviour of Krishna offends Radha whose love for Krishna will not tolerate any one in between. On this Radha feels betrayed and upset.

DESCRIPTION : This painting is divided into two parts. The artist seems to have slightly changed the episode. The upper part of painting relates to the first part of the episode, though with some change. Krishna is alone on the swing. He has his eyes fixed on Radha who is sitting in the porch, or on terrace. Radha too is looking at Krishna. Thus ego of both ends obstructs union and offends both. In the lower part Krishna is seen sitting inside one bower and Radha inside the other. The eyes and faces of both betray grief and pain. From the action of gopi's hands she appears to assert that being a male and the mightier he is expected to have a broader, wider and more liberal mind and a greater responsibility towards Radha.

This painting is nearer to indigenous Rajput consciousness. It reflects folk-art elements whereas in its fine draughtsmanship technical execution and use of softer tones of colours, lines are thin and sharp. Krishna is wearing a crown and ornaments. At the back of Krishna and Radha there is a round pillow.

White colour is used for ornaments.



NAME : **RADHA (BANI-THANI)**
ARTIST : NIHAL CHAND
SCHOOL : KISHANGARH SCHOOL OF ART, Rajasthan
PERIOD : CIRCA, 1760 A.D.
MEDIUM : TEMPERA (water colour) ON PAPER
COURTESY : THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, NEW DELHI

SUBJECT MATTER : This painting is based on the court dancer of king Sawant Singh of Kishangarh named Bani-Thani. The king was great devotee of Radha and Krishna. He gave the name Bani-Thani to his court dancer.

DESCRIPTION : This is one of the most well known paintings of Rajasthani Art of Kishan Garh. Nihal Chand's painting Radha of Kishan Garh or Bani-Thani which means well turned out. Her face is elongated with high and sloping forehead, pointed and long nose and bulging out well cut lips, and pointed chin, her long black tresses are flowing down from her shoulders to her waist. Long tapering fingers of her right hand are delicately holding the edge of the transparent Orhni. In her left hand there are two lotus buds of pink and white colour which she is holding with her delicate fingers. Orhni is decorated with golden motifs. Her dress and jewellery reflect the taste and costumes of the contemporary Rajput royalty. She is wearing a white pearl necklace around her neck.

The background is painted in deep blue colour. Lines are very sharp and thin. It is believed that Nihal Chand used Bani-Thani, the court dancer as his model for Radha. Her body is painted in peach colour. This painting has beautiful colour scheme. On the whole the painting is very beautiful.



NAME : **BHARAT MEETS RAMA AT CHITRAKUTA
(A SCENE FROM RAMAYANA)**

ARTIST : GUMAN

SCHOOL : JAIPUR SCHOOL

PERIOD : 18th CENTURY A.D. (Circa A.D. 1740-50)

MEDIUM : TEMPERA (water colour) ON PAPER

COURTESY : THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, NEW DELHI

SUBJECT MATTER : The Painting depicts a scene from Ramayana, when Bharat comes to Chittarkoot to meet Rama with his three mothers and Guru Vishwamitra. Various episodes have been shown in a single scene.

DESCRIPTION : In the background, the use of green colour in different shades is the speciality of this painting. In the foreground and in front of the huts Ram, Sita and Lakshman stand out against the green forest. Behind the hut a grove of lush green banana trees has been painted.

This small painting has about 49 (forty-nine) figures in the centre of the painting. Rama has been shown prostrating on the ground, touching the feet of his Guru. Lakshmana stands nearby, facing Vishwamitra with folded hands. At one place Rama is meeting his mother. Some ladies can also be seen in profile standing and sitting. In front of all (figures and objects) we can see a stream of White and Red lotus flowers. Colour balance is very good. At this time Mughal influence had receded and a genuine Jaipur style came into prominence.