

VII SST - OTBA

Miniature Painting

Miniatures paintings are beautiful handmade paintings, which are quite colorful but small in size. The highlight of these paintings is the intricate and delicate brushwork, which lends them a unique identity. The colors are handmade, from minerals, vegetables, precious stones, indigo, conch shells, pure gold and silver. The most common theme of the Miniature painting of India comprises of the Ragas i.e., the musical codes of Indian classical music. There were a number of miniature schools in the country, including those of Mughals, Rajputs and the Deccan.



History of Miniature Painting in India

The evolution of Indian Miniatures paintings started in the Western Himalayas, around the 17th century. These paintings were highly influenced by the mural paintings that originated during the later half of the 18th century. During the time of the Mughals, Muslim kings of the Deccan and Malwa as well as the Hindu Rajas of Rajasthan, this art flourished to quite an extent. Infact, the Mughals were responsible for introducing Persian tradition in the Miniature paintings of India. The credit for western influence can be ascribed to the Muslim kings.

Schools of Miniature Painting

The different schools of the Miniature paintings of India include:

- Pala School
- Orissa School
- Jain School
- Mughal School
- Rajasthani School
- Nepali School

These schools were the products of hothouse cultivation that was practiced over generations. The earliest instances of the Indian Miniature painting are those related to the Pala School and date back to the 11th century. This school emphasized on the symbolic use of color in the paintings, which was taken from tantric ritual. The other characteristics of the Pala School include the use of a

skillful and graceful line, modeling forms by delicate and expressive variation of pressure, use of natural color for painting human skin, etc

The Jain School of Miniature paintings laid great emphasis on style. The unique features of this school include strong pure colors, stylish figures of ladies, heavy gold outlines, diminution of dress to angular segments, enlarged eyes and square-shaped hands. One can see the influence of Jain miniature paintings on Rajasthani and Mughal paintings also.

