



GLOBAL INSPIRATION, LOCAL IMPACT: PROGRESSIVE ART MOVEMENT ACROSS STATES

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DOI - 10.5281/zenodo.8378506

ABSTRACT:

Through the high culture of its ancient civilization and the idea of "invented tradition" as part of the nationalist mission, modernity within India had to carry the weight of its turbulent past. These two elements were intimately related to the late 19th and beginning of the 20th century's "modernism" cultural and historical movement. The 'modernism' essentially was directed towards a process that required and involved experiments of not only methods and supplies but also privileging novel ideas and concepts in artistic expression and centrality premised on the uniqueness of the creative individual. This era was eventually to become an important factor in influencing the character and configuration of the emerging modern Indian art. The colonial-established art institutions in major cities like Bombay and Calcutta had contributed positively to the emergence of "artists" in the modern meaning of self-sufficient creative people throughout the nationalist struggle. Even while these cities had art institutions, the modern movement did not originate in Bombay or Calcutta. The Progressive Artist Group in Bombay, which was founded in 1947, was a loose association of artists with the goal of lessening nationalist elements in the arts. They also seriously considered stealing European art movements at the time, particularly Post-impressionism and Expressionism.

Keywords: Movements, Local Effects, and Progressive Art.

INTRODUCTION:

With regard to establishing India's modernism in the visual arts, the first ten years of the twentieth century are significant turning points. Abanindranath Tagore's Bengal Art Movement successfully merged the canonical visual legacy with methods borrowed from Chinese and Japanese sources to create the foundations of

India's modernism. The culture, beliefs, and traditions of any country are the best indicators of its heritage. Art is a subset of these that has profoundly shaped India's identity. India has long had artistic traditions. The forms of Indian art that are currently in existence have experienced extensive and varied transformation throughout the previous century. For instance, the traditional

artists focused on socioeconomic concerns. But subsequently, as modernists and their contemporaries emerged, Indian painting underwent a profound transformation. The largest collections of different arts, including music, theater, dance, rituals, performing arts, scriptures, paintings, folklore, and texts, are found in India. These artistic disciplines are referred to as part of humanity's "Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)".

To preserve these priceless art forms, the Government of India's Ministry of Culture has implemented a number of programs and projects. The ministry offers financial assistance to those individuals or groups engaged in performing such literary and visual arts. Here is a quick summary of Indian arts' traditions and history. This was created in the 1900s, a period that underwent a number of changes that helped give rise to these kinds of art styles.

India is one of the oldest civilizations in the world, and it is a very large country. Its age reflects the civilization's wealth and is consistent with the vastness of its geographic reach. All of these elements have influenced India's numerous, rich, and diversified art traditions. The artworks chosen to be on display at the Museum of Sacred Art collection are well-representative of diversity. Among other stories from Indian mythology, the epic Mahabharata, the Ramayana, Sri Mat Bhagavatam, the Harivamsa, etc., have a place in Indian art. In Indian art,

Shri Krishna is portrayed as the supreme being, a godchild, a divine hero, a model lover, and a celestial hero. These motifs are seen in artwork from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Odissa, Kerala, Gujarat, and other states in India as well as from close neighbors like Tibet, Nepal, Indonesia, and Thailand. Despite coming from different backgrounds and cultures, these works of art share a common theme and ethnicity.

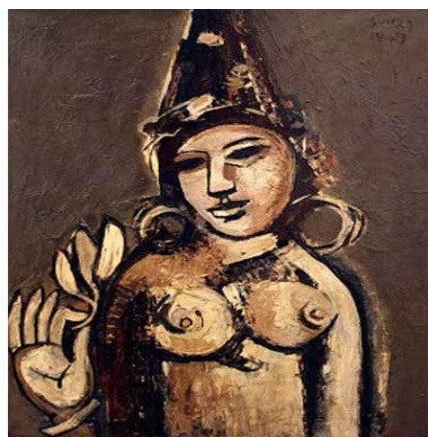


Figure 1:1949's Hindu Princess by F.N. Souza

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Smith's (2020) The complexity of global art movements and their impact on local artistic practices are explored in depth in the study. Smith uses a comparative method to investigate how artists in diverse locations negotiate their artistic representations within the framework of developing global aesthetics, concentrating on the effects of global modernism on local identity. The study emphasizes the conflict that exists between upholding cultural traditionalism and adopting global aesthetic trends. Smith's research sheds light on how artists manage this tension

to create distinctive art forms that deal with universal concepts while incorporating local sensibility.

Kumar and Gupta (2018) Their research focuses on postcolonial India, where local artists' responses to foreign inspirations are studied as modernism is negotiated. This study emphasizes the necessity for a comprehensive understanding of how artists reconcile their cultural heritage with modernist ideals by highlighting the intricacy of regional responses to global influences. Kumar and Gupta explore the manner in which the negotiation of modernization becomes a vehicle for the articulation of complicated postcolonial identities by examining the many artistic techniques used by Indian artists.

Chen's (2017) An informative viewpoint regarding the global-local dynamic can be gained by investigating the impact of Western modernism on current Chinese art practices. This study reveals the conversations between cultural norms and global artistic currents via the prism of Chinese artists who are battling Western influences. Chen notes that regional adaptations of global modernism are active encounters that change the conversation surrounding contemporary Chinese art rather than mere imitations. The study demonstrates how artists reinterpret components of global modernism using their cultural history, ultimately creating a unique aesthetic lexicon.

Williams (2019) explores the pathways of cultural interaction while

tracking the impact of European avant-garde movements on Latin American artists. Williams highlights the challenges of incorporating and modifying international aesthetics within regional contexts by tracking the influence of European modernist movements on the Latin American art landscape. The study emphasizes the complex interactions between international and local aesthetic paradigms and how cultural interchange shaped Latin American artists' responses to European influences. Williams' work highlights the complex process of artistic reception and transformation, illuminating the ways in which Latin American artists interacted with and interpreted European avant-garde ideas.

Rahman's (2021) Our understanding of how modernism and local settings interact is aided by comparative analysis of progressive art movements in South Asia. Rahman explains how modernism's reflections take different forms depending on local histories, cultural values, and socio-political circumstances by exploring the artistic trends throughout several South Asian nations. The book examines the comparative histories of South Asian modernist movements, illuminating the local differences that give rise to various visual vocabularies. Rahman's research demonstrates how the modernist movement is reflected through the lens of regional identities and emphasizes

the mobility of modernist interpretations.

THE PROGRESSIVE ARTISTS GROUP'S LEGACY:

Midway through the 20th century, a group of artists known as the Progressive Artists Group were active in India. The gathering, which was situated in Bombay (presently Mumbai), included craftsmen including FN Souza, MF Husain, KH Ara, SK Bakre, and SH Raza. They fostered a different scope of structures that drew from both Indian people legacy and Western Innovator draws near. Later on, the gathering would consolidate specialists like Mohan Samant, Smash Kumar, Tyeb Mehta, and Krishen Khanna prior to dissolving in 1956. Nonetheless, the impact of these craftsmen and their objective for an innovation liberated from religion, one that invited the variety of their nation and challenged the supremacy of custom, can be seen in the acts of South Asian specialists working in the extended twentieth 100 years.



Figure 2: Francis Newton, still life, 1958

A group of painters assembled in 1947, just a few months after India proclaimed its independence from colonial British authority, determined to foster a recent trend of workmanship for the recently comprised country. This different gathering of craftsmen, working in various mediums and styles, was united in Bombay by the candid painter Francis Newton Souza. They became known as the Dynamic Craftsmen Gathering, a moniker that was roused by the Ever-evolving Essayists' Relationship of the 1930s yet additionally signified a bunch of philosophical responsibilities for a nation experiencing significant change. These responsibilities — to secularism, pluralism, and serving the different social milieux from which the specialists arose — would be scrutinized and refined as the PAG, like the juvenile Indian state, attempted to characterize its motivation and its limits, yet they filled in as a vivifying force for uniting a scattered gathering whose impact can be felt all through the Pioneer ordinance.

The founding members of the PAG—FN Souza, MF Husain, KH Ara, SK Bakre, HA Gade, and SH Raza — mirrored the wide assortment of social, monetary, and phonetic foundations in India. This pluralism would act as the impetus for the Gathering's resistance to the imaginative practices and styles that had come to run the Indian creative scene in the twentieth 100 years. Afterward, Akbar Padamsee, Tyeb

Mehta, Mohan Samant, V.S. Gaitonde, Smash Kumar, and BhanuRajopadhye would join the Gathering. These craftsmen recognized that the prevailing method of workmanship creation, which zeroed in on an orientalist and nostalgic patriotism impacted by figures like Rabindranath Tagore and the impact of the Bengal School, was as of now not suitable for a recently free India regardless of the way that their styles, ways of thinking, and methods of craftsmanship making much of the time contrasted extraordinarily.



Figure 3: Sayed Haider Raza, view of Bombay 1940

The Progressives looked to the rich history of the past to materialize this new way of thinking, from the design of Mughal and Pahari miniatures from the 17th century to the sensual carvings of Khajuraho temples. The artists mixed aspects from Muslim history with imagery from the Hindu and Jain traditions as they looked to the past for inspiration, making a case for a secular modernity in the process. By tracing a trajectory of concurrent histories that led to the 20th century, the Progressives attempted to

accurately evoke the pluralism of their modernist present by incorporating both formalist techniques and spiritual, metaphysical themes. Their goal was to take stock of the rich environment in which their own practices evolved. However, this style had several drawbacks as well: MF Husain, the group's lone Muslim member, later came under fire and even faced censorship for including Hindu deities in his paintings. As a result, in 2006, he decided to leave India.

As confirmed by the numinous types of Padmasree and Gaitonde, the Reformists, consistent with their far-reaching origination of Innovation, didn't restrict themselves to the endowment of conventional Indian custom however rather focused on the styles and methods of Asian artistic creation, prominently Korean scene and Japanese ink painting. Raza and Husain's portrayals of rustic town life were renewed by gestural strokes, brilliant variety, and firmly created structures that pointedly stood out the peaceful from India's quickly industrializing present. Vernacular and society customs of ancestral people groups inside India likewise filled in as a urgent method of motivation for them.



**Figure 4: Ram Kumar, untitled
Varanasi, 1981.**

Such irregularities have come to portray the tradition of the Ever-evolving Craftsman's Gathering, whose attachment began to fall apart after Souza left for London in 1949 and remained there until the last part of the 1960s. His compatriots would take action accordingly — Raza to Paris, Bakre to London — and the enduring specialists would progressively move toward individualistic methodologies while keeping up with sticking to the Gathering's directing beliefs in their work. When the Gathering officially split up in 1954, its individuals had scattered across Europe and India, yet they had made an enduring imprint on the rise of a worldwide Innovation that highlighted various perspectives, subjects, and stylish registers. The Dynamic vision actually exists today as proof of such a turn of events, and its belongings are as yet being seen now.

INDIAN PROGRESSIVE ARTIST GROUP EMERGES:

India's set of experiences is entwined with that of the pioneer English domain, which went on for over

three centuries. Despite the fact that there are still a few restrictions from custom, imaginative development has followed its own way during this time. That radically changed in 1947 after the decree of India's freedom, when another age of painters joined the Dynamic painters Gathering. A bigger social, social, and strict system is utilized in the presentation The Ever-evolving Unrest: Current Craftsmanship for Another India, which is presently in plain view at the Asia Society Exhibition hall in New York City. It is planned to analyze and represent the gathering's belief systems as well as its imaginative result. From the 1940s until the 1990s, craftsmen including K. Ara, S.K. Bakre, H.A. Gade, M. F. Husain, and S. H. Raza, as well as ensuing development individuals like V. S. Gaitonde, Krishen Khanna, Smash Kumar, Tyeb Mehta, Akbar Padamsee, Mohan Samant, and others, contributed parts of the show. This is a presentation of distributions.

1. The Beginning:

Souza, Raza, Ara, and critic Rashid Husain met on December 5, 1947, driven by their ambition to change the art world as it was at the time. They expressed their disappointment with the situation of exhibition judging. They hoped to eliminate the arbitrary selection process and increase openness by establishing a judging committee so that up-and-coming artists would have a fair opportunity to exhibit their work.

The choice to display their craft all in all had proactively been taken by Raza, Souza, Ara, and Bakre (who was convinced by Ara). The association was framed when Souza enlisted Husain, and Raza acquainted Gade with the PAG people group. To keep away from stylish confusion, they initially choose to go on with six individuals.

Be that as it may, PAG developed over the long haul, and prestigious performers like Tyeb Mehta, Smash Kumar, and Manishi Dey began to be connected with the association. Krishen Khanna, Mohan Samant, and V.S. Gaitonde all committed to by 1950. The eminent craftsman Akbar Padamsee likewise framed an enduring kinship with the PAG's individuals regardless of never being an authority part. The following are a few instances of contemporary Indian fine art:

2. FN Souza:

FN Souza, a co-founder of PAG who died in 2002, personifies insurgency and rebellion. The portraiture and satirical imagery depart from typical signs, despite the early vivid paintings' hints of European modernism. For his work on nudity and religion, Francis Newton Souza was the first to draw criticism from the Indian and international art communities. He had a deep interest in Catholic themes and motifs because he was born into a Goan Catholic household in Panaji. Additionally, he was admired for how he portrayed female nudity and the conflict between good and evil in his

artwork. Since he was young, Souza has an artistic and rebellious side to him. He attended St. Xavier's High School, where he discovered his love in drawing through studying European prints, paintings, and oleographs. However, he was expelled from school at the age of 15 for misbehavior that included painting sexual images in the restrooms. He later enrolled in Bombay's Sir J. J. School of Art, but was quickly expelled for supporting the Quit India Movement. His first piece, "Blue Lady," which was quickly displayed and purchased by Dr. Hermann Goetz for the Baroda Museum, was produced on the day he was suspended. Souza's journey got started.



Figure 2: FN Souza, Untitled, 1962, Oil on canvas

3. SH Raza:

SH Raza (1922-2016) outlines a path that scrupulously protects color through the striking transition from native to European to inherently Indian. Whether in his early landscapes, expanding into impressionist and postimpressionist paintings, or in the later mature phase of his Bindu paintings, Raza's complete body of work enchants with a variety of color palettes. Within a few years of the founding of

Progressive Artists Group, Raza and Souza both left India. One of the most significant painters in the nation during the 20th century was School of Art, Mumbai and co-founder of PAG. While living in India, Raza took a stab at an assortment of Pioneer procedures. In 1946, he held his most memorable independent presentation at the Bombay Craftsmanship Society Salon, for which he was given the Silver Award. He moved to Paris in 1950 in the wake of tolerating a canvas grant at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Expressions, where he laid out French scene settings utilizing free brushstrokes and an impasto method. His utilization of variety as an instrument of development changed from gouache and watercolor to more material oil-based paints because of his impact from European partners like Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh. His scenes would ultimately turn out to be increasingly dynamic, which assisted him with making his now-renowned unique styles like Theoretical Expressionism and Mathematical Reflection. In the wake of losing his better half and wanting to reconnect with his Indian legacy during the 1970s, Raza's advantage in Indian themes developed, particularly the promising "Bindu," which started to appear much of the time in his compositions as of now. He died in 2016 at 94 years old, abandoning an exceptional assortment of work for which the Indian and French state-run administrations each granted

him the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan grants.



Figure 3: SH Raza, Carcassonne, 1951, Oil on paper

4. HA Gade:

The paintings of HA Gade (1917–2001) are clearly influenced by cubism and impressionism. Gade was heavily influenced by scientific theories, despite the fact that the artwork below lacks any geometrical framework. His fierce and extremely difficult brushstrokes served as an expression of his effort to escape colonial enslavement.

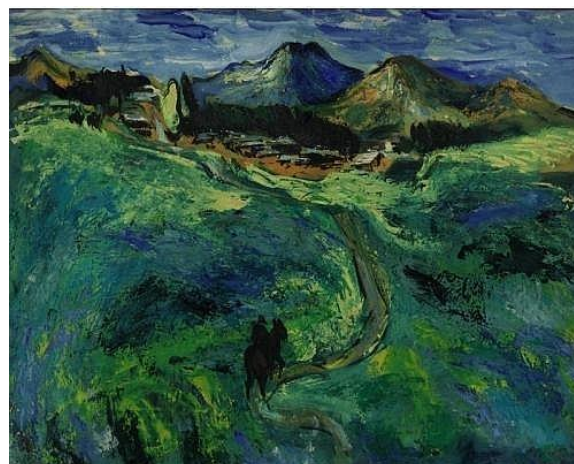


Figure 4: HA Gade, Trees, Water colour

5. Sadanand Bakre:

There was only one sculptor in the Progressive Artists Group, Sadanand Bakre (1920–2007). His career-spanning work was

characterized by a dynamic personality as well as a pure spirit of experimentation. Later, his sculptures and paintings explored abstraction while experimenting with new languages and techniques.



Figure 5: Sadanand Bakre, Untitled (Still Life), 1964

6. MF Hussain:

One of the greatest modern painters from India, MF Hussain (1915–2011), finally attracted attention from all across the world. Despite the other members of the scholarly progressive painters group, Hussain was a self-taught artist. His connection with PAG influenced his artistic sensibility and expressional aesthetics; he had painted movie posters. On our list, Maqbool Fida Husain is possibly the most well-known and divisive artist. The Bollywood actress Madhuri Dixit, naked Hindu goddesses, and his work on themes like religion and politics employing historical characters, icons, and events are among his most well-known subjects for his vibrantly colored paintings. Hussain began his work painting posters and billboards for India Cinema in Bombay, unlike other PAG artists. He joined PAG and traveled to Paris in 1953 like his contemporaries F.

N. Souza, S. H. Raza, K. H. Ara, and others. There he encountered the works of Henri Matisse, Paul Klee, and Pablo Picasso and began incorporating Cubism into his own work. He was known as the "Picasso of India" in his later years and honored with the Padma Bhushan awards (1973) and the Padma Vibhushan (1991).

Hussain's energy of films persevered even as he won grants for his compositions. For his film *Through the Eyes of a Painter* (1967), Hussain won the Public Film Grant for Best Trial Film as well as the Brilliant Bear seventeenth Global Film Celebration's Most memorable Award. *GajaGamini* (2000) and *Meenaxi: A Story of Three Urban communities* (2004) were both composed and coordinated by him. Hussain, being the unusual craftsman that he was, undeniably got allegations that his portrayals of amazing animals in political settings "hurt individuals' opinions." Hussain, who caused a flurry of debate about the artistic license, exiled himself from 2006 till his death.

In its later years, the Progressive Arts Group also created young artists. The group's sole female artist, Bhanu Rajopadhye Athaiya, is among the notable members, along with, Krishen Khanna, Ram Kumar, V. S. Gaitonde, Tyeb Mehta, Mohan Samant, and Akbar Padamsee. These painters carried on the heritage of the Masters of Indian Modern Art by collectively embracing Prime Minister Nehru's philosophy of "Unity in Diversity".



Figure 6: MF Hussain, 1950.

GROUP OF PROGRESSIVE ARTISTS: WEAVING A NEW VISION:

For obvious reasons, 1947—the year when India gained independence from British rule—is permanently imprinted in the collective memory of the country. But it is also logical to assume that such a significant event, and the deeply ingrained movement that preceded it, would have had an effect on artistic expression. Nehru's idea of "Unity in Diversity," in particular, was a thought that epitomized the spirit and pulse of the moment. The cry for a new India, in short, encapsulated the essence and pulse of the time.

The Partition of India, which had caused tremendous suffering and displaced people, was another significant and sad event. An important trend in Indian painting was started in this context by F.N. Souza, one of the most disobedient painters of our time. Souza envisaged the creation of a collective after being disenchanted with

the work created at the time and hoping to develop a more unique style. At the time, Bombay, where he was stationed, was a significant cultural hub.

AUTHENTICATING THE MOMENT:

The emergence of the Progressive Artists' Group, or rather the Bombay Progressive Group, as it was additionally known, needs to be examined in light of the nation's artistic and sociopolitical landscapes. An essay by Siva Kumar [3], which offers a brief review of Modern Indian Art, describes this context in detail. It emphasizes how the 1940s "was an important turning point in the Indian view of modernism".

In Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay, India there was an expansion of art movements during this decade that "doubted the wisdom of striving to create indigenous modernity that skipped modern Western art." The Bombay Moderate Gathering, otherwise called the Ever-evolving Craftsman's Gathering, was maybe the remainder of them to be established however "addressed the contemporary statement of the current day at its most clear".



**Figure 7: S.H. Raza, The Bindu series:
the complex geometry**

INDIAN ART FORMS:**Painting:**

Painting is one of India's oldest art forms and has been practiced there from the beginning of time. While the Ellora and Ajanta cave artworks tell about Buddhism in India, the motifs in ceramic paintings reflect the Indus valley culture. The paintings still maintain their individuality and rank as the pinnacle of Indian art forms despite adverse weather conditions and numerous invasions by different kings. Western India, the eastern part of India, Central India, and Deccan India were the primary centers of painting art forms at the time, with special emphasis on Rajasthani, contemporary, colonial, and Mughal paintings. The main paintings were regional in nature, specifically, Paintings. North Indian, South Indian, West Indian, East Indian, Central Indian, Rajasthani, Mughal, Colonial, and Modern Indian

Sculpture:

The golden age of Indian sculptural art is seen as occurring during the Harappa civilization in the year 2000 B.C. The majority of Indian sculptures were created to represent many Gods from various religions, including Hinduism and Buddhism. The majority of these sculptures in India were produced by the kings at the time. Generation after generation, the family members were taught the skills necessary for sculpture as a profession. The various sculptural styles that were

used in India include, Indus Valley, Colonial, Modern, Buddhist, Hindu, and Islamic

Dance Forms:

The most ethereal and elegant dancing styles in the world are thought to be those of Indian classical dance. The credit goes to the intricate body movements, gestures, emotions, and postures that were used. In his or her dance, nature of current workmanship practice and is a need for those experts who will shape the inevitable destiny of the creative development. Odishi, Manipuri, Kathakali, BharathaNattiyam, Kathak, and Kuchipudi are a few of the popular dance styles in India.

Indian Theatre:

The world's best and longest theatrical forms of art are Indian productions. The fifth Veda, "Natya," is credited with giving Lord Brahma his yearning to amuse the Gods and is where Indian theater is supposed to have its roots. Bharata wrote an article titled Natyashastra about the traditions that existed in acting, dancing, and other fields.

CONCLUSION:

This study shows that cross-disciplinary collaboration is a distinctive nature of current workmanship practice and is a necessity for those specialists who will shape the eventual fate of the innovative movement. By blending the lines between many fields, interdisciplinary art techniques are being used by both the artist and the

viewer to address social, political, and other relevant concerns. The display and preservation of art, however, have become more problematic as a result of the expanding diversity of artistic activities. The technical tools required to display new art utilizing new digital technology are typically lacking among presenters. Though museums and galleries are improving their capacity to exhibit these multidisciplinary works, modern Indian art must currently be assessed in relation to cross-disciplinary collaboration and diversity, in addition to against both continuity and discontinuity with traditions. Thus, defining the common diverse creative activities could encourage their orderly, specified, and advantageous development.

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