



# EXPLORING THE AESTHETIC AND CULTURAL IMPACT OF MUGHAL MINIATURE PAINTINGS IN THE ISLAMIC ART MUSEUM

**C. Venugopal Reddy**

Research Scholar

University of Technology

**Dr. Saurabh Saxena**

Supervisor

University of Technology

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## Abstract

*This study focusses on the appreciation of art and examines the Mughal miniature paintings that are on exhibit at the Islamic Art Museum in Kuala Lumpur. The artwork itself is the subject of appreciation in relation to the five miniature paintings that were on exhibit at IAMM. Specifically, the exhibition "14 Dynasties and a Region: The History and Culture of the Muslim World on display" will open on June 8th and run until October 16th, 2022. The layout organisation, colour palette, and style are all given special attention throughout the analysis of the artwork. Art as a discipline with formalization. Western civilization has been a trailblazer throughout history, and it is inevitable that their formulas will be applied to the study of Islamic art.*

**Keywords:** *Aesthetic and Cultural Impact, Mughal Miniature Paintings, Islamic Art Museum, Shah Jahan, India.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Miniature painting in India first emerged boldly under the Pala dynasty. These were the very early works, manifesting themselves in manuscript illustrations that were made entirely with organic materials. Miniature painting evolved as a refinement that continued this tradition. In her text, Jain

writes: "The first Indian miniature paintings can be dated back to 7th century AD that are dated back to Palas of Bengal. During their rule, Buddhist text and scripts were painted onto the manuscripts of 3 inches broad palm leaves depicting pictures of Buddhist gods and goddesses. Pala painting has smooth colors and running lines; it resembles paintings inside the Ajanta walls. Later on, there were different styles of their own: Rajasthani, Pahari, and Mughal schools, which depicted nature, flora, fauna, and urban life differently. Miniature paintings were used for the celebration of nature as well as eco-friendly techniques. Courty life, love scenes, and daily activities were the most common themes, but nature always existed. Artists painted detailed landscapes, architectural elements, and abundance of flora and fauna.



**Figure 1:** Dhani Ram, Radha Krishna in the Rain, natural pigments on paper, 8.25 x 11 inches

In many works, the stories of Radha and Krishna and the love reflected through them are mirrored with nature's symphony. Weather and natural elements have been used to echo emotions and desires. Animals and birds appear symbolically for harmony with sentiments. Nature is central to emotional expression and portrayed through lush landscapes. Some scenes featured dry leaves, which symbolized sustainability, while clear ponds with lotuses depicted nature's purity and the bliss it offers to humanity. Borders usually featured intricate patterns of flowers and leaves, celebrating nature even in decorative elements.

One of the favorite themes of Indian miniaturists is the Gita Govinda, the 12th-century Sanskrit poem by Jayadeva, narrating Krishna's romance with Radha and his relationship with the gopis of



Vrindavana. In one example, Radha and Krishna meet amidst the flowering creepers along the Yamuna River in Vrindavana's forests, with lotus-filled waters. This romantic scene is called Lila Hawa, in which they can be seen to change identities—Radha becomes Krishna and Krishna takes on the timidity of Radha.

### **1.1. Techniques, Methods, and Applications in Miniature Painting**

In the beginning, artists drew their compositions using organic, earthy materials, making it ecologically friendly but labor intensive. Organic colors were derived from natural pigments. Each color made the artist connected to nature; therefore, artists were in love with such a color. As nowadays, we are using synthetic pigments, it is very disturbing, while natural colors will be very calming for a piece of art, and people feel that natural colors give health benefits unconsciously. They look very greenish because many tones amplify the subtle details and designs. Along with all these applications, imagination would come along with reality because artists will take all the beauty and environment-friendliness from nature in their work.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Rao (2022)** emphasized the transitions and many idioms of Indian miniature artists, underlining their outstanding contribution as the heirs to the Indian visual culture for coming generations. The role of visual imagery was elevated, progressing from religious texts to the great heritage of paintings. The artist absorbed the spirit of divinity, deeper love, and passion that are present in Indian culture instead than copying nature. They had a religious as well as a decorative purpose. One recurrent feature frequently observed in Indian art was the idea of "horror vacui," or the need to fill space. The study examined how line, colour, and space are articulated. It's possible that the climate enabled Indian artists to create unique colour schemes, and their ingrained respect for religion and the natural world satisfied the tastes of their customers. They were finally set apart as outstanding performers in the world for all time by this special combination.

**Mokhtar et. (2022)** examined the Islamic Art Museum Kuala Lumpur's Mughal miniature paintings as the focus of its art study. Five little artworks on exhibit at the museum were the subject of the discussion. In particular, these pieces were on display during the 14 Dynasties and a Region: The History and Culture of the Muslim World exhibition, which ran from June 8 to October 16,



2022. The layout, composition, colour diversity, and style of the paintings were the primary focus areas of the examination. Since the Western world created the study of art history, it was just a matter of time until Islamic art was examined using their methods.

**Jaipurian (2021)** analyzed that in response to the distinctively colonial exchanges between native artists and a British audience, Patna Kalam began to take shape in the late eighteenth century and continued to change over the course of more than a century. Some significant concepts in the discussion of Indian art emerged from the sociocultural setting of "new" India in the early 20th century. Abanindranath Tagore's leadership of the emergence of contemporary national art has a significant impact on how people view art. This trend was closely related to the decline of Patna Kalam.

**Maitra (2023)** studied how the creative styles of the time, societal customs, and religious beliefs were reflected in these paintings. Maitra examined a variety of works of art, taking into account their subjects, methods, and historical setting. The study showed how important Jain paintings are to comprehending the mediaeval cultural environment of Western India and how they preserve and transmit Jain aesthetics and ideals. The study added to the larger conversation on Indian art history and its complex relationships to religious and social dynamics by thoroughly analyzing the paintings and the material culture that went along with them.

**Mumtaz (2023)** examined a wide variety of artworks, emphasizing how these pictures expressed dedication and represented the social and spiritual exchanges of the times. In order to convey the intricate link between faith and artistic expression in the Indo-Muslim milieu, Mumtaz examined the paintings' methods, topics, and symbolism. Through examining a range of artists and their creations, the study shed light on the profound influence of devotional imagery on South Asian religious rituals and creative expression. The discoveries provided important new information on the relationship between art, religion, and identity, highlighting the paintings' significance in comprehending the larger sociocultural dynamics of the time.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Islamic artists use reference examples from the actual nature of God's creation to illustrate their interpretation of monotheism in order to promote universal knowledge (salvation). Various visual



language strategies are used to simplify complex and mystical topics in order to increase the audience's cognitive activity and thinking capacity. Artists must consider and comprehend the body of information that already exists in a person's life. In order for a person to learn new things, the creator must consider and comprehend the foundation of his or her current knowledge and use his or her imagination to arrange the specifics of that information. In the end, the act of thinking, evaluating, and interpreting involves both the audience and the artist in an indirect way. The basic procedures used to create Islamic art will hone the brains and sensibilities of those who appreciate its values.

As a result, D'zul Haimi has created four fundamental work procedures. Shahadah is the initial stage. Imitation, or copying anything that is appreciated in the context of God's creation, is the second phase. Artists may comprehend, study, and appreciate the beauty of God's creation via the process of mimicking nature. Islamic artists exhibit humility, confidence, and sovereignty that are incomparable to the magnificence and beauty of God's creation. In fact, what is produced is an illusion that is subject to the artist's own perception and is not entirely accurate.

Style is the third step. Islamic artists keep creating art that deviates from representations of nature that have organically vanished. At this point, Islamic artists use their understanding of their creative process to enhance Islamic artwork. At this point, Islamic artists use their understanding of their creative formula to enhance Islamic artwork. Abstraction is the final and fourth phase. Imitation, denaturalization, and style have all been used to analyse and interpret nature's representation until it ultimately boils down to accepting something abstract. The technique of talking about implicit ideas about the cosmos is called abstraction. In both two and three dimensions, this idea has been personified, stylized, and celebrated.

#### **4. DATA & ANALYSIS**

- a. Shah Jahan seated with attendants in early 17th-century Mughal India Gold-pigmented study, 19.6 cm in height and 13.5 cm in width



**Figure 2:** Shah Jahan Seated with Attendants in Early 17th-Century Mughal India

This study examined a wide variety of artworks, emphasizing how these pictures expressed dedication and represented the social and spiritual exchanges of the times. In order to convey the intricate link between faith and artistic expression in the Indo-Muslim milieu, Mumtaz examined the paintings’ methods, topics, and symbolism. Through examining a range of artists and their creations, the study shed light on the profound influence of devotional imagery on South Asian religious rituals and creative expression. The discoveries provided important new information on the relationship between art, religion, and identity, highlighting the paintings’ significance in comprehending the larger sociocultural dynamics of the time.



**Figure 3:** Strict and Formal Style Example in Mughal Art

For the area in the middle: Give an example of the strict and formal style. The figure's posture is less realistic and it lacks facial expression. seated on a chair made of gold. The emperor is holding

a flower, while the other elements are arranged in a dynamic manner. begins to permit more realistic portrayal.



**Figure 4:** Limited Foreground Details and Abstract Appearance of the Building

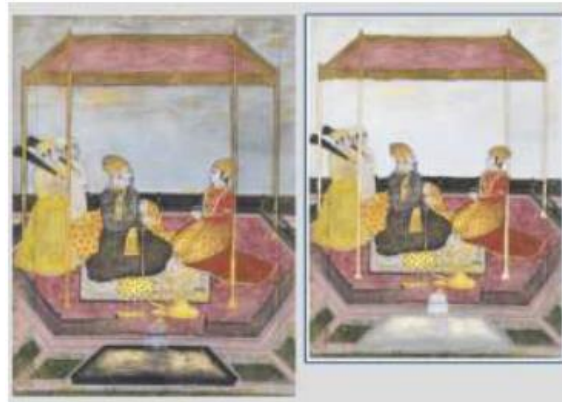
There aren't many details in the foreground, thus they're imbedded in the centre ground. The entire building appears abstract and flat.

- b. Nawab Aliwardhi Khan's miniature painting, sitting with a visitor in Murshidabad, India, 1750–1760, on study with gold and coloured pigment, measuring H. 40.3 cm by W. 31



**Figure 5:** Nawab Aliwardhi Khan's Miniature Painting with a Visitor in Murshidabad, India

The artist uses light blue and a few yellow spots for backdrop space. The pseudo-cloud of flat colour.



**Figure 6:** Backdrop Space in the Artwork

For the centre ground: Nawab 'Aliwardi Khan of Bengal wearing a silver jama in a garden setting beneath a pink canopy. Mortals are held aloft by two attendants. The rigidly straight is a defining feature of the Murshidabad painting style. It was common practice to paint compositions beneath canopies. incomplete artwork, like the carpet. He supported the arts of the Mughals.



**Figure 7:** Nawab 'Aliwardi Khan of Bengal in a Garden Setting

The fountain in the centre of the photo frame is the foreground space. The water element is a component of garden or court accessories.

c. Mughal India, about 1750, Shah Jahan holding his son Aurangzeb Gold-pigmented, coloured study, H. 20.8 cm, W. 13.7 cm



**Figure 8:** Shah Jahan Holding His Son Aurangzeb in Mughal India, Circa 1750

For back ground space: Halo represent important and honorable man. Flat stroke for river and simplified water effect. Golden halo –shows the magnificent of the emperor. Simplification 6 putti adorning the scene in an unprecedented interpretation of emotions. The winged being was introduced by Jesuit missionaries in late 16th centuries.



**Figure 9:** Background Space Elements in Mughal Art

Trees and mountains are stylised for the middle ground area. Just a mountain impression. With very little illusion of perspective, the floor appears to be floating. Indian culture and fashions are reflected in the jewellery and attire.



**Figure 10:** Simplification in the Foreground Area

Figure simplification for the foreground area. Figures, sections of figures, costumes, and objects are stylised. side and flat views. Demonstrate the traits of a parent who helps his son. A bent stance conveys deference and compliance.

In the 19th century, Nawab Ghazi Al-Din Haydar lived in Lucknow, India. Coloured study with gold pigment, H. 18

- d. Regarding the back yard: Oudh's final Nawab Vizier (1814-1818). The East India Company's first King of Oudh (1818–27).



**Figure 11:** The Last Nawab Vizier of Oudh and the First King of Oudh

The last Nawab Vizier of Oudh (1814-1818) for background space. The East India Company's first King of Oudh (1818–27).

- e. Space was found; however, the quality of the space was destroyed. backdrop photos' flatness and simplicity. He invited British painters George Duncan Beechey and Robert Home to the Royal Atelier.



**Figure 12:** Unclear Curtain Position and Flat Floor Color in the Center Ground

The position of the curtain is unclear for the centre ground area. The floor's colour is flat.



**Figure 13:** Cotton Clothing and Architectural Motifs in Islamic Culture

Cotton clothing with prints for the foreground area. architectural motif seen in Islamic culture. Sitting on a chair was Nawab. wearing a complex turban. Sarpech turban decoration carved with diamonds and emeralds. A balcony with a portrait traditional green curtain. column made of Roman marble. European context and methods.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Islamic artists use instances and allusions from the material world of God's creation to illustrate their interpretation of Tawhid in order to aid in public comprehension (salvation). Numerous visual language strategies are used to simplify complex and astonishing topics in order to improve



audience reasoning skills and cognitive activity. The fundamentals of current information in a person's life must be considered and understood by the artists. and use his creativity to organise the information so that it can learn new things. Lastly, both the artist and the audience were indirectly involved in the process of thinking, analyzing, and interpreting. Compared to Western approaches, Islamic artists have a distinct perspective on and appreciation for the world. The four creative art processes—abstraction, stylization, imitation, and Shahada—are all evidently used in Mughal art. Tauhid was their artistic manifestation of their beliefs. The Mughal artists' application of the notion of Alam al Mithal helps them communicate via visual languages. Persian, Indian, Mughal, and later European techniques were all combined to create the unique format of Mughal miniature paintings. Sharing the shahada while producing and enjoying art for the benefit of artists, patrons, and audiences is what makes Islamic art meaningful. Ingenious and innovative are the techniques, supplies, and tools employed by Mughal painters while adorning artwork so that the pieces of art appear magnificent, alluring, and breathtaking. The ideals and values of Tawhid are not abandoned by Islamic artists, who create Islamic artworks that align with the cultural geography of their place. The success of the artwork was now anticipated by the creators to reach a magnificent and astounding degree. Nonetheless, this expression's significance is kept under control and without exaggeration.

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**C. Venugopal Reddy**  
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