

# Medieval Indian Miniature Paintings: An Overview of the Latest Writings and Trends

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**To cite this article:**

Bennabhaktula Lavanya. Medieval Indian Miniature Paintings: An Overview of the Latest Writings and Trends. *Social Sciences*.

Vol. 11, No. 3, 2022, pp. 188-193. doi: 10.11648/j.ss.20221103.18

**Received:** June 13, 2022; **Accepted:** June 23, 2022; **Published:** June 30, 2022

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**Abstract:** Historiography, as an intellectual and academic field, is concerned with the study of historical methodology, the examination of several schools of thought on a particular historical issue, and the history of the creation of historical accounts. For instance, paintings offer a visual experience of many forms, lines, processes, concepts, and historical representations. Art historians utilize visual analysis and sources in order to convey and appreciate the experience of concentrating on a subject while attempting to understand art history. Art historians who worked throughout the medieval period defined the miniature paintings of Medieval India by employing a variety of stylistic approaches, including analysis, development, and change, as well as characteristic styles. As part of their focus on patronage and style, they also highlighted the style and patronage of certain periods of time, specific locations, and specific artists. An examination of the cultural and historical milieu around the practice of miniature painting was carried out. Iconographic, contextual, historical, and critical techniques were utilized throughout their research for these publications, which were devoted to the study of medieval Indian art. In order to characterize the miniature paintings of Medieval India, art historians of the time period made use of a wide variety of stylistic analysis, development, and change as well as characteristic styles. As a part of their focus on patronage and style, they also highlighted the patronage and style of certain time periods, geographic locations, and artists. An exploration into the art of miniature painting was accompanied by research into its cultural and historical context.

**Keywords:** Art, History, Historiography, Miniatures, Paintings, Writings

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## 1. Introduction

As an intellectual and academic field, historiography pertains to the study of historical methodology, the examination of the many schools of interpretation on a given historical issue, and the history of historical writing. Art forms such as paintings offer a visual experience of shapes, lines, methods, ideas, and historical representations. Art historians utilize visual analysis and sources to explain and comprehend this experience of focusing on topic matter and attempting to comprehend art history.

The main is to understand the writings of both Indian and European scholars who have contributed to the study of the art of miniature paintings. These scholars covered important areas of Indian history and attempted to understand complicated themes and approaches. They made an effort to explore the history of medieval Indian miniature paintings, including their origins, their evolution, and the many types.

Empirical evidence has been combined with data from secondary and primary sources as well as other secondary and primary intellectual sources to create a comprehensive strategic framework that takes into consideration geography, time, epistemology and a variety of other factors.

## 2. Discussion

A variety of stylistic analysis, development, and change or characteristic styles were employed by art historians of the medieval period to describe miniature paintings of Medieval India. As part of their focus on patronage and style, they also highlighted the patronage and style of certain periods and regions and artists. A cultural and historical backdrop was investigated in connection to the art of miniature painting. This art of medieval India was studied using iconographic, contextual, historical, and critical analyses in their writings. Attempts are made in this paper to understand major texts on

miniature paintings and art history of medieval India in general and the Deccan in particular, which are as follows.

Anjan Chakraverty's Indian miniature painting takes the reader on a tour through the School of Indian miniature painting's growth, advancement, and extinction. Viewers may enjoy the artistry of the world's greatest artists thanks to this collection of masterpieces, which hail from museums throughout the globe. [1]

Darielle N. Goswamy's *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings* from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection contains reminiscent depictions of religious tales from Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam as well as thoughts on life are presented in this book. [2] There is a statement from a collector who discusses the history of courtly painting in India and the relationship between artists and patrons, as well as the history of collecting Indian art. There are replicas of paintings from the 1500s, before the rise of Islamic Mughal control in northern India, and up to the late 19th century, when the British Raj was at its height. An in-depth analysis of each piece of art is provided.

Dr. Daljeet and P. C. Jain's *Indian Miniature Paintings: Manifestation of a Creative Mind* presents a new perspective on Indian miniature art. This book explores its body and spirit, as well as the underlying unity, ethos it symbolizes, and the influences that molded it from the seventh century onwards, all of which are examined here. [3]

*The Spirit of Indian Painting: Close Encounters with 101 Great Works 1100-1900.*

Illustrated by B. N. Goswamy aims to provide light on the ideas and feelings that motivated Indian artists, as well as the ideals and influences that impacted their work. [4] In addition, it covers the various regional styles, the connection between clients and artists, the setting in which they created their works, and the equipment and procedures the painters employed. Everything from Jain writings and miniatures to Company School and Mughal masterworks are included in the book's second half.

The book *Ranga Roopa: Gods. Words. Images* of B. N. Goswamy opens out, taking the reader on a journey through some of the most significant depictions of gods and goddesses. [5] The reader's understanding and imagination are expanded not only by the poetry in this book but also by the magnificent pieces of art that are featured in it.

An introduction to India's lively art form, *Indian Folk and Tribal Paintings* by Charu Smita Gupta, deals with the visual vocabulary of Indian folk and tribal painting. [6] It is a stunning record of the art form's growth, context, continuity, period of obscurity, and current wonderful resurrection.

B. N. Goswamy's *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, work challenges the prevalent image of the Pahari painter as an anonymous artisan who follows a set of rules when making his work. It was hailed with critical praise at its original release in German and has subsequently been raised to the status of classic. [7] J. M. Rogers' *Mughal Miniatures* analyzes the development of Mughal painting, from its earliest beginnings to the masterpieces created by the palace studios for the books and albums of its demanding

imperial clientele. [8] Portrait albums, text illustrations, and animal portraits are all part of this collection, which includes both human and animal themes.

Indian, Islamic, and Persian styles are used to create a unique combination in the paintings of Mughal India by Andrew Topsfield. [9] The paintings range from hunts, royal feasts and other scenes of imperial life to legends, mythic deities and conflicts.

For the first time, a real visual record of people's life and the labor they accomplished can be found in S. P. Verma's *Ordinary Life in Mughal India: The Evidence from Painting*. [10] Additionally, it illuminates many aspects of rural life for both men and women. In addition to being aesthetically pleasing, it also highlights the significance of visual arts in historical writing.

Visibility prevented Rajput women from being explicitly embodied in images, as noted by Brittany Daugherty in her article "Rajput Women: Representations comparable to Western Gender Constructions," which was published in *Art of the 18th Century: Gender and Visual Culture*. [11] As a result, an ambiguous idealized female form emerged.

In her article titled "Introduction: Gender and Art History," Gill Perry makes the following observation regarding feminist art history. [12] For feminist art history, the divide between 'high art' (such as sculpture) and the more feminine spheres of applied or decorative art (such as embroidery), needlework, and craft has been a major emphasis. Aniruddha, Krishna's grandson, and Usha, Banasura's daughter, are shown in the book by Harsha V Dehejia and Vijay Sharma in *Pahari Paintings of an Ancient Romance: The Love Story of Usha Aniruddha*. [13]

The authors of "Towards a New Art History: Studies in Indian Art" Shivaji Panikkar, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Deeptha Achar focus on specific visual cultures within the dynamics of historical processes and raise critical issues of art production, circulation, and consumption in an effort to rescue traditional arts from a past that is completely isolated from the present. [14] The book was written in honor of Professor Ratan Parimoo,

Parthe Mitter's *Indian Art*, which is included in the Oxford History of Art series, walks the reader through 5,000 years of Indian art and architecture. An extensive examination of a diverse creative heritage is conducted through the Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Colonial, and current time periods. [15] This examination also includes a study of modern Bangladesh and Pakistan, as well as the ornamental arts and tribal artists.

A few secondary works on sources are as follows: *Medieval India from Contemporary Sources: Extracts from Arabic and Persian Annals and European Travels* by Lane-Poole Stanley 1854-1931, A textbook of historiography by E. Sreedharan, 500 B.C. to A.D., and *Historiography: a history of historical writing* by Tej Ram Sharma. A Pictorial and Iconographic Study of Indian Musical Modes, Known as Ragas and Raginis is Gangoly's greatest work on a phase of the History of Indian Music, the genesis and the evolution of Indian musical modes—picturesquely known as the Ragas

and Raginis. [16] It is based on the original sources, and it was written by O. C. Gangoly. In *Miniature Painting: With Special Reference to Rajasthan*, Shalini Bharti discusses the progressive evolution of Rajasthani Miniatures with regard to women's clothing and accessories. [17] Presenting magnificent miniature art from Bijapur, portrayed in the Deccan style, *Ragachitra: Deccani Ragamala Paintings* by Dr. Daljeet is a collection of paintings. [18] Paintings by Nainsukh of Guler are Works from the Pahari Region of the 18th Century and Can Be Found in the Collection of the Museum Rietberg Zurich and his Successors, According to B. N. Goswamy's *Indian Miniatures*.

*Miniature Painting: A Complete Guide to Techniques, Mediums, and Surfaces* by Joan Cornish provides an in-depth look at the subject. [19] These miniature portraits, which were painted in the manner of medieval manuscripts when they were first created, were frequently painted by jewelers, who then put them into pendants or boxes after setting them in gold. The paintings were frequently utilized for the purpose of identification. Although the materials and functions of miniatures have evolved through time, the techniques used to create them have remained the same. These techniques involve applying tiny layers of paint in order to generate brightness, details, and a smooth surface. This book offers an introduction to the method of miniature painting as well as instructions on how to paint tiny landscapes, still life, and portraits. Additionally, the book discusses color harmony, the use of gold leaf in miniature painting, and painting outlines. Included in this package are detailed demos of each step. Another significant piece of literature about Medieval India is Henry Beveridge's translation of the *Akbar Nama* of Abu-I-Fazl. [20] It is not only about the political, economic, social and cultural elements of Medieval India that the manuscripts and works in question cover, but it is also about the theme of women and the art of the era. The miniature paintings of Medieval India depicted women from many walks of life. This group of women was active in matters of royal and cultural importance. They make it possible for us to reacquire ourselves with a hitherto unknown world of art, culture, and women.

*Paintings of the Hyderabad School* by Jagdish Mittal is an important historical study that makes an effort to examine the appropriate historical meanings of the paintings created by the Hyderabad School. [21] The author makes the observation that the majority of the work created by painters from Hyderabad dates back to the 18th century, and that painting in Hyderabad began about the same time that the Asaf Jahi dynasty was established in 1724 A.D. by Mir Qamruddin Khan Nizam-ul-Mulk. This facet of painting gained momentum due to various factors other than the interest in painting of Asaf Jah-I (C1724-1748), such as the migration of artists to Deccan during Aurangzeb's prolonged stay in this region, etc. This facet of painting gained momentum due to various factors other than the interest in painting of Asaf Jah-I (C1724-1748).

Stella Kramrisch stated in the book *Survey of Painting in*

the Deccan that painting that was created under the patronage of the Deccani dynasty like Golconda was not swayed from its cores by the orders or tastes of any of the rulers. However, Turkish and Persian elements entered into Deccani painting in large amounts as a result of political events that gave impetus to them. In his opinion, the interpenetration of many traditions and schools as well as their coexistence at Deccani palaces served to inspire Deccani art, which eventually established itself outside of the Deccan as well. [22] It provides a catalogue of paintings from Golconda and Hyderabad, each of which possesses a certain peculiar characteristic, such as with and monumental quality in spacing the picture, as well as use of colors such as light yellowish green ground and reds of sun shade. Moreover, each of these paintings is characterized by the fact that they depict a scene from mythology.

Deccani painting, by Mark Zebrowski, is notable for being both a high-quality and significant contribution to the area of miniature world paintings. [23] The author's perspective on the evolution of the arts in the Deccan sultanates, notably in Golconda, is unquestionably a significant accomplishment on the author's side. At a time when there is a lot of discussion on concerns of information related to dates and significance of Deccani paintings, it deals with a great number of notable Deccani paintings. It makes an effort to provide solutions to the disagreements that exist among academics while at the same time drawing attention to newly discovered information on the medieval Deccan. The author notes that the Golconda monarchy was known to support and collect exceptional works of miniature art. However, due to significant cultural linkages with the Middle East, particularly with Safavid Iran, Deccani painting has been long associated with Persian, Turkish, and Mughal court art. This confusion has persisted for a long time. Despite this, the art of the Deccan has developed its own distinctive persona as a result of local inspirations. He discusses, in order of chronology, the many paintings that were produced in the Golconda empire and brings to light the qualities, colors, and peculiarities of those paintings. In these paintings, Hyderabad continued to serve as the primary focal point, and they depicted a wide array of regal, noble, and feminine subjects.

On the other hand, M.S. Randhawa, in his book on Indian miniature painting, made the observation that the style of painting in Hyderabad and the Deccan was heavily inspired by Mughal art. In point of fact, several of the miniatures are difficult to differentiate from Mughal paintings on various subjects, and vice versa. Ragamala paintings, which featured a backdrop of stylised foliage, palms, and plantains of the Deccan region, were produced publicly under the patronage of Asaf Jahi monarchs. These paintings were known for their intricate detail. [24] The author provides an analysis of the works produced at each school or center that was responsible for the development of a certain artistic movement. According to him, the miniatures frequently give accurate recordings of the social and cultural life that existed throughout the historical period. The evolution of miniatures from a number of different schools is also covered in this

volume. He made the observation that the mining of diamonds and commerce with Persia were the primary contributors to the kingdom's wealth in Golconda.

Indian miniatures, such as those by Mathur. N. L., summarize a long history of art. Various Deccani regions, including Golconda, have distinct art styles and distinctive qualities that are described in their historical and cultural contexts. [25] In the Sultanate courts of the Deccan, a distinct style of painting with local differences arose and aimed to show out the major elements of the masterpieces of miniature paintings and their significance. 17th-century Deccani painting was at its peak and remained so until the 18th century.

Some hitherto undiscovered forms of Indian painting for the British are revealed in Mildred and W. G. Archer's Indian painting for the British (1770-1880). Nicolao Manucci, an Italian adventurer who had just departed Golconda in 1686, had noted that the native painters in that region were already painting European-influenced topics. Among the paintings that Manucci acquired were depictions of local monarchs and Deccan notables, all of which were representative of Indian and British art genres. This type of painting is typical of Deccani art in Hyderabad during the 18th century. [26] With its design, it was a reflection of both British and Indian influences. These painting sets were taken off the market as a basic commodity.

The most important aspects of Deccani paintings are brought out by Douglas Barrett in Paintings of the Deccan from XVIth - XVIIth century. In his work, he brings to light a number of color plates that represent the creative craftsmanship of the Deccan kings. He made the observation that the paintings of the Islamic rulers in the Deccan were of a distinct order, just like the atmosphere of their courts. [27] They were frivolous during the war and lethargic during the peace. They left the running of business to a stream of ministers and favorites picked for charm as much as they were chosen for effectiveness. They passed their free hours with the arts, with ladies, and with attractive cup-bearers.

Another significant work on art is titled Indian miniatures and was written by Mario Bussagli. In this book, the author argues that pictorial art, along with literature, theater, and music, is one of India's most essential forms of expression. Miniature paintings, despite their small size, are nonetheless capable of expressing important psychological aspects of everyday life. [28] These paintings, which are among the most delicate and refined types of art, also have a lyrical significance in addition to their descriptive one. He made a remark to the effect that Golconda was the most significant market place in the all of India. As a result of the city's success in a diverse range of industries, Hyderabad has transformed into a wide variety of distinct forms over the course of its history.

Francis Brunel dealt with a variety of paintings in his book "The Splendour of Indian Miniatures." These paintings depicted the life-styles of rulers, ambassadors, commoners, and other notable figures. [29] These life-styles were charged with energy, and the figures displayed vigorous gesturing and pose while retaining a sombre Deccani glow. He made the

observation that each miniature is a manifestation of the soul and the sensitivity it possesses.

Bedekar. B. H and Goswami. B. N give an account of the stylistic development of miniature paintings in the kingdom of Golconda and Hyderabad in their book "Stylistic approach to Indian miniatures." In this book, they highlight the various types of miniature paintings that were executed, the characteristics that were included, the differences that were blurred, and the influences that were brought about. [30] He made the observation that Golconda art had achieved its zenith under the reign of Abdullah Qutb Shah, but the style of Hyderabad became distinct with the establishment of the Asaf Jahi Dynasty.

An vast collection of Indian miniatures dating from the 16th to the 19th century may be seen in the Indian Miniatures by Toby Falk and Mildred Archer. Many of them were acquired by the East India Company in 1807 AD from Nawab Richard Johnson, who served as a governor in India between the years of 1770 and 1790 AD, for the library of the East India Company. [31] He lived in Hyderabad for a while, where he commissioned his own painters to paint things that attracted him. In particular, he was interested in Ragamala sets that were based on a number of different musical systems.

Anand Coomarswamy, in his Introduction to Indian art, split the paintings of the Rajput dynasty into two distinct categories: Pahari and Rajasthani are two of the languages spoken in Rajputana (concerned to Jammu, Kangra, Garhwal, Basholi and Chamba). [32] He referred to all of these works of art as Rajput Paintings since the dynastic families who ruled these territories were Rajputs.

It is clear from W. G. Archer's Indian miniatures that a wide variety of miniature art forms were in widespread use up to the 19th century. [33] Throughout history, different patrons have played varied roles in relation to artists. Despite the fact that the practice was most common in Muslim courts, traces of Hinduism may also be found in it.

Music, poetry, and painting all come together in one form or another in Klaus Ebeling's Ragamala paintings, which contain detailed comments on the numerous regional schools that are represented in the paintings. [34] Album of Indian Miniatures, authored by Mulk Raj Anand began to trace the continuity of the tradition of painting through a period of two thousand years with a variety of styles by showing a link between one time and another. This was done by displaying a picture that linked one period to another. He made the observation that the Sultans of Golconda were prolific art patrons throughout that time period. [35]

The Golconda School was also mentioned in Treasures of Asia, Painting of India by Basil Gray and Douglas Barret. [36] They classified painting as either classical or post-classical, with the former being represented by large-scale murals and the latter being dominated by miniatures.

### 3. Conclusion

Therefore, it is obvious, based on these methodical and

verifiable works, that the research of the art of miniature paintings was performed by both Indian and European Scholars who, covering important sections of Indian history, attempted to demystify complicated themes and approaches. They endeavored to comprehend the history of miniature paintings from medieval India and the Deccan region, with the goal of distinguishing distinct types and developing knowledge of their genesis and evolution. In light of this, an attempt has been made within the scope of this study to investigate other sources of paintings for the objective of carrying out more investigation. This is done in order to maintain a constant connection with the events and experiences that occurred in the medieval era, with the goal of highlighting the expressions and actions of patrons, as well as events and incidents related to the medieval Indian art of miniature paintings. One may obtain a feeling of the tempo of royal life as well as the ordinary lives of commoners by comparing ancient and modern miniatures. This can also teach one about the broad spectrum of human skills, particularly those connected to intelligence and emotion. Historians have made an effort to explain how this artistic endeavor became permeated by culture, philosophy, and patronage while also attempting to explain how art strives to preserve its own autonomy to the best of its ability. The majority of the publications adhere to a methodology that emphasizes having a comprehensive epistemological, geographical, chronological, and thematically organized strategic framework. to investigate the current body of information on the history of medieval art with appropriate arguments, concepts, and points of view, as well as to acquire fascinating insights into a variety of historical events on both the conceptual and methodological levels. These writings also contribute to the development of further research on a variety of artistic and cultural topics connected to the history of medieval India.

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