

## Commercialization of Contemporary Art in India

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### Abstract

Contemporary Indian art has travelled a long journey since the days of Raja Ravi Verma, Amrita Sher Gill, R.N. Tagore, A.N. Tagore and his followers as Nandlal Bose, Asit Kumar Haldar, K.K. Habber etc. They all produced figurative art or abstract art. The artists came through various stages of elimination and simplification through abstraction cubism and a variety of expressionistic trends. In short, artist had lost their patronage in the modern age so it is very difficult for an artist to survive because there is no one to pay his work so he has to sell his art work to survive or to create more work. So it is important for artists to be able to sell their work. It keeps the fires in their kitchen burning as well as it encourages more artists to pursue their talent and by putting a value to it, it makes the general public appreciate their work and try to understand it better. So commercialisation of art is good to encourage the young artist to create art and to adopt art as their career. On the basis of art market artists are focusing on their career and adopting new techniques new art forms.

**Key words:** Contemporary art, various schools, artists, commercialization, art galleries, art works, style, medium, India art summit, Exhibitions, Musium, Art Market.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The term commercialization of contemporary art stand for the marketing of art works such as – painting, sculpture, graphics and many other types of fine arts. The classical tradition of art in India had more or less died when british ruled in India because british tradition over powered Indian traditional art which was running under the patronage of kings from the medieval period. The kings pampered art and artists in every way to satisfy their artistic thirst or need. They were the patrons of art works. In those days there were no need of market to sell art works. There was no question of earning the livelihood before the artist. Artist worked according to the taste of the patron kings. On the contrary, now a days art has become commercialized due to the individual approach of an artist, which is known to be the contemporary modern art. In this process the value of Indian modern art is increasing at the national and international level too. Indian artists are flourishing and gaining their individual place at the global stage of art, as Indian art market is growing.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER**

- To find out the difference between art under patronage or individual art, today according to the situation, where art is for its own sake.
- To state that commercialization of art is good whether some oppose it and criticise it.
- To identify the role of the art market and art fairs.
- To state the impact of growing art market on creation or modern artist.

India has the glorious history of making excellent arts over the centuries. It has been a part of our culture, religion, lifestyle and aesthetics. Indian art is having a distinctive place in the world from ancient time to modern and modern Indian movement is considered to have begun in 19<sup>th</sup> century. The classical tradition had more or less died when British ruled in India because British tradition over powered Indian traditional art which was running under the supervision of supreme king of various states in the medieval age. The kings pampered art and artists in every way to satisfy their aesthetic thirst. In 19<sup>th</sup> century artist lost their patronage so they started to visit European art galleries and followed western trends to pamper themselves. That was the transition period that art was began to created for its own sake. They were also influenced by famous Europeanisms and artists. The modern movement which influenced Indian contemporary art very much, no doubt began in Europe, but its source of strength lay elsewhere. It was Mexico, Africa and Asia which provided the momentum for it<sup>1</sup>. Thus, contemporary art began to cope with the globalisation of art which is to open the market in the international level too.

Distortion and Abstraction became the synonym of modern contemporary art, at first the source of which was Negro sculpture and geometrical shape of Cezanne, the father of modern art. Some time an art which is bind by the classical rules, cannot express so effectively or boldly as through a little distortion, an artist may easily express. To show the importance of geometrical shape Cezanne wrote 'give shape the world through cube, cone and cylinder.'<sup>2</sup> Afterward artist Pablo picaso established cubism and gave new path to the modern art. From here fauvism, Dadaism, surrealism, expressionism and many isms came into contemporary scene which makes the art more expressive and globalised. With this globalisation art became more commercialised which facilitate creative expression. Thus, these isms influenced the Indian artist very much as well as show path of marketing. Then artist started to express their feelings about subject through their

individual theory and principles. Their images flowed through their different mediums. We can say that it is the sheer force of rhythm which let their imagination flow freely and turned to a creative expression. Various schools provided access to innovative techniques and ideas. Several galleries were established where artist could show and sell their work. Master artist also gained recognition not only on National level but also on International level. Artists established their group such as progressive artist group, shilpi chakra, Calcutta group etc. in India.

Thus, contemporary Indian art has travelled a long journey since the days of Raja Ravi Verma, Amrita Sher Gill, R.N. Tagore, A.N. Tagore and his followers as Nandlal Bose, Asit Kumar Haldar, K.K. Habber etc. They all produced figurative art or abstract art. The artists came through various stages of elimination and simplification through abstraction cubism and a variety of expressionistic trends.

In short, artist had lost their patronage in the modern age so it is very difficult for an artist to survive because there is no one to pay his work so he has to sell his art work to survive or to create more work. So it is important for artists to be able to sell their work. It keeps the fires in their kitchen burning as well as it encourages more artists to pursue their talent and by putting a value to it, it makes the general public appreciate their work and try to understand it better. So commercialisation of art is good to encourage the young artist to create art and to adopt art as their career.

The creative seen and the art market in present day in India particularly in big cities seem to have converged, with the majority to successful artists today, as well as upcoming ones, seeking the lime light of the market place. After independent there were only some art galleries which show and sell art pieces for some due amount. But the artists get less profit in comparison of gallery owners. There were some private and government governed galleries in the metropolitan cities such as Chitrakoot, Genises, Aakriti, Cima art galleries of Calcutta, Dhoomimal and Kanika art galleries of Delhi, Chennai forum art gallery, Prakrit art gallery of Chennai, Akarprakar of West Bengal, Bombay art society of Mumbai and Tao, Jahangir art gallery, Project 88 art gallery of Mumbai, Sakshi art gallery, the Guild Mumbai are some private art galleries. Besides these National galleries of modern art at Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore etc. are the government art galleries which sold the art works in the modern age.

The market of contemporary Indian art has grown as a result of economic changes, an open economic policy and a growth of the private sector. A change has been noticed from the late 1980s, with new element sentering the market: popularity of the deformed style, the English style in water colour works of senior painters of early contemporary period and many other styles. The growing market of senior artists of contemporary Indian art is also a consequence of the pride that collectors have developed in owning eminent names. For example V.S. Gaitonde's untitled painting of 1995 is sold for 29,30,25000/- at christies auction house of London in 2015. Thus, this painting is the most expensive of all the Indian arts<sup>3</sup>.

### **3. AVAILABILITY OF VARIOUS ONLINE ART WORLD PORTALS HELP COMMERCIALIZATION OF CONTEMPORARY ART**

Thus, earlier it was difficult to approach the buyers but today the online websites have made the process completely easy. We find various online art world portals which let users browse and purchase favourite art piece on affordable price. If an artist desires to visit their portals, his

agenda is discussed in advance on phone or by e-mail. These portals are actually online market for investors looking for quick profits as well as collections, masters, new comers and established buyers. Artists can upload their art works for sale and art lovers can buy them online. Suchitra art, Art Intaglio, Tulsa Indian Art market, Indian art ideas etc are few online art galleries which provide genuine art and focus on upcoming as well as old masters. The portals have a great collection of art works from budding artists as well as most renowned Indian artist by surfing these portals. Users can get complete knowledge and buying reading blogs they also can get latest reviews of events across the world. Buyers can find a large collection of original paintings in different mediums such as oil painting, water colour painting and acrylic or mix media paintings in different style like abstract, figurative, landscape, seascape etc. Art critic Kirpal commented in Indian express that "These countries have a number of potential collectors who have to be identified? The next five years will see the emergency of many new collectors because this is a period of collective enterprises and community building in Indian art and its promotion."

These portals believe in promoting contemporary art and artist both at national and international level. These portals serve in many ways as they:

- Upload images of art works immediately from artist camera or computer gallery.
- Provide instant payment through money- order/ VISA/MASTER Cards/ Cheque.
- Display images of art works along with every details i.e. size, medium, price etc.
- Facilitates for 14-15 days trials.
- Edits gallery and allows adding / removing any items for free any time instantly and easily.
- Provide free biographical page.
- Allows people to mail the artist while keeping artist information private.
- Offers instalment plans of payment.
- Provide interactive messaging system to share, buy and sell art for free.

#### **4. INDIAN ART FAIRS ALSO STANDS TO SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF INDIAN ART WORLD.**

Different art fair had been supported art market in India and abroad such as Art Basel in Basel and Miami, Frieze Art Fair in London, Armory Show in New York, India Art Summit in India etc. first fair named India Art Summit (2008) was patronised by prominent Indian artists like Anjali Ela Menan, S.H. Raza, Krishna Khanna, Keshav Malik. Since then it has taken place every year with the exception of 2010. Neha Kripal the current owner of the Indian art fair divested 49% of its stake in early 2011 to two stakeholder, Sandy Angus and Will Ramsay - co-founders of the Honkong Art Fair to create a large network. In 2009, the highlight of the fair was a display of Pablo Picasso's work exhibited by Beck and Eggeling- A German gallery. The same year Lisson gallery brought diaspora artist Anis Kapoor sculpture to India for the first time at the art fair. In the third India Art Summit 2011 the art work of Raza, Souza, Hussain and Anis Kapoor was on a great sale. About 570 Indian contemporary artists had exhibited their work in the fair. The fair had taken up more than 90000 sq. ft. of Pragati Maidan, the main public exhibition hall here in India's capital. About 84 galleries were represented there<sup>4</sup>.

The director of fair Neha Kripal had said that Indian art market elevated through this type of fair or celebrations. After the successes of this fair the participation of international art galleries increased to double. In fourth edition in 2012 the fair moved to NSIC ground in Okhla and hosted

90 galleries from 20 countries. Almost thousand artists from around the world with 80000 visitors participated in this fair. Those participated were 26 museum groups including representative from the Tate, Guggenheim Museum, New York, San Jose Museum of Art Pompidou Centre, Moma and the Singapore Art Museum. The fair has certainly made a bold step up, with higher quality overall and a more international roster, including “Big Box” galleries, Hauser and Wirth and White Cube. There were some big prices as well. The event has now archived “museum status” meaning art can be brought in without the payment of duty up front, as was previously charged<sup>5</sup>.

At the preview alone of the fifth edition over 3000 works of art were sold by 105 exhibitions from 24 countries. Yes Bank joined as presenting partner, maintaining the partnership for the next three editions<sup>6</sup>. The sixth edition (2014) featured 91 booths of modern or contemporary work by over 1000 artists to India and overseas. Participations of 12 new galleries from outside India including those from Israel, France, Portugal, Germany, Spain, Turkey etc. The Himalayas art museum in Shanghai and Mark Rothko museum in Latvia both participated in the fair for the first time. The seventh edition (2015) hosted 91 exhibiting booth and over 80,000 visitors. Sales were up 25% and were reported not just from Delhi but also from tier II and tier III cities such as Ahemdabad, Chandigarh and Jaipur. A number of new spaces were launched, including the design store located in the new IAF courtyard as well as a new roof top restaurant. In the growth of Commercialization of art, the eighth edition 2016 added more as BMW joined as presenting partner and the fair was restructured into five main sections: Galleries, Featuring leading Indian, South Asian and International galleries focus showing solo presentations which have been curated by participating galleries or institutions. Institutions showcasing leading international and Indian museum and Art foundation presenting elements of their programme or collaborations. On the 12 September, 2016, MCH swiss exhibion (basel) Ltd., a company MCH group Ltd. acquired 60.3% of the shares in the seventh plan. In New Delhi, the organizer of seventh India Art Fair, with the participation of MCH group BMW and co-ownership with Angus Montgomery Ltd. had 29.7% share.

The founder director of India Art Fair Neha Krapal will have new ownership for its ninth edition which will take place in 2 to 5 feb.2017 with 10%. Thus, Krapal, who established the fair in 2008 will still play a key role in its development. India is the first “ Region of focus” for MCH, indicating of growing International interest in Indian and south Asian art and building of a strong cultural eco-system in the region as – Kochi Biennale to Dhaka Art Summit<sup>7</sup>. Thus, Indian art fair is scheduled every year showcasing a range of modern and contemporary art. Various art galleries also feature in this fair from India and across the globe. Undoubtly, now India has become an important centre for globe art market due to the commercilization of art. Now, there are some websites which sell the art work online. For example –

<http://www.artbid.co.za/sell>,

<http://www.artflute.com/>,

<http://www.indianartmarkets.com/index.html>,

<http://www.artmarketindia.com/>,

<http://www.artintaglio.in/artshop.jsp>. etc.



## **5. CONCLUSION**

Indian art has made a prominent place in the world as Indian art market growing day by day. As a result new artist are getting encouragement to create a new art world or to develop a new aesthetic sense or outlook. Different art galleries, auction houses, art fairs and webcities are playing a very important role in the field of modern art. Thus, commercialization of art is good to encourage the young artists to create art and to adopt art as their career and it also facilitates the creative expression among young artists.

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