

Difference Between Gandhara and Mathura School of Art

Indian art and sculptures are known for their religious and spiritual dimensions that mirror the Indian soul. Both Gandhara and Mathura school of art has stood the test of time and still influence many artists. Therefore, we must preserve and propagate them to the future generation.

Let us check the difference between Gandhara and Mathura school of art based on various parameters mentioned in the table below.

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Parameters	Gandhara School of Art	Mathura School of Art
Area	Gandhara school of art flourished in Areas of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and present North-west India.	Mathura School of art flourished in Mathura and other areas of Uttar Pradesh.
Time Period	Gandhara art flourished between the 1st century BC to the 5th century AD.	Mathura art originated in the 1st century BC and flourished till the 12th century AD.
External Influence	Gandhara art was influenced by Greek and Roman sculptures. The Buddha sculptures showed Hellenistic features.	Mathura art was purely an Indian art form with no external influence. The sculptures were based on Yaksha images discovered during the Mauryan period.
Religious Influence	Buddhism inspired the Gandhara art, and hence Lord Buddha was the central theme.	Mathura art produced sculptures relating to Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

Material Used	Gandhara sculptures were made from bluish-grey and grey sandstones.	Mathura sculptures were made from spotted red sandstone.
Description of Buddha	Gandhara Buddha sculptures were spiritual and exuded calmness.	Mathura Buddha sculptures were less spiritual. It depicted a masculine, smiling Buddha, often seated in Padmasana.
Other Features	Gandhara images depicted longer eyes, shorter ear lobes, and sharper noses. The eyes were partially closed in meditation.	Mathura images depicted longer ear lobes of Buddha with thick lips, wide-open eyes, and a prominent nose.

Gandhara School of Art

Gandhara is one of the major schools of art that flourished in India during the Kushana Empire. It touched its peak during the reign of Kanishka, one of the greatest emperors of the Kushana dynasty, from 127 to 151 AD. Gandhara school of art is best known for its fine detailing and bluish-grey color.

The Gandhara art form is an amalgamation of Greco-Roman, Indian styles, and other foreign influences. The art form was closely associated with Mahayana Buddhism, and hence Lord Buddha was the central theme of the art. However, images of the Greek God Apollo and other kings were also carved. This art form flourished in prominent areas, including Taxila, Peshawar, Begram, and Bamiyan.

Mathura School of Art

Mathura school of art was another art form that thrived during the rule of Kushanas. It was the first art form to depict sculptures of all three religions- Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The indigenous art form carved sculptures of Buddha in a human form.

The Mathura school of art sculptures were gracious with sharp and beautiful features, a slim body, and several folds of transparent drapery. The art flourished further during the 6th and 7th century Gupta period.

Key Difference Between Gandhara and Mathura School of Art

The key difference between Gandhara and Mathura School of Art are given below.

- The Mathura school of art was founded in the first century BC and thrived until the twelfth century AD, whereas the Gandhara school of art existed from the first century BC to the fifth century AD.
- While the Mathura school of art emerged and thrived in Mathura and portions of Uttar Pradesh, the Gandhara school of art mostly flourished in regions of Afghanistan and modern-day North-West India.
- Buddhism had an impact on the Gandhara school of art, whilst Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism had an influence on the Mathura school of art.
- The biggest feature of the Gandhara Buddha is his expression of serenity, but the Mathura Buddha is joyful and reclining in Padmasana with his right hand in the Abhaya mudra and his left hand resting on his left thigh to demonstrate masculinity.
- While the halo around the head of the Buddha in Mathura Style was richly embellished and the images are less expressive, the halo in Gandhara Style is often plain and the figures are far more expressive.

