

Patna Kalam Painting Style

After the fall of Nawab of Bengal and the subsequent decline of Murshidabad in the mid 18th century, the artisans moved to Patna, where they came under the patronage of local aristocracy and often the (EIC) East India company. After that, a new unique form of painting emerged which came to be known as the Patna Kalam or Company painting.



Main Characteristics

- This painting style got influenced by Persian and British styles of paintings.
- The artisans adopted the colours and linings from the Mughal style and the shading from the British style.
- The painting has wide and exquisitely decorated borders, which majorly focused on the subject of the painting.
- Unlike Mughal painting, which focused on the royalty and court scenes, the artisans of Patna Kalam were deeply influenced by the daily life of the common man (e.g; washerman, butler returning from the market, tailor, sweeper, and slave struggling with the dog, etc).
 - The subjects are really very simple depictions of the 'sets of caste occupation' known as 'Firka'.
- **Main subjects of painting-** Ceremonies, Local festivals, local rulers, bazaar scenes, and domestic activities.
- **Materials used-** All natural materials are used in a painting like red lacquer, indigo, yellow soil, and charcoal for colouring.

- In the initial days, the paper was used but after the sometime bamboo-based paper got prominent. Later on even Europe made papers were used
- Brushes were made up of squirrel hair, pigeon feathers, swine, goat, and buffalo hair.
- Apart from this paintings were done on diverse surfaces like paper, mica, and ivory and bone surfaces, etc.
- But in Patna style, there is a lack of any landscape, foreground or background, but there is development in the shading of solid forms.
- **Types of painting:**
 - Miniature Firkas depicting daily life, which had a large clientele of European customers, portraits of people, objects and animals.
 - Miniature of social events like marriages and festivals.



The technique of Patna Style Painting

- The artisans' used brush without marking with the pencil to delineate the shape of the outer surface of the picture and the procedure of Patna Style Painting is popularly known as '**Kajli Seahi**'.
- Since the paintings were made for commercial purposes, they lacked the richness of Mughal art.
- It depicts the everyday local life instead of that of just those belonging to the aristocracy and royalty, later on, the painters also started painting nature.

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