Chapter -2

(a) M.F. Husain As Modern Indian Artist (A Comparative Study of his Work with Western Art).

(b) An Evaluation of the Art of Anjolie Ela Menon
M.F. HUSAIN AS MODERN INDIAN PAINTER (COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HIS WORK WITH WESTERN ART)

At the time Husain started his career, there was a great dearth of usual material pertaining to modern western art available to the Indian Artist. The production of Art Books was in any case now here so lavish as it is now. As an enclave of British culture, India was hopelessly impoverished even in what was available of Europe an art as the British art scene was largely academic, with only a few tame and tardy modernists. Husain who began painting in the provincial town of Indore, had until 1947 concentrated as landscaper and portraits. And though he knew enough to admire the greatness of Rembrandt, he was fashioning himself on the more modest examples of English Naturalist painters. In 1947, under the influence of his new found artist friends, be took in all sorts of influence in the same breath. On the one hand Picasso, Rouanlt, Beckmann and Nolde, and on the other, Indian sculpture especially the smiling, big breast,ed laksis of the Kusana period.

M.F. Husain's early paintings are essentially GENRE paintings. The idion he built upon it in the following years is most readily related with Picasso. The reason for that is not so much Husain's special affinity with him as the over weaning presence of Picasso on the world art scene. With Picasso's staggering ability to invert, overthrow, and fuse different vocabularies of art and lies ability to

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1. A great painter of Holland born in 1606.
2. The most famous artist of the century born in 1881.
3. Husain saw it in 1948 at an exhibition of Indian sculpture.
span any and every style, casting his brilliant shadow upon it. It is obvious why he
represented for artists far flung from the centres of modern art the necessary
stepping stone towards modernity. Picasso becomes, infect, the common stylistic
denominator for painters from all over the world, thus bringing into relationship
painters of quite different genius.

Compare the work of Husain with that of the Refino Tamayo4, whose work
he had seem in the early fifties and the compromisar makes sense, not as a direct
influence but in terms of the trajectory of their respective styles which reveals
similar inclinations. Both Tamayo and Husain wished to free themselves of an
obvious indigenism in art. Let the preoccupation harms them both and they make a
sort of compromise painting native symbols and mythologies in a language openly
borrowed from the West and specifically from Picasso. In the very richness and
flavour of colour and the attenuated contours which arc the attributes of their
respective styles are glimpses how, finding a wholly convincing idiom without
succumbing to exotic appeal, is indeed, a difficult task for a non Western
contemporary.

Taking Picasso as the starting point, one is tempted to place Husain in the
broad stream of Expressionism. However, Husain's Expressionism derives more
from environment in which he started serious painting then from his temperament
or convictions. It was Souza, a foresworn Expressionist, who picked him out and
told him what to look and what to read, and how to release his native energy. It

4. A well known Mexican Painter.
was Shelesinger, an enigre Jew from Austria and an adnurer and collector of the Virennese Expressionist, Egar Schiele, who was Husain's earliest buyer and patron.

At a more personal level, Husain's adoption of Expressionist vocabulary has something to do with that youthful zest which seeks on identity by breaking down formal, academic structures in the supposedly impulsive manner of the Expressionists. The self Portrait\(^5\) in the footsteps of Van. Gogh\(^6\) is a very early example of Husain's Expressionists mode.

Husain has superimposed many varieties of horses the horses from his visit to China in 1952, the big rumped horses of Paolo Uccello, the horses of Mariono Marini with their phallic necks, the sky, dream horses of Franz Marc. These country vanities resolve themselves with Husain into an image of a wild horse, a beautiful noble creature of vast spaces.

After that Husain borrowed a good deal of his inspiration from George keyt because he liked his voluptuour delinsation of mythological figures.

Husain and Klee are the once who have found the ability to speak in a private voice in a way which bears all the complex resonances of a public and conflated world. Both are formal innovators in water colour. Klee is like M.F. Husain in that what counts as form for him is highly contxtual and comples. Both Husain and Klee have produced animated organic pictures whose life is like

\(^5\) Painted in 1950.
\(^6\) Van Gogh was a Dutch painter born in 1853.
nature. Every thing in the work of both is alive and intercasting. Form is a complex of colour, line and figure which grows and diffuses. Background and foreground interact or merge. Both artists are profoundly inspired by music. Husain has drunk deeply of Indian music. Klee was a gifted amateur musician, his father a conductor both add to their formal complexity through potent innovations in the water colour medium.

These artists have managed through such innovations, to make the personal intimacies of water colour speed to the complex psychological insecurities of the modern world through the sense in their pictures of uncertainly. Klee's pictures are inviting, witty, ironical and playful, yet this play conceals a childlike fascination and fear of things large and luminous, things posing a threat. Amidst Klee's complexes of form one is in danger of loosing one's way, just as one way equally find oneself in magical or transfigured place without knowing exactly how one got there. His water colour bring one into an intimate word, call it the soul of the world in which one is not fully sure how to proceed, how to follow the road map, how to avoid danger Husain's soul, born in water colours and graphics, is similarly organic, playful and uncertain. His felt choseness to Klee has to with that imilarity. If Klee's pictures carry the intimacy of childhood, Husain's pictures carry the intimacy of work done.

Husain's first visit to Egypt in 1953 had left a deep influence on Husain. "For the next few years I consciously tried to incorporate the two dimensional
structure of Egyptian art in my painting." The decasualized, primal Feminine form.7

The Western Style:

Like Ravi Varma (1848-1906), who preceded them, several artists chose a painting style developed in the West. They made works with oil paints. Raja Ravi Varma, Rawindarnath Tagore, Gagandarnath Tagore, abanindranath Tagore, Jamini Roy, Amrita Sher-Gil, M.F. Husain, Anjolie Ela Menon, K.K. Hebbar, Satist Gujral, Ram Kumar, V.S. Gai toned, Laxman Pai, Tyeb Mehta, Krishen Khanna, Afpita Singh, Arpana Caur,

An artist of the time who resisted going west in search of fame and torture, yet found both in a more substantial and durable way was the indefatigable Husain. Mining in his cavalier manner the village, the tribe and the town, his work had caught the imagination of the nation from his PAG days and it has remained fascinated by him ever since. While the successful artists of modern times all came from middle class back ground Husain alone hailed from a traditional artisan community in central India his grandfather was a tinsmith, Having lived with his own family for years in object poverty in a Mumbai hovel out house a cottage he had experienced at first hand the irredeemable misery of such lives. A native of the feudal city of Indiore, where he attended art school for six months, Hussain painted film sets, and cinema hoardings in Mumbai for several years.

7. Indian drawing today by Ram Chaterjee.
If modern Indian art really began life in the year of its independence, 1947, it entered its next and more crucial phase, that of consolidation, in the 1960s as artists strove to evolve individual styles. The PAG had not truly opened up any new directions nor offered panacea to artists to find their identity.

Natvar Bhavsar's (born 1934) fields of color breathe and throb (1980.227). Although he moved to New York in the 1960s and was a contemporary of Abstract Expressionist painters Indian culture continued to inform the work. Hinduism guided his use of colors, for instance. Nasreen Mohamed (1937-1990) made-minimalist ink drawings. The reverberating lines in her work recall Indian music, and she was influenced by the clean forms of Islamic architecture and design. The figurative work of Arpita Singh (born 1937) is made with pigment and very little oil to form cakes of impasto paint. This patchy quality references the folk art of quilts in India. And Krishna Reddy (born 1925) played with multiple printmaking techniques in Paris during the 1950s. He felt free in this environment in contrast to India, which had just experienced the light of freedom after centuries of foreign rule.

**Modern Indian Painters:**

Indian art is of great vital importance in accordance to its culture and heritage. Art is of various types and it changes its style of expression in the hands of different painters in relation to the changing time. Presently modern and abstract art is in high demand not only in India but abroad also. Modern form of painting is the result of the experimentation that the stalwarts of art had initiated.
Abstract forms on canvases give a liberating spree to the beholder's soul and hook
the mind to gauge the meaning. Here lies the enchantment for the mysterious and
this gives zest to the devotees of painting. Painters trap the mystery loving quest in
the audience and create exalted examples of painting. Know with the help of the
following sites about the modern painters of India and their pieces of vision.

Modern art has received good acceptance in both national and international
market. Indian modern art is highly acclaimed in the west. Know about the top
modern art painters of today through this site. You also get short compressed
profiles on these painters through this site.

M.F. Husain is a renowned name in art not only in India but also abroad.
This painter of modern art has painting a new form and style. To know about this
famous artist of modern art.

**Figurative and Abstract Art:**

The pace which characterizes the advance of non-objective art, even in
India, during recent years, has been astounding. What is significant-perhaps
alarming, to those who cannot shake off convention easily, is that this cult of non-
objective art appears to have caught the imagination of some of our very gifted
artists. This rather sudden, positive shift has created a problem which is both
engaging and challenging - not one which is merely imaginary, a passing mist
likely to be blown away in course of time, as some people would have us believe.
To discount the more positive aspects and achievement of non-objective art would be as unintelligent and thoughtless as to discredit the more salient aspects of the figurative element in a work of art.

"The majority of onlookers do relate their own visual experience in appreciating a work of art, and when they find a vacuum in their mind, then only the false expression comes; they claim it is abstract art and cannot understand it.

"Figures or any natural form of nature are generally the starting point for an artist. Each form has a shape; it may resemble a human figure, or a tree or a cloud. Even a cloud form may resemble a human figure. The trouble is not of the form but the search to find a resemblance of it, to satisfy individual sensibility.

"Therefore even in so called figurative painting, which might have been started with natural forms in the process of the painting, the artist comes to discard representational character and concentrates on the main elements of the painting, that is the achievement of harmony in a given space, of the forms, lines and colour.

"And this appreciation should be direct and free. "This controversy will cease only when is a change in the onlooker's approach towards the appreciation of a painting or any creative work of art.

Laxman Pai:

Sri Pai, indeed, traces the controversy between abstract and figurative art to the titled and preconceived approach of the spectator. It needs no effort to agree with Sri Pai as to the supremacy of form and colour in a work of art. But surely,
even Sri Pai knows that irrespective of this preconditioned approach of the spectator, something more needs to be said to explain the polarity between a Rambrandt and Mondrian.

The same emphasis on the fundamental role of form (and colour) in a work of art is laid by Dr. Charles Fabri, who is astonished that there should be any serious consideration at all whether art should be abstract or figurative.

I am always astonished that people seriously considering art could worry about the problem of whether art should be abstract or figurative.

The simple answer is that Content (or Subject Matter) has nothing to do with art proper. Art is Form, and great creative art can be born, whatever the subject matter of painting or sculpture.

A great painter can create splendid art with some such content as employed by Francis Bacon or Giacometti, not discarding the figure, not to speak of the great masters of yesteryear. Chagall is as modern as any abstractionist, and a fine abstractionist is as good as the Old Masters were. Picasso in many ways father of the new modern movement.

In India, the major artists now working, Mr. M.F. Husain, Mr. Tyeb Mehta, Mr. A. Ramachandran, Mr. J. Sultan Ali, Mr. F. Souza, Mr. Laxman Pai, Mr. Krishen Khanna and many others still retain figurative elements in varying degrees in their very fine arts, and Mr. Bimal Das Gupta and Mr. Swaminathan (to mention only two) have discarded figurative work. It makes no difference.
Historically speaking, standing back and speaking of the centuries, it is the same kind of variety that is offered by past ages. The masterpieces of the 'trecento; of the renaissance, of the mannerism of Michelangelo, of the baroque of Titian and the baroque of Rembrandt, all offer masterpieces. So do Rouault and Douanier Rousseau and Paul Nash and Karel Appel, Subject matter, La matieje literaire, has nothing to do with great art.

"A great painter can make great art whether he is abstract or figurative."

**Alexander Calder:**

Figurative Art lived a long undisturbed life from the primitive period until the end of the 19 century. A long life chequered with several evolutionary changes, left unchallenged. But the sensational discoveries of the present ea in the field of science and technology widened the vista of the artist and the sense of enquiry within him urged him to search beyond the surface. In this search for inner reality, his intuitive emotional and intellectual faculties came to his aid. In addition to this desire in creative man the change in the political and economical sphere all over the world gave him an opportunity to assert his sense of individuality. This self-acquired freedom of expression opened a new horizon for the creative artist and the various revolutionary changes became effective from the beginning of this century culminating in Nihilism. Between the two extremities a balanced approach is being explored by many a contemporary artist all over the world.
The term "Abstract Art" is generally used for all works of art, be it painting or sculpture, where motives or objects depicted are beyond recognition. Merits of works in this category are judged on the merit of organization of form, colour and space and so, this attitude has broken all the national barriers. Quicker modes of travel invented by modern man and intermingling of peoples have made the various movements and inventions in art common property all over the world. As a consequence daring experiments with ever new techniques and ideas arise. This newly acquired licence in some cases resulted in artists imitating each other and thus lose their identity. The craze for originality often resulted in works beyond the comprehension of the spectator and perhaps of the author himself.

The significance of a work of art, be it figurative or abstract, depends on its elevating qualities and on its values that stand the test of time. Figurative art all over the world lost its vitality during the 18th and 19th centuries, but is seen as a new force in the hands of modern masters like Picasso during the early part of this century. Possibilities of projecting figurative art, intelligible and interesting to the sensibilities of the modern man are being tried by artists everywhere. They of nature form a creative vocabulary. They infuse abstract for example, in a painting with a believe in projecting man to them the human figured or the motifs musician singing the sound, element too is infused in. The expression of an emotion not only depends upon 'the subject matter but also on the juxtaposition of colours and treatment of space together with inventive symbols. The resulting work attains a new reality, for more true than the visible reality and far removed from the so-
called academic or impressionistic work. It is in this middle path. I believe, that there lie immense possibilities of maintaining the artist's individuality and at the same time of creating works which attain universality ",

Chintamoni Kar:

One is therefore led to the very tempting, conciliatory proposition that there is no tangible conflict between abstract and figurative art and that the polarity between conventional ideals of art and of the modern is symptomatic of the present age. It is suggested that the non-figurative art forms best express the contradiction, frustration, love and hate of our troubled times.

The terminology 'Abstract and Figurative' is of recent origin, established partly in the process of the simplification following the European Renaissance. I would rather use the word non-figurative to abstract, that is "Figurative and non-figurative Art.

The meaning of 'abstraction', as I see it, is to draw away from a mass of visual impressions, that is to represent its very essence. This trend is evident in the Arts produced in various periods of history. As soon as one starts putting something on the canvas or to build or carve something in sculpture it is quite apart from Nature, from that which is living, moving, growing and all the related organic activity one embarks into the realm of abstraction, however outwardly representative the character of our expressions be. The process of art is always a process of abstraction. It is a matter of interpretation of ideas and feeling-Un a thousand different ways.
However, my own feeling is that there has been plenty of non-figurative art produced throughout the ages. Most of the symbols produced by different civilizations are wonderful examples of non-figurative art. They contain valuable human experience and philosophical significance. Non-figurative art for its own sake, without the element of abstraction, as I have explained, has little meaning for me. The quality of this abstraction depends on one's own capacity to understand, feel, and interpret objective reality.

This is precisely what any artist docs, whether contemporary or ancient. There is a basic undercurrent which is common to all arts of different periods. The artist's aesthetic sensibility and his ability to transform the visual world into a work of Art through the materials and means at his disposal marks a unique human process. The ideal is not to achieve 'progress' in Art, but to establish the right kind of relationship between man and universe, releasing his creative urges and establish a harmony within and without.

Having stated my view about abstraction in art, I see that there is no real conflict in art expression, between contemporary or ancient art. What we term 'Abstract or non-figurative Art' today has a great meaning not because it is abstract or non-objective but it is the language of our age.

This is a language of art, which expresses our century and the world in which we express our feeling of love, hate, anger, frustration, etc. through the art form which is evolved out of our present day problems of existence. Our Art has a
specific meaning for us because it" is the language that we speak and which has the capacity to contain temporary feeling.

K. S. Kulkarni:

"Our world to-day is subject to such immense tensions both national and international, that in the struggle for existence every facet of the mind, be it emotional, artistic, or intellectual, vibrates at full pressure. More than ever before does Art in its varied forms enter our everyday life.

To my mind it is absolutely clear that both Abstract and Figurative Art have got to co-exist, to the detriment of neither; on the contrary, I believe the coexistence is towards the enrichment of both.

Abstraction has giver, art a new dimension. It demands of the artist, an extension of his mind, the intellect being encouraged to soar at will, and probe into realms that, were held inviolate-by thinking man half a century ago. The imagination has never been as stimulated as now, when a painting or work of sculpture is dependant, almost wholly upon colour, texture and a revolutionary use or material. With its lawlessness and intuitive character Abstraction reflects the confusions and contradictions of the age.

Having said what I already have in defence of the Abstract idiom, I must however point out that my own research and predilection as a painter, has led me to feel and sympathise far more with Figurative Art.

Let us not forget that the many brilliant and revolutionary experiments of our century, the whole complex edifice of Modern Art, an almost top heavy
superstructure, exists because of the solid and magnificent foundations which have been rooted in Figurative Art for centuries. The one has led to the other in the very process of artistic evolution.

I feel keenly that unless Abstraction is clearly understood both emotionally and intellectually by the artist concerned, before he puts brush to canvas, and then expertly handled the painter heads down a one-way street to a 'dead end.

This is never so with Figurative Art in which the imaginative significance transcends the more depiction of subject matter. The expression of reality, being humanistic is infinitely more intuitive, more emotional and intelligent. It may achieve a truly abstract quality as for example in South Indian Bronzes. I dread the decorative in a painting and Abstraction so often heads straight for this pitfall with its constant preoccupation with texture, design, and spatial effects. I find the monotony and coldness of this idiom limiting, and the possibilities of quackery infinite.

In my own paintings I feel the need to refer to nature for stimulus. For me it is the point of departure towards new and limitless horizons.

Jehangir Sabavaua:

Sri Sankho Chaudhuri Emphasised the inevitability of the "figure" in whatever form, even in an extended form, without which expression is impossible. He almost suggests the impossibility of pure abstract art.

"The choice between emphasis on the form in content of art has been an age-old dilemma. Emotion - the main source of man's expression is abstract, but is
always expressed through a concrete recreation in terms of colour, line, and form. A motif or a symbol is the outcome of the concept of the concrete expressed in terms of the abstract or vice versa.

The abstract is an intellectual concept. It has no definite area, time, and space. It is a-value and a truth that is empirical. Man, being an anthropomorphic creature has always used the vehicle of 'the figure' (man) for his expressions from time immemorial in our talk, or- in our writings and in our art, when expression becomes the main preoccupation we tend to generalise; we talk of philosophy and truth, which are abstract. It is the interrelation between the concrete and the abstract - realization of a lofty truth and the struggle for its expression in terms of personal experience that makes a work of art fascinating, and a poignant imprint of the struggle. Truth by itself remains an impersonal cold and lifeless.

Like worship or meditation, man's devotion or desire for spiritual realisation becomes easier through the medium of a deity who is in fact a man-made symbol. So in art Man's innate urge for expression finds an easy vehicle in objects and figures created by man which then became the means to his expression.

Modern abstract art started as an experiment to separate painting from its content, which to the artist was an illustration and merely succeeded in conveying a meaning or telling a story, Identification of an object or theme the artists held; was not necessary for appreciation of a painting as a work of art. The language of art, it was felt, is the creation of forms pleasing to the eye. This lead to theories of
optics and aesthetic sensibility which had so far been beyond the purview of the artist.

Abstract as the non-representational or the non-objective or non-figurative in art is essentially the expression of the cynic and the sophisticated—where truth in the form of principles has resulted in machines which produce power and products possessing greater precision than man's hand could ever achieve.

Sankho Chaudhuri:

Is it then a question of emphasis of certain aspects of human condition, valid in each age? What about the more noticeable part of technique and materials, which is becoming increasingly evident and has become symptomatic of avant garde art? Technique and materials not only produce the essential visual impact of a work of art, but go a long way in creating moods, both tense and pleasurable.

The means at hand for my chosen expression are paint materials. I have colours and brushes, canvas and the mediums required to dilute the party colour material and to use them thinly, thickly, blended and mixed or in any other way suggested while manipulating them, with brushes, rags, palette knives or a printer's roller, I spread the colours mixed with oil mediums on the canvas the way I want them to be laid and placed.

Abstract and other paintings including figurative paintings are made up of such colour manipulations. Abstract paintings in part or as a whole does not represent anything else besides what it is made of. But it is possible for a spectator to impose on it his own readings and meanings for which the artist, its creator,
cannot be held responsible. These 'unities' may even create moods, soothing, pleasant or otherwise in the minds of the spectators.

Other paintings include works which may have a story to tell. The subjects may be a record of a passing glimpse or a more deeply studied view of nature or specially arranged objects. They may be things imagined or dreamt of. These illustrative 'unities' can have various kinds of appeal to the spectator, who may read the story, recognize, the semblance of the original view or object and also participate in the personal dream experience of the artist.

However, the aesthetic considerations behind the laying of coloured forms forming into a 'unity' may be missed by them. Nor should it normally be expected of them to participate in this enjoyment. They may get interested and admire the skills employed by the artist in using colour, in creating illusions. In the acquisition of such skill practice, experience, and knowledge are required.

In abstract painting intense feeling and knowledge of colour matter and its handling to form a unity through possible and desirable juxtaposition is necessary. Abstract painting also offers the possibilities of expressing feelings such as those of disgust, contempt, bewilderment, love and detachment etc.

As for the pleasure derived in the act of painting I would say that abstract painting offers far greater and purer pleasure than the figurative. Apart from the sanction of liberty abstract painting makes its own severe demands. A painter of 'abstracts' has to have his ideas more aesthetically oriented, has to be more conscious of things happening on the canvas, has to be more concerned with the
subtleties of colour sensations, have more feeling for the recordings left by the brush strokes, and of the rubbings, wipings, scratchings, thinnesses and thicknesses of his paint. He is more directly concerned with the material that he uses. If an abstract painting has no aesthetic values it is just to be thrown away. Other paintings do exist and are cared for, for they have other values.

The appeal of Indian classical music, specially of instrumental music, is very much like the visual experience derived from abstract painting. I think it should therefore appeal to Indians. The idea of world brotherhood or 'one world has not been politically possible but it has become possible through abstract art.

J. Sultan Ali:

The emergence of non-figurative art and its phenomenal advance is said to be historically inevitable. Perhaps, it is a result of the relationship of man with the complex, mystery-ridden modern predicament. But, purely from the aesthetic point of view, the lesions learned from abstract art are manifold and undeniably valid, despite the part degeneration and shock tactics.

The inevitability, even the significant need, for non-figurative art seems to be clear from the events in European art history that led upto the first decades of this century. It seems at least in the retrospect that the unfolding of events demanded that art become abstracted, then entirely abstract. The new relationship
of man to the unexplored, unchartered and more ambiguous realms that found expression as it were, 'abstract visuals'.

After about 50 years of abstract art we maybe on the fringes again and seeking new pastures. Every art movement loses its force gradually and new desires begin from within. After an original search into the domain of abstract by some of the most significant 20th century artists, there seems to be an exhaustion, leaving a residue of mannerism. Yet it would be naive to declare any art form 'dead'. The chapters are never really closed: they accumulate in layers generating directions into the future. Thus if we say abstract art has lost its vitality, it is an anticipatory statement, and it refers only to that aspect of it that is the content of 'art history' at this moment. In so far as art is always related to the needs and inspirations of living creative artists, a demand by him to his means (the elements) different from that which has been previously made can yield revolutionary results. An 'organizational' aspect of art, degenerating into the decorative, has been pursued in recent years, due to a series of external and internal reasons. But if the intention and the elements could be apprehended freshly and perhaps if subterranean sources of inspiration could be tapped from different cultures, of different times new windows on abstraction could be opened.

To talk of a 'return to the figure is false because it is almost a truism—there is never a 'return'. Moreover alongside the mainstream of abstract art, figurative art has retained its place. The question then is, can the emphasis shift to the figure; if it does, what kind of figurative art is it likely to be? The answer to the first part of
the question is, quite simply, yes. The very 'sophistication' of recent abstract art makes alternative direction natural, even as early in this century, its reverse was true. Even factually this is so: in the last decade there is almost a vengeful swing of the pendulum by the neo-realists (pop-imagists) who have used clearly defined figures in their work.

What is Composition:

In the Visual arts in particular painting graphic design, photography and sculpture Composition is the placement or arrangement of visual.

Definition of Composition:- The spatial property resulting from the arrangement of parts in relation to each other and to the whole "harmonious composition is essential in a---

Constitution the way in which some one or something is composed.

Composition (Visual arts):- In the visual arts- in particular painting graphic design photography and sculpture composition is the placement or arrangement of visual elements or ingredients in a work of art. It can also be thought of as the organization of the elements of art according to the principal of art, "The term composition means putting together and can apply to any work of art, from music to writing that is arranged or put together using conscious thought. In the visual arts, composition is often used inter changeably with various terms, such as design form visual ordering or formal structure. Depending on the contest in graphic design and desktop a publishing, composition in commonly referred to as page layout.
**Contemporary:** Just means "art that has been continues to be created during our life time."

Surya
Title: Thread Ceremony thm
Anjolie Ela Menon began her paintings in the mid 1950s. It is said that many of the qualities and motifs that are now ascribed to her can be traced to her paintings of this early period i.e. 1950s. During this period just a teenager she performed her artistic genius under the analyzes of instructive vigous. It was not the result of formal school which was to come later. As a young artist Anjolie applied paint with a palette knife, vigorous and bold strokes with some large unfinished areas. Her paintings during this period shows the influences of Van Gogh and Modigliani, Munch and Roualt and to a lesser some extent Jamini Roy and Amrita Shergil. Her paintings during this early phase of life is devoid of formal up bringing, hence eclectic in nature.

The technique of thick application of paint as in Van Gogh’s work, is evident in Portrait (Plate I), an intuitive approach imples Anjolie here, rather than a conscious awareness of the Dutch painter. Exprorruionist fervour imbues some of the early work, but latent Indian influences are seen, as in Fisherwomen (Plate 9) where the line of the seated woman is strongly reminiscent of Jamini Roy. During this period of her artistic activity she used heavy colours which resulted in thick, textured quality. She slowly began to gain confidence and strength. The strong black lines used by her painting of early period bears the influence of the great M.F. Husain. A great Pioneer of contemporary Indian painting M.F. Husain’s soon became her ideal and a source of great inspiration. It is evident from her early work that M.F. Husain’s influence played a decisive role in the formative period. The influence of
Shergil is also traceable although to very lesser degree. However, it was during this period that the began to understand the genres and styles in the visual arts under the influence of her art teacher at Lawrance school, Lovedale. She also learnt the basis of western art. She slowly moved towards the visual motifs and spatial arrangement which later on became an integral part of her mature work, an important aspect of her work from the very beginning is that she uses a strong central figure to highlight the central figure intensity (mural) plate 8. There is no maturity in the form and technique during this early period of her life. Yet her painting show intensity and innocence. Beginning with 1960’s her artistic work shows a further evolution.

This is evident in “Refugees” “Mohan as a young boy” During this period she appears as a prolific, using paint. Some times she paints both sides of the canvas and covers every black surface from the wall to doors. At early as 1950’s she was acknowledged as an artist by art circles in Delhi and Bombay. It became clear that Anjolie Ela Menon was going to emerge as a great artist, which proved true.

Richard Batholomew remarked “Anjolie’s work is singularly mature for her years and all the characteristics of an expressionist painter. She is interested in landscape in faces and in figures which are evocative or symbolic. She has a bright palette which is toned down some what in the latest pictures”.

There is also a shift from a marked romantic attitude manifest in her earlier works to a quality of introspection and revelation. This opinion about Anjolie was expressed by Bartholomew when Anjolie was just twenty years
age. It was during this period the M.F. Husain introduced her to art circles in Bombay.

Anjolie in Paris: A period of Transition

During her stay in Paris she went through a new experience. It was a period of transition. She enrolled at the Ecole-de-Beaux Arts in 1959. The life in Paris was hard for the young artist. She had to depend on a modest stipend provided by the French government. The financial problem and a very hard discipline caused a crisis and frustration in her mind. At the same time she found herself for behind the many talented young scientists.

This added to her frustration at the Atelier Fresque. As a result of hard work day and might. She suffered a terrible loss of confidence in the first year in Paris, struggling with the language and her fiirst ever taste of isolation. But imbed with fierce determination and what she now calls the very typically Indian exam syndrome’, she preserved, working long hours to compete with local and international students at the Atelier Fresque. For some time in Paris Anjolie shared a studio with a young Mexican painter, Francesco Toledo, whose mythical, translucent drawings bathed in ink washes were to influence her a few years later. Over long weekends and during the summer holidays Anjolie embarked on hitchhiking expeditions which covered Spain, Italy and France, and later Greece and West Asia. Together with her friend, Shama Zaidi, now a film director, she saw every major cathedral in Europe and hundreds of little churches, altars and painted ceilings.

She spent ten days in Exploring the prehistoric cave paintings in

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Tarquinia in Italy. This experience has a strong effect on the evolution of her art. At the Louvre, the Jeud' Paume and the Uffizi Galleries had greater influence on her than the beaux Arts. She had British education but her introduction to the great filmmakers Bergman, Anotonioni and Pudovkin widened her imagination. However her stay in Paris had a great influence on her artistic development.

She spent her winter in Florence. The great work of Giotto, Botticelli, Michel angelo and Leanourdo-da-vinci Captured her mind. The chief characteristic of her work that is loneliness is manifest. The very wide and broad aspects of European art also confused her. The question arises what was the main Aesthetic sense in her art during her stay in Paris. The answer may be spatial separation and an obsession with volume and form. The emphasis was on qualities on solidarity, stability and durability.

In the early 1960s Picasso also was at the peak of his creativity. Most young painters of the time were profoundly influenced by the cubists, and the more avant garde were unabashedly looking to the abstract expressionism of American painters like Rothko; op and Pop were in their infancy and Malevitch had already passed beyond Futurism to the absolute abstraction of the ‘black square’. Yet Anjolie’s work has always run counter to trends and continued to be elusive and temperamental.

She used of undefined areas of colour. This is against geometric form of cubism of the special surfaces of Cezanne or Matisse. Thus Anjolie’s non conformism grew strong in the 1960’s. Anjolie did not follow the ‘School of
Paris” instead she derived from anonymous Romancesque influences.

Post-Paris By the end of 1960 Angolie had completed her studies in Paris and decided to travel once again with her friend Shama Zaidi. They planned to return to India over land. The two friends met in Florence. Anjolie recalls a bleak winter day when they traveled to the grimy docks of Brindisi and onwards to Piraeus in Greece. The Sea-Sick voy Voyagers Spent the night in the cattle-hold of a rusty old tub since both the young women were painfully short of funds. Athens from they went to Spata. An important thing to be noted during this Voyagersis that she filled large sketches books with intense water colours. But only a few photograph these water colour are available which are faded. She reacted to her immediate surrounding rounding by creative her own contrasting word.

Her water colour landscapes contain reach maturity and melancholic quality her recollection of the visual imprint trans figure into reality. From Greece Anjolie went to Beirut through our land Journey. She stayed in the caves of Petra. Her stay in West Asia left a definite impact on her work. She was very much influenced by the Ancient side in Syria. This is clear from Dead Sea. It appears that Anjolie was absorbed into the timelessness of the past through Ancient symbols or architectural motifs.

Anjolie’s artistic work took a change during her stay I Soviet Union. In Vladivostok Exhibition we find a new trend, one of the painting Batushka depicts an orthodox Russian priest with planning eyes, reinforcing a much earlier tendency of the painter to present a full frontal figures. Anjolie had now
emerged from the shadowy moody water-colours and the soft Madonna like figures of the mid-1960 that appeared almost to be bathed in blood.

During this period of her experience she learnt the use of blue colour effectively. The opaque blue of her earlier work as is evident in portrait, was replaced by translucent layers of ultramarine and Prussian blue.

The colours are used to create a contrast of light and shade. Her love of colours is intuitive. The works of early 1970s are expresses pensive view due to the colours used the pensive under expresses innocence. Her two years stay in the U.S.S.R. witness a change her interest Byzantine Romanesque art develop farther. She created dark, Pensive Christ, like male figures, in her art the composition of mother and wife is a very important factor. After return to India from U.S.S.R. and Exhibition was held at the Academy of Fine Art in Calcutta. In this exhibition her composite art was at its best. It was the result of experiments in Paris, New York, England found a Unique interactions.

Desmond Doig

Desmond Doig made-the following comments. There is promise of another Amrita Shergil in the making”. However during the course Anjolie’s own personality in art continued to be evolved. As one writer says. “Anjolie through her multi-layered hoard of memories to evolve her own path and painted in Frenzied bursts amidst her children and the Trivia of domesticity. Along with prophets and Priests the Madonnas wearing crowns of thorns were nudes set against the flora and fauna of dense tropical jungles more Eve than madonna suggesting a certain shift in her handling of sexuality and repressed
emotion”. According to her own statement “Eve” a work of famous Italian Sculptor Giselbertus, attracted her most. The Eve lies Wide-eyed and full of complicity under the apple tree with a shy, sly smile that was fraught with the knowledge that accompanies the loss of innocence”. This period of Anjolies painting, i.e. the early 1970s is dominated by Eve. There is a full presence of sexuality in almost all the nudes very soon we see six exciting paintings of 1971 dealing with the tragedy of Bangladesh. Along with human skulls and severed limbs there is a symbol of hope i.e. the birth of a new nation. The symbol is represented by flowers. The Exhibition of the mid 1970s saw a change in her work in the sense of use of strong crimsons, blue was not in the tradition of modern Indian art.

By the end of 1970s a new trend emerges in her, from the nude to the window. It was a transition from subjective to literary mode.