‘Color is a tool to create whatever illusion you wish. It is how one utilizes this tool to look ones personal best that is important’\textsuperscript{14}.

Many philosophers have been attracted by the view that colors\textsuperscript{15} as the attributed properties of object surfaces are mind-independent. This is a leading, and increasingly popular version and has been defended in recent years as what has been termed the physicist position. The color theory encompasses a multitude of definitions, concepts and design applications. However an enumeration of the total information on the subject would fill several encyclopedias. In the present context only a few basic concepts are given. A color circle, based on red, yellow and blue, is traditional in the field of art. Sir Isaac Newton developed the first circular diagram of colors in 1666. Since then scientists and artists have studied and designed numerous variations of this concept. Differences of opinion about the validity of one format over another continue to provoke debate. In reality, any color circle or color wheel which presents a logically arranged sequence of pure hues has merit. In traditional color theory, these are the three pigment colors that cannot be mixed or formed by any combination of other colors and all other colors are derived from these rudiments.

The colors one wears can make or break the overall appearance of a person. It is the judicious use of colours that can enhance the facial features, eye color presentation and complement the shape of the body. Colours can also work against one as they tend to camouflage the natural shape of the body while accentuating the negative attributes all the while. This can even change the perception of ones natural coloring. Interestingly enough most people are unaware of the colors that do and do not compliment their looks. Many a times a person’s favorite color is often and most probably the worst possible color for

\textsuperscript{14} Rohit Khosla (designer)
them to wear. It is only the designer who has an inbuilt capacity to comprehend and create can focus upon persona and colour schemes alike.

It is the fashion designer, who after detailed understanding of natural coloring as manifested in the color of eyes, the skin colour, hair colour and natural tones, can bring about a complementary ensemble which in essence would be a personification of the best in a person. This is the basic idea behind the customized or designer dress-ware that has had the world by storm in the 20th century.

**Color Harmony**

Harmony can be defined as a pleasing arrangement of parts that appeases the senses, whether it be music, poetry, color, or even an ice cream sundae. In the visual experience, harmony is something that is pleasing to the eye. It is an assuaging of the senses through its appeal contributed by the creation of an inner sense of order, a balance in the visual presentation and form of experience. When something is not harmonious, it's either boring or chaotic. There is on the one hand the extreme visual experience that is so bland that the viewer is not engaged because the human brain tends to reject under-stimulating information. On the other hand is a visual experience that is so overdone and so chaotic that the viewer can not even bear to look at it. The human brain rejects the disorganized, the disorderly and the illogical. It refuses to organize, understand, analyze and act upon such inputs. The visual task of imbibing such information requires that we present a logical arrangement and structure when presenting an ensemble. There is always a need harmonized color placement to deliver and effectively capture the voyeur's visual interest and imagination. Thus, extreme unity leads to under-stimulation, extreme complexity leads to over-stimulation and harmony in colour is a dynamic equilibrium arrived at between the two.
India, has perhaps the earliest history of using various dyes and motifs for decorating fabrics. Colouring has taken the form of immersion to get a complete colour effect, partial dyeing as in tie and dye as well as batik and there was also the well established form of block printing. The earliest record of block printing dates from about 3000 BC. Few other country have had such an impact on the history of dye-decorated fabrics as India. Records dating from 400 BC indicate that coloured chintzes were common. Descriptions of colorful cottons, found in India, have been elaborately described by the Greeks in 327 BC. Invasions and trade routes, which were a constant feature of the history of India, were the principal method of introducing newer techniques of fabric colouring to other cultures.

A number of Indian fabrics which were recovered from the ruins of Fostat (Old Cairo), Egypt can be dated to approximately between the twelfth to fifteenth centuries AD. Many of these fabrics were block printed with resist and dyed either with blue (indigo) or red (madder). The designs have a directness and simplicity all their own which has been easily identified as an Indian characteristic. They are often two-color prints comprising the natural base color of the cotton ground and tinted with either blue or red. Besides these two basal colours there are some shades that result from a combination of these two colours as a result of repeated dyeing.
Begum Noor Jahan.

Jodhpur, C 1825-30. 10.0 X 14.5 cm.
Mehrangarh Museum Trust,
Jodhpur.
By Amar Das.

The bright and almost untouched colors depicting Begum Nur Jahan are rendered in so much simplicity that each color appears so fresh that it seems to be almost breathing. She is shown in profile with a halo around her head. She is pouring herself some liquid from a bottle into a miniature bowl [could be a drink?] What is remarkable is the colour of the delicate blue of the pottery – probably Chinese in origin because of the colour and the figurines. Her long, curly black tresses are shown draped over her shoulders. Some of the hair fall forward over the shoulder and come up to her elbow while the remaining part of the mane falls beyond her waist. The front open choli has a mustard background with a print of white daisies scattered all over – lending a very feminine appeal to her appearance. A special feature of her attire is that the gores of the skirt begin at the empire line. The skirt in itself is translucent and golden. Under it is the Indian orange or rust colored main skirt which probably originates from the waist level. She has been shown wearing the jewels befitting a royal personage or the Maharani that she is. Long waist-length strands of pearls are visible with sapphires interspersed to make equidistant, meaningful divisions.
What is worth mentioning in the depiction is the brilliance and radiance of the color white. The rendering of the white with true patches of grey here and there by Amar Das lends a deep lustre and originality to these pearls.

A rectangular patch of deep carmine red in the foreground with a border of mustard, red and white lace is probably a piece of fabric rich in nature which is carefully draped over a window ledge. The wall towards the foreground has rust and peach roses with small leaves in a jaal format on a pista green background. A big bolster behind Begum’s back gives the look of being very used as has been shown by the faded, jaded colours used. It may have been done also to present the Maharani in her vivid best.

The Maharani is sitting beneath a canopy of orange adorned with a leaf motif done in gold. It has a pista green border repeated on either side of the canopy with a greyish blue border beyond it.

Color and its Appeal to the Essence:

Colour\(^1\) plays a significant role in the over-all presentation of a personality when one considers the colour of the ensemble, the accessories, including the jewelry, handbag and the shoes besides the play of colour vividly seen today on the heads and headgear of individuals. Make-up and hair colouring and tinting devices have made for a special impact ranging from the painted geishas of Japan to the elaborately kohled and tattooed Lambadi women of Rajasthan. In the present day, colour has been manifested upon the bodies of individuals in the form of elaborate tattoos that have made a veritable canvas of the human body. Making the tall look smaller, the fat look thin and the skinny look athletic to some extent can be managed by the nimble designer who cleverly plays upon colours and tones to achieve the required effects. For example if one wants to highlight the impact of the specific tone of one’s skin or

hair one may consult the fashion plate for remedial and complementary special effects.

Plate: 36

Maharaja Takhat Singh Celebrating Divali with Ladies.

Jodhpur, C 1850. 27.0 X 39.0 cm. 
Mehrangarh Museum Trust, Jodhpur. No.128. By Dana

Green, gold and saffron are the dominant colours of this scene. Ranging from the clothes of the Maharaja and the ladies to the carpet and canopy – all have the singular colour coding in mehendi green embellished with gold and the all pervasive saffron.

The Maharaja is wearing an off-white angrakha having a gold floral motif. His turban is green and gold and tied in a manner whereby it protrudes like a chignon at the occiput. There is a gold floral motif on the material used for the turban. In front of the Maharaja is seated a lady in a green dress. She is wearing an odhani with a gold edging and golden motif printed all over. Her jewelry is also magnificent in gold and precious stones. The canopy under which they are seated is deep red embellished with gold motifs and has a green and yellow/gold border. The carpet they are seated on and which seems to overhang the balcony is also identical in treatment but for the broad yellow
border. The carpets border is mustard and gold and red. There are visible two yellow hangings or curtains on either side of the seated couple.

In the foreground are the performers or the entertainers. All these women are identically clad in the green gored skirts having golden piping. The odhanis are sheer green and have gold edgings which frame their faces as they drape the heads of the women. On either side of the court are deep red and green screens set in ornate golden/wooden frames.

Color

In the royal art of many cultures, colors are strong and bold. In India, surfaces both large and small - architecture, clothing and personal art - were enriched with bright color, especially red and brilliant blues. Colors and patterns were combined to create rich floral and geometric designs found in Mughal textiles and carpets. Color in miniature paintings was first fanciful and jewel-like - blue rocks, for instance, and lavender horses - as in the Persian court style. In the early Rajput style, and limited number of colors were with little attempt at naturalism. In Pahari painting, color became increasingly naturalistic, although artists also used them to lead one's eye through detailed scenes of court croud, battles and hunts so favoured by royalty.

Color can hide, reshape, and even accentuate the appearance of the body's shape. The appearance of one's shape can be changed when one thinks in terms of light and dark combinations. Women may want to change the appearance and size of their breasts. One way for achieving this could be by choosing a dark solid color for a skirt or pant [lower] along with a printed or boldly colored top. Similarly some women may want to reshape the hip area and a popular practice would be to wear all black or dark colors in the effort towards downplaying the curves and bulges. This can sometimes be counterproductive and end up actually drawing unflattering attention to the area being subdued. A better camouflage is to use prints and patterns. The objective is achieved when the eye is distracted by the multicolored print and does not focus on the shape of the body. Illusionary distraction, thus, is one of the main
impacts of the colour schema adopted by a designer. Illusion is the tool that plays with colors and patterns.

Colour is the significant aspect of temporality that comes across in various cultures. In India not only is colour an important part of dress and ornamentation but it has a special ritualized perspective rooted deep in the traditions of the region. This can be elaborately explained keeping in mind the ancient arts of mehendi and body tattooing common among the tribal and rural folk of the country. Body art in India includes tattooing and henna with the help of vegetable dyes. The practice of applying henna / mehendi is an age-old practice in India (painting the palms of the bride with henna during marriage is a ritualized custom prevalent in large tracts of northern India). The mehendi designs are usually in floral or geometric imprints that are left onto the palms and feet of the women as the vegetable dye dries off. The tattoo, although longer lasting is a very painful process. Colour in ritual and everyday life has several themes and properties attributed to it. This is borne by the oral traditions, has been eulogized in the Vedas and is evident in the commonly observed alpana (motifs of chalk/rice powder) on the floor. There is also a difference in the type of design painted on as well as the part of the body on which it is to be painted on. mehendi, floral designs are painted on the palms or the feet. For tattooing, there are specific patterns to be decorated on various parts of the body from the forehead to the belly to the legs - the designs are culture specific and in many communities it is carried out at various stages of a person’s life. The tattooing may be in hues of blue and red.
The above depiction is of a royal personage sitting at leisure and listening to lyrics set to the tune of a stringed instrument. The royal personage is wearing an orange printed churidar which is teamed with a sheer jama in muslin probably which is full-sleeved and two-toned in color. The upper part of the jama is mustard while the lower part is beige. The armholes are in brocade strips. This brocade border can be seen at the neck and at the central tie-ups. At his waist is an elaborated woven, probably brocade patka that has heavy borders. He is wearing a turban in printed white material that is tied with a golden band that is encrusted with precious stones. There are two small golden tassels emerging from the top and bottom of the turban. His main accessories are strings of pearls worn around the neck with pendants of precious stones. He is also wearing bracelets of pearls. Several rings adorn his fingers. He is
holding a rose in his left hand and a short, probably ivory handled flywhisk in his right.

The singer in the picture is shown wearing a self printed, golden jama that ties left over right at the chest and is tied at the waist with a yellow patka that is printed in a red and green floral pattern. He is also wearing a shoulder cloth that is wound around the arm and across the chest. It is white and has a narrow golden edging and a broad golden border at both ends probably muslin. His accessories comprise strings of pearls around his neck, pearl bracelets and pearl earrings. He is wearing a white plain turban with a golden band over the top of which rises a thick, golden tassel.

The musician is shown wearing a plain brown-beige jama the monotones of which are broken by the brightly coloured white and yellow patka that is printed in yellow, red and green. Into this waist band is tucked a short double handled dagger which has a gold tipped red scabbard and a golden hilt. He is wearing a tightly wound yellow, red and green turban that sits in coils on his head. The only jewelry that he is wearing comprises earrings in pearls and a finger ring with some large white stone worn on the little finger of the right hand. He is also probably wearing a yellow and green leaf printed churidar.

Overall the miniature represents a very colorful atmosphere, which tells us of the happy times of the royal personage and his pawns.

Symbols and Colors

Traditionally, the colours of the spectrum have each been attributed with a specific property. For example where white is symbolic of purity the Hindu woman is forced to wear white after her husband’s death. On the other hand the Christian woman has black as a colour of mourning. The Hindu woman has the colour red as the auspicious colour of matrimony and it is symbolized in her sindoor, bangles and garments. The color purple is another example as it has come to be associated with royalty the world over. Thus, certain specific dyes
came to symbolize the specific social status of an individual on the basis on color cues. In ancient Rome, e.g., only the emperor was allowed to wear the robe dyed royal purple.

Colourful tribal motifs and tattoos worked in earthy tones onto natural fabrics like coarse linen, jute blends and even canvas and knits are finding favour increasingly among the younger generation, for making short skirts, shorts, and minis, long and wide skirts as well as even Indian dresses like the *salwar kameez*. The tie-dye techniques, the marbling effect on veils and dress material alike embellished with crystals, laces, buttons and sequins all make for a pleasing overall effect when seen in the combination and colours the designer intended. Colours often strike our awareness levels first. They are suggestive of our basic personality and may also mirror ones inherent psychology. It has been proven that the strengths and weaknesses can result in color likes and dislikes and a self-directed balanced can be attained through a persons quest for establishing harmony. The colours one uses and tends to use stem from an awareness and the imposition of self-discipline through integrating a variety of colors into both ones wardrobe and surroundings. Persons with strong color likes and dislikes are often demonstrating the influence of Energy Blocks which are actuality learned reactions.

These reactions are learned in the process of life in response to experiences which have been triggered in the mind as traumatic. Colour can influence one's attitudes and expectations. Thus, there is the juncture where an appropriate choice of color for the occasion, oneself and ones' surroundings may present and contribute to the style and outcome of the interactions entered into. Variety can always be considered an indicator of balance and health besides the ability of the individual to respond to her/his environment rather than merely react to it. Similarly the colour of an apparel has a strong association with custom and ritual. Even today, many women in India

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20 Costumes and Textiles of Royal India, Ritu Kumar, Edited by Cathy Muscat
continue to wear a specific colour for each day of the week. Apart from the codes prescribed for religious observances, the change of seasons and rites of passage are also marked by a change in the prescribed colour to be worn by the individual especially the women. In Rajasthan, for instance, princesses and peasants alike celebrate the advent of Basant (Spring) by wearing yellow. This is a common practice in many parts of the northern Indian sub-continent in India and Pakistan.

Plate: 38

Verses and Wine
Mughal, Jahangir period
Circa AD 1620, Paper 16 X 12 cm
Acc No. 50.14/9

The above picture is a colourful rendition of a scene of leisure among nobility during that era. The clothing reflects the mood where everybody is relaxed and at ease. The noble personage is relaxing in a fine green angrakha which loosely falls over his frame and is tied at the waist with a green printed rust cloth. He is sipping wine from the goblet held in his left hand and is eating some preparation being handed to him on a tray help by an assistant or slave. The only accessory he is wearing is a mustard undershirt which is full-sleeved. He

21 White for Mondays; Red for Tuesdays, Green for Wednesday; Yellow for Thursday; Blue for Friday and Black for Saturday. The colour for Sunday can be any of the radiant colours like magenta, orange, pink etc.
is shown wearing a white turban with fine black stripes which he has wrapped around his head quite casually.

The person who is serving him the edibles is wearing a yellow angrakha teamed with an orange churidar and orange shoulder cloth draped around his chest and left shoulder. At the waist he has used a cloth belt in green batik and suspended from this belt is a brown leather pouch which is hung on an orange string. He is wearing a grey-white fur cap on his head.

In the foreground is a mandolin player who is wearing a pinkish grey toned angrakha which is tied at the waist with mustard, pleated patka. He is wearing a dark mauve toned undershirt which has long sleeves. He is wearing a white turban with yellow lines at the loose ends which are pulled out at the base of the turban.

The person next to him is pouring out wine for the noble and is wearing a burnt sienna angrakha with a red, full-sleeved undershirt. The patka tied at the waist is white with maroon borders. He is wearing a white turban with a white red and green speckled band to tie it. One end of the band is hanging from the back of the turban.

Behind the noble is the poet who is reading out his verses to him. He is shown wearing a mouse grey and pink toned angrakha with a white and yellow checkered patka at the waist. It's loosely tied at one end and loosely tucked in at the waist. Of a similar hue is his turban which is also loosely tied and has one end sticking out at the top.

The scene is a depiction of probably near winter season where the protagonists are shown wearing inner wear of a darker tone and outer wear in a lighter tone but which is in a much finer material. The finesse of colour coding and matching is exhibited here.
Natural dyes

India's little tradition of vegetable dyeing is unequalled anywhere in the world. However, the European development of synthetic dyes in the mid 19th century gave a jolt to the export market for colourful textiles as well as the dyed material. The technical skills of vegetable dyeing were lost to a large extent but were preserved by a small minority of textile craftsmen. However, today there is renewed interest in natural dyeing because many bans are being imposed by European Governments, because of the health risks posed by the numerous synthetic dyes that they originally developed.

Natural dyeing has been preserved by some weavers along with the skills passed down from generation to generation. The dying dyeing traditions of Rajasthan, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh exemplify the best in workmanship and design. The natural dyestuffs used most often are indigo, madder, pomegranate, lac, walnut, tea and katchu.

The centers of tie and dye fabrics, in India are Jamnagar in Saurashtra (the water in this area brings out the brightest red while dying), and Ahmedabad in Gujarat. The finest bandhani or tie and dye work of Rajasthan comes from Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Barmer, Pali, Udaipur and Nathdwara. Rajasthan is reknowned for its leheriya or striped patterns. The word literally means waves. These are harmoniously arranged diagonal stripes, which were originally, dyed in the auspicious colors of yellow and red. However, the process of making bandhani (tie and dye) varies in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Even the patterns, designs and craftsmanship are very different. The craftsmen from Rajasthan can be easily discerned because they grow a nail on their little finger to facilitate the lifting of cloth for tying. or wear a small metal ring with a point. The Gujarati craftsmen prefer to work without these aids. The delicate hand work is time consuming but cannot be done away with because the flow is much better when one works with one's bare hands and there is the added assurance of no damage to the cloth. Like Rajasthan and Gujarat, Pochampalli is one of the three main traditional yarn-dyeing centers of India.
form of tie-resist dyeing and *patola* the technique of dying the yarn before weaving are two outstanding examples of the Indian dyer's art.

The colors commonly used in *bandhni* are - red, a symbol of marriage, saffron, a color worn by the yogi, or one who has renounced the world, yellow, which stands for spring and black generally considered inauspicious and used for mourning. *Bandhni* material is sold folded and with the knots tied. One has to pull the folds apart for the knots to open. The payment is made according to the number of dots in the pattern. An intricate design in a sari would have approximately 75000 dots. What is essential in *bandhni* is the minute and skilful manipulation of the fingers for tying, extensive knowledge of color schemes and skill in dyeing materials. It takes several years for a craftsman to perfect his skill.

Often man has resorted to colour to liven up his environment. To offset the barren colorless landscape and continued monotony of its cloudless sky, the people of Rajasthan and Gujarat, for example, show a distinct preference for bright costumes. Their preferred colors are bright red, dazzling yellow, lively green or brilliant orange against the backdrop of deep maroon or black, highlighted by a lavish use of sparkling gold and silver *zari* or gota. The dyers of these regions are renowned masters of the craft of dyeing. Their unequalled skill is evident in the dress material of the people both rich and poor to this day.
The dark mood of despair has been depicted most successfully by the artist in this painting whereby despite the use of bright colours that envelop the characters and protagonist the artist carries through the emotion of despair. The princess is shown wearing a bright saffron skirt with magenta kachnar flowers as the main motif printed all over it. Her chunari is a translucent pink with heavily worked pallu in orange. She is probably wearing a muslin blouse with golden edging at the waist. Her jewelry comprises many stringed pearl necklaces, armbands in precious stones like ruby and emerald set in gold, earrings in ruby set in gold with a pearl drop suspended from it and her wrists are adorned with golden bands edged with pearls.

The maids-in-waiting comprise one who is reciting poetry from a book. A candle has been set before her as a sign of initiation of poetic verse. She is wearing a jade green skirt coupled with a pink net chunari that is draped all over her upper body and head. Her jewelry is similar to that of her mistress. Her wrists are encased in broad gold bands that are edged with pearls. Her armbands are also golden bands set with precious stones like rubies and
emeralds with pearl edges. Her earrings are rubies encircled with pearls and a pearl drop is suspended from them.

Another is apparently singing the verses or giving companionship through talking to her. Her attire is much more colorful. Her churidar has a dark blue geometric repeat pattern on an orange background while a sash in heavy golden work lies on the floor between her legs. Her chunari is in greenish net with some shiny embellishments in the foreground. Around her neck she is wearing a yellow floral garland, probably of marigolds. These complement the multiple stringed pearl necklaces that she is wearing. Her armbands are golden with precious stones set in them. Her earrings are similar to the previous two women though the one distinctive feature of her ornamentation is her pearl anklets which are made up of multiple strings of pearls.

One of them is at her feet, kneading her calves to take away the strain. She is wearing a white odhni over a red and green skirt. The skirt is elaborate worked in golden embroidery. She is wearing what are probably orange coloured glass bangles and these are edged in with pearl kadae.

Another girl stands besides the lady’s bed to fan her Ladyship with a fly whisk. The remarkable feature about her is her headgear which is like a fur hat with black fur edging and a golden central part. She is depicted wearing a sheer blue skirt over a green pajama or loose trouser with a central sash suspended down the front of her skirt. She is also wearing a peculiar bodice like a short kurti that has a heavily embroidered yellow-saffron neckline. Her jewelry is however, absolutely akin to her lady.

There is also a young maiden standing at the Princess’s head and is fanning the lady with a long handles blue embroidered fan. She is depicted as wearing a white long sleeved bodice coupled with a light blue skirt and a yellow sheer, dotted chunni. Her wrists are adorned with golden bands that are edged with pearl kadae at both ends. Around her neck are several strings of pearls and her earrings are a copy of the other ladies.
The Basis for Dyeing

A basic knowledge of fibers and fabrics is essential before subjecting them to dyeing and designing. Fibers are either found in nature or they are manufactured. Natural fibers comprise those obtained from animal and plant substrata. Besides these there are the man-made fibers which consist of the following three groups:

1. Modified cellulose i.e., such as rayon
2. Synthetic polymer fibers, i.e. nylon, polyester, acrylic, spandex.
3. Mineral fibers i.e., glass.

The textile designer covets natural fibers like cotton, flax, silk, and wool. This preference is mainly because of the specific characteristics which lend themselves to the processes that form the repertoire of the artist. These fibres have a greater affinity for being subjected to dyes. The vegetable dyeing depends upon the repetition of an element of a motif that is a part of the larger overall design. These patterns or repetitions can be divided into two groups:

1. The ones which have an orderly placement.
2. The ones which are placed in random arrangement.

The first type which form the largest group are usually referred to as formal patterns and the second type is referred to as informal or random patterns. Formal, all-over patterns often require even distribution and generally follow one of the following basic placements:

1. Square, basic or block
2. Brick
3. Half-drop
4. Diamond
5. Triangle
6. Ogee

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7. Hexagon
8. Scale

Most of these guidelines for placement of repeat units are often visible and become patterns like checks, lattice patterns, stripes and plaids. The vegetable dyes used on some of the natural fabrics like cotton are the earthy browns, reds, ochre, chrome and greens along with the vibrant indigo.

Indigo has been used since Neolithic times in Europe as it was highly prized for its colour and light fastness. Until the end of the 19th century, the sole source being woad plants (*Isatis tinctoria*) and Dyer's Knotweed (*Polygonum tinctorum*) favoured by the temperate climates. The *Indigofera* species flourished in the tropics. Woad was widely grown in Europe. It made regions like Toulouse in France and Erfurt in Germany, very wealthy by the end of the 16th century.

Plate: 40

**Princess in Despair.**
Golkunda, Deccan, early 18th Century
Paper, 25.5 X 35.0 cm.
Acc No. 54.61/7
A true depiction of the colour can be observed from this beautiful miniature painting. It is a scene of ladies from all the walks of hierarchy spending a leisurely summer afternoon by themselves. At a glance what strikes the observer most is the brilliance of colors which are purely Indian in nature. A distinctive feature is the blending of the primary colours to make the different hues. Typical Indian colors like Rani pink, also known colloquially as khata gulabi as the base color for the Kaleen or carpet on which these women are sitting. Complementing the base color are flowers which are in sun burnt orange and vermilion red with burnt sienna leaves in a jaal format.

The royal personage at the centre whose entire entourage the scene depicts is resting on the carpet in a casual and relaxed stance. She is wearing a long-sleeved choli that overlaps her ghagra at the waist. The sleeve of the choli is remarkable as up to the upper arm it is in the same material as the main choli but below that up to the wrist it is in crinkled sheer material. It is tied in front and is open at the waist. The ghagra is comprised of an orange printed skirt worn over a similarly printed ochre churidar. Her ornamentation comprises a string of pearls at the neck. The most characteristic piece of jewelry she is wearing is a hemavaikaksha that is comprised of two long strings of pearls crossed at the chest, worn mainly by women of that time. It is joint at the neck with a pearl string that goes around it. She is wearing pearl anklets and bajuband. Her wrists are adorned with golden bands that are edged with pearl borders. She is wearing a nose ring in pearls and her forehead is adorned with a pearl and gold tikka.

She is attended by a musician playing a string instrument near her head and another attendant standing near her feet is fanning her. The musician is wearing a striped yellow ochre and saffron skirt teamed with a sheer upper and a grey odhni edged with yellow. Her choli is brown in colour and has white crinkled sleeves extending to the wrist. She is wearing many strings of pearls which also adorn her forehead, ear, arm and wrist ornaments. The earring is in a floral motif with pearls surrounding a ruby inset in gold. The motif is, however, reversed at the wrists where the ruby is surrounded by golden petal shaped...
pieces. The musician seems to be looking over her shoulder to probably call one of the two maidens standing outside the tent. One of them probably is a singer who is practicing her song to the tune of the other’s mandolin. The attendant who is fanning the royal personage is wearing a brown choli teamed with a violet odhni, edged with yellow. Her ghagra is in a bright yellow printed with a floral motif with a central panel that carries the same theme but with a geometric repeat pattern and borders. An additional feature is the white, gold edged overlapping skirt that opens at the front to display the central panel. Around her neck are pearl strings. The white pearls are used for her forehead ornament, earrings, bajuband and wrist bands.

The outfits of the pairs of women continue the theme of colour and essence. The two in the foreground on the left side are shown sharing some quite conversation. The one on the extreme left is wearing a brown bodice teamed with a white over skirt and odhni edged in gold. Her sleeves are also in crinkled white transparent material, probably muslin. Her companion is wearing a brown bodice and a mehendi green pyjami teamed with a white transparent overskirt which is attached to the bodice. There is a ochre and orange printed central panel suspended at the front of the skirt. She is wearing a mustard odhni, the loose end of which covers her head. The sleeves of her bodice are also in crinkled, white, thin material. The jewelry of the two maidens is similar in design and material. The use of pearls for necklaces, earrings, forehead ornament, bajubands, kadae is very prominent.

On the right are two women indulging in conversation to the accompaniment of refreshments. The one on the left is wearing a blue grey churidar which has multiple churis at the ankle. The choli is in burnt sienna while its sleeves are in a lighter tone in a transparent material. The overskirt is attached to the choli and is in white transparent material probably muslin which has strips of gota on it. A panel in yellow and orange floral pattern is tucked in at the waist to fall down the front of the skirt. The odhni is gold edged and red in colour in a transparent material. The central part covers the head of the maiden. Her companion is pouring her some drink from a flask. She is depicted
as wearing a yellow pyjami printed with red and green floral pattern. There is a yellow patterned panel suspended down the front of the skirt. She is wearing a brown choli which has a white transparent skirt attached to it. The jewelry of both the women is identical. What is remarkable is that the long pearl strings have large beads at the central point from where a bridge like attachment is suspended that has a pearl encircled, gold encrusted jewel as a pendant. This is a characteristic feature of almost all the necklaces worn by the women depicted in the painting. At the bottom of the necklace is usually suspended a larger stone or bead which probably could be a rudraksh. Another interesting feature is the fact that most of the women have their hair open giving the atmosphere of casual relaxation. It can be safely concluded that even at leisure the women were conscious of their status in life and dressed accordingly, the maids of the royal personages were also considerably adorned to give an idea of the high rank of the royal personage.

At the extreme right of the painting are shown three women who are about to enter the pavilion. One of them is being supported [probably] by two maidens. She is shown wearing a bright red, printed churidar and a brown, sheer bodice to which is attached a white, transparent overskirt that has strips of probably gota on it. Down the front of her skirt hangs the characteristic ochre and orange patterned frontal panel. Her veil is in transparent white with golden strips in the foreground. It has slipped from her head. On her right is a maiden in a vertically striped ghagra in yellow and navy blue. The yellow stripes have a geometrically placed floral pattern. Her blouse is in mehendi green colour and her odhni is in navy blue but in a transparent material. Interestingly, one end of her odhni is gathered into pleats and tucked into the front of the ghagra while the other end is draped over the head and tucked in at the other side at the waist. It has a thin golden edging. The lady on the extreme left is depicted wearing a crimson churidar under a brown bodice to which is attached a white, gota striped over-skirt having a central panel of yellow and orange printed flowers down the front. Her odhni is rust in colour. The brilliant hues of their clothes are complemented by simple jewelry in pearls that is identical in the
trio. They are also depicted wearing many stringed pearl anklets and on their feet they are wearing embroidered open mojadis.

Towards the left part of the painting are show two women standing. One is holding a stringed instrument like a mandolin while the other is standing in a relaxed manner while holding the tent rope for support. The one playing the mandolin is wearing a red churidar with a minute print in yellow which is teamed with a brown bodice that has a white, sheer over-skirt attached to it. This skirt has many strips of gota on it. A yellow ochre printed panel hangs down the front of the skirt. She is standing with her feet partially in her open mojadis which have an embroidered frontal panel. Her rust brown odhni is bundled up on her head. The second lady is shown wearing a navy blue churidar with a brown bodice from which is suspended a sheer, white over-skirt down the front of which is suspended a yellow and ochre print panel. The skirt has strips of golden gota on it. Her golden edged red odhni is bunched up on her right shoulder. Both the ladies are wearing identical jewelry and mojadis.

Origins of Fabric Decoration

Evidence suggests that earliest man decorated fabrics with some type of colorant. Archaeological digs have brought up a variety of stamps used in Mesopotamia 5,000 years ago for dyeing of clothes and fabric. Babylonian and Assyrian sculptured representations depict use of various patterns in clothing and textiles. Other evidence of decorated fabrics has been found in Egyptian mural paintings from as early as 2500 BC. The motifs shown are geometric in design and are used in repeat. Specimens of hieroglyphs painted on fabric dating from 1545-1350 BC have been found, as have resist-painted and mordant-dyed mummy cloths from before 1000 BC. Block printing is described in historical accounts as early as the fifth century BC as well as the use of clay or wax resists combined with refined mordant dyeing23.

At regular intervals sprayed evenly is a very fine motif of probably a daisy with a burnt umber head. The color of her wavy hair is shown to be very natural i.e. a mix of black and brown with tinges which are reflected from the body and skin tones. Her finger tips show the bright ‘Alta’ in redish orange color.

The almost translucent colours of Noor Jahan’s bodice has a quality that shows that the material used is of very fine quality fine silk of yellow ochre color.

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The skin tone is almost porcelain in nature with out any blemishes seen, a translucent quality which shows her place and her position. The opulence in the jewels which she is shown sporting is brilliant and radiance of the color white lends a deep luster and originality to these pearls.

They dazzle at the viewer leaving us with lingering thoughts of the times then. The bright red nature of the coral stone hanging without any major support is indeed astonishing. The bright and almost untouched colors in the emerald appears so fresh that it seems to be almost breathing. A Jade green
halo around her head with a dark black border and around it a golden outline symbolic of her being the begum. The color of the delicate blue of the pottery probably Chinese in origin because of the light blue colour and the motifs on it, the way the colors have been merged in the fine piece of art is worth mentioning.

The bright redish orange of the very Mughal cap brings out the picture and makes it very special. The mustard tie-up around the cap is very appealing in nature with anecdotes of jewels here and there. The aesthetic rendering of the light blue sky in the background brings the picture in a way that the viewer cannot forget her if seen once opulent quality endorsed in her due to the rendering of the colors which is so well done.

Color in History and the Present Day

Colors have always had a strong and bold hold on the cultures and people of the world. In India, this is truer because surfaces both large and small be they in architecture, clothing, and personal or bodily art were all suffused with bright colors, especially in tones of red and its other brilliant hues like sunset rose, orange, chrome yellow, etc. There was also an appreciation of the softer, subtle shades like peridot, jade, pinks, mauves and soft blues. Colors were combined in various patterns like the rich floral and geometric designs found in Mughal textiles and carpets as well as their resplendent frescoes. Color in miniature painting was at first fanciful and jewel like blue rocks, for instance, and lavender horses as in the Persian court style.

In the early Rajput style, a limited number of colors were used with little attempt at naturalism. In Mughal painting, color became increasingly naturalistic, although artists also used them to lead one’s eye through detailed scenes of court crowds, battles, and hunting so favored by the Mughals.
Colour forms a major part of the fashion statement as the fashion houses the world over make a place for themselves and then tend to rule the choices and preferences of the more creative people of the world. The colour schemes and more often the colour of the year are brought out with much fanfare and accolades in the fashion centres of the world. Some years the colour scarlet may rule the fashion palette while in other years there may be a range of colours and shades that provoke the designer to bring out ensembles that will appeal to the fashion conscious in the leading circles of haute couture. In some years the ivory and gold theme would reign supreme while in other black and gold or lack and silver may find much favour with the fashionable elite. For example the colour for the year 2005 is black and white.

Plate: 42
Maharaja Takhat Singh Celebrating Divali with Ladies.
Jodhpur, C 1850. 27.0 X 39.0 cm.
Mehrangarh Museum Trust, Jodhpur. No.128., By Dana

Green, gold and saffron are the dominant colors of this scene. Ranging from the clothes of the Maharaja and the ladies to the carpet and canopy – all have the singular colour coding in mehendi green embellished with gold and the all pervasive saffron.

The Maharaja is wearing an off-white angrakha having a gold floral motif. His turban is green and gold and tied in a manner whereby it protrudes
like a chignon at the occiput. There is a gold floral motif on the material used for the turban. In front of the Maharaja is seated a lady in a green dress. She is wearing an odhani with a gold edging and golden motif printed all over. Her jewelry is also magnificent in gold and precious stones. The canopy under which they are seated is deep red embellished with gold motifs and has a green and yellow/gold border. The carpet they are seated on and which seems to overhang the balcony is also identical in treatment but for the broad yellow border. The carpets border is mustard and gold and red. There are visible two yellow hangings or curtains on either side of the seated couple.

In the foreground are the performers or the entertainers. All these women are identically clad in the green gored skirts having golden piping. The odhanis are sheer green and have gold edgings which frame their faces as they drape the heads of the women. On either side of the court are deep red and green screens set in ornate golden/wooden frames.

Plate: 43

Jubilation at the Death of the Evil King
Ascribed to the Master at the court of Mankot.
Folio from the same horizontal Bhagavata Purana series as No. 42
C. 1700., 20.2 (16.8) X 30.3 (27) cm. Acc no. 1275
Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh
The riot of colour seen in this painting is a feast to the voyeur who goes from one point of brilliant colour to the other and attempts to imbibe the entire essence of the picture presented. The scene is one of jubilation and the colours seem to say it all. So exuberant is the mood that the protagonist on the extreme left of the painting seems to fall out of the frame itself. There are two dancers and six musicians. The two dancers are on the left of the painting. They are attired in striped long drawers that drape their thighs. One of them is wearing orange ones with blue and white stripes while the other one is wearing red ones with blue and white stripes. At the waists are knotted cummerbunds. One of them is wearing a cummerbund in red with charcoal grey and white broadly placed horizontal stripes. The pallav of this one ends in a charcoal grey edge having black and red motifs on the foreground. The edges are done up in tassels. The second dancer is wearing a white sash with charcoal grey broad bands on it. While the ends of the sash are grey with peacock motifs in dark grey and red woven in. They are wearing colourful uttariya draped around their shoulders. The left most dancer is wearing a golden, off-white combination with a woven edge that bears an elaborate floral motif in green and red on a yellow background. The other dancer is wearing a red uttariya probably in silk which has a floral motif in gold all over the foreground and ends in a golden pallav woven in red and green.

Stripes predominate as the focal motif all over the garments. They are wearing garlands of colourful and white flowers across their chests and bells or ghungaroo on their feet. The ghungaroos at the feet are tied in an interesting manner with the tie-up at the big or small toes. Both the dancers are shown wearing conical caps tied with striped cloth materials at the forehead and have their ends flaying in the air.

The musicians are divided into the four wind instrument players and the two percussionists. Interestingly enough the four musicians at the wind instruments are all in stripes while the others are not. The one seated in the foreground is shown wearing an orange and green long angrakha which is tied at the waist with a pink and grey striped sash. While the stripes on the
The last pipe blower is depicted wearing a striped orange, blue, white and red angrakha tied with a sash in red black and yellow bands. The end of the sash finished of in a broad grey band. He is wearing a blue and golden printed turban that is tied with a beige white and maroon striped cloth at the base.

The player on the dhol or large drum is wearing a white floral printed angrakha teamed with a blue, vertically striped pyjami. He is wearing a red turban tied with a beige and white cloth. The turban has a golden tassel at the tip. The musician playing on two drums is wearing a brilliant red and gold printed angrakha which is tied at the waist with a white and grey horizontally striped sash which ends in a border having a floral motif in red and green woven into it. The drummer is also wearing a turban in blue and gold which is tied with a beige and white cloth at the base. His turban too has a golden tassel.
Thus, the colours spread over the canvas capture the essence of joy and celebration that marks the mood of the participants and is reflected in their clothes.

Plate: 44

Preparation for Rama’s Wedding: the Fathers meet
Ascribed to a master of the Bahu Shiangari – Ramayana Series
A Folio from the Bala Kanda, the first section of the Ramayana series
C. 1700-1710, 22.7 X 33 cm
Collection of Dr. Alvin O. Bellak, Philadelphia

The depiction of a wedding procession is always one of the best means to capture the mood of gaiety and rejoicing that pervades the atmosphere when any celebration is on. The celebration of Rama’s wedding depicted above bears the marks of being one such where the clothes of the members of the procession and their accessories all are eye-catching and attractive to the maximum. Almost all the men are wearing striped angrakhas in bright colours like blue, green, maroon, orange, pink, and olive green. The biggest attractions
are the beautiful silken patkas that they have tied around their waists. Some of them are beautifully woven and others are printed in stripes of bright colours.

Since the occasion of a wedding procession is also a show of strength, many of the men in the procession are wearing their swords, bows and quivers full of arrows. The brightly coloured decoration element extends also to their horses, horsemen and chariot. The canopies being held by two of the men are also in brightly coloured. One is orange while the other one is green. An interesting element is the dress of the groom. He is wearing a brilliant orange angrakha teamed with a pyjami in tones of green. It is reflected in the shades of green on his patka which has a yellow pallav. Around his neck are a frilly necklace made up of rectangular leaves in orange and red. Close to the neck are strings of grey pearls which are tied at the back of the neck with long threads that end in thick black tassels. Across the shoulders of most of the men are janaeu in pearls. Barring the two purohits and the groom along with his brother all the other men are wearing colourful turbans and the two kings are wearing resplendent crowns. The crowns have been surmounted with three lotus flowers for both the kings.
Silhouette