Popular art as the more general term is used to refer to all those art forms of India that have a mass audience and use mechanical reproduction in their creation and distribution.  

Calendar art is a generic name for a style of popular print art. And more literally while referring to Calendar art the images that come to mind are the colour prints produced for framing to serve as wall decorations, to artistically rendered illustrations used to grace hanging calendars, almost typically, to polychrome lithographs that depict Gods and Goddesses and enigmatic and charismatic tales from their lives and times. The term Calendar art refers primarily to mass-produced colour prints who lent themselves to the expression of national sentiment, envisioning the nation through its landscapes, its bounded territory, its gods and goddesses and sacred sites, its myths and legends, highlighting the lofty ideals of spiritual, saga of valour and pictorial ballads of valiant warriors and heroes. The essence of their mass appeal lies in the themes chosen by the artists which showcases spiritual, religious, literary and historical perspectives. The Indian Calendar art revolves around the axis of religious wisdom, piety, mythology, rich cultural traditions and heritage. In fact it is interesting to know that Indian Calendar art is none of these separate features alone but an amalgamation of all these elements above.

Indian Calendar art was the product of ‘modernizing’ trends in the fine art in India- the domestication of techniques of oil painting and the mastery of western perspectivism- allied with the dissemination of new technologies of reproduction. The genre of Calendar art received the real

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2 Uberoi, Patricia; 2006, Freedom and Destiny: Gender, Family, and Popular Culture in India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p.49
4 Uberoi, Patricia; 2006, Freedom and Destiny: Gender, Family, and Popular Culture in India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p.11
5 Ibid, p.11
push with the advent and arrival of printing machines, techniques and technology which was brought to India by the Europeans.

Yet a similar definition attached to this genre of art is ‘Bazaar Art’, as these calendars are sold on festive occasions in small stalls, or pavements or at pilgrimage sites, reaching through such commercial networks into the very remotest parts of the country.\(^6\) By virtue of their mass production and low cost, these calendars have made inroads into the houses of the masses and classes alike by making them the most popular form of decoration and worship. Today we find them in homes, in temples and shrines, in offices and shops, commercial business establishments big or small, on the walls of educational institutions, splashed on walls, fixed in scooters and computers, stuck on machines, displayed on dashboards of swanky cars, lowly auto rickshaws and taxies, neatly slipped into wallets and lockets - printed on the jackets of notebooks of school children and so on.

The popularity of calendars have endeared them to be telling artifacts of contemporary Indian popular taste\(^7\), as they are normally printed in bright colours with profound decorative elements and naïve and eye-catching depiction of religious and moral values, ethics and traditions making them the objects of worship and these calendars are freely used as modes of advertisements for particular business houses.

The reach and thrust of Calendar art surpasses limitations impacting religious and the sacred themes to representing commercial and official aspects to vernacular and regional scopes. The fantastic images range between the direct and appealing to strange and queer expressions which may not be

\(^6\) Uberoi, Patricia; 2006, Freedom and Destiny: Gender, Family, and Popular Culture in India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p.50

born out of reality but as reality is perceived in popular beliefs, symbolism, fantasies and fables by the populace of a particular region. For instance, myths, ballads, folklores and heroic tales always inspired and left an indelible impression on the minds of the people and their depiction in visual forms in the calendars makes them all the more fascinating. This being the reason, that these calendars are admired by the people and offers them a visual treat and an elated experience to see the characters in myths, folklores etc. come alive in their visual *avatars* along with the other historical backgrounds. The symbolism shown in these colourful calendars for ex: different *vahanas* or vehicles of Hindu Gods and Goddesses and similarly their various incarnations or *avatars* border on fantasia and deep imaginative thoughts. They are instrumental in propelling in the minds of the onlookers deep feelings of spirituality and solemn religious thoughts, which are always dear to human beings. The other symbols depicted in these calendars such as ‘Lotus’, which stands for purity though it grows in mud, is considered the purest flower which is depicted as a seat of many Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Similarly ‘Nandi Bull’ the *vahana* of Lord Shiva is a symbol of virility and strength, ‘Durga on Tiger/Lion’ symbolises power and bravery and multi-armed Gods and Goddesses with many objects in their hands are symbols of different thoughts and powers attributed to a particular deity. The other interesting symbols include the form of a dwarf under the feet of Lord Shiva as ‘Natraja’ symbolises the destruction of ignorance. The pot bellied God Kubera is a symbol of riches and prosperity. The elephant-headed Hindu God Ganesh is revered as the remover of obstacles and is therefore invoked before the commencement of any enterprise or business. His *vahana* is the mouse. The God Shani is taken as the one who rules one of the nine planets in Indian cosmology. He is the Indian equivalent of Saturn known for his uneven temper. His *vahana* is the crow.
Though some minuscule highbrows may maintain that Calendar art caters to an untutored taste, conveying whatever the messages or themes through unsubtle means of communication and forms. They further believe that being a staple diet of crudity and unsophisticated forms for the consumers of this popular brand of art caters to generally innate and unrefined populace. This genre of art they claim will die its own death due to the lack of aesthetics and depth in the depiction of such art forms. They also assert that art devoid of sophistication loses its appeal and disappears without trace never to be seen again. The subject of Popular art deserves a fresh look as this very concept of Popular art in its many myriad manifestations provides valuable evidence of current attitudes and life styles and it presents the glimpses of cultural and religious perspectives of the times bygone. Focussing our attention exclusively on ‘great’ art merely perpetuates a view of history, which exults the elite and ignores the ordinary. Popular art is either ordinary or extraordinary. Its interpretation and why it is popular is a matter of investigation with a serious and unbiased mind or thought as it corresponds to the masses as well as classes and their tastes, aspirations desires, beliefs and their day to day history. It is indeed an ode to the anthropological account of a vast population revealing their cultural, artistic and aesthetical acumen.

The saga of Calendar art goes back to the emergence of printing industry, which was established in India at the end of the nineteenth century, was entirely devoted to the production of pictures of Gods, Goddesses and mythological themes. These mass-produced calendars soon emerged as the most vigorous medium of visual communication of the socially and culturally diverse Indian society. The calendars besides being religious icons

found its use in advertising goods and services and also in propagation of political and nationalistic ideologies as well.\[9\]

Though the contribution of the most important picture printing press named Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press (1894) pioneered by the famous Indian painter, Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906) who painted the Indian themes in western oil painting technique exclusively for the purpose of printing oleographs is of immense significance. But the important role played by other printing presses and publishers in revolutionising and popularising the Calendar art form commands outstanding attention which were Calcutta Art Studio, bow bazaar street, Calcutta; Chitrashala Steam Press, Poona near Bombay (1878); Hem Chand Bhargava, Chandni chowk, Delhi (1900); S.S.Brijbasi (1927-28); Sivakasi National Litho Press, Tamilnadu(1954); Chor Bagan Art Studio, Calcutta; Lakshmibilas Press, Cawnpore; Kununyalal Lachoomal, Delhi; Anant Shivaji Desai, Bombay; Anandeshwar Press; Arya-Bhushan Press; P.S.Joshi Kalbadevi, Bombay; Rising Art Cottage, Calcutta; Battala Press, Calcutta; Harnarayan & Sons to name a few.

The main printing techniques in vogue were lithography, chromolithography, letter-press printing, woodcut printing, albumen printing, bromide printing and half-tone printing. The cities of Calcutta, Bombay, Chennai, Patna, Lucknow, Kanpur, Amritsar and Delhi emerged as the major centres of printing of calendars.

The most popular and admired religious themes which were printed on these calendars pertained to Indian mythology, Hindu Gods and Goddesses and scenes from the epics- Ramayana and Mahabharata. The colourful pictures of Goddess Lakshmi (Goddess of wealth) standing on lotus and Goddess Saraswati (Goddess of music and learning) clad in white sari seated on a lotus and playing

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9 Neumayer, Erwin and Schelbeger, Christine; 2003, Popular Indian Art- Raja Ravi Varma and The Printed Gods of India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, India, p.1
veena are still in vogue besides the pictures of Ram, Lakshmana and Sita, Radha Krishna and gopis, Bal Krishna Leelas and Raaslilas of Krishna. Also prominent are the calendars depicting various avatars of Vishnu- Narsimha avatar, Matsya avatar, Kurma avatar, Shiva and Parvati, Shiva as Gangadhar, Ganesha, Hanuman as Pavanputra, Goddess Durga on tiger, Goddess Kali, Ardhanarishwar Shiva and Shiva and Parvati with Ganesha and Kartikeya. Some other rare themes depicted in these bright and colourful calendars are Annapurna (Goddess of food), Samudramantan scene, Vishwakarma (God of art and architecture) sitting with his tools and Shree Sharada Pujan (Lakshmi, Saraswati and Ganesh).

In the true spirit of patriotism various nationalistic and patriotic themes were attempted and admired by the people depicted in these calendars pertaining to the pre-independence of India. These calendars infused a sense of national pride and yearning for freedom. Prominent among these calendars are Bharatmata with Indian flag (Tiranga), Hind Devi (Goddess India) standing with a fierce Lion and martyrs of freedom presenting their heads at her feet, Martyr Khudiram, Shaheed Bhagat Singh with Sukhdev and Rajguru, Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhi with Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose receives a weapon from Durga to be used in the struggle for India’s independence with the sword comes the flag of the Indian National Congress and The leaders of the Nation (Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Rabindranath Tagore, Sardar Patel).

Sikh Calendar art has accomplished the position of being the most admired genre of Sikh Popular art as it has successfully and emphatically captured the imagination of millions of people inhabiting the northern states of India for decades and decades, due to the spiritual and historical content, stylised form, decorative and ornamental appeal one finds these calendars respectfully and prominently displayed on the walls of the religious places, households, shops and other commercial as well as social establishments. The Sikh calendars carrying the images of Sikh Gurus, Saints and Sikh martyrs
are revered as if they are the embodiment of spiritual and religious empowerment. Episodes treasured in the popular imagination of *Sikh Calendar prints* are legends and manifestations of the religious, spiritual, cultural and traditional values and ethos of the Sikhs. The bright and colourful collection of these absorbing calendars depict scenes from the Sikh history from the Gurus to the Maharaja Ranjit Singh, *Janam Sakhis*, Gurdwara Reform movement, *Baramaha Tukhari*, Sikh themes showing the *dignity of labour* as Guru Nanak Dev drawing milk from the dry bread of Bhai Lalo, a carpenter and blood from the lavish feast of Malik Bhago, a rich and tyrant merchant; equality of women; love of mankind; Bhai Kanahaiya-as forerunner of Sewa-Panth offering water and medication to the wounded Sikh and Mughal soldiers alike in the battlefield beyond the distinctions of caste, creed or nationality as a symbol of pure humanism which indeed is the true soul of Red Cross movement today.

In some calendars the themes portray are *Guru ka langar*—where rich and poor are sitting together in rows partaking the same food being served by the Sikh sewadars; *Kar-Sewa*—in which devotees of all faiths participate in the construction and renovation of Gurdwaras; *Amrit Sanchar* ceremony show Guru Gobind Singh baptising the *Panj Pyaras* as Sikhs by offering them *Amrit* prepared by him; Birth of Khalsa— as Guru Gobind Singh standing at his Anandpur Fort with a naked sword in his hand and asking for a head from the congregating crowd; Gurmat Prachar; *Janam-Sakhis* showing the episodes from the life of Guru Nanak Dev, scenes of martyrdom; Sikh-wars; Guru Nanak Dev with Bala and Mardana as his devoted companions on his way to far-flung lands.

Even today the most popular themes in Sikh calendars are the portrait of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh on horseback and falcon perched on his gloved hand. A variety of calendars which highlight the importance of martyrdom and values of valour in Sikhism is also an absorbing subject matter in *Sikh Calendar art* where Shaheed Baba Deep Singh is shown as- the brave
soldier of the Khalsa holding his decapitated head in one hand and the sword soaked in blood in the other engaged in a battle in Amritsar. What stirs the chords of one’s heart the most are the calendars depicting the episodes of Muslim oppression and Sikh bravery – the scene of bricking alive of two younger sons (Chotte Sahibzade) of Guru Gobind Singh highlights the violence of tyrants over supremely loyal innocents.

Calendars showing the episodes of Guru Nanak Dev’s life like Bal Nanak sleeping and being protected from bright sun by a five headed snake; Sacha Sauda- wherein Nanak is shown feeding the poor sadhus with the money his father gave him for starting a business; Guru Nanak Dev seated in a grocery shop weighing grains and uttering the words Tera-tera; Mecca Pherna; Self-rotation of chakki in a jail; Wali Kandhari at Panja Sahib is shown throwing a boulder and Nanak stopping it with his single hand; Demon Kauda who was a cannibal is shown frying human beings in the large karaha (Wok) and Guru Nanak Dev reforming him with his wisdom from perfoming such demonic acts; Reetha-Meetha an interesting episode in which Baba Nanak turns the bitter and inedible fruit (reethas) into a sweet eatable (reethas) for Mardana who always pretended to be hungry gained instant response from the masses as these themes depict the lofty, divine and pristine pinnacles of Sikhism.

While studying the emergence and development of Sikh Calendar Art it will be pertinent to know the historical background, development and origin of Sikh art that is Art produced by Sikh artists, created under Sikh patronage, offering a distinctive Sikh style, produced in a territory dominated by Sikhs and highlighting Sikh themes, traditions, culture and religion.¹⁰ Foremost and most poignant patron of Sikh art was revered Maharaja Ranjit Singh whose efforts to promote Sikh art and culture are unparalleled. He was instrumental in bringing in fresh air in the form of new painting techniques

and styles practised by European painters and offering patronage and encouragement to the Sikh painters like Kehar Singh, Kishan Singh and Bishan Singh who were pioneers to adapt these new techniques and who will be remembered for their contribution in converting the Sikh themes into paintings of newly adopted genres.

*Sikh art was born in the incredible illustrations of Janam-Sakhis.*

*Janam-Sakhis* which are as popular and sacred in the Sikh tradition as are *Puranas* in Brahmanical and *Jatakas* in Buddhist. In *Gurmukhi*, the literal meaning of ‘Sakhi’ is supposed to be a ‘story’ but generally speaking *Janam-Sakhis* are the episodes from the life of Guru Nanak Dev.

The *Janam-Sakhis* are Hagiographic accounts of the life of Guru Nanak dev, popular narratives which have enjoyed a considerable popularity throughout the history of the Sikh panth. Each consists of a series of anecdotes, loosely organised in varying chronological patterns and laying particular emphasis on Guru Nanak’s travels within and beyond the Punjab.

The *Janam-Sakhi* illustrations deserve to be recognized as the fountainhead of Sikh artistic endeavour. *Janam-Sakhi* illustrations had a direct impact on the minds of the masses as one would agree that a visual object had a direct impression on to the onlooker than the written word. The content of *Janam-Sakhis* lays greater emphasis on portrayal of Guru Nanak’s personality aspect, philosophic and divine religious messages of love for mankind, universal brotherhood and discarding of unfounded beliefs and superstitions which block the straight-forward and truthful paths impairing the rational human behaviour.

The anecdotes represented in the *Janam-Sakhis* are simple yet graphic. Numerous versions of *Janam-Sakhis* incorporate or dwell upon a hymn, couplets

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12 Daljeet, Dr; 2004, *The Sikh Heritage—A Search for Totality*, Prakash Book Depot, New Delhi, p.118
or religious quotes of wisdom. The narrative part serves only as their scene setting. Their language is mostly Punjabi, script Gurmukhi and the diction fiction in prose, imbuing them with exceptional narrative skill as experienced in a storybook. Likewise, Janam-Sakhis are found both simple plain manuscribed texts and as also highly illustrated and appealing; serving both the ordinary as well as an affluent Sikh. The Sikh art, portrait, frescoes, border illumination decorative designs have its seeds in Janam-Sakhi illustrations. In Sikh art, Janam-Sakhi illustrations are the earliest specimens of emerging Sikh narrative art.\textsuperscript{14}

The popularity of Janam-Sakhis illustrations later on propelled the tradition of painting murals and frescoes on the walls of religious establishments, monasteries, dharamshalas, temples, havelies and palaces with paintings depicting the life events of Sikh Gurus and their portraits and those of Mahants or priests.\textsuperscript{15} Fresco paintings enlarged the scope of Sikh art and at the same time became instrumental in spreading the teachings of Sikh Gurus, Sikh way of life and ethos, amongst all sections of the society.

With the passage of time, artists adopted and improved mural and fresco painting techniques and enriched the Sikh art with addition of number of artistic, ornamental and stylised elements in the form of floral patterns, geometrical margins and elaborate depiction of flora and fauna. There was special emphasis on bright colours and fascinating stylised portraits of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh, the first and the last Sikh Gurus.

The art of painting frescoes and murals is a well-established art tradition in India since ancient times. The tradition of frescoes or murals based religious constructions/shrines started diminishing with the invasion of Islamic invaders

\textsuperscript{14} Daljeet, Dr; 2004, \textit{The Sikh Heritage-A Search for Totality}, Prakash Book Depot, New Delhi, p.118-119
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, p.132
who were not in favour of preserving and projecting non-Islamic religious structures. Obviously during the Sikh Guru’s lifetime the indigenous mural art tradition in Punjab has hardly any scope to grow save what of it crawled in some less significant far-off sectarian buildings mostly the Thakurdwaras of Bairagis.  

The eighteenth century Sikh art thus remained dominated by portraiture as its forms, Mughal as its style and Sikh art as its central theme. The onset of nineteenth century saw the incorporation of some of the elements of European art such as the use of light and shade and dimensional effects in Sikh art. This saw an emergence of some accomplishments and mastery in technical aspects of portraying the specific personality facets in a portrait adopted from European art. Now besides painting the portraits of Sikh Gurus, Sikh artists showed a keen interest in painting the portraits of a common Sikh, a labourer, a goldsmith, a weaver, a carpenter, a farmer and even a potter engaged in his vocation. This enriched the dimension and scope of Sikh art of portraiture. The entire character of the Sikh art- its vision, theme, style, area, effects, motifs and symbols found a new patronage during the nineteenth century. But Sikh art did not fail in preserving its earlier professional angle and sectarian direction but had developed besides secular and amateur aspects. With the passage of time, themes which were popular and dominant in Sikh art earlier such as religious themes, lives of the Sikh gurus, martyrs etc remained popular and found sustained patronage and expansion during the period that followed.

A remarkable new thematic transformation where emphasis started shifting and focussing on the portrayal of the common man and depiction of his day-to-day life where artists freely discovered themselves and were delighted

16 Daljeet, Dr; 2004, The Sikh Heritage-A Search for Totality, Prakash Book Depot, New Delhi, p.130-131
17 Ibid, p.138-139
with their new creations, newly found techniques and adoption of new styles, materials with a wider vision.

Another aspect which gained credence is a new imagery evolved entirely out of the personal experience, vision and imagination of a particular artist who was not confined to illustrating texts or legends or translating into lines and colours mere conventions, creeds or traditions. With a new consciousness and self-discovery, the artist was feeling free to give a creative went to his imagination or to its own concept of things around him. The emergence of secular type amateurism in fact revolutionised the Sikh art to a great extent where the winds of changes started blowing bringing in new aspects of aestheticism and creativity which influenced the content matter of Sikh artistic endeavour.\footnote{Daljeet, Dr; 2004, \textit{The Sikh Heritage-A Search for Totality}, Prakash Book Depot, New Delhi, p.139}

After a prolonged period of turmoil and struggle Maharaja Ranjit Singh was able to establish a reign of peace and stability in the Punjab hills. The result was a fruitful and much needed Sikh patronage to the \textit{Pahari} art. In the Lahore court, the most preferred form of painting became portraiture or paintings of group of nobles and generals. Under the auspices of valuable Sikh patronage \textit{Pahari} painters eagerly adopted Sikh themes and this gave a new dimension in stylisation and depiction of Sikh ethos their works. During this reign of tranquillity and prosperity, this was an ideal period when painters from hills of Punjab and Rajasthan preferred to migrate to Lahore court.\footnote{McLeod, W.H; 1991, \textit{Popular Sikh Art}, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, p.9-11}

Though initially Maharaja Ranjit Singh was reluctant to get his portraits painted but the art of portraiture flourished with the passage of time and a number of professional and amateur artists have left some remarkable and superb portraits of the Maharaja, his family, soldiers and the sketches of people. These
fine specimens are found in memoirs, travelogues and contemporary accounts of the *Lahore Durbar*.  

Emily Eden, August Schoefft, Baron Hugel, Captain Goldingham, William Carpenter, C.S. Hardinge, the German painter Van Orlich, G.T.Vigne, W.G.Osborne, Russian prince-Alexis Soltykoff are the notable European visitors who visited the Lahore court.

The European painters visited the Lahore court for various reasons such as some came to seek their fortunes and others landed in *Lahore Durbar* for the sake of curiosity and to see the Maharaja of this empire and yet others were lured by the attraction of romantic East. The presence of numerous accomplished artists from Europe has left us with a fine body of paintings in oils, sketches, engravings, lithographs, etchings, woodcuts, pen portraits, water-colours, line drawings and miniature on porcelain that can be classified as *Sikh art* that is by, for and or about Sikhs.

What attracted these artists the most was the splendour of the Sikh court of Ranjit Singh, its treasures and its handsome Sikh warriors, architecture natural environs of Lahore court scenes, portraits of famous personages of Ranjit Singh’s court- Maharaja’s sons Sher Singh, Kharak Singh, Nau Nihal Singh, portraits of famous ministers- Fakir Nuruddin and generals like Sham Singh Attariwala, portraits of foreigners- Allard, Ventura, Vo’n Cortland and Honibeger. There are numerous authentic and elaborately painted portraits of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh showing him sitting on a chair with one leg pulled up and the other on a foot-rest and his left hand finger pointing. Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s palace and Shalimar Gardens were the favourite subjects for the lithographs at that time. The beauty of Lahore environs, robustness and handsome facial cuts of the

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people and the prosperity of Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s reign inspired many great works of art.22

The Sikh painters appreciated the newly introduced techniques brought in by European painters such as elements of realism, border perspectives, foreshortening, unconventional approach, elaborate backgrounds, group painting, oil painting instead of vegetable or mineral colours, minuteness of detail, precision, tone, tints and highlighting, intricate representation of jewellery, costumes, weaponry, furniture and drapery, broad strokes of the knife and an added imagery to enhance a work of art. The beauty of landscape has been captured very vividly and lyrically adding an aesthetic charm to the otherwise dull picture. All these embellishments and achievements characterized this later phase of Lahore art. And the city of Lahore emerged as one of the earliest centres of modern art anywhere in this part of India.23

With the British annexation of the Punjab in 1849 a marked diversion in Sikh art was observed. The artists now had to cater to the distinctively different taste and preferences of the British patrons. Earlier these artists earned a comparatively comfortable living but with the introduction of the Printing Press and with lithographic techniques which provided the first opportunity for mass production, they had to equip themselves with the coming commercial onslaught.24

The Sikh art under the dominant presence of the British saw three main changes- firstly, a different format for Portraiture, secondly, a demand for stronger sense of perspective in the paintings and thirdly the adaptation of water-colour and sketching. This extension was in response to the solely

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22 Singh, Manmohan; 1977, Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s court: Painters and the Painted, Marg Publications, Bombay, p.109
23 Daljeet, Dr; 2004, The Sikh Heritage-A Search for Totality, Prakash Book Depot, New Delhi, p.146
elite British preferences and tastes and was encouraged by the Mayo School of Art established in Lahore in 1875. As the Europeans in India had a fascination to record interesting people or scenes in the form of sketches and water-colours to acquaint their relatives and friends back home.\textsuperscript{25} Sikh artists did not lag behind in pursuance of this new found style of art and fully indulge in adjusting to the new techniques, subject matters and styles.

\textbf{Deviating from the typical flat colour technique of Sikh painting, the first Sikh painter who adopted western realistic style in favour of light and shade was Kehar Singh who flourished at Lahore and Kapurthala.} We see a glimpse of last century’s life of Punjab in his paintings of carpenters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, potters, masons, dyers, beggars, women baking \textit{chappatis}, jugglers, \textit{Sadhus, Nihangs} and so on and so forth.\textsuperscript{26} Another contemporary of Kehar Singh was Kapur Singh who worked in oil and water-colours and specialised in portraiture. Kapur Singh became a court painter of Kapurthala who was initially assigned the job of fanning the European artists engaged by Kapurthala court. He learnt western techniques of painting through observation. Puran Singh was yet another prominent artist who excelled in painting portrait of Sikh Gurus in oils.\textsuperscript{27} The contribution of two nephews of Kehar Singh- Kishan Singh and Bishan Singh,\textsuperscript{28} was instrumental in further strengthening the Sikh style of painting. As they admired, adopted and practised the elements they learnt from their European contemporaries.

The introduction of technical expertise enabled wider circulation of \textit{Sikh Popular art} which was the blend of British and native traditions. In the late nineteenth century, the Printing Press became an instrument of popularising \textit{Sikh art} and played a significant role in mass production and distribution of fine

\textsuperscript{26} Randhawa, M.S; 1971, \textit{Sikh Painting}, Roopalekha, Vol. 39, No.1, AIFACS, New Delhi, p.29
\textsuperscript{27} Aryan, K.C; 1971, \textit{Some Punjabi Artists}, Roopalekha, Vol.39, No.1, AIFACS, New Delhi, p.36
specimens of *Sikh popular art* which were earlier available only to elite classes but with this technological revolution in printing the superb and fantastic works of art reached the masses who could afford to spend a nominal amount of money, this awakened a new resurgence of Sikh consciousness and developed into a new stream of publishers, printers, journalists, authors and painters/illustrators. The most preferred technology adopted by the printers was lithography and woodcuts.\(^{29}\)

The contribution of J.Lockwood Kipling, principal of the Mayo School of Art in *Lahore* (1875-93) and also curator of the Central Museum is earnestly recognised here for the pioneer work in collecting, protecting and preserving an album containing 196 prints, paintings and drawings in pen and pencil together with 37 loose pages of paintings, calligraphic drawings and outline pen drawings which were produced during this period at Lahore and sold in the bazaars and religious fairs of North India. This set is in the permanent collection of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. These *Popular Sikh art* prints were printed by Bhai Gujjar Singh proprietor of the Faiz Printing Press near Akal Bunga in Amritsar. Their editions touched a couple of thousand marks. J.Lockwood Kipling chose the representative specimens of these prints selecting from amongst a number of series on the same subject.\(^{30}\)

The modern bazaar prints/calendar prints emphasised on depiction of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh mainly and in some Sikh calendars *Guru Ram Das has been shown* because of their connection with Golden Temple. The series of Adi Granth *Bhagats* did not find much prominence in these popular Sikh calendars.\(^{31}\)

During the first half of the twentieth century the *Sikh Calendar art* witnessed an apparent barrenness/recession due to mainly two reasons. The

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30 Ibid, p.20-21
31 Ibid, p.23
first being the general disapproval with which members of the Singh Sabha movement regarded *Popular Pictorial art*. Calligraphy and Gurdwara designs were not opposed but imaginative painting and drawing depicting the Sikh religious themes was not well received by the members of the Singh Sabha movement. Photographs were preferred as they projected actual pictures of people, places and events. The members of the Singh Sabha movement feared that these colourful calendars of Sikh Gurus may make them iconic figures whereas no actual portraiture was available of a particular Sikh Guru.  

Although the hostility of reformist leaders evidently slowed the output of *Popular Sikh art*, it did not stop it. Another reason for the slow down of *Sikh Calendar art* could be the belief that some thought it was not worth preserving and there were very few examples of this art left in the market. But the *Sikh calendar art* did not vanish altogether and painters kept on creating scenes of Sikh history, culture, traditions and ethos in their own distinctive styles and manners and these painters had their own followers and disciples who remained engage in carrying forward the art of *Sikh calendars* stylised by their forefathers who were also their teachers or *Ustads* generations remained engaged in this profession.

**After India gained independence from the British in 1947, there were two distinctive developments in *Sikh Calendar art*.** One is the appearance of a group of Sikh artists who genuinely chose to paint Sikh traditions in their own imaginative style modes and the other factor is the circulation of mass printed calendars on Sikh themes. Addition of adding soul and character to the painting in individualistic style of a particular painter was appreciated by the supportive and sophisticated admirers. The effort satisfied the urge to relate to spiritualism

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in these Sikh Calendar art prints. This style is the new avatar of the Sikh psyche and traditions as represented in the earlier traditional iconography. Some of the artists attempted painting the events of Sikh history in new techniques of painting in oil on canvas etc. Sobha Singh being the forerunner of this new artistic endeavour.  

Other important artists whose contribution is of considerable significance in the enrichment of the genre of Sikh Calendar art are G.S.Sohan Singh, S.G.Thakur Singh, Bodh Raj, Trilok Singh Chitrakar, Kirpal Singh, Jaswant Singh, Gurdit Singh, Amolak Singh, Devender Singh, Mehar Singh, Jarnail Singh and many others. 

Analytical and critical observation reveals that the themes which are still popular and which have been painted again and again by a number of artists are the ones, which glorify spiritualism, divinity, sacrifice, martyrdom, valour, selfless service to mankind and oneness of humanity. These themes have been very powerfully and artistically narrated through eye-catching and fantastically impressive compositions, which have the capacity to mesmerise and anchor the attention of a viewer. Guru Nanak in many facets have been beautifully painted in new imagery and realism such as in a painting titled ‘Eko Simro Nanaka’ by Sobha Singh as Guru Nanak has been shown rising from turquoise blue waves of a river, clad in pale robes raising one finger towards the heavens and there is a divine glow on his face with eyes half closed with spiritual intoxication and ecstasy. This is a large picture which is in permanent collection of Chandigarh Museum. Replicas of this masterpiece have been attempted by many painters and they are available in calendar form. Another remarkable calendar which is a bit surrealistic in approach and style has been done by artist Jaswant Singh wherein the artist has painted one foot of Guru Nanak symbolically touching the earth and

the other foot is receding in the distance. The rocks and canyon in the
background have been skilfully painted with remarkable sense of perspective and
realism. Though the artist has not depicted the full body or face of Baba Nanak
but one can easily make out from his foot wearing wooden clogs, the appearance
of a rosary and some part of his robes above the knees that this is a painting of
Baba Nanak—the traveller. These paintings are a departure from the accepted
iconography.35

The legendary painter Sobha Singh who is widely acclaimed as ‘saint
artist of the people’.36 After a long stint of working in Punjab and elsewhere he
finally settled in the peaceful surroundings of Andretta in the Kangra valley, near
Palampur, Himachal Pradesh and the house where he used to live and work has
been converted into a small but significant museum by his family.37

He often remarked that ‘Art was his religion and his aim is to give form to
the formless’.38 He created a new intensity by delving deep into the spirit of the
subject he chose to paint. He created a series of his portrait of Guru Nanak Dev
titled ‘My meditations on Guru Nanak’ in which he represented his own vision
of Guru Nanak Dev. His portraits of the Sikh Gurus, avatars, saints and immortal
lovers- ‘Sohni Mahiwal’ shall endure the test of time.39

The most popular individual portrait of Baba Nanak painted by Sobha
Singh which we find in every home is a fine example of a shift in traditional
iconography. This artistic endeavour of the artist can be categorised under
imaginative portraiture. Another remarkable work by Sobha Singh is a portrait of

35 Randhawa, M.S.; 1971, Portraits of Guru Nanak by contemporary artists, Roopalekha, Vol.39,
No.1, AIFACS, New Delhi, p.5
Singh, Guru Nanak Dev University Press, Amritsar, p.55-56
37 Kaur, Madanjit; Ed. 1987, Painter of the Divine- Sobha Singh, Guru Nanak Dev University
Press, Amritsar, p.3-4
38 Singh, Dr. Kulwant; 1987, Sobha Singh’s philosophy of Art. In Madanjit Kaur, Ed. Painter of
the Divine- Sobha Singh, Guru Nanak Dev University Press, Amritsar, p.79
Painter of the Divine- Sobha Singh, Guru Nanak Dev University Press, Amritsar, p.34
Guru Gobind Singh as a symbol of upright brave and valiant soldier oozing with synergy of courage and confidence- a true saint and a mystic scholar at that too. The calendar shows a solidification of Sikh patriotism and nationalism. These two most popular portraits of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh by Sobha Singh have set a benchmark in Sikh Calendar art and he had become a living legend.

**G.S. Sohan Singh**, one of the pioneers of Sikh Calendar art who had his own remarkably ornamental individualistic style where the richness of detail, elaborate composition and vibrant colour scheme are the hallmark of his masterpieces. He learnt painting from his father Gian Singh Naqqash who was an exponent of the art of Naqqashi (fresco painting). His father devoted his entire life decorating the walls of Sri Harmandir Sahib. An enigmatic painting by G.S. Sohan Singh which was a great commercial success in Sikh Calendar art is titled ‘Sarp Chhaya’ depicting an episode from the Janam-Sakhi of Guru Nanak Dev in which a cobra is shown shading Bal Nanak from the harsh sunlight and Rai Bular and other villagers watching amazingly at this unusual phenomena.

Though G.S Sohan Singh was a prolific painter and attempted variety of themes besides painting episodes from Sikh history, Sikh war scenes and many portraits of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and other Sikh warriors yet a pleasing picture which captured the imagination of masses is the painting of ‘Bal Gobind’ this is a rare picture which immediately strikes a cord between a mother and child and is an epitome of innocence and affection. One of the masterpieces of Sikh Calendar art, which has a rare aesthetic value, artistic excellence, and novelty of subject matter is an enchanting work by G.S. Sohan Singh in which the artist has displayed superb sense of diagonal composition, fluidity and a great sense of balance. The theme of this calendar is a scene from the tale that after the
cremation of Guru Gobind Singh at Nanded he saved two maratha chiefs Bala rao and Rustam rao from the fort of Sitara in Puna. In yet another specimen of masterly painting of Sikh Calendar art by this artist, which speaks volumes of his artistic calibre, is a painting of Guru Gobind Singh standing in the posture of a heroic leader urging and inspiring his Sikh warriors to fight for justice and live with dignity and freedom.

The artist whose contribution towards carrying forward the mantle of Sikh Calendar art or Sikh Popular art is of immense significance was S.G.Thakur Singh who was born in Amritsar and preferred art to engineering as his career. His talent was nurtured by a Muslim painter Mohammad Alam and Thakur Singh accompanied him to Bombay and Calcutta where his artistic genius matured and he produced remarkable body of Sikh Calendar art.41

Though he had a preference for painting historical sites, monuments, landscapes and portraits of common people in a rare realistic style and form in oil on canvas. He painted Sri Harmandir Sahib in myriad moods, seasons and hues capturing the eternal beauty, which exudes spiritual spell and ethereal solace. His skilful strokes and an eye for detail presents harmonious exuberance combined with external beauty and a rustic charm. The notable pictures which were popular and were converted into calendars are the scenes from the kullu valley, its people and the magnificent landscapes of ranges of mountains and shepherd boys with their lambs and goats. He had a fancy for painting ladies performing daily chores of life with soft and mellow contours and postures. The well-known paintings which are in permanent collection of Chandigarh Museum are titled ‘The Morning Dip’ and ‘After the Bath’. His works have enduring qualities and establish immediate repo between the public which is the uniqueness of his artistic endeavour.

41 Rani, Dr. Saroj; 2001, The Realistic Artists from Punjab, Panjab Lalit Kala Akademi, Chandigarh & Lokayat Prakashan, Chandigarh, p.30
The stalwart who made alive the Sikh history of Punjab and whose contribution deserves to be acknowledged and appreciated is artist Kirpal Singh who is perhaps the most exhibited artist in Punjab and the most popular and prolific painter. His powerful works depicting the scenes from Sikh history are displayed in museums, institutions, Gurdwaras and other public places in India and abroad wherever Punjabis have settled. His paintings of gutsy and robust ferocious looking Sikh warriors mounted on galloping horses flaunting spears and flashing swords attract and cast a spell on the onlooker. His celebrated works which have carved a niche in every Sikh’s mind is the brutal killing of martyrs of Sikh faith- upright bold and brave people without a trace of fear on their faces have been shown being gruesomely slaughtered by the official Mughal slaughterers (jallads). He has successfully depicted scenes of cruelty which were unleashed on the Sikhs but the result evokes sentiment of heroism (Veer Rasa) in the beholder.

In one of his heart-rending important paintings, he painted Sikh mothers forced by the Mughal oppressors to wreath themselves with the mangled limbs of their minced children but never let their faith be shaken up. In another moving painting the Sikhs are shown being hounded and killed in pursuance of sadistic glee. The most poignant painting describes the brutal swearing of the limbs of Bhai Mati Dass and culminating into sawing his body into pieces in front of the very eyes of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Bhai Mati Dass was a man of strong faith and determination. Humane ideals of Sikhism are depicted in the painting titled ‘Bhai Kanhaiya: forerunner of Red Cross’ serving drinking water to the wounded Turks soldiers along with the Sikh soldiers irrespective of the fact of caste, creed and religion.

Amolak Singh renowned artist who was born in Amritsar had the rare honour of working under the guidance of great artist Sardar Sobha Singh at Andretta (Himachal Pradesh). He had created more than four hundred paintings
on Sikh themes. He worked as an artist from 1970 to 1974 in Bollywood and was appointed curator of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), Central Sikh Museum in the Harmandir Sahib complex, Amritsar. After the Operation Blue Star he was assigned the duty of renovating the Sikh Central Museum. His paintings are in permanent collection of Punjab and Sind bank, PNB finance, Bank of Punjab, Central Sikh Museum, Amritsar, Baba Baghel Singh Museum, Delhi, Bhai Mati Dass Museum, Chandni Chowk, Delhi and other Sikh institutions and private collections.42

The valuable contribution of Amolak Singh in portraying Sikh history with his brush is of utmost significance. Most of his paintings have been converted into calendars by the above mentioned patrons of Sikh art and a large audience appreciates and admires his artistic genius due to the fact the paintings are very appealing and bring alive the ethos of Sikhism through rich and versatile narration as he had a keen sense of composition and was master of using harmonious colours with an eye for detail.

In a painting by Amolak Singh titled ‘Curing a leper’ Guru Nanak Dev is shown visiting a suffering leper during his first udasi and asking him to permit to spend a night in his cottage. The leper was amazed and filled with joy. He said “even an animal would not think to come near him due to his leprosy”. A mere glimpse of Guru Nanak dev cured him of the dreaded disease. The leper profusely thanked him and bowed before Guru Nanak remarking that this is an act of a man of god who with his compassion and love for the mankind had cured him.43 Amolak Singh being a true disciple of Sobha Singh had mastered the art of realism and had a profound understanding of composition.

In another masterly work which is a rarely attempted theme Amolak Singh has painted the scene from ‘The compilation of Guru Granth Sahib’. In

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42 Walia, Varinder: October 16, 2006, Artist Amolak Singh dies in sleep, The Tribune
43 Bains, K.S; 1995, Sikh Heritage in Paintings, Perfect Press Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, p.16
this painting Guru Arjan Dev and Bhai Gurdas are shown engaged in the compilation of Guru Granth Sahib. In yet one of the rare Sikh themes from the Sikh history the artist has narrated the episode of ‘The invincible Guru’- Guru Hargobind Singh wherein foes of the Guru hatched a conspiracy to hire a snake charmer to kill the young Guru Hargobind. The snake charmer was bribed by the conspirators to let loose a poisonous snake. But the great guru overpowered the snake. Amolak Singh deserves all the praise for attempting rare themes from Sikh history in a realistic and expressive manner.

**Trilok Singh Chitrakar**’s rich contribution towards painting of *Sikh art* is no less valuable. He was fondly called ‘Chitrakar’ means an artist and he attached this word with his name. Trilok Singh was born at Sardar Gurdit Singh’s home in Jartuli district, Ludhiana. He took keen interest in painting from his very early childhood as his father migrated to Assam where Trilok Singh accompanied him and while living there he studied Assamese, Bangla, Hindi and English languages. He invested his time in painting and studying and interacting with local artists, which widened his vision as an artist.44

Trilok Singh chitrakar added a new chapter to Sikh painting with his dramatic stance, mysticism and a fair amount of surrealism while narrating accounts from the Sikh history based on the couplet- ‘*dharm chalawan sant ubaran dusht saban ke mool uparan’*. This dream-like work shows Guru Gobind Singh with sword in hand descending from the skies and the divine light from the darkness guides his way. From amongst many other masterpieces done by this artist the painting which captures the soul of the theme powerfully and vividly depicts the ‘brave and sacred duty performed by Bhai Jaita’ who after the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur respectfully carried the holy head of Guru Tegh Bahadur to Punjab.

44 Rani, Dr. Saroj; 2001, *The Realistic Artists from Punjab*, Panjab Lalit Kala Akademi, Chandigarh & Lokayat Prakashan, Chandigarh, p.65
Artist Gurdit Singh had the honour to be appointed as the Curator of the Central Sikh Museum, Sri Harmandir Sahib complex, Amritsar. His organising abilities and keen interest in Sikh history and culture were evident in the pioneering work he has done in selection and display of remarkable masterpieces of Sikh history in this museum. He was a simple and saintly man but was bestowed with unfathomed talent and a very keen sense of visualising paintings from the Sikh history, which deserve appreciation and acclaim from the connoisseurs of art and the masses. Realism and classical handling of the subject is evident from each of his works, which have been done painstakingly and skilfully. Each painting appeals to the eye because of the harmonious and rich colour scheme, superb handling of posture and division of space in a given frame.

Basic ethos of Sikhism that is love for all mankind and universal brotherhood are the favourite themes of Gurdit Singh’s works and in this context the ‘Portrait of Sain Mian Mir’ (1550-1635A.D.) holds great significance as this saint who was born at Sistan and who belong to lineage of Caliph Umar was requested by Guru Arjan Dev to lay the foundation of holiest of the Sikh shrine. Mian Mir was also a great devotee of Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Hargobind Singh.\textsuperscript{45} This master painter has paid tribute to the first preacher of Sikh tradition ‘Bhai Gurdas’ (1543-1637A.D.) who assisted Guru Arjan Dev in the compilation of Guru Granth Sahib.\textsuperscript{46}

The versatile and prolific talented artist of Sikh Calendar art who devoted his entire life to the cause of painting Sikh history is Bodhraj. He was engaged in production of countless paintings and colourful illustrations for the publications, calendars and magazines, which are brought out by Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhk Committee publication bureau. He has done a large body

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\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, p.119
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of work but has never compromised on quality of work and attempted variety of themes from Sikh history. His compositions are par excellence and life-like inhabited by characters right from the time period of a particular theme. Flora and Fauna and sense of perspective in landscapes and buildings are very meticulously attempted in his flawless paintings. His dextrous control over the brush can easily be witnessed and his intense mastery in choosing the colour palette is profound. The novelty of his work lies besides painting countless pictures of the Sikh Gurus he painted the Bhagats and Saints like ‘Sant Kabir’, ‘Swami Ramanand’, ‘Bhagat Namdev’, ‘Bhagat Ravidas’, ‘Baba Sheikh Farid’, ‘Baba Buddha’ to name a few whose literary contributions are enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib. The other remotely attempted themes such as ‘Bibi Rajni- a devoted wife of a leper’, ‘Healing touch of Guru Harkishan Sahib’, ‘The Guru’s word is the panacea of All Ills’, ‘Guru Hargobind blessing Mata Sulakhani’, ‘Installation ceremony of Guru Granth Sahib’ at Sri Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar are some of the popular paintings which have been converted into calendars and are admired and preserved by people.

In the lineage of Sikh painters who have painted portraits of Guru Nanak Dev in their own individualistic styles, one such painter who have painted Guru Nanak’s portrait keeping in mind the essence of his preachings and the ethos of Sikhism is famous artist Jaswant Singh who migrated from western Punjab, now in Pakistan and established himself in Delhi after the partition. He excels in surrealistic and lyrical depiction of the essence of ‘Ragamala’ and other religious subjects. His works are in permanent collection of Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. Keeping in mind his talent for painting large panels eminent patron and connoisseur of art in Punjab-Dr. M.S.Randhawa assigned him to paint large murals for Museum of Natural History, Chandigarh. A quiet and simple man, Jaswant Singh has created very appealing and moving paintings of Guru Nanak Dev’s philosophy that is simplicity, oneness of humanity and
tolerance of all religions. In one of his paintings titled ‘Mystic ecstasy of Guru Nanak’ Nanak has been shown as a sage wearing a cap which was commonly worn by fakirs and yogis who travelled far and wide in search of truth. This portrait of Nanak is a unique departure from the traditional iconography depicted in calendars of Sikh art. ‘Guru Nanak-the Pilgrim’ remains his most popular painting which has been converted into calendars.

**Artist Mehar Singh** carried forward the tradition of Sikh painting to new realms and was instrumental in producing fine works of Sikh history which speak volumes of his creative acumen and dexterity. The characteristics of his work are classical realism, clarity of thought and profoundness of composition. Being a true disciple of artist Sobha Singh he imbibed in him some of the precious elements of his master’s works. Portraits attempted by him are full of precision and life-like. In some of his paintings richness of colours reigns supreme while painting group figures of Sikh royalties. An eye for detail for the costumes and the jewellery is magnificent and mesmerising. His great love for drawing shows in his masterpieces and present close glimpses of rich works by European painters in Sikh courts. He is also a great commercial success and his paintings are in collection of universities, museums, academies and art galleries. He is an established Portrait painter of great repute. The impressive paintings which come to mind include ‘Robe of Honour’, ‘Jahangir visiting Golden Temple’, ‘Mai Bhago going to battle field’, ‘The birth of Gobind Rai’, ‘Gobind Rai in the lap of Rani Maini’, ‘Portraits of Maharaja Ranjit Singh- Lion of Punjab’, his generals and courtiers.

**Devender Singh** has his own individualistic style which is reflected in his paintings of Sikh history and religion. He was initiated into painting by his accomplished father who was a commercial artist late S.Sewak Singh. Devender Singh was born in Amritsar and received his formal education at Bombay, Amritsar, Ludhiana and Chandigarh. He was propelled into fame by his first
collection of paintings on Sikh women which was bought by Punjab and Sind Bank for their calendars in 1972. His canvases are not in the nature of a ‘satsang in colour’ but carry meaningful delineation through the countenances of Gurus, silhouetted women and the elements in sober pastels and oils. The walls of the Sikh museums in Paonta sahib, Anandpur Sahib and Golden Temple are adorned with his paintings. With the sound patronage of financial establishments such as Punjab and Sind Bank, Bank of Punjab and Markfed his paintings have been commissioned by these institutions and converted into calendars for mass circulation. He has also experimented the Sikh themes in contemporary and so called semi abstract style with pleasing colours and bold and engrossing compositions. A series of paintings titled ‘Barah Maha’ based on compositions on seasons by Guru Nanak Dev in Raag Tukhari and Guru Arjan Dev in Raag Majh establishes him as an artist who is creative and in step with times. Apart from Sikh history he has done innumerable paintings on Punjabi culture, traditions, ceremonies and folklores. His paintings are appreciated by the Punjabis living in far-flung continents. In a prominent painting titled ‘Bandi Chhor Guru’ which is a popular Sikh theme from Sikh history, artist Devender Singh has elegantly and expressively depicted Guru Hargobind Singh emerging from the fort of Gwalior along with fifty-two innocent rajas clutching the strings of his robe.

The illustrious son of a very talented artist Kirpal Singh well known for his exceptional paintings of Sikh warriors and battles is artist Jarnail Singh who was born at Zira, district Ferozepur, Punjab. He inherited art from his father and chose to be different in approach and style. He painted folklores, ballads of love and war, fairs and festivals, dances, music and Punjabi literature and above all the women of Punjab engaged in various household chores were the favourite subjects of his paintings which found instant admirers in Punjab and amongst Punjabi speaking people all over the world. His paintings of Sikh wars and
royalty are also worth a mention which were under the influence of his father being a prominent painter of Sikh history. But the stylisation and the colour palette chosen by him celebrate the colours of Punjab that is bright, vibrant and luminous. Notable paintings which are popular calendars today are Punjabi bride, Punjabi woman at the spinning wheel, a Punjabi girl embroidering a Phulkari, a group of women at trinjan and woman churning milk to form butter in the morning against the backdrop of Punjabi rustic life and surroundings.

**Though many critics may opine and predict that Sikh Calendar art will be on the decline in popularity and in churning out fresh talent in this field. But it gives us a sense of great satisfaction and hope that this wave of Calendar art which was started at the emergence of Sikh art in Janam-Sakhis is alive and kicking today.** The ideals of Sikhism are universal and instrumental in inspiring fresh talent which is found in abundance in small cities and towns and the pivotal contribution of the stalwarts mentioned above is a fountainhead of Sikh Calendar art which is flowing vigorously. Patronage of Sikh religious bodies, academies, institutions and non-resident Indians who are keenly interested in the preservation of Sikh heritage, culture, religion, art and language deserve praise. Streams of new painters of Sikh Calendar art are emerging and silently yet steadily working towards carrying forward this genre of art which brings financial support and artistic satisfaction to the new painters who are establishing small studios in their homes and markets. The role of bodies like Punjab and Sind Bank, Bank of Punjab, Markfed, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), Art Academies, Museums, Art Galleries, Printing presses, Publishing houses, Advertising agencies and Animation and Graphic design houses is of immense significance and in fact the introduction of new printing techniques like Digital and Offset printing have made it easier to

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47 Bhatti, S.S; 1988, *Art with Rustic intensity- Jarnail Singh’s ‘Punjab Paintings’*, The Tribune
spread the popularity and scope of *Sikh Calendar art* and today *Sikh Calendar art* is not only found in calendars, diaries, book covers, stickers, necklaces, lockets, office decorative items. The specimens of *Sikh Calendar art* are also found on the plastic, PVC, metallic keychains, wall clocks, pen stands, mouse pads and other items of daily use such as T-shirts, stoles, textiles and fabrics. The popularity of *Sikh Calendar art* can easily be gauged from its presence in all spheres of life.