Chapter V

Tagore's Influence on Contemporary Painters and Their Work and Techniques:

Nand Lal Bose:

One of the foremost figures in the modern renaissance of Indian painting and unquestionably the most popular of Indian artist is Nandlal Bose, the head of the Kala Bhavan at Santiniketan. He is not only the leader of the so-called Bengal school of painting but is also recognized as one of the master of the world.¹

After Abanindranath, Nandlal Bose is being acknowledged as the major painter of Bengal school. He had great respect for the Indian tradition not only in art but also in life, and so he treated mythological themes more realistically.²

Nandlal's Ancestral Home was at Banipur, a village on the west bank of the river Hooghly, about ten miles to the south of Calcutta. He was born on December 3, 1883, at a village called Kharagpur in the district of Monghyr, Bihar, where his father Purna Chandra Bose was in charge of a Zamindare forest office under the Darbhanga Raj. Nandlal lost his mother, Kshetramani, when he was about eight years old. But the impress she left on her son's mind was considerable. Kshetramani was a gentle-spirited woman. She was very good at making things-like designing moulds for preparing sweets, making small catechu dolls, artistic needle-work on Kantha patterns, etc., all these being accomplishments for women brought up in the traditional culture of an old time middle-class Hindu household. When his mother, or perhaps an aunt, was doing one of these things, the child Nandlal would be sitting by, absorbed in watching beauty and form taking shape in

¹ G. Venkata Chalam: Contemporary Indian Painters, Nalanda Publication Bombay, 1948, p. 29.
the work of dexterous fingers. Nandlal would spend many an hour an eager, entranced spectator of the transformation of clay into dolls or images of gods and goddesses.³

He was very fond of painting from his very childhood, luckily he got a learned teacher like Abanindranath Tagore.⁴ At Kharagpur, as a boy, Nandlal heard of a painter in a nearby village. He searched him out. The fellow was a crank. He lived by painting pictures for the villagers. One day Nandlal took to him painting materials, paper, paints and a brush-and asked him to make a picture. On completing the course of the "Middle" school at Kharagpur, Nandlal was sent to Calcutta for further studies.⁵

At fifteen, Nandlal went to Calcutta to continue his education. There he studied at the central collegiate school for his entrance examination and then joined the General Assembly College to study for the F.A. examinations. But his Passion remained art. All his time was spent collecting books and magazines to study the works of great painters. Even the money meant for his school fees went into art. He failed in the F.A. Examination, and then joined the Metropolitan College where again he did not pass the examination. Nothing persuaded him, away from art. Nandalal incessantly kept learning to paint, picking up model drawing, still-life, etc. From his cousin Atul Mitra copying the works of European masters (like Raphael’s Madonna) and the style of Raja Ravi Verma’s (as seen in Mahashveta). When he was yet feeling his way, Bose was elated when he suddenly recognized his future Guru, Abanindranath Tagore, from his paintings like 'Buddha' 'Sujata' and 'Bajra-Mukta' he was too shy to ask Abanindranath to accept him as a disciple, Bose took his classmate Satyan to speak to the Guru on his behalf. Bose went with some paintings. Not only Abanindranath Tagore, but also Havell and Lala Iswari Prasad examined them and appreciated the maturity of lines and

⁵ An Album of Nanda Lal Bose with a Biographical Note Santiniketan Asramik Sangha Calcutta, 1956, p. 5-6.
experimentation in his works. Some were copies of European paintings but among the originals ‘Mahasveta’ won Hevell’s admiration while ‘Ganesh’ won over Lala Iswari Prasad.⁶

When Nandlal was a student at the Art School sister Nivedita visited it one day in the company of Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose. Nandlal’s work made a great inspiration on her. Nandalal was a student at the art school for five years. When he finished the course the authorities of the Art School offered him a post which he refused. He assisted in the preparation of a catalogue of Abanindranath’s famous ‘Tagore Collection’. Nandlal copied for Abanindranath a large number of old drawings.⁷

Abanindranath’s Art School was not just a teaching institution, but a locus for extending and deepening the appreciation and enjoyment of both classical and folk art through a variety of activities like recitations and discussions. In the beginning Harinarayan Basu and Iswari Parsad guided Nandlal in the school, but later Abanindranath himself guided his growth. During this time, Bose was his only student, though later many more joined him. While his disciple for over five years, Bose picked up a lot from Abanindranath. His method of teaching, simple and engaging as it was enlivened the classroom atmosphere and inspired rapt attention from his disciples. Stories from Indian history, the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha were woven into his classroom. Buddaha’s stories, Goddess Kali, Thandava Dance narrated in the class fired Bose’s imagination. Famous artists recognized Bose’s original style and art critics like Gaganendranath Tagore, Anand Coomaraswamy and O. C. Ganguly. Along with being a great painter Nandalal.

Bose played a leading role in the renaissance of art in India along with Asit Kumar Haldar, Surendrananth Ganguli, Samrendra Gupta, Kshitindranath Majumdar, Surendranath Kar, K. Venkatappa, Hakim Mohd Khan,  

⁶ www.indianarticle.com/arteducation/bose.shtml-23k-Cached - Similar pages
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Shailendranath Dey, Durga Simha etc, who were all inspired by Abanindranath Tagore. Nandlal became associated with the work of Indian Society of Oriental Art. His picture *Shiva-Sati* at one of the Society’s exhibitions brought him a prize of Rs.500. Nandlal visited Gaya, Banaras, Agra, Delhi. Mathura and *Virindaban*. The tours, in North, and South India, formed a special chapter in Nandlal’s life.

*Ajanta*’s paintings are seminal to Indian and Asian Art. Their influence traveled to other parts of Asia with Buddhism, and can be felt in the paintings of China and Japan to this day. Their influence in contemporary Indian art came through the Bengal school, when Lady Herringham and her assistants, which included three students of Abanindranath Tagore: Nandlal Bose, Asit Haldar and Samrendra Gupta, spent three years (1909 to 1911), copying the paintings of *Ajanta*.

After completing their allotted tasks at *Ajanta*, Nandlal and his three colleagues returned to Calcutta in February, 1911. By this time Nandlal’s fame as an artist had spread, not only in India, but also abroad Abanindranath and his colleagues belonging to what was now called the ‘Bengal School’ of painting with an established position in the country roused interest among art-lovers and connoisseurs in some foreign countries also. In 1909 he had also come to contact with attracted personality Rabindranath Tagore, noted poet and philosopher, and this marked the beginning of a life-long association. All of them were concerned in one way or another with India’s cultural regeneration and its conceptual bases. In the summer of 1914 Rabindranath invited him to Santiniketan where he was involved with a novel educational experiment, and gave him a moving community reception; he was probably trying to in inveigle Nandlal to join in as a co-worker. Nandlal lost his heart. Its rural environment inspired him, with a near religious experience; all its little features seemed to

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[8] www.domusartgallery.com/-20k - Cached - Similar pages

[9] ibid, p.12, *An Album of Nandalal Bose with A Biographical Note,*


wear a halo. In the following year he joined Rabindranath on a boat trip on the Pasma River, and he was taken greatly up with the vision of Bengal’s countryside, and moving human types. These experiences were crucial.\textsuperscript{12}

Nandlal settled down at Santiniketan in the year 1920. This was a vital decision on his part in respect of his personal development as well as the development of modern Indian art. Under the overall supervision of Rabindranath Nath Tagore, Nandlal, along with a group of promising young talents, concentrated upon experimenting with varied art forms.\textsuperscript{13} Santiniketan environment, Rabindranath’s personality and the challenge of his new educational experiment exercised a magnetic pull on Nandlal. Rabindranath on his side found him a man of Kindred sensibility with whom he would find easy to collaborate. He was met Arai Kempo a Japanese artist which on a tour to Japan (in 1916). Arai kempo, came in India 1916 to teach Nandlal Bose and others. By this time Rabindranath had organized a cultural group in his house in Joransanko, which he christened Vichitra, and along with it in an art-class, in which Nandlal had a major responsibility. Rabindranath wanted him in Santiniketan to take charge of Kala Bhavan, the Art department of Visva-Bhatti, the new international university he was planning. Nandlal was in a dilemma. He went for a short while to Santiniketan in 1919, then returned to Calcutta, then decided again to move to Santiniketan for good. The request was to take the charge of the Art department—Kala Bhavan of Visva-Bhatti in September 1919.\textsuperscript{14}

Rabindranath could easily include Nandlal into his incourage during his visits to China and Japan in the year 1924. This was a great opportunity for him. Going through the collections of the works of the master-painters of China and experiencing the conflict between traditional excellence of the Chinese paintings and contemporary propensity for imitating Western art, he

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. P.22:( \textit{Nandalal Bose (1882-1966) Centenary Exhibition’} 1983. p.22)
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realized how a great heritage was in disarray due to lack of proper understanding and leadership. The leaders of the Japanese renaissance, Taikwan, Kwanzan, Hishida, Arai and others of the Nippon Bijistuin gave him a certain insight into the technical nature of painting. The Santiniketan experience broadened Nandlal’s art perspectives. Santiniketan gave him a raison d’être for such an interest. For here his responsibility did not quest. Rabindranath had stated in no uncertain terms that man’s sensory encounter with the environment was as important as his mind’s enquiry into its inner mystery, and any worthwhile society should provide for both. Nandalal took it up as a challenge. So he gave attention to all, inducing them to learn alpana, batik, leather-craft, and picture making with simple units; besides he tried to bring cleanliness and order into the campus, considered elegance to its building and interiors, visual variety and liveliness to its festivals and dramas, a distinctive graphic image to its publications, even set standards of refinement in personal and group conduct, so that, at one time he managed to bring to the place a special aesthetic aura, the hall-mark of which was a dynamic simplicity, an artless art. Under the general canopy of Rabindranath’s ideas the system he evolved laid major stress on the art students initiative and originality, it did not approve of streamlined delivery of techniques and skills.

It considered art as more of a vocation (to answer an inner calling) than a mere profession. It recognized the importance of art. Students needed to understand his artistic and cultural heritage, its forms and techniques, but analytically, testing their viability in terms of his drives and impulses, and their own life-content. In formulating this he openly acknowledged his debt to the ideas of Rabindranath and Okakura but detailing was all his own. He had great admiration for Rabindranath. A feeling of awe heightened his respect for the poet. Nandlal met Rabindranath Tagore. Nearing fifty at that time greeted

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16 G. Venkata Chalam: Contemporary Indian Painters, Nalanda Publication, Bombay, 27 Dec 1948, p.29.
him with a smile. He said, "I have seen your paintings, I like them, and now I would like you to illustrate some of my poems in Chavbanika. Rabindranath’s paintings appeared to him independent of the visual, factual, material world. Art, Nandlal felt had to be such an essence; it should have the flavour but not the flesh of individual facts. In his recollections with Rabindranath he states:

"Gurudev once told me that truth, however you may define it, had the power of attraction inherent in it. It must draw your inner self towards itself, and the more you open yourself to if, the more you feel its hypnotic, influence. The unnatural through its very novelty may attract us for some time, but the attraction wears off if there is no truth in it. The very fact that Gurudev’s experiments in the grotesque instead of repelling us for continue to attract us more and more as tie passes, proves that the element of truth is not a negligible factor."

Nandlal had no illusions about his ability to teach or Rabindranath’s capacity to learn methods or techniques. Rabindranath’s paintings would have been initially a dismaying experience; but when the initial shock wore off and when he was able to disengage his vision from his habit of carrying the measuring scale of tradition, he did see the worth of Rabindranath’s art. When by 1938 or 1939, he completed at least 3000 pictures. Nandlal Bose says that even many renowned artists could not paint so many pictures within such a short span of time. Rabindranath was first inspired by his own scribblings on manuscripts to draw something. He says "When the scratches in my manuscripts cried like sinners for salvation and assailed my eyes with the ugliness of their irrelevance, I often took more time in restoring them into a merciful finality of rhythm than in carrying on what was an obvious task."

In a different place Nandlal Bose says, "That which lends charm to poetry and clothes it in beauty is the same element, which gives life and colour in art compositions. Gurudev had already developed in himself the three

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18 Winkar Kowshik: Nandalal Bose The Doyer of Indian Art, National Book Trust India by the New Delhi, 1985, pp.33-36.
essential qualities of an artist before he took up the brush namely, a sense of rhythm, a sense of proposition and a sense of identity." This particular feature of Rabindranath’s art may give the critics the idea that he was the propagator of primitive art. But according to Nandlal Bose, these paintings were modern and intellectual in spirit. In the last, Santiniketan, where he was encouraged by Rabindranath Tagore to experiment with form, medium and theme. This was a phase when his art came close to life and reality. Nandlal Bose illustrated many of Rabindranath’s poems, and even designed the sets for the latter’s musical plays. He became the official designer of the Indian National Congress, creating "magical cities" out of bamboo, thatch, paper and pots at Haripura and Faizpur.

Nandlal Bose has succeeded in drawing the attention of art-lovers the world over by his significantly original interpretations of some of the classical myths and legends of India. About from religious sentiments and theological superstitions, it is indeed too much to expect from on educated modern Indian any interest or admiration for Puranic stories rendered in stale and worn-out pictorial forms. “One cannot forever go on ruminating on the self-same forms of Shiva, Vishnu, Lakshmi or Rama and Krishna. The Lord of the Universe, Mahadev, is described in the ancient Hindu books not only a Maha Yogee (Prince of Ascetics) but also as Naterja, (the King of Dancers), and Nandlal has given to the modern world his own version of these two aspects of Shiva in his paintings. His art is fundamentally linear and is profoundly influenced by Ajanta inform and motif, his graceful calligraphy has aboard Oriental foundation, suggested in part by the Mughal and Rajput schools, and owing some thing also to the far eastern idioms. Nandlal has coined new types from the richness of his imagination and the inner vision of his soul. But rightly also

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19 Tapati Dasgupta: *Social Thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore. A Historical Analysis*, Abhinav Publication, Haiz Khan, 1993, p.44.
has he used the thousand and one forms and figures, gestures and attitudes, poses and postures and other details of ornamentation, which those masterminds of *Ajanta* conceived, evolved and designed from the spacious depths of their spiritual consciousness. Nandlal’s special contribution to modern art is this recreation of the forgotten art-tradition of India.23

Nandlal’s approach to modern art was positive and practical. He was against the aping of the Western styles and techniques as well as the initiation of traditional styles and techniques by Indian artists. Nandlal did not find anything new in modern art. According to him, intellectually committed Indians were better than artistically contrived modernity. Art in essence is not just filling up of given space with lines and colours but something more serious. Art, which is not a product of inner compulsions, can never endure. Nandlal Bose accepted modern art as it related to the European ethos, he condemned it as an irrelevance and incongruity in the Indian context.24

His great masterpiece “Shiva mourning over Parvati?” is a work to be ranked with the best painting ever done by a master under any clime. As a painter of Hindu mythological subjects he is still the greatest among the moderns. His robust technique and virile imagination, even in small-scale studies of heroic episodes, though often reminiscent of Ajanta, are delight fully his own. Its better known painting like “Sati” “Kaikey”, “Ahalya” “Karma”, “Umsa’s Grief”, “Sauata” and others have not only brought him immediate recognition and fame as a master artist’s. His lines always tend to move, sway. Curve, ever suggesting motion. The London editions of “The collected poems of Tagore” contain some of the best examples of this illustrative art of Nandlal Bose. The lovely illustration he did fore Tagore’s “Nateer Puja” revealed the strength of his lines and the rich harmony of his colours.25

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23 Ibid. p.31. (*Contemporary Indian Painters*)
24 Ibid. pp.28-29 (*Nandalal Bose A Collection of Essays,*)
25 Ibid. pp.31-32. (*Contemporary Indian painters*)
Internally restless, Nandial Bose always carried with him a stack of blank cards, a slab of ink and brush. Even sensitive to the stimuli surrounding him, he used to give into his impulses to record these, recall old images and invent new ones, through small spontaneous sketches in monochrome. Nandial Bose always kept the habit of realistic sketching on the spot and doing finished drawings of sceneries, people, animals and vegetation. Fundamental directness, seasoned details a convincing overall finish and emotion marked his expression. Nandial came into close touch with the Mahatma first in 1935, Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress. He became a nationalist in the thirties, when he decorated the Pandal of the Haripura Congress at the invitation of M.K. Gandhi, whom he admired. Bose also designed and embellished the Constitution of India. He set a model for Pavilions and pandals, gateways and halls which is fast becoming a fashion in India and widely copied everywhere. Since 1911, Bose has exhibited in several exhibitions such as at Crystal Plais, England in 1911, the Societe des peintres Orientalistes, Francais, Grand palaces, Paris traveling to Belgium, the Netherlands & imperial Institute, England (1911). Traveling Exhibition Organized by the Indian School of Oriental Art and the American Federation of Art 1924, Athenee Gallery, Geneva, Switzerland (1928), Lucknow and Haripura Session of the Indian National Congress (1937,1954). Nand Lal Bose retrospectives were held at Calcutta in 1954 and at the Centenary Retrospective Exhibition, National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi (1982).

Nandlal’s first and last love is Santiniketan, where, surrounded by his pupils he lives a dedicated life Bose was regarded at times as a partisan idol, a prominent leaders of the Nationalist backlash against colonialism. Yet despite his nationalistic bent, Bose was not a defensive antagonist. He aims of India’s

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26 www.indianarticle.com/arteducation./bose.shtml
28 Ibid. p.34, (Contemporary Indian Painters)
29 This article about a South Asian writer or poet is a stub. Retrained from “http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nandlal Bose”
30 en. wikipedia. org/wiki/Nandlal _Bose -13k-Cached - Similar Pages
creative genius, so as to make its stand with the world healthy and fruitful. He died on April 16th 1966, in Calcutta. Thus we can say that Nandlal is the only Artist who got success lives in his culture. He participated in Bengal movement through his art that reflected in Indian culture.

**Amrita Sher-Gil:**

For a woman painting in India, Amrita Sher-Gil is inheritance. No perspective on our art is complete without reference to Sher-Gil. Her commitment to her self image as an artist, as much as her brilliance and flair, has ensured for two or three generations of women artists since, the right to be taken seriously. She propended a new style of painting with the combination of the western modern art with that of Indian art. But because of her premature death this artist could not complete her work of this integration.

Amrita Sher-Gil was an innovative painter of modern India. Her father Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, scholar and savant, learned in Sanskrit as well as in Persian, came of an old Sikh family of the village of Majitha, in Amrita district of the Punjab. Her mother Mari Antoinette was a Hungarian. She Punjab with princess Bombay, who had through a public notice published in London, sought a companion to travel with her to India, the land of her forbearers. Marie Antoinette made the acquaintance of Umrao Singh in Shimla and acquaintance led to marriage. Amrita Sher-Gil was born on 30 January 1913 in Buda in the apartments of the family situated at 4 Szilagyi Dezso ter overlooking the Danube. One year later on March 2, 1914 her sister Indira was born. The out break of the world war kept the family in Hungary for six years. They returned to India in 1920 and made for the next nine years. The scenic beauty of the hills and dales and of the Himalayas peaks not for away from their summer Hill residence left a deep impact on Amrita's aesthetic sensibility. Upon the recommendation of the English teacher who had been

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hired to teach art and music and who had soon recognized her unusual talent, she in 1924 went, her mother. In April 1929 she joined Grand Chaumiera, well known art school in Paris, where she studied for one semester, shifting thereafter to the Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts.\textsuperscript{34} Amrita learnt the basics at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, the premier art institute of that time. She lived life to the hilt in the cafes and streets of the city, Plunging with abandon into the Bohemian Paris art world.\textsuperscript{35}

She made a very minute study of the human anatomy, perspective and various techniques of oil paintings. The encouragement. She received from her teacher, Lucien Simon, Who admired her talent and frequently commended her progress, stimulated her creative energies. In Paris, she frequented art studios, art Galleries and art museums; she studied the original works of the great masters. The paintings of Paul Cezanne taught her the art of compact composition and the technique of modeling to represent the third dimension. Gaugien, Tahitian paintings, with their sensitive draughtsmanship and effective use of colours, especially his technique of using flat areas of pigments marking Tahitian sunshine, made a special appeal to her.\textsuperscript{36}

At the instance of her uncle, the Ideologist Ervin Baktay, the Sher-Gil family moved to Paris in 1929 so that Amrita could study art. Amrita flourished in Paris but by 1934, she was longing to return to India. “I began to haunted by an intense longing to return to India, feeling in same strange inexplicable way that there lay my destiny as a painter.”\textsuperscript{37} On her return to India Amrita’s first effort is to find a mode of delineation appropriate to her Indian subject.\textsuperscript{38} Because she knew she could paint in India alone and in no

\textsuperscript{34} http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_Shergil
\textsuperscript{35} Out Look: The weekly News magazine Publisher. Maheshwari, 20 March 006, p. 74.
\textsuperscript{36} http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_Shergil
\textsuperscript{37} The Hindu: Sunday, 2 April, 2006. Article.
other country. Her first impression on her return is a key to the greatness of her work.  

In June 1938, she traveled to Hungary to marry her cousin, Dr. Victor Eagan. After their honeymoon in Europe, the couple returned to India. Dr. Eagan took up employment with Amrita’s uncle, Sunder Singh Majithia, who owned a sugar factory at Saraya. Dr. Eagan served there as a physician. Here at Saraya, Amrita went through a new phase in her creative experience. In September 1941, Amrita migrated to Lahore where her husband, Dr. Eagan, set up his own practice. Here she started work on a painting of buffaloes in a suburban setting, which was never to be completed.  

They spent together about four years and this short time was very fruitful for Amrita’s art. For Amrita he was the only man who could understand her and he was curiously enough a Hungarian.  

When back home in India, Amrita was eager to win recognition. She found two champions: Karl Khandalaval, a noted art critic in Bombay, and fellow Hungarian Charles Fabri, who lived in Lahore. Both acclaimed her as perhaps the greatest painter of the Century. Despite the build up, she found few byres. She traveled across India with her canvas. Nawab Salar Jung of Hydrabad kept her painting for a few days but returned then. She tried the Maharaja of Mysore but he preferred Ravi Varma’s calendar art to hers. Amrita was not as beautiful as she fancied herself and depicted in her self-portraits. She was fair, petite, with large Searching eyes and full lipped. She wore bright colored saris and large beaded jewellery.

Controversy pursued Amrita to her last and continues to this day. When she was taken ill, she put it down to food poisoning. The other and more reliable version is that an early suitor was Yusuf Ali Khan, son of the Nawab of Akbarpur. He made her pregnant and infected her with venereal disease. She turned to cusion husband Victor Eagan, to get rid of the unwanted fetus and


\[40\] http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_Shergil

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disease. Victor botched up the abortion. After her death, her mother accused Victor of having murdered her. After Amrita died England declared war on Hungary and Victor was put in jail as an enemy. Amrita Sher-Gil’s career, tragically brief, remains a landmark in history of the art of painting.42

Her painting techniques were forthrightly western; yet, she was consumed with the intense longing of an expatriate to return to an imagined India. She convinced herself that at the touch of the sea-change, not only in the subject and the spirit, but, also in its technical expression, becoming “more fundamentally Indian”. She proclaimed her artistic mission thenceforth “to interpret the life of Indians and particularly the poor Indians pictorially, to paint those silent images of infinite submission and patience, to depict their angular brown bodies, strangely beautiful in their ugliness”.43 From the purely technical viewpoint of laying paint on the canvas, her entire work may be divided into two categories. Her earlier work executed with thick pigment and with tremendous bravura of brushwork, and later paintings with their quiet applications of paint where the gestures of the brush are almost eliminated from the surface of the canvas.44

She went to live in Simla, the fashionable summer capital of the Raj in the Himalayan foothills, where her liberated lifestyle caused a stir. She began painting poor hill people who, to her romantic and naïve mind, embodied the spirit of India. She gave them large doleful eyes and vacant stares, exuding an expression of utter hopelessness. Her lanky and angular figures shrouded in homespun materials look fragile and melancholic, reflecting, an inner melancholy of her own.45 The first few paintings on which Amrita worked in her studio in Shimla show a sculpturesque technique, both in the folds of the dresses and the severity of planes.46 In colours she created a vision of her own and it is no exaggeration to say that she was one of the world’s greatest

colorists of her time. Though she always maintained that form and colours were her first considerations, it is apparent that she kept them in the forefront as the only way to discipline her emotional compliances and prevent that degeneration which unrestrained emotion can bring out.\textsuperscript{47}

Her areas of colours became wider, more expressive. And the sum total of her composition always in higher colours, revealed the mastery of her singular style, greater daring, and the intelligent harmony of her method.\textsuperscript{48} It is clear that few contemporary Indian have handled colours with quite the passionate joy, which Amrita Sher-Gil brought to it. And yet all these gay and bright colours are used to communicate the essential melancholy of this land and her inhabitants. In-group of three Girls and Child Wife the colours are even brighter and resultant sadness more poignant.\textsuperscript{49} From \textit{Ajanta} to the Basholi works to Mahabalipuram to Tagore's paintings, Amrita was hungry to see.\textsuperscript{50}

As early as 1930, when she saw Rabindranath Nath Tagore Paris exhibition, she had fully accepted his novel distortions of line and colours—"I like his drawing well than his poetry even, she exclaimed. The neo- Bengal school, on the other hand, filled her with aggressive storm.\textsuperscript{51} In 1936 she made pilgrimages to the shrines of Indian art. She went first to see the wall paintings of \textit{Ajanta} and the near by temple of \textit{Ellora}, hewn out of rock.\textsuperscript{52} Painting of this period show how well she under stands mannerist in alienations in these two divergent traditions. It is by testing her European sensibility against her Indian experience, and splendid examples of Indian painting, that she has arrived as a modern Indian.\textsuperscript{53} The freshness and originality of \textit{Ajanta} and \textit{Ellora}, the

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Marg}: J.J. Bhava for Marg, National Center for the Performing Arts at 24, Hami Mody Street, Mumbai, number.1. Vol. 6\textsuperscript{th}, 1952, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{48} R.Del Furlaso: \textit{Three Painters}, Dhol Memal Ram Chand, New Delhi, p.19.
\textsuperscript{49} http://www.sikhwiki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_SherGil
\textsuperscript{50} W.G. Archer: \textit{India and Modern Art}, Published by Ruskin House George Allen & Unwin Museum Street London, 1959, p.84.
\textsuperscript{51} Yashodra Dalmian: \textit{Amrita SherGil A Life}, Pengui Viking, 2006, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{52} http://www.sikhwiki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_SherGil
sensuous mural of the Mattancheri palace in Cochin and the strength of the Kushan sculpture, which she saw at Mathura, began to characterize her work. She became acquainted with Indian miniatures and fell in love with the intense Basholi School. She even attempted to include certain elements of Rajput painting in her later work.  

Influenced by Basholi painting and Mughal miniatures, colours are more intensity the hero of her work of this period than ever before. "I can not control my appetite for colour," she said to her friend, "and I wonder if I ever will." One of greater reflection, of more conscious painting, more observation and more stylization in the sense of nature." Elephant Promenade, The Swing, Horse and Groom, Ancient story Teller, Women Resting on a Charpoy. Haldi Grinders, and Camels show her experimenting with compositions more derivative from the Kangara and Mughal paintings than of any of her previous work, but there is a new brightness, a new precision and new simplicity here, without the atmosphere of a sad, elfin music, the hallmark of her tender sensibility. Amrita seems to have been concerned in her art with redressing the balance of certainty and restating basic truth about human nature, human folly, and human inadequacy, about the pain and pleasure of the creative act, and about suffering and the joy of being. She developed a unique style of painting, maintaining a mysterious harmony of idea, perception and visual image. She rejected verisimilitude and refused to reproduce a mirror image of actual scene and turned from an empirical to a conceptual method of representation. Her stylistic implications and colours harmonious introduced a new trend in Indian painting.  

Amrita Sher-Gil is important as a turning point in the story of modern Indian painting. Since her works appeared, painters have turned more to the use of oil in place of the wash and watercolour and there are also many later painters with a reminiscent style. Her work, while it was characteristically

54 http://www.Indianarticle.com/arteducation.amrita.shtml.P.1,2
55 http://www/sikhiwiki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_Shergil

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synthetic, has given a great impetus to modern art in India and the inspiration
to go forward in experimental directions.56

In September 1934 Amrita wrote: Modern art has led me to the
comprehension and appreciations of Indian painting and sculpture. It seems
paradoxical but I know for certain that had we not come away to Europe, I
should, perhaps, never have realized that a fresco from Ajanta or a small piece
of sculpture in the Musee Guimet is worth more than the whole Renaissance.57

The most puzzling aspect of Shergil's was is her dependence on the model.
Shergill, strangely, seems to know only two categories of painting-Studio and
plain air.58

Her paintings could now be compared to those of Rabindranath Tagore
or Jamini Roy, the two artists whose work she most valued. Although she
never met Tagore, she found his work compelling to the point of contradicting
Karl Khandalaval, whose opinions she normally set great store by. In a letter to
Karl from Simla in August 1937, she wrote, 'I have not seen much of his
(Tagore) Paintings, he is trying to ape the primitive.59 She far from flattering
about Tagore's poetry either, she described it as "piddling little poetry" and
wrote, "I have as profound a contempt for it as I have for the mannerism of the
mass." She conceded however that "the only thing that Tagore can do is paint."
On another occasion, reverting to the subject of Tagore, she said she didn't
think he was "trying to ape the primitives or is a primitive at all... It is the usual
case of 'his eminence being due to the surrounding flatness of the country."
Early when she had seen reproductions of Tagore's painting for the first time
and had called them "delightful," She had commented: "I don't think he is
trying to ape the primitiveness. As a matter of fact, I found his work rather

56 Marg: J.J. Bhava for Marg, National Center for the Performing Arts at 24, Hami Mody Street,
58 Gayatri Sinha: Expressions & Evocations Contemporary Women Artists of India: Marq
Publication, p.23.
59 Iqbal Singh: Amrita Shergill A Biography, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. Printed at kay kay
Printers, 150-D kamal a Nagar Delhi, India, p. 96.
sophisticated (though of course his technique is not good enough yet for successful self expression). He paints from the Kemal, which is what Bengal people have no notion of and which is the only way to paint soundly). During first half of the twentieth century of the number of painters who remained independent of Bengal school Rabindranath Tagore, and Amrita Sher-Gil were prominent and outstanding. These two leading artists were great pioneers of Indian modernism, which they backed up with their exceptionally richened creative imagination. Amrita Sher-Gil who integrated the pictorial idiom of the west and an Indian vision, and Rabindranath Tagore who demanded for paintings music's autonomy and independence from factuality and thus gave a charter for free variations on naturalism, abstraction and expressionism.

Amrita's painting exhibition in Hungary held on London, 7, September. The Hungarian foreign Minister, Mr. Janos Marlonyi, and India's Ambassador, Ms Lakshmi M.Puri, inaugurated the exhibition, which has aroused considerable interest in Budapest because of Sher-gill's Hungarian links has been set up under the cultural exchange programmed between India and Hungary exhibits loaned by the National Gallery of modern art, New Delhi. There are some another important paintings, which are kept at national Gallery of modern Art, New Delhi.

1) Girl in Field. 1932
2) Boat. 1934
3) Klara Szepessy, 1934
4) My Grandmother, 1938
5) Potato Peeler, 1938
6) Hungarian Markets Scene 1938

60 H. Geotz: *Art of the World, Indian Art through The Ages*, Publication Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Old Secretariat, Delhi, 1950, p.4.
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7) Nude. 1938
8) Hungarian Peasant 1939
9) The Merry Cemetery 1939
10) Winter, 1939.1Ind
   II Mr. Sundram, New Delhi
11) Hungarian Village Church. 1932
12) Two Girls, 1939 I
   III Mrs. Erno Gottesmann, born Viola Eagan, Budapest
13) Portrait of Victor Eagan. 1933
14) Self-Portrait, 1932

The Hungarian village Church, (1932) shows a two-steepled church. The surrounding is the greyish, stormy sky. From this luring background rises the view of the church with its white walls and red steeples. Amrita was inspired by the church of Zebegeny while doing this canvas.

Boat -1934:

Boat, 1934 The deep and unusually broad boat without hoars is rolling on the water reproducing the different tones of the green colours.

The Potato Peeler, (1938):

The Potato Peeler, 1938 depicts a women dressed in a black or dark blue striped garment sitting in front of a greenish background. She is peeling a piece of potato with knife.

The Hungarian Market Scene:

The Hungarian Market Scene .1938, in NGMA is her most well know canvas. A village Church in the background, a market place with little figures in black, the sky gray and the church Tower white. Rather Breughelesque.
Hungarian Peasant, 1939:

The painting represents with sun-dried face and hands. He is wearing a greenish shirt and his eyes are also greenish even the white of the eye.

Winter, 1939:

The painting shows a snow-covered Hungarian landscape, the monotonous whiteness of which is broken only by the leafless trees and pole supporting electric wires. These are the important painting, which is show Amrita’s great art. The recent sale of Amrita painting (village scene, 1938) she probably could not sell for a paltry Rs.250 during her lifetime was snapped up at OSIAN’S auction in Delhi for a whopping Rs.7 crore, the highest price ever paid for a painting in India testing to the growing value placed on her work. Village scene captures the grace and beauty she saw in their humdrums lives, the colours, form and composition she instilled into quotidian rural scene. The paintings also shows the different artistic traditions, both foreign and Indian, from which she drew inspirations the highest price ever paid for a painting in India testifies to growing value placed on her work. So we can say that her stylistic implications and colours harmoniously introduced a new trend in India painting. In the history of modern Indian art was the appearance in the mid thirties of Amrita Shergill with whose paintings contemporary painting in India look shape a contemporary style and expression that were, at the same line of the soul and in direct continuation of great national past. And today Amrita Sher-Gil is the best-known woman painter of India despite her death at a very young age she made name for herself on the international art scene and is considered a pioneer of modern Indian painting.

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63 Ibid , pp.21- 25. (Amrita Shergill and Hungarian)
64 India Today: 27 March, 2006, p. 83.
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Asit Kumar Haldar:

Asit Kumar Haldar, the renowned artist and pioneer of the Renaissance school of Indian painting. And potentially principle dealing with the important episodes in India's long History of several millenniums from the dawn of civilization in the Indus valley.66 Besides, being a poet artist he was also an art critic of high order. He has so many specialties as he was a philosopher also.67 Asit Kumar Haldar was born in Joransanko, a great nephew of Rabindranath Tagore. From an early age he showed an aptitude for drawing and joined the Government Art School in Calcutta when he was still a young boy in 1906 at the age of 14.68 As a distinguished pupil of the master, Abanindranath Tagore, he came into close contact with Ananda Coomaraswamy and E.V.Havell. His genius stood out even in the company of such outstanding artists as Nandalal Bose, Surendranath Ganguly and Kshitindaranath Majumdar and his talent flowed forth without any limitations. The vast range of his oeuvres reveals a mind that was keenly aware of both the oriental and occidental concepts of art.69

He was a sculptor and a craft man of consummate skill as the sculpture Haldar received his education from two famous artists of Bengal, Jadu Pal and Bakeswar Pal of Krishna Nagar in 1905 and Later received training from Leonard Jennings. The Indian society in London sponsored a visit to the Ajanta caves for the purpose of copying the fresco so there; Asit Kumar and copying a number of other students, under the guidance of Hungarian, went there twice. For the period 1911 to 1915, he was an art teacher at the Santiniketan vidyalaya. After spending a few years copying jogimara, and Bagh cave painting and teaching at the Government Art College, he returned to Santiniketan. During his Stay in Santiniketan he acted in most of the plays by

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67 http://www.visva-bharati.ac.in/Greatmaster/Contents/Ashithalder.htm
Rabindranath their were stayed. He designed sets and illustrated a limit edition of *Gitanjali*.

Asit Kumar Haldar was instrumental in helping Rabindranath Tagore in establishing *Kala Bhavan* in Santiniketan. He was the principal of *Kala Bhavan* between the years 1911 and 1923 and helped Tagore in promoting cultural activities. He introduced ritualistic Alpana designs as a decorative device in social and ceremonial occasions at Santiniketan. During this period he disseminated his own ideas about art and inspired several students like Mukul Chandra Day, Ramendra Nath Chakervarti, Direndra Krishna Dev Barman, Vinod Bihari Mukherjee and others.

In 1923, he went on a study tour through England, France and Germany. During his tour abroad in 1923 Haldar realised that the European method of rendering objects realistically suffered from considerable limitation. On his return, he became the principal of the Maharaja's school of Arts and crafts, Jaunpur, where he remanded for a year before moving to the Maharaja's School of Arts and craft in Lucknow, which he built up along with Birendra Sen and later, became its principal. Haldar has applied his brush in almost intruder fields of artistic creation, but his mastery of technique has enabled him to sub clue the intractable material to his own artistic purpose. Rabindranath Tagore has said of Haldar in a letter to him "you are not merely a painter but also a poet. Thus your brush pours on both the 'rasas' and when the poet desires a painting he has to full back on you."

The talent of Asit Kumar Haldar inclines towards the romantic, but his technical competence in unequal to his sensibility. While his pictures are informed by a rhythmical movement and subtlety of line, they are only limitedly significant as architectural forms. His basic Impulsion, the heritage of

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70 http://www.visva-bharti.ac.in/GreatMaster/contents/ashithalder.html
71 http://banglapedia.search.com.bd/hlt003.html
72 http://www.contemporaryindianart.com/asitkumarhalder.html
74 Ibid p.1. *Culture (At A Glance, Text and Thirty Illustrations)*

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classical Indian painting, induced an early stream of mythological and idyllic pieces, but their pictorial import was only secondary to their emotional appeal. His early output was heavily accented in the manner of the Bengal school, with allegorical content: a picture of a forlorn mendicant, in the darkening gloom of a setting sun, is labelled “His Heritage”, while in the “Old and the New” and in the “Cycle of spring”, withered old and budding childhood are contrasted with too obvious effects; a desolate mother, condemned to an inglorious life draws to her bosom a hapless infant in “Fallen on Evil Days” and a sinuous woman, half-obscured by an enveloping cloud, personifies “Nature Mysterious”. These efforts at transparent or laboured symbolism are of little consequence aesthetically; as organisation of significant forms they are jejune. Nor are his mythological pieces inspired by exalted formal or emotive conceptions; his “Hara Parvati” is a singularly drab performance, marred by in different drawing, and his “Kacha and Devayani”, provoking an immediate comparison with Abanindranath Tagore’s famous fresco on the same theme, is definitely the poorer picture. As an example of his linear and schematic qualities, his early “Baul” in symptomatic of his aspiring imagination, which falls short of adequate pictorial expression.

He was a fine writer and wrote excellent poetry a focally rare in a painter and which contributed greatly to the richness and imagination of his pictorial representation of the “Rubbayat” of Omar Khayyam. His great uncle, the poet Rabindranath was one of the first to descend poetic genius of his nephew and complimented him again and again on the beauty of his verses. In some of his earliest and best works mostly big pencils are the collection of Mr. Debendranath Tagore of Calcutta. In early style of his career he made so many copies of the paintings at Ajanta, Bagh and Jogimara using tempa oil or watercolours, which ever suited to the as his medium. Requirement. In process

75 D.R. Rama Chandra Rao: Modern Indian Painting, Rachana Bhimarena Gardens Modern Indian, 1953, p. 17.
76 Roopa Lekha: J. of All India Fine Arts and Craft Society, Raj Marg, Vol.xxxiv, 1&2, 28 March, 1972, New Delhi, p.60.
he also discovered a special technique lacquered painting on wood also known as lacsit.\(^7\) Ajanta copied with the artist’s own lyrical nature and romantic feeling. “The Flame of Music” was one of his creative masterpieces. He has immortalized of the samples, their folk dance and their simple beauty in his many several of “Rasleela” and Rairaja’ which aghai show the lyrical sweetness of his composition. Kirshna and his compositions are seen here engaged in entertaining Radha who is seated on a Charpai, with a half glowing joy, attended by her maids. The dancing figure of Krishna with his flute and his drum beating companions are drawn with power and vitality, there is why then and movement in every one of their steps the alter simplicity of this painting is compelling. Of equal merit and of the same techniques and style are his other companion pictures “Keenala”, “The blind son of Asoka” and “Rama Guha” both sub line in their simplicity of pictorial story telling. The tragedy of the one is as much touching as the devotion of the other. His “Moon and Lotus” is after the Japanese style, and in this kind of art he was quite at home. His sensitive studies of Umar Khayyam in delicately tented colours drawing are as good as those of Tagore’s and certainly superior to most of the various one seen in European art.\(^7\) Haldar also made thirty paintings on the Buddha’s life and thirty paintings on episodes from in his paintings the physical attribute of his objects were treated in accordance to the subject matter. Haldar’s Yashoda and Kirshna was not merely a religious painting. It is a representation of the infinity as represented by Krishna and its interaction with the finite world as represented by Yashoda. Indian History conveying values and ideas and not mere events.\(^7\) His books on art, translation of Sanskrit classes, his poems songs and essays bear evidence of his versatility. He was the first Indian to be elected Fellow of the Royal Society of arts, London. In his book Ravitirth he has acknowledge his debt to Rabindranath Tagore and Santiniketan in helping to establish him as an artist. During his stay in Santiniketan he also

\(^7\) G. Venkata Chalam: Contemporary Indian Painter’s Nalanda Publication Bombay 1948, pp.66-67.  
\(^7\) http://banglapidia.search.com.bd/hltp003.html
acted in most of the plays by Rabindranath that were staged. So his art is not
an abstruse expression of inarticulate pattern, it is a value-laden narrative;
speaking its inner meaning to the observer. In this respect, Haldar's art is like a
seer's or a poet's vision, which enriches the soul, inspires the mind and
ennobles the ignoble. Rabindranath Tagore often found inspiration from the
themes of Haldar's sensitive brush drawings of lyrical scenes from village life,
while composing his immortal songs. Through the early part of his career he
was associated with the Indian Society of originate art the held his first solo
show then exhibited with them in other Indian cities and at the festival of
empire at the crystal place (1911), In Indian art. 1914, the American Federation
of Art. Asit Kumar Haldar died in Lucknow on 13 February 1964. His death
brings to close a glorious nostalgic chapter of empty of Indian art.

80 http://www.visva-bharti.ac.in/GreatMaster.contents/Ashithalder.html.
81 http://www.sanat.in/artist/techer.php
82 http://www.contemporaryindianart.com/asitkumarHalder.html