



A Review of Sustaining the art of Rogan printing

KEYWORDS

Rogan, kutch

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ABSTRACT *The document is related to the study of Rogan art, a rare craft that is not well known even in India. Because of its rare qualities, it's practiced by only one family in India and they reside in Nirona village in Gujarat. Rogan art is well known for its beautiful motifs including floral, plants, animals and birds, humans and abstract designs prepared with the use of a thick bright paste to paint on plain cloth. The art was done on products like cradle cloth, Ghaghara, odhana, prayer mats and borders.*

To sustain the ancient art of over three hundred years old an attempt has been made to produce similar designs and effect using three dimensional fabric colours. Thereby increasing the acceptability, marketability and reducing the cost of the product.

INTRODUCTION: - Rogan printing is an art of cloth printing practiced in the Kutch District of Gujarat. Rogan printing involves using a thick bright paste to paint on plain cloth. It is the oldest form of direct style of hand painting. It is the application of thick resin like paste on the surface of a plain cloth using a stick, a rod or a metal block. Yellow, blue and red are the most frequently used colours.

Geometric and floral designs are most common. Stylish results can be achieved using the most ordinary cloth. Rogan-printed cloth is now used for saris, pillow covers, wall-hangings and curtains, among other uses like file folders, hand bags. Table mats and runners as well as decorative pieces.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Rogan art of painting is an ancient art over three hundred years old. The traditional Rogan flower motifs and designs speak of a Persian influence and the word Rogan itself means oil-based in Persian. Today, Nirona in Kutch is the only place where this work is created. When castor oil is heated over fire for more than twelve hours and cast into cold water, it produces a thick residue called rogan, which is mixed with natural colours obtained from the earth. With a six-inch wooden stick or pen, the craftsman then draws out from this a fine thread which is painted to the cloth. Rogan painting is delicately and precisely painted from one's own creative imagination and is done with total concentration sitting on the floor without using a table-frame or any outline.

Most of the other artisans have lost their art as it was not passed on during partition or lost from generation to generation. Rogan art is currently the bread earner for a family of Khatri. It is interesting that the Khatri community of traditional dyers and printers are almost oral historians as they were commissioned to make fabrics for various communities for different occasions.

Rogan art is currently the bread earner for a family of Khatri. Gafoorbhai Khatri is the head of this family and he has kept the art alive by ensuring his entire family learns and practices his life's work. He is a National award winner as master Craftsman in 1997 and He is currently in the process of opening a school that teaches Rogan art to children from different families. He has not marketed his creativity through any distribution channels.

In Gujarat, Nirona, Khavada and Chaubari were the hubs of Rogan art and bustling with its practitioners till a few years ago but not anymore. The rich tradition of Rogan painting began some centuries ago among the Khatri, a Muslim community who trace their origin to Sindh. They are Muslims who belong to Ghela caste. The other Khatri craftsmen gave up their ancestral craft after it stopped yielding good returns and switched over to other jobs but not this particular family.

The eight male members — all of whom have State and National awards to their credit — in the joint Khatri family are experts of their craft and produce eclectic items like wall-hangings, pillow covers, table cloths bearing imagery which combines influences of Persian miniatures and local folk art, mainly for the international market. They are the Sixth and Seventh generations in the family to continue to practice this craft. As reported by the artisans, Rogan work gets them their primary income. There is no other source of income for the family.

A lot of tourists who visit the village also pick up stuff from them. The exposure through tourism gradually led to an increase in demand for Rogan. And the family now even runs a unit employing outsiders, with a hope to make their products available in the market.

"The products are not easily available and those who want to buy it have to come to the family in Nirona,"

Recently the family, with the support of an organisation, has trained 60 women out of which some are employed with the Khatri and a few have been absorbed elsewhere."

Marking a departure from the age-old tradition, the women have entered what was the reserve of the men folk. They are from various castes and faiths.

Rogan paintings are symmetrical so the artist draws only half of the design and then folds the cloth to create a mirror image. The Persian roots of this art form can be clearly seen in its flower and minaret type motifs.

Their most famous design is the tree of life which is apparently a favourite of the current chief Minister, Narendra Modi!

With respect to health, Rogan artisans reports that they generally get the breathing problem and neck pain while making Rogan.

Method of preparing dye - Rogan printing involves using a thick bright paste to paint on plain cloth. The paste is prepared by boiling the oil of safflower, castor or linseed and pouring it into water. This paste is mixed with chalk, coloured pigment and a binding agent to form a thick dye. The painting on the cloth is done using a stick, a rod or a metal block. Yellow, blue and red are the most frequently used colours.

Motifs and Designs –There was a vast range of motifs used in Rogan printing. The designs ranged from Simple geometrical motifs to floral motifs like marigold flower, seed pod, mango, flowers with leaves ,flower with two or more petals and floral borders, plants like tree of life, animals like elephant, howdah and rider, birds like parrot and peacock, garud or angel human figures like two women wearing Ghaghara and odhani , women churning curd using churner and abstract designs drawn from the nature and religious associations.

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