

Heritage of Roghan painting-Its motifs and design



Home science

KEYWORDS: Nirona, Roghan, Motif, Design

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ABSTRACT

This article is documentation about the existing motifs and designs used in Roghan painted articles in Nirona village in Kutch, Gujarat. The designs created through Roghan painting has their own uniqueness and was ranged from simple geometrical motifs including floral, plants, animals, and birds, human and abstract motifs. These motifs are drawn from the natural world and religious association. Presently, tree of life motif has been extensively used in Roghan painted articles. Tree of life is a blooming floral design with bouquet in panel and shapes of mihrab. Roghan painting are well known for their beauty, in which each single motif signifies an important aspect of life. Use of Roghan paste for producing designs on fabrics is an ancient tradition not known to many people.

INTRODUCTION

Roghan painting is the oldest form of direct style of printing known. It is the application of a thick pigment on the surface of the cloth using an iron stylus. It is considered as a standard style of printing from ancient times.

Fabric decoration is done by using oil that is coloured and made workable for hand painting. Various dyes (pigment colour) are used to colour roghan with the prominent colours.

A short 6 inch wooden stick (stylus) is used in roghan gel painting. The craftsperson then draws out fine threads from the prepared gel, which is finally painted on the cloth to form a design with stylus. The roghan thread is then dabbed onto the fabric along with a moistened fingertip, so that it sinks into the fabric and adheres to it. The main objective of the study is to analyze various motifs and designs adopted in the art of Roghan painting on fabric

METHODOLOGY

This study was done in Nirona village where the art of roghan painting somewhat remains and is therefore, identified as the area of study. In order to fulfill the objectives of gathering information related to roghan painting on fabric, purposive sampling technique was used.

The field survey approach is found to be the most appropriate method for the purpose of an in depth study. Interview and direct investigation technique were used to record all information from the craftsmen concerned. The interview technique was selected due to the fact that Nirona has a low literacy level (Census of Nirona Village). Observations were recorded by taking photographs.

To study the historic background of roghan painting and its evolution, various literatures were reviewed and museums were exhibited.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Background information of the artisans:

This craft was practiced by 4-5 families in their village about 40 years ago.

Presently there is only one family of six members at Nirona who are practicing Roghan art.

Abdul gafoor was given the National Award as Master Craftsman for Rogan in 1997 by the Government of India.

They are the sixth and seventh generations in the family continue to practice this craft successfully.

They are Muslims who belong to Ghela caste.

As reported by the artisan, Rogan work gets them their primary income. There is no other source of income for the family.

With respect to health, roghan artisans reported that they generally get breathing problem and neck pain while making roghan

Motifs and Design

It was observed that there were a vast range of motifs used in Roghan painting. The designs ranged from simple geometrical motifs to a great variety which included floral, plants, animals, birds, human and abstract motifs, drawn from the natural world and religious association. (Table 1 about here)

The traditional floral motifs included small flowers like chauphulla, tik, ghonta (mari gold flower and keyri(mango)). Small buties like babda, triphulla buti with three flowers, tripakhi buti (buti with three leaves) and chaupakhi buti (buti with four leaves and kharak (date), Putri Triphulla buti, keyri and ambi.

Also seen in the articles were composite motifs like golgul concentric circle incorporating vel and flowers in their circular rings. A variation of gul was the suraj (sun) with rays.

Simple geometric forms most commonly occurring were morepagla – a triple spoked motif variously described as peacocks foot, shiva's trident or a young shoot, basur (chevron), aaked (small parallel lines), sungar (chain stitch like), kungri and kungra (crenellated border) and jharmar.

The floral borders include panfarei, single farei (seed pod and flower), kangsi or phullivel (comb like pattern and phulvels), popat gulvel (with parrots and flowers), dana-vel.

Motifs drawn from animal kingdom are popat (parrot) occurring in stylized forms haathi (elephant) – a royal animal occurring with or without ambadi (howdah and rider) and a garud or angel.

Figurative motifs are mahiyarin – two women wearing ghaghara and chunaris, churning curd using ravirya (churner).

Tree of life, a typical bye product of oriental craftsmen catering to cultivated western taste. Tree of life is evidently of indo Persian origin evolved under the impact of muslim architecture. The real tree of life in its original form is made by blooming floral designs and bouquets in panels with arches and shapes of mihrab, with symmetrical trees or jali designs, bordered with picturesque calligraphy and inlay work (Quadri .N, 2009).

Products made

Products made by the ancestors of Roghan artisans were cradle cloths, Ghaghara, Odhana and wall pieces. These were sold within the community and to the traders. Earlier, it was customary among few communities, for the bride to wear Ghaghara and dupatta decorated with roghan painting. But now days, this trend has been changed and people prefer wearing machine printed cloth.

Cradle cloth

A cradle cloth locally referred as ghodiyun is slung upon a frame of traditional type of cradle (a cross bar which is supported by four poles) like hammock. It is considered comfortable and hygienic in the Indian climate. Its depth also provides some protection from hazards such as insects. It is a rectangular cloth measuring about 93cms X 64cms. All the cradle cloths were characterized by a composite border i.e. 3-4 rows of different border were mostly jharmar facing towards the field. The central motif was golgul, a composite circular motif with one of the border always repeated in its concentric rings of gul. Rest of the body was filled with jali (net) of different types like square jali, laheria jali, jali made by diagonal lines. The jali may be further filled with floral motifs.

It was interesting to note that all the cradle cloths were made of fine cotton material with a dark blue background – a colour not only used by Muslim community but which is associated with Lord Krishna by the Hindus.

Odhani

Odhani or head veil is a rectangular piece of cloth measuring 250cms X100cms. It's generally made up of two widths of cloth sewn together, lengthwise, and is therefore often referred as Dupatta (literally two widths of the fabric). All the odhanis were printed on coarse thick hand-spun cotton cloth. The entire odhani was surrounded by a narrow strip of border. The centre of the odhani was embellished with the composite suraj. Each end had ambo or tree of life in the middle. The rest of the field was filled with floral buties, the keyri, chauphulla, stylized peacocks, mahiyari, hathi and butis.

Ghaghara

The ghaghara was 50-70 year old and was of thick maroon khaddar. The ghaghara had a broad and intricate border at the bottom hem and as the design moved upward the motifs became smaller and the placement sparse. It had floral and geometric designs while the other had figurative motifs like mor, mahiyari along with floral motifs.

Square pieces

These are commonly referred to as the table cloths now. However, the use could be similar to that of square pieces generally seen in Gujarat like chakla or pieces folded up as bujkee (material used for wrapping meals etc. It thus,

had a string attached at one corner to secure it). They were characterized by a continuous composite border all around the field. These borders were very much similar to ones in cradle cloths. The central motifs were a large gul or suraj and the corners had buta in conical form. The ground was either left blank or filled with small flowers like kharek, chauphulla or buties.

There was one square silk piece at the kutch museum. It was pink in colour and said to be more than hundred years old. It had motifs very different from the rest of the square pieces, though its placement was similar with other square pieces. Each details seems to have been done singly with very fine lines. Big blotches of colour and figurative motifs like garud and popat were seen only in this piece.

Prayer mat (200yrs. Old)

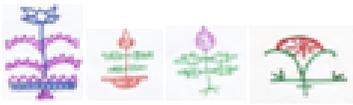
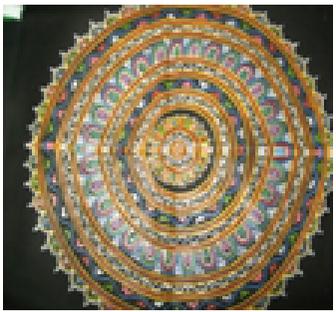
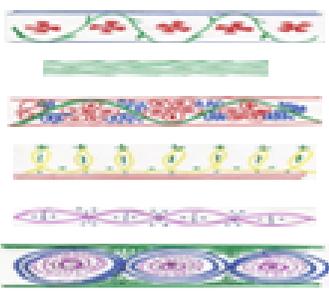
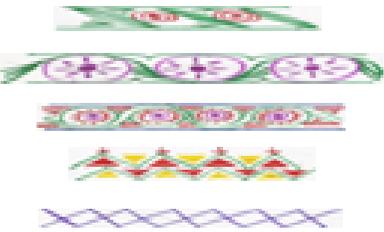
Prayer mats or Mussalla was used by Muslims at set times of the day for prostrations in prayer. Only one specimen was seen in the kutch museum. Its antiquity could be more than 200 years. It showed a strong Persian influence in its designs and was made on fine and dark blue cotton. It has worked in single technique with no folding at all. The designs were finely and intricately executed. The stylized tree in mehrab shape dominates the design. The mehrab, which always appears on a prayer mat represent the finely carved niche in the mosque, which the worshipper faces as he looks towards the mecca. The center portion was surrounded by broad border at four sides. The two cross are similar whereas the bottom end had a broader border than the upper end. These borders have only floral and geometric motifs

Border strips (Kutch museum)

Four border strips were studied in Kutch museum. These borders measured 6-7 yards in length and were five inches wide. A narrow strip of composite border was painted on blue or red thick cotton. These borders might have been when the craftsmen did not want to invest in large articles like ghaghara etc.

CONCLUSION

It was seen that there was a vast range of motifs used in these articles. The designs ranged from simple geometrical motifs to a great variety which included floral, plants, animals, birds, human and abstract motifs, drawn from the natural world and religious association. The traditional floral motifs seen included small flowers like chauphulla, tik, ghonta (mari gold flower) and keyri(mango). The floral borders include panfarei, single farei (seed pod and flower), kangsi or phullivel (comb like pattern and phulvels), popat gulvel (with parrots and flowers) Tree of life, a typical bye product of oriental craftsmen catering to cultivated western taste. Tree of life is evidently of indo Persian origin evolved under the impact of muslim architecture. The real tree of life in its original form is made by blooming floral designs and bouquets in panels with arches and shapes of mihrab, with symmetrical trees or jali designs, bordered with picturesque calligraphy and inlay work. Motifs drawn from animal kingdom are popat (parrot) occurring in stylized forms, haathi (elephant) – a royal animal occurring with or without ambadi (howdah and rider), other figurative motif are mahiyarin – two women wearing ghaghara and chunaris, churning curd using ravirya (churner) and a garud or angel.

 <p style="text-align: center;">Chauphulla</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Tik</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">Ghonta (Marie gold)</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Keyri (ambi)</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">Triphulla (three flowers)</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Chaupankhi (four petal flower)</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">Bavur Kungra Jharmar</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Garuda Mor Hathi Mahiyarin</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div data-bbox="343 897 679 1209">  <p style="text-align: center;">Gulgul</p> </div> <div data-bbox="692 907 1063 1209">  <p style="text-align: center;">Suraj</p> </div> </div>	
	 <p style="text-align: center;">Border designs</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Table 1- Motifs and design used in roghan painting</p>	

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