

Exploration of Female as a Subject and as an Artist: A Historical Overview

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ABSTRACT

Due to the fact that without women, humanity's social infrastructure cannot function properly, women have always been an integral aspect of society and culture. Mothers, who are female, are responsible for bringing life into the world. The fundamental functions of women in societal structures have been linked to their relationship with men as a mother, sister, wife, and beloved. Instead of this, there are alternative auxiliary roles—such as slaves, mistresses, and servants, among others—that do not include blood ties. Additionally, religious beliefs play a significant role in the artworks, and the female deities have valuable significance in society. The mystical association of Goddesses has been appropriated by the artists from religious elements, yet these are far from true experiences. The effects of this vital and necessary existence of women can frequently be thought about through other human creativity. Humans' surroundings and possessions have a big impact on their creativity, therefore this kind of mixture frequently produces creativity, whether it takes the form of reality or fiction.

Keywords:

INTRODUCTION

Discussion

The irony of gender also influences this very imagination or way of thinking. Due to the individual perception of the portrayal, which varies in several aspects, gender plays a significant role in identifying the differences between such creative works. Painting is based on the individual's interest; for example, religious iconography is frequently created for ceremonial depiction, and the style of representation is based on the individual's taste or the taste of the patron or viewer. In this perspective, the beauty and allure of women can be used to observe the art and poetry of ancient India. These things continue to serve as a source of great inspiration for the author.

The other facets of womanhood are also incorporated into the portrayal, but the beauty and sensual grace of the feminine are the most frequently used facets. Since the beginning of time, the representation of women has been one of the most important aspects of painting. Almost all types of stories frequently feature the bodies of women. Since the beginning of time, female forms have been

linked to physical attractiveness and sexuality. If we look into the artistic representations of any era, the first thing we notice is the uniform body and lovely face. After this standardized body came the other associations. On the other hand, when men are portrayed as having a physique, their dominance and power come before anything physical.

The biggest issue in painting now is the contrast between how men and women are portrayed—men with their strength and power, and women with their physical beauty. This distinction effectively encapsulates the social construction of gender, according to which a woman must be attractive and beautiful while a man must be strong and superior to a woman. Since the beginning of time, everyone has ingrained this distinction everywhere, and it has progressively been more apparent in artistic representations. Before the advent of female artists, women were mostly depicted in paintings for their beauty and sexuality. They were portrayed as servers of man's desires and as means for the creation of human-made art. The identical subject that was previously created by male painters had a drastic change in representation when female artists took control of it. We cannot claim that objectification has almost completely disappeared. Despite the development of contemporary trends, the objectivity may still be seen in the work of some masculine artists. The groundbreaking essay "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists" by Linda Nochlin highlighted this particular distinction in the world of painting (1971). This essay succeeded in telling a story about gender and sexuality in relation to artworks. Vidya Dehejia was the first to describe the politics of gender in the context of Indian paintings, and other art critics have since followed (Dehejia 1997). If we calculate the contribution of Indian female artists outside of art literature, we can observe that there has been a noticeable shift when Amrita Sher-Gil arrived since she embodied a strong subjective approach to the representation of women (Kapur 2000). This makes it obvious that without the work of female artists, we would never be able to comprehend the concepts of subjective and objective approaches to the representation of the female form. The very difference that Sher-Gil has produced by reinterpreting popular iconography (Lutzker 2002). Female painters that portray women on their works of art have a remarkable talent for capturing authentic female encounters rather than manufactured ones. Returning to the study of contemporary Indian art, we may see Raja Ravi Varma's creations. In his paintings, sensual and attractive women are making eye contact with their observers and tempting them. They act more like they are posing for the audience, as if they have been invited to provide that aesthetic pleasure. If we examine the work of well-known contemporary male artists, it can be said that they primarily represented the moral and physical standards of the social construction of patriarchy through the bodies of women. Sometimes, women's bodies have been shown to further political and religious causes; for example, Bharat Mata or Devi iconography has been used to stir up people's emotions. All of these depictions, in which the female body is utilised as the target of other people's desire, especially male desire, are particularly prevalent in the works of male artists.

Through the works of Ravi Varma, who infused his themes with Indian mythology and classical improvement in oil technique, the Westernization of art during the Colonial era was first recognised in paintings. Following this, the so-called Bengal School, under the patronage of Abanindranath Tagore, defeated patriotic semiotics by reconfiguring the indigenous subject (1871-1951). The Bengal School Renaissance painters in India also used art to express their nationalism. The Indian miniature style served as the foundation for the Bengal School, as it has always been a great source of inspiration for contemporary artists in India.

Although she (Bharat Mata or Devi) is depicted as a goddess in the painting, what people are most drawn to be her beauty and perfectly proportioned physique. In addition to this depiction of the Goddess, the usual forms have also been offered to the audience while dressed with sensuality and erotic appeal. This specific manifestation of female sexuality has persisted up to the present. Many female artists have spoken out against the preconception of man-made art that is still prevalent today. They do not adhere to the same standards of sexuality and beauty that have existed since antiquity. Two different types of fundamental methods may be seen in the work of female painters. One is the subversion, antagonism, mockery, or rejection of those male-made identities on the painted surface. Another is to celebrate womanhood by showing the feminine figure in art. In the second strategy, they aim to depict women's bodies solely from the perspective of women. This covers a wide range of topics, such as personal interactions, realistic glimpses into women's lives, their drive to rise to power or achieve equality, as well as some unresolved concerns in their lives, etc. Through their paintings, these artists have problematized how the two sexes represent the female body in such binaries. It is crucial to compare and thoroughly examine the work of both genders because this intricacy is growing every day. We can use both the artists' subjective and objective perspectives as a framework for our observation (male and female). The pioneering artist who built the ancient Indian miniature milieu in Indigenous fashion was Amrita Sher-Gil. She was a great female artist who contributed to the formation of feministic or women's-oriented art through the fellowship of feminine encounters. Indian artist Gogi Saroj Pal is a feminist who portrays her female images in a feminist manner (Lutzkar 1997). Since the period following independence, she has been working on the female project. Female artists like Sher-Gil and many of her followers decided to subvert that politicized imagery when the male painters were interested in portraying women as objects to be projected or praising macho above womanhood. In the Western art world, feminist art or the work of female artists has been taken into consideration. In this way, it can be seen that a group of art critics and art historians first questioned the politics of gender in the West before doing the same thing in the East. Griselda Pollock says that the Museum of Contemporary Art's exhibits of cubism and abstract art are the best places to view the development of modern art.

Due to patriarchal hegemonies throughout the history of the art world, the contributions of female artists had been completely disregarded and prohibited. Because women had no right to rule, men in particular shaped the universe of Western modern history. She also brought up a number of concerns for addressing the paradoxes that underlie such contemporary political confrontations. The foundation of modernity has been firmly established in the semiotics of the most important myths about a brand-new Paris for entertainment, leisure, pleasure, spectacle, and money. Additionally, the works of Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot have been contrasted with paintings like "Olympia" and "A Bar at the Folies-Bergère" to define the gap of feminine exposure between the two artists' works (Pollock 2003).

Like many female artists, some people whom claim to work on issues, do not accept that they are feminists. Like Pal, she claims that she paints in order to express the problems that disturb her and attempt to find solutions for them on canvas. She abruptly said, "I am not a feminist, but a socially conscious person; even I do not follow any ism," when the topic of feminism was asked. I'm only expressing my opposition to these unfair features that are engrained in society (Pal 2015). She created a woman once more in a variety of forms for her next television series, Altar for Nirbhaya, and when questioned about it, said that: "The meaning of art is statement," she said, adding that she only paints

subjects that are important to her as a woman. "Our body is our property, not someone else's" (Pal 2015).

Conclusion

Artists' attitudes about the portrayal of women are significantly influenced by gender; whether on purpose or accidentally, they are compelled to act in accordance with social conceptions' hierarchies. Because women are being victimised (directly or indirectly) by the politicised representation of gender, female artists are challenging the masculine gaze and erotic posture through their works. The gender gap has diminished from historical depictions, but it has taken on new forms as modernity has progressed.

Through their work, female artists are reexamining or opposing the sexualized images of women by creating reversal identities as female protagonists. They are also reshaping their beliefs and viewpoints to show women as strong, independent individuals. Strong feminist elements may be found in the works of female artists since this movement enabled them to comprehend the gender politics that were still in place and to defend the vulnerable female body in the arts. Because both are products of the social construction of gender politics, male and female painters have very different approaches to depicting female characters.

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