

Folk and Minor Art in India
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Lecture – 19
Commonality and Congruity in the Diverse Content of Art

We are beginning our 4th Module and this is our first Lecture for the forth module On Commonality and Congruity in the Diverse Content of Art. To understand that we must also focus on the basic ethos of a particular place that is common. Due to it is ancient and stable culture in spite of different disturbances different invasion politically and culturally that to pleasant the country. But when we talk about the identity that is Indian it is very difficult to deceive for that particular concept because of the fact that it is very eclectic in nature, it has gone through several changes by different influences time in again and that give it in unique feature. And that is evident in most of the streams that is existing now in the country.

But most interestingly when we go back to the indigenous culture like folk and minor art of India; we know the that has gone through no patronages as such or even if they had been some supports that is come from the common people they were not commissioned by the royal court ever. It was connected to the temple and it was made by the people, for the people.

And let us focus on that and see how because of all those reasons there are different art styles that is come in to the scene because of different influences from different sides. There are also certain characteristic that is come from west to east it has gone from east to south and it traveled all over within the country. But after the entire shuffling we could feel that the vernacular art or the regional art of this country could maintain their regional identities very strongly with utter awareness.

In this lecture we are going to see a mixed bag of images from India which is different in their physical character that gives us different visual identity, but the experience is towards the commonality that is existing there. And slowly at the end of this module will move to another topic, there will see how protective those forms are that of the cultural forms that is that belongs to one place which is just about 100 kilometers away from another place and how protective those people are in spite of all sought of cross cultural

interactions that took place and that is nurtured it is (Refer Time: 03:35) from time to time.

So, let us realize all those things with more examples and when we look at them we will also try to notice how different they are in their stylistic profile. For example, the angularities, the organic formation, the geometric formation and the other elementary aspects for example; the colors scheme, the use of line, the use of texture with decorations, the space divisions, two dimensionality, three dimensionality, creating elusion in space and other things that should be our focus and that will enrich our way of looking at things from a critical perspective.

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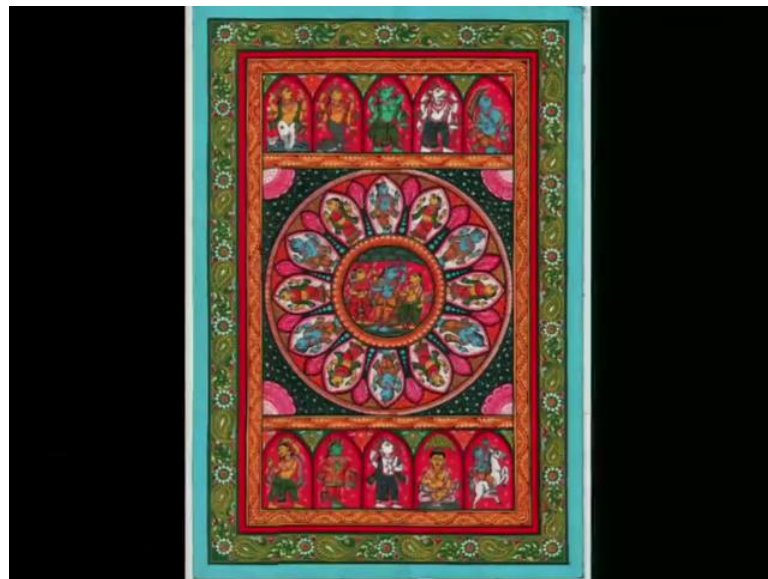


So, seeing the picture is an image from Raghurajpur Odessa and in this traditional Patachitra we can see the expertise of the people who have made them. What is seen in the picture is a space division which is very typical of this place to give it a distinct stylist identity and a it is also important to see how the geometric formations of simple central composition with a square a rectangle and finally a circle right at the center is giving a sense of reputation throughout. The thing is very clear that it is a figure who is in the center with a blue bordered God who is repeated in the flower petals that are arranged in a repeated order and it also has a circular movement though apparently they are started. And it tells about different stories which are connected to each other through

different frames. And all the corners and the extra parts which are remaining like nothing is told there, there filled up with some decoration or the other.

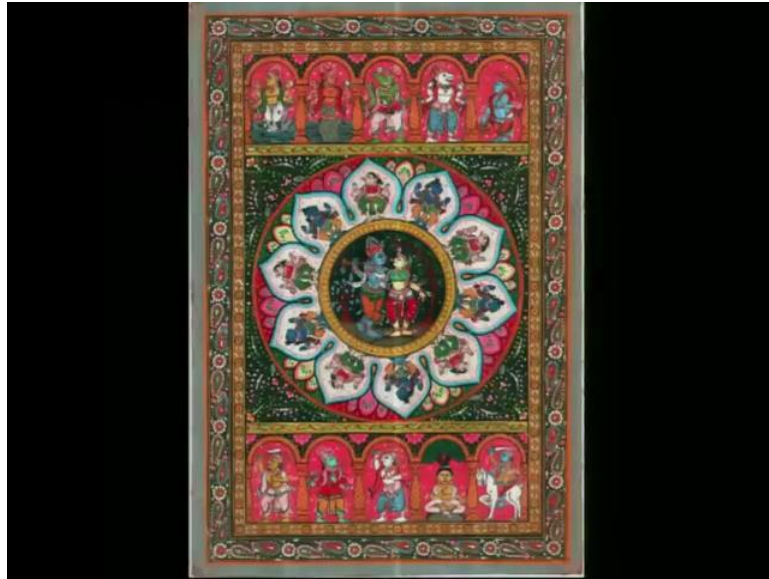
For example we have the parrots in green which is a contrast color that is not seen anywhere else, but it is a distinct parrot green and the parrots are in that color but more than their naturalistic imagery they emphasized on a decorated qualities of each, and every images that they executed here and that gives it a very rich characteristic where not a single part is kept empty and it also makes the composition more to dimensional and decorated. So, there is no illusion of space that is taking place is just a trivial overlapping that is taking place to make a foreground and background ready prominent. And there is hardly any suggestion of a middle ground which is just below the feat of the characters here. And it is filled up with interesting imageries and illustrations from different myths. We see some characters which are highly animated and they are into action throughout. We will see some similar art works from the same tradition to get familiar with this art style.

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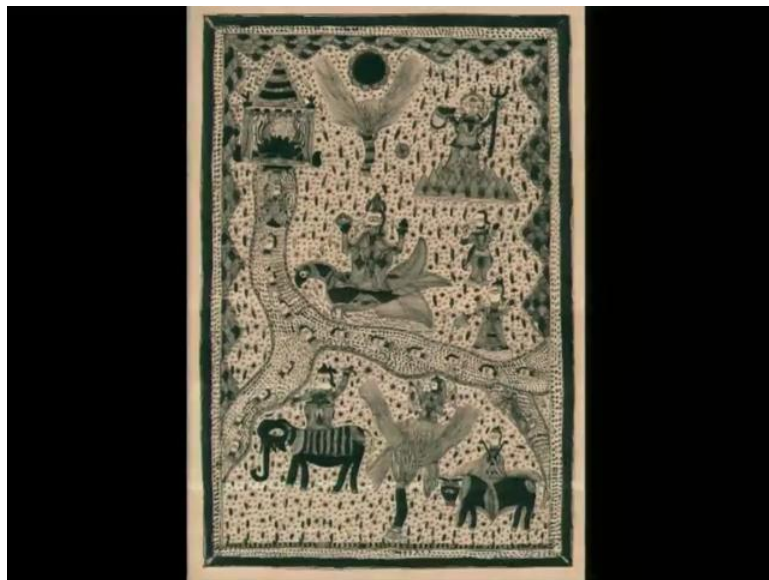
So, a similar art work from the same genre having slight difference in the image formation, but it has the similar character. It follows the same principle.

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A slight variation in the formation with basic principle maintained that gives it a strong identity that it belongs to Odessa.

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Another example from a different region that is from Bihar, it is a Madhubani painting done by a specialized community. The art work does not have much of a feeling it is all linear, it is full of linear texture, very spontaneous. Both the art works have some Western Indian influence it though they belong to the Eastern part and slightly Northern part of the country because of cultural exchanges. But the space division here is

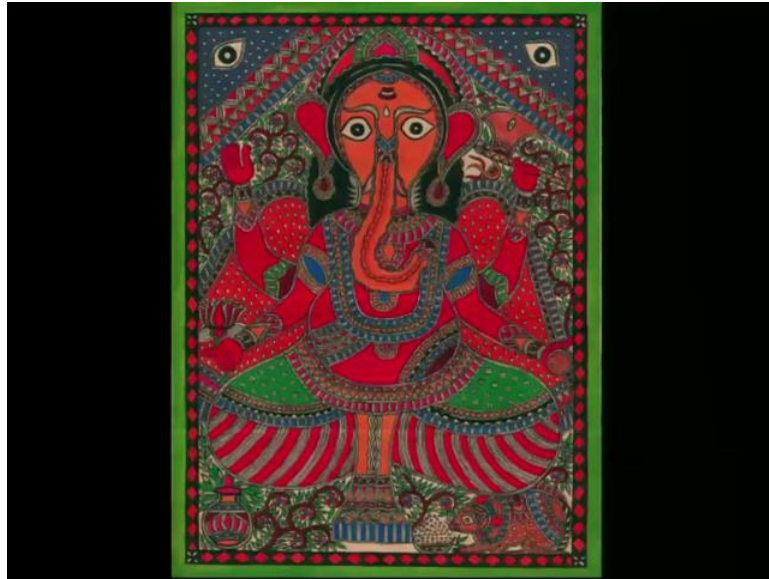
following the same rule that we cannot see the space to have any optical illusion rather the two-dimensionality is maintained throughout that gives it a highly painterly quality indurate.

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Another from the same tradition a Madhubani painting from North Bihar, it has a stylized feature in the horizontal stretch of the bird which gives it a very interesting division in terms of its space. Where, the main characters in these figures are placed in a vertical order, whereas the emphasis there equally on the horizontal and vertical formation. We see the similar principle here where all the empty spaces between the main characters are filled up with some motives or other. So, it is all entirely filled up to give it a dimensional look. The use of line and color is also of a very simplistic kind where all the figures are delineated with single lines made out of black color and the spaces have no gap everything is very well confined and filled up with the basic primary colors.

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Another art work from the same region following the same principle.

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Again a Madhubani painting by the Bhushan Community which is known to be the Gond art which is quite well known that derived from a traditional tattoo practice which shows a tree which is quite an imaginary tree which is the source of prosperity. We see the linear formation all over and the variation in the linear formation throughout. So, what we see there are different thickness of the lines throughout with textures, but no where

the color is filled up rather it is whether ink and whether a basic nib the everything is filled up.

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The repeated figures that no focal point as such, so, when there is no focal points the entire art works as a focal point.

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Another art work is the wedding seen of Ram and Sita it is that is a thematic content and that is the minimum visual clue that we have that a Ram and Sita in blue and pink respectively they are getting married they are exchanging (Refer Time: 11:33) as the

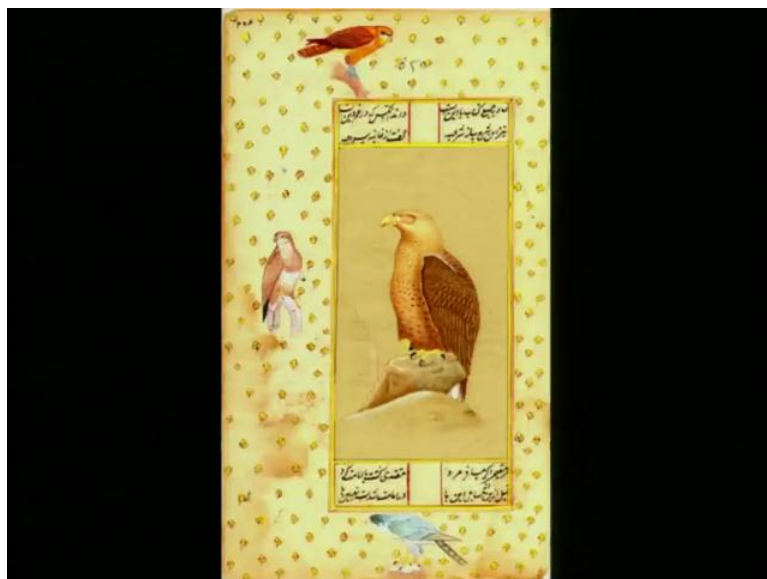
ritual. And the entire figuration has a vertical emphasis into it. And the horizontal formation of the angular hands which does not have a clear cut anatomical formation is giving it a decorative quality that creates the balance because of its reputation.

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Durga with 10 hands and the formation of the hand is adding to the quality of its freedom the creative freedom that was enjoyed by the artist. It did not follow the conventional norm of painting the idol. Seeing in the picture is a very interesting and unique thing where Durga is holding the tail of the lion with her hand.

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Another art work from a different tradition which is from the Western India Rajasthan, and these are certain art works which are highly influenced by the Persian miniature artists who came to India with a Mughals. These are the art works which are still practiced with a lot of seriousness.

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They include the local flora and fauna. Sometimes the flora and faunas are inspired by some foreign identity which is come from Persia itself.

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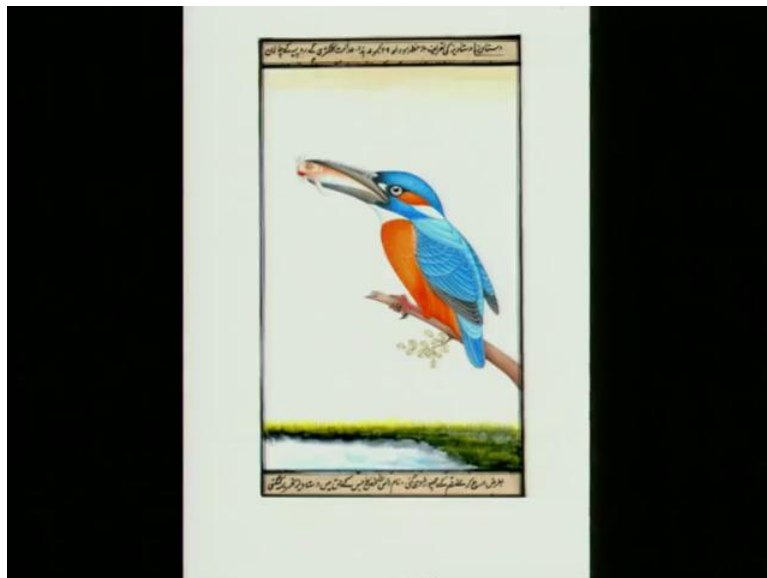


They are done on old parchment which has the Urdu scripts in it and that adds to the quality.

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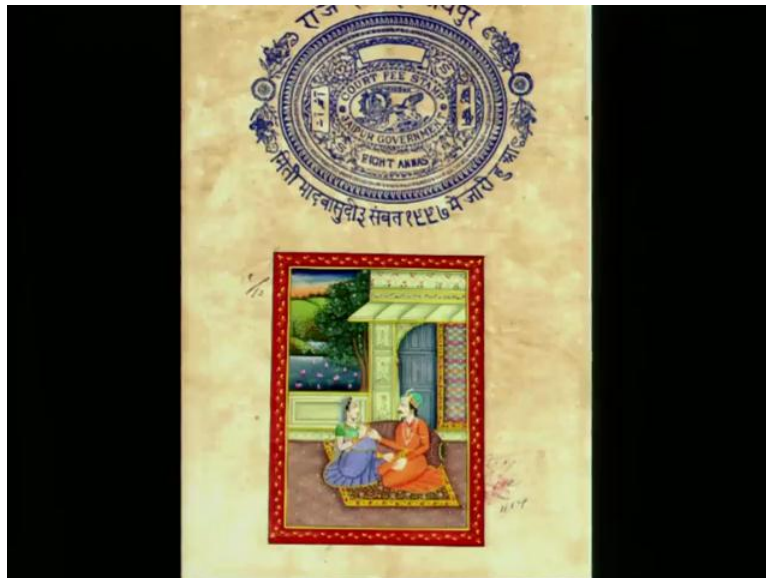


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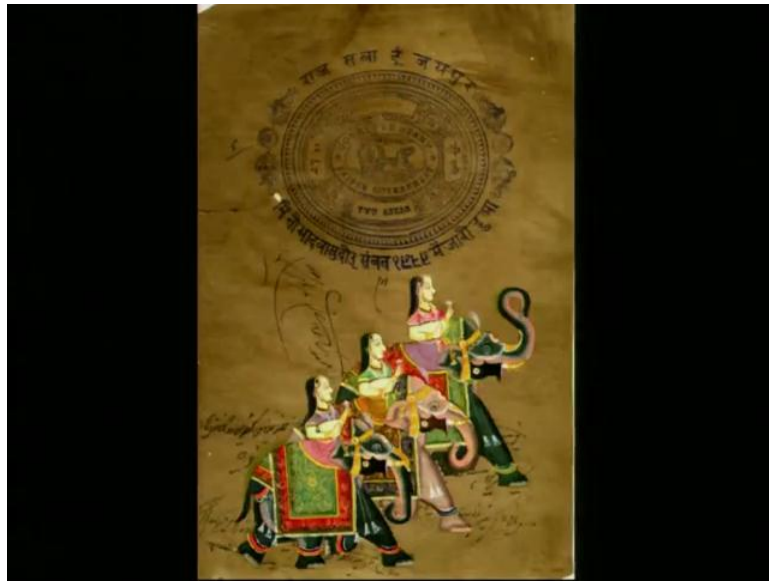


A linear formation with the gradient of color which is very different from the earlier once that we have seen in Bihar or Odessa, here the volume is shown with the gradual formation of tones of a single color. So, it is (Refer Time: 14:19) character, but it has the right volume.

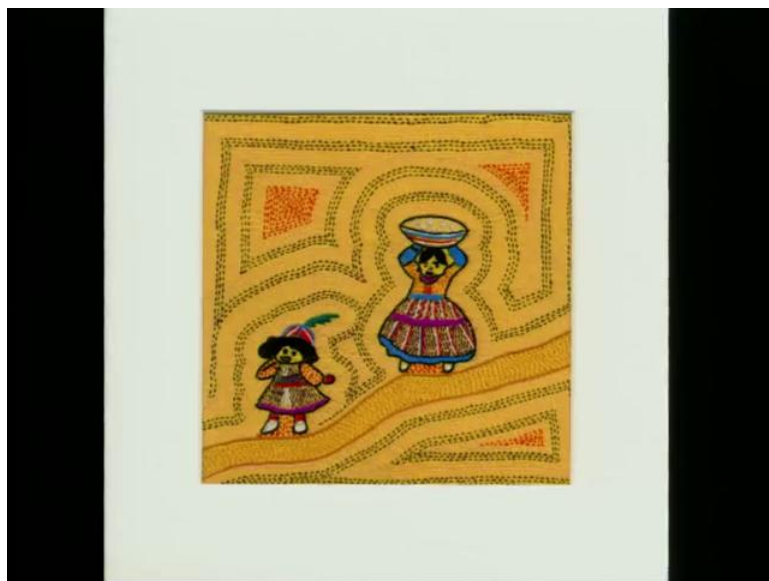
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Another tradition with embroidered lines there they are all stitched with threads, this is known as Sujani.

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Some more example of Sujani.

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Gond art with semi abstract images and over lapping throughout creating texture with very matured graphic formation throughout. The motive of eye is repeated almost everywhere in a picture take some textures of wave, in the stoned and the water is flat along with the background which is white.

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From the creative formations of different creature from stories and myths

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The organic formation whether in an essence of natural forms.

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Imaginary animals and narrative formation based on the animal forms.

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Trees and it is dwellers.

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Harvest forming.

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The simple two-dimensional formations with distinct background and foreground; and with no suggestion of a clear middle ground, that will create a spatial debt in terms of creating an illusion of space.

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And artist and making of the art works. The detailing done by the artist with brushes, so the color over lapping is quite clear in this picture.

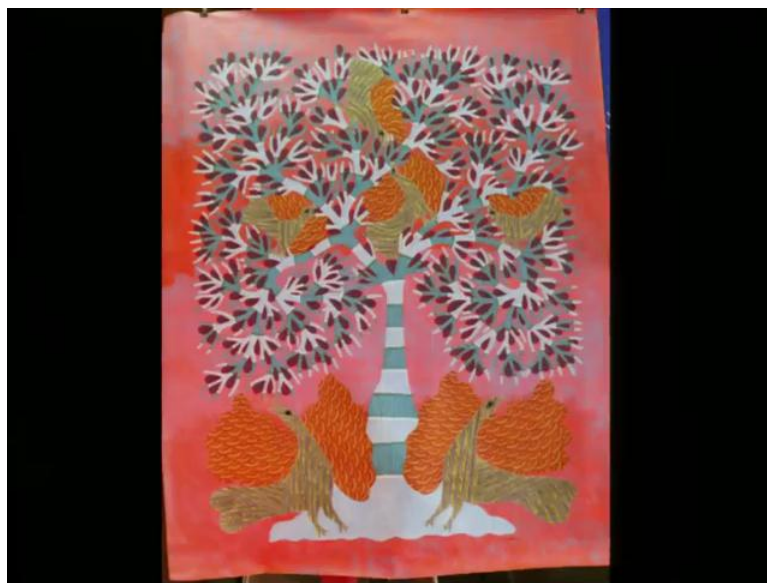
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The rendering of symmetry is a unique feature of these compositions.

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It has a strong survival component in to it with unusual gesture positions of form in utter harmony.

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I would like you to focus on this particular image from Gond painting tradition where you see there is a dilemma with created by the over lapping images and the value contrast and the value variation throughout, where it confuses the audience towards ground formation. It takes a sometime to understand whether the black is the image the color that is there at the background or is it in the foreground. Because the same black is

used as the foreground black which is very unique and whenever we see a color like black which has the lowest of value it tends to get pushed back.

But here when the artist used a black paint as it is background he consciously made sure that it should not work as a background to give it a three dimensional formation rather he was keen on maintaining that two dimensional quality. And that is perhaps one reason that he uses a same black in intricate smaller sections which are repeated in a pattern which is also there throughout which are coming at the foreground as separate images. And very interestingly the blue white scribes are striking out at the same time it is getting even with other formations in the frame.

In the thematic level if we alter and try to analyze this image and see it in a alter way for example, let us assume that instead of adding the blue lines if you change it into red lines. It would have been a red and white scribe that could have just come at the foreground, and we could not avoid having a three dimensional depth and that kind of a formation in the art work. So, light blue dark blue or whitish blue and another light blue that combination is very thoughtfully maintained throughout to give it two dimensional look.

So, it is not a un inability to create a three dimensional form rather it is the very decision of the expert artist who is able to create this kind of a form. And whenever we are looking at this kind of art works we should just look at them from it is elementary detail. We will come to all those things in our following lectures where we will see and analyze images in greater detail, but before that it is very important that we get used to it. So, the content of art is diverse in the thematic level it comes with different stories, different values, different identities at the same time it is all connected with a common ethic that is very much connected to the basic ethic of the country that is related to it is local text; the folk loads, the model stories also different fables and that days back to the main epics that is connected to it.

So, when they look at the traditions which are coming or deriving from a royal patronage where as in Raghurajpur Odessa we see there is a strong regional influence that is there along with a Western Indian influence that is come from Rajasthan where a it was political exchange that took place during the time of one king who got some painters

from Western India to be there and that time the classical temples were also getting build it up in Odessa.

So, there are reasons why it got mixed up and we are going to talk about that in detail in the following lectures. But right now it is very important that apart from looking at them from a complete thematic angle should also a pay some time to look at them for their artistic qualities and develop our eye of looking at the images and then it will provide us with a right confidence to look at them with a right approach.

So, with that we are moving to our lectures on different school of art for example, Madhubani and the kind of Cultural Revolution that took place and the augmentation of Madhubani style of painting. Then we will move to the (Refer Time: 24:32) tradition and also the other traditions of Jharkhand and also Bengal and Odessa to some extent to understand the variation of style for the existing module that we are approaching now.