

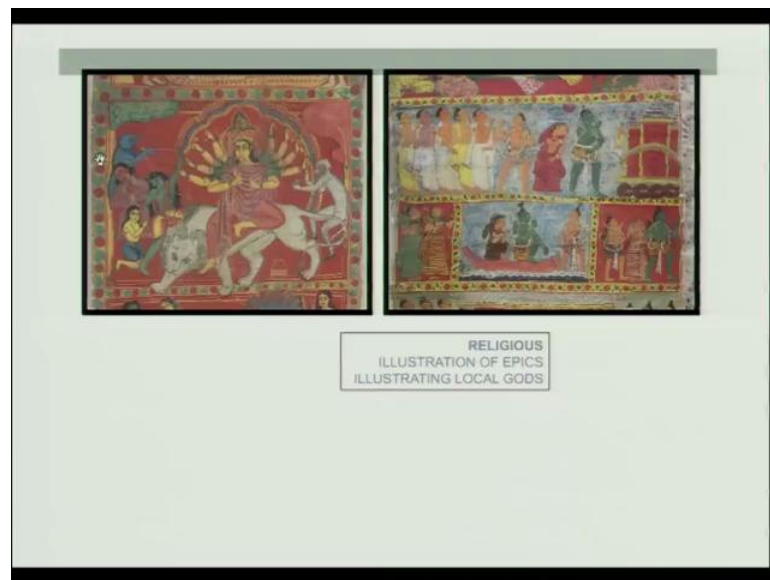
**Folk and Minor Art in India**  
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**Lecture - 06**  
**Contemporary Practice**

To get familiar with the contemporary practices we must also understand that there are contemporary values that makes it contemporary, it is not that what is made in the recent time makes it relevant for the modern time. But there are certain elements that have to be observed which has to be also observed in connection to the past and then track the root of evolution that sense.

We will try to realize that with some visual examples, but we make it more effective for our study. So, let us go back to some of the past images and slowly get in to the most contemporary art works to understand the flow.

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The examples of the religious illustration of epics that is illustrating the local Gods were very common in the tradition. What we see in the picture this is the Goddess Durga accompanied by the lion, and see in the picture are the characters from the Ramayana;

Ram, Lakshmana, Hanuman. And that gives it us an impression that this is not just the image of Durga, but this is a frame from the age old epic which is Ramayana. In the next frame what we see is there is a character known Guhak who is coming into the picture.

So, one has to have certain knowledge of the theme to understand what is actually happening that the character Guhaka is helping Seetha and Ram with Lakshman to cross the river. And it is going through narrative and asymmetrical order where we see that there are characters who are decorated with certain local costumes. So, when we see Seetha here or the other characters we can clearly make out where the costumes and jewelries that they wearing in this picture they are from Bengal.

So, although there are lots of influences of western India in this particular picture it is not very difficult to make out that this is one painting which is from Bengal.

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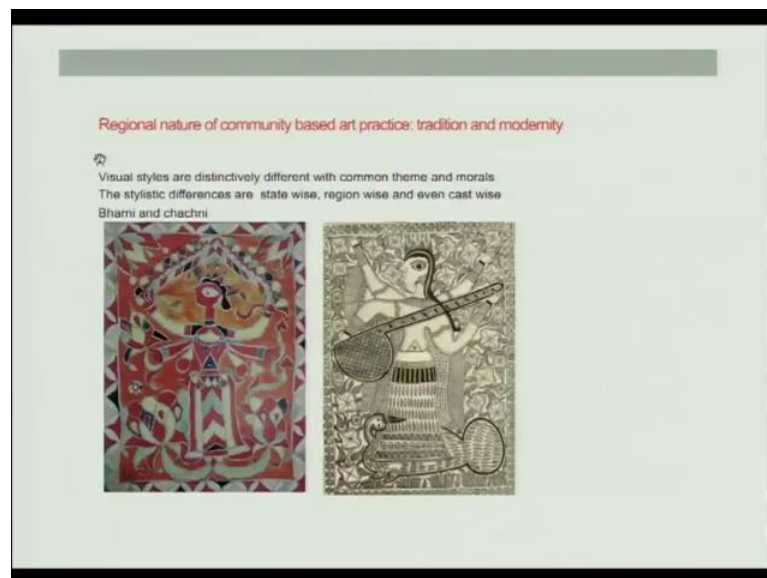
The examples here that we get to see are taken from a recent exhibition in Delhi by Kalam Patua where the things are much more secular. So, this is made in the style of the urban folk painting of Kalighat Pata where the linear formations are also undergoing some kind of a voluminous identity which is more sculptural at the same time it has two-dimensionality. And what we see in the picture in it is thematic context we do not get to

see Ram, Seetha, Lakshmana, Guhak or Hanuman rather what we see here are people from our surrounding.

What we see here is a story where an art exhibition is taking place and there are many people who are supposedly the viewer of the show, but there more indulged into socialization. There are people who are clicking photographs, serving drinks and chitchatting with each other. In the next frame there is a photographer clicking photograph of two beautiful ladies with a connection of the past Kalighat Sundaries or the beauties of Kalighat Pata of 19th century, a dog standing there in the back drop of the temple the Bahai temple or the Lotus temple of Delhi.

So, this is how it is getting contemporarized the style remains the same, but because of the contemporaries subject matter and theme it becomes much more modern in it is looks and identity.

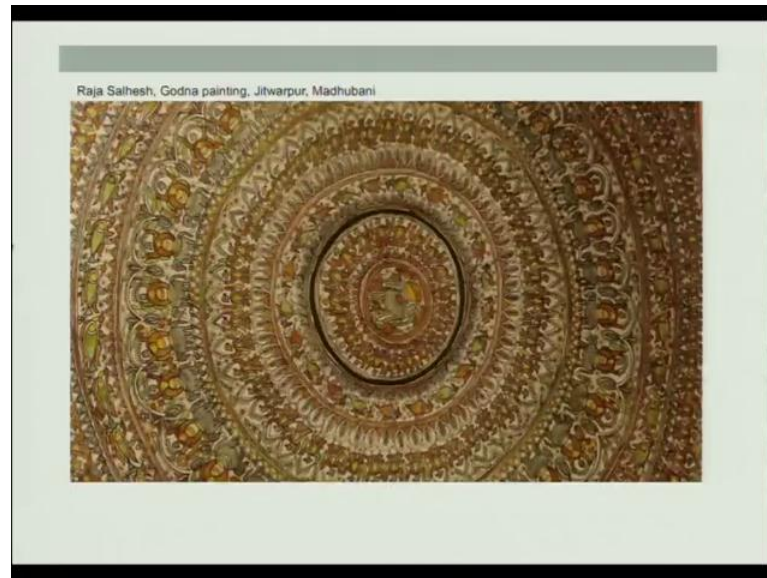
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The regional nature of community based art practice where we see the visual styles at distinctively different with common theme and morals. The stylistic differences are state wise, region wise, and even cast wise. The Bharni and the Chachni these are the two traditions that we get to see. In the Bharni technique there are color filling and in the

Chachni technique these are only the line drawings and there is no color filling in any of these parts.

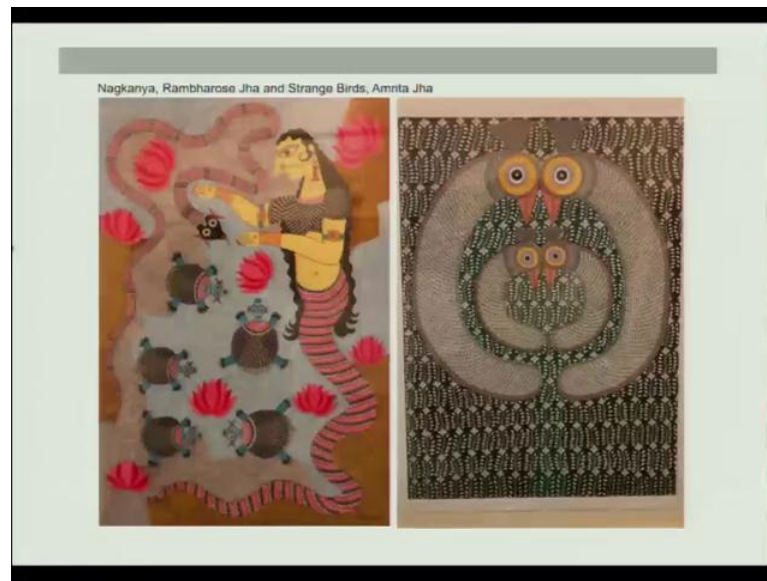
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This is one art work that is made by Channodevi was the wife of Lodipaswan through whom the study when I was conducting the research I got to know that the theme was based on a local story from the border of Nepal. There was a local king who is very popular in that region and his name was Raja Salhesh, he had his brother called Mothiram they also had parrots known as Hirasugavan, who all were part of this story. This is known as the Godna painting of Jitwarpur Madhubani. And this is the style that they write from the tattoo practices. Were the tattoos were need on human body and here they are using the same motive to make human figures who are the Malians or the gardeners. And there in a row the amazing quality of repetition that is seen in the picture is breath taking. And the design quality is of a very high quality here.

So, this is from Madhubani and it is not the theme which is very contemporarized thing, but the execution on paper is a very recent thing, it is not very old and it is culture or it is practice.

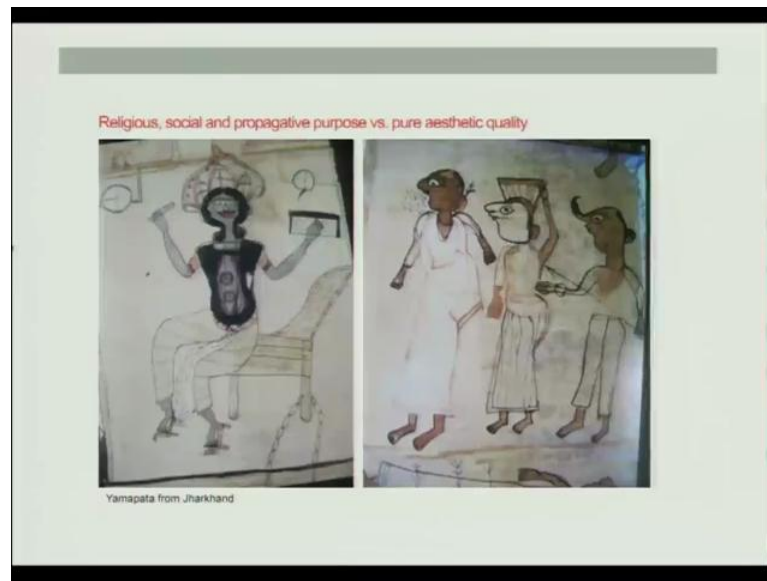
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We get to see two more art works; one by Rambharosa Jha and other one by Amrita Jha. They are more informed and modern painters, they are quite well known in today's scenario. And we get to see their art exhibitions happening every now and then in big cities. What we see in the picture are made by Rambharose Jha named Naga Kanya and the Strange Birds by Amrita Jha where these are the subject matters which are beyond the religious and (Refer Time: 07:45) restrictions and there much more creative.

At the same time the rendition of the traditional idiom of Madhubani painting is getting more meaning because of the execution of this art works. And more over the initiative of picking up the elements of from tradition and contemporizing them in with the new sensibility is very very commanding.

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Religious, social and propogative purpose versus pure aesthetic quality becomes the main aim of our study now. So, what we see here are the examples of the Yamapata of Jharkhand. This is a tradition which was not meant for any pure aesthetic purpose ever rather it was something that was connected to the compulsory ritualistic rights which is connected to the after death conditions.

So, after the death of a person they used to call one of those painters to come over and give life to the person who died. In terms of making eyes to the images of them which were made on the Patachitra on those scroll paintings. And through the eyes by painting those eyes it is believed that the people after death will be getting some vision to see the dark path and find their ways after life.

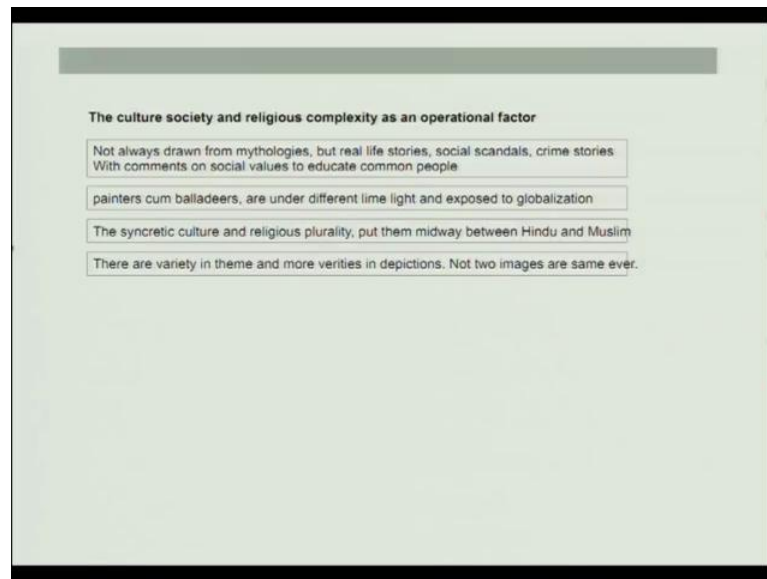
So, this people are known as Jadupatia or Jadu is connected to the word magic. So, they do some magic they perform some miracle against some (Refer Time: 09:46). And that is how it also incorporates a lot of morals what has to be done, what are not to be done, what is seen, what are the virtue and many other things in the same category.

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Seen in the picture is a Yamapata where we see that they showing if somebody is committing a scene what is going to happen to him after his death. As you can see that some of the ghosts are taking out the tongue with some forest, and also there are images of two characters Shiva Parvathi they also have images of (Refer Time: 10:31) ad (Refer Time: 10:32). They more like the first man and women of the tradition, so they will appear and with their blessing their life continues.

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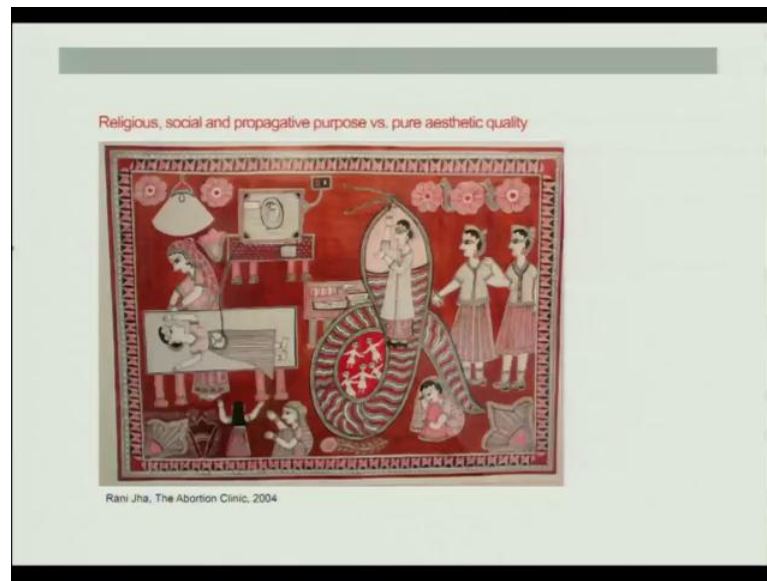
The cultural society and religious complexity as an operational factor for nurturing folk and minor art of India is dependent on a query few factors that we need to understand and conclude our statement with those understanding.

So, it is not always drawn from mythologies, but real life stories, social scandals, crime stories with comments on social values to educate common people. The purposes also include painters cum balladeers are under different lime light and exposed globalization. The syncretic culture and religious plurality put them midway between Hindu and Muslim. Many of the practitioners paint Hindu Gods and Goddesses, but they have a Muslim name and also another Hindu name this is to establish certain acceptance of this people in all religious households.

So, regardless of their religion they are most welcome then most of the households. And the artists also believes that artists are beyond religion and they have one religion that is operated by the Gods of creativity and it also shows a religious plurality where they do not hesitate to paint pictures of (Refer Time: 12:19) from a different religion and culture for their creative aspirations. There are verity in theme and more varieties in their depictions not two images are same ever.

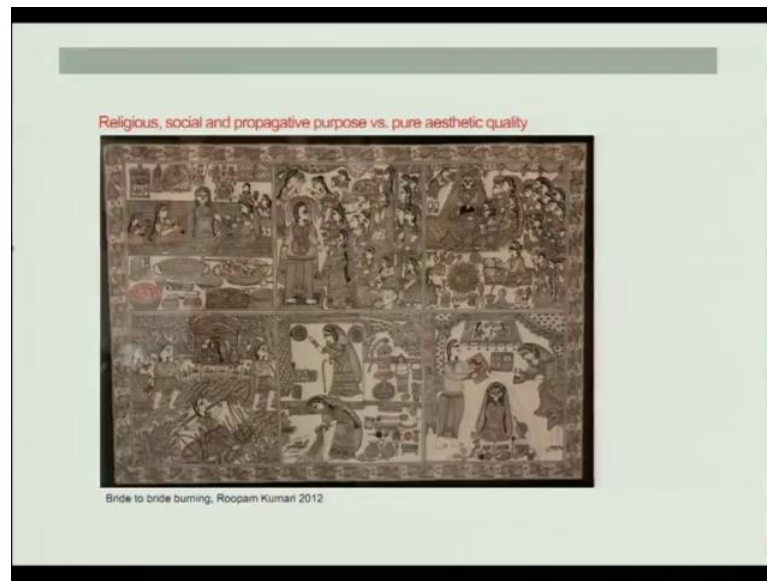


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What we see in the picture is the painting by Rani Jha executed in 2004 which is quite a recent art work. And the subject matter of the art work in a way is much more radical. It shows an abortion clinic where the female fetus is getting x rayed through ultra sound a system, and finally they getting killed. In the other side of the picture what we get to see are the two school going girls and they show some new perspective. This is certainly a bold comment on the female photo site and next very bold mark with the pure aesthetic quality that is derived from Madhubani painting. And the subject matter is completely going to a direction of social relevance where the awareness generation is one of the purposes and more than that it is very important that how the artist has realized and reacted to the happening the practice and reacted and expressed it in a creative manner.

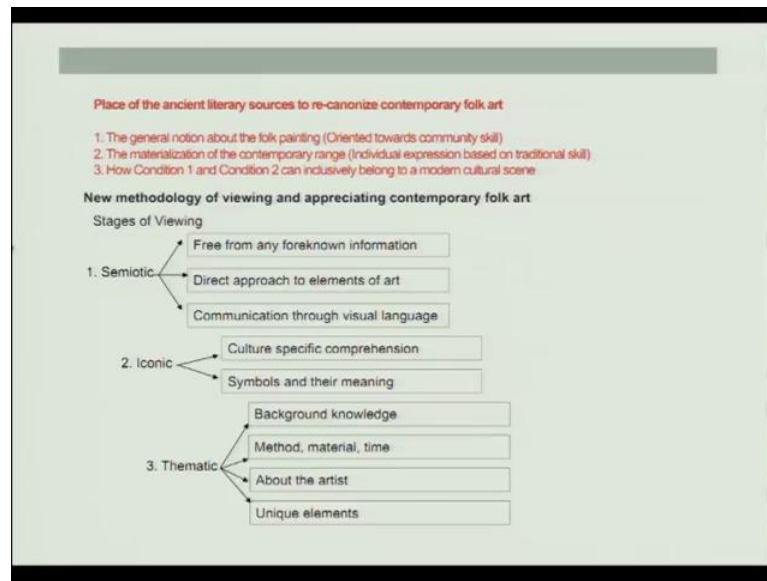
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Another example; bride to bride burning by Roopam Kumari is also very relevant in this context made in 2012. What we see is, apparently very common picture from traditional Madhubani paintings from Rati where they used a Chachi technique throughout and it shows the wedding scene where the bride is getting wedded and she is coming to the in laws place and she is learning many different skills in the super vision of the mother in law. Somehow she does not look very satisfied with her skill and in the final scene very unaccepted and expectedly we see something very unpleasant is taking place, where the husband is pouring some kerosene fuel on the girl and the mother in law is standing with a match box and she is about to burn her.

So, this is a very strong social message that is depicted through this picture. The aesthetic is pleasant, but she showed the most unpleasant reality that is derived from many peoples experience. To conduct effective critical analysis of this kind of art works are very important as they are undergoing lots of relevant changes. And with that we need to again go back to the 3 layers of it where we look at them from the pure aesthetic conditions, where we look at the quality of the line, the quality of the color, the quality of composition and many other things which is in it is purely semantic understanding and the semiotic value which is free from any for known information direct approach to elements of art the communication through the visual language only.

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At the same time the cultural specific comprehensions are also important which comes in to the iconic layer, and the symbols and their specific meaning is also a matter of research that comes in to the scene.

In the thematic mode the background knowledge, the background understanding of the happening; why this particular subject has coming to the place, how the society is behaving and whether it is a true story, is it reflective of the society or is it giving the right message that has to be understood. This is also another phase where we must also alter certain elements and see whether they are holding the same relevance or not. We can also make critical comments on how it should have been or being very critical and suggesting new modes of expression.

As well as you know understanding about the artist and the unique elements that they bring in into their art works in terms of the new imageries and that makes our viewing for the contemporary art works more relevant and successful.