

Visual Art in Developing Indian Economy & Ethical Responsibility

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INTRODUCTION: Indian economy had experienced major policy changes in early 1990s. The new economic reform, popularly known as, Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG model) aimed at making the Indian economy as fastest growing economy and globally competitive. The series of reforms undertaken with respect to industrial sector, trade as well as financial sector aimed at making the economy more efficient. With the beginning of reforms to liberalize the Indian economy in July of 1991, a new chapter has emerged for India and her billion plus population. This period of economic transition has had a tremendous impact on the overall economic development of almost all major sectors of the economy, and its effects over the last decade can hardly be overlooked. Besides, it also marks the advent of the real integration of the Indian economy into the global economy.

Indian Art witness a major change and added value to the Economic growth of the country, heightened the Indian art scene on global canvas and resulted in opening up of New Galleries and a renewed approach in functioning of Galleries, Museums and Auction Houses. It created a huge impact on Indian art scene as art reached out of the white cube of the gallery space to the public spaces as a new venue for art enthusiast. This swift change not only provided the artist ample opportunities to exhibit their works more frequently but also their works got important acquisitions across the globe. The first decade of the 21st century observe major changes in the Art Making and Market as great number of Biennials and International art fair curated by art historian/artist/gallery etc. got enormous critical appreciation. Indian art also witness International Art Fairs, Biennial, Public art festivals, opening up of Private Museums in the country which provided Indian artist an international platform within the country to exhibit and acquire Indian art by Indian art enthusiast.

When we look back Indian art scene during the last decade of 20th century, it is quite conspicuous that galleries were more conventional in the sense they only exhibited/acquire old senior artists of the country because of their reliability on international art market and for any new young artist the situation was very challenging to create a niche to notice their work by galleries and critics. Even artists were less experimental with adopting new media such as video art, performance art, installation etc. very few artists were developing interest in technological interventions and experimented with new media, the practice was observed seriously by art critics and historians. The Indian artists were in a state of transition with new ideas and new means and methods. The change was the outcome of technological advancement in the country and its accessibility with a new wave of globalization.

Contemporary Art Making and Market

In recent time, art making is not confined to conventional system of painting, Drawing or Sculpting it has reached to a level of broader phenomena whereby time, space, viewers interaction has turned as important as the artist own self/Idea. This has driven artist in the newer venues of search and art discourse out of the paradigm of aesthetics as a notion of art. The New Media art plays a vital role as artist working in the genre of Installation, video art, photography, site specific works, Interactive sculpture/Installation, performance art etc. and the stimulating facet of this change lies in the role of galleries and Museums as they are supporting such practices and the art theorist critically examining such innovative works in the light of critical discourse in the changing scenario of Society, Politics and Economy. Art as a cultural topic and a social activity and artist as a social reformer, contemporary art is regularly featured in popular print publications and other social media the world over; in daily newspapers, page three parties, television programmes, art, fashion, travel, and lifestyle magazines, internet sites, blogs, and most recent all sorts of social media as facebook, twitter etc.

Today the extensive coverage of contemporary art by the popular media reaches to a larger audience. Artist, gallery owners and collectors are treated as celebrities, the way they live, work in their studios and dress themselves have become everyday media coverage for newspaper and magazines. Extravagant gallery openings and auction house functions have become major glamorous events and one can notice the presence of famous artists, celebrities, art students, media reporters etc. so it's a gathering of famous or not so famous or is looking for a platform of to be famous.

The online contemporary art market is relatively a new phenomenon in India, which has taken Indian art to the global market. Today many online gallery and auction houses functions in India, more people now make art, sell art and buy art than ever before. As the art market grows infinitely larger, however it is also growing more accessible, as every gallery and artist have their websites allow any collector/buyer to see the status of available works with the gallery/artists. Among other e-commerce ventures, VIP Art Fair places art online for a limited time in virtual viewing rooms, or booths, set up by the participating galleries around the globe. Saffronart online auction house stated its journey in 2000 on the strength of the private passion and successfully serving the growing community of Indian collector. Saffronart's gallery spaces in Mumbai, Delhi and New York, and its offices in London provide access to a substantial range of art, information and advice. Saffronart has held several highly successful online auctions, accompanied by physical catalogues and preview events in cities like Mumbai, New Delhi, New York, London and Hong Kong. These auctions allow bidders around the world to participate simultaneously in exciting sales. Responding to the needs of today's collectors, saffronart offers a range of services including art advisory, private sales, appraisals and valuations, and specialized art storage.



(This photo taken Dec. 16, 2013, a visitor looks at a painting of Vasudeo S. Gaitonde during a media preview of Christie's first auction in India.)

Past few years for Indian art market observe a big slump because of global economic slowdown. But recently Christie's auction observes a revival of Indian art market with a sale of Vasudeo S Gaitonde's untitled minimalist work with the highest price for any Indian artist of Rs 23.7 crore. This auction was observed by many experts and collectors as a leading indicator of art repositioning itself as an attractive asset class. Christie's first-ever auction in India gives a clear indication of growing art market in India.

The size of the Indian art market – around \$100 million – is minuscule compared with western markets. Just one recent western art market sale – a Francis Bacon work that sold for \$142 million – fetched more money than the Indian art market represents collectively. The local art market grew frenetically between 2000 and 2008. The slump since then has been long. The observation comes from the ArtTactic, a sort of bible for art investors around the world, reported in a November issue said confidence level in the Indian art market fell by 13.6% in the six months till November. Rupee's steep fall was identified as the main reason for this crash by ArtTactic.

Christie's first ever auction in India have lightened up the gloom for Indian art market and the Galleries, Private Museums and the coordinators of India Art Fair and the Indian collectors take this auction as a great booster for the Art Market in India. The total sales of the Mumbai auction were Rs. 96 crore. Newspaper Media put art auction on the cover page which is great for the art market as more people in India come across to Indian art sale and its importance and this is how artist work is also seen by larger group of people. Many others agree with the positive aspect of the auction, Mumbai based Sonal Singh, associate director and head of sale, South Asian Modern and Contemporary Art, Christie's, says the Gaitonde's sale shows appetite for good quality work. "Collectors are looking at the quality", she said, adding that this augurs well for the market because these are occasions when we realize that Indian art is getting truly internationalized. This is very important for the market.

Ashish Anand, managing director, Delhi Art Gallery, who was among the successful bidders at Christie's Mumbai auction, says, "The market has been lying low for a long time...no one expected this kind of result at the auction." Anand says the action at the auction indicated a changing mood. "The competition was fierce." He also says galleries are reporting a more upbeat market. "Our gallery has already sold a few art pieces in the past couple of days and the market is looking up now. People are coming forward to buy before works become more expensive. Galleries are expecting to do brisk business."

Kiran Nadar, founder of Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, who participated in the Christie's auction, says the event is

potentially a market moodchanger. "It has created a lot of buzz...prices were high...unimaginable." Nirav Modi, jewellery designer and an art collector, says the auction results are "very encouraging given that there had been a lull in the art market since 2008".

Nadar and Modi both said it will take a few months to firmly say the market has turned. Abhay Sardesai, editor, Art India, and a prominent art critic, has a word of caution for investors. "The art market may soar, but I would wait for six months before bursting firecrackers." Sardesai said after the previous boom, panic offloading led to prices crashing. He says art buyers should look carefully for quality.

Quality is an attribute emphasised by many experts. Dinesh Vazirani, founder of domestic auction house Saffronart, says the turn in the market is long overdue. But he points out that "the uptick in the market is happening for good quality work...there is a big gap in the supply and demand of good quality pieces".

Artist Riyas Komu, a key architect of The Kochi-Muziris Biennale, also makes the point about quality. He points out that the Christie's auction was successful because a big batch was made available from the collection maintained by the Kekoo and Korshed Gandhi estate. Of the 83 works put on the block, 52 were from the estate. "It ensured that there was high quality at the auction," Komu says.

Shireen Gandhi, late Kekoo Gandhi's daughter and Mumbai-based art gallery Chemould's director since 1988, says she is cautiously optimistic about auction sales sustaining market sentiment. "I would be glad if all this excitement also translates into more biennales and results in promoting art of all kind," she says.

Some excitement is already visible. Saffronart's Vazirani says after the auction there have been enquiries by buyers, "predominantly for works by modern artists such as Gaitonde, Raza, Husain, Suoza and Tyeb". Saffronart has upped its expectations for the February 2014 auction. So has Indian Art Fair's Kirpal. She says at the last IAF, sales of works priced above Rs 1 crore were slow. "We are expecting a much better response now," she says. The Gaitonde sale has changed the market's value perception, Vazirani says.

Riyas Komu an artist pointed out when the art market lost its fizz, not only did page three parties stop and many galleries downsized or wound up their galleries. Now, everyone hopes a minimalist painting by a dead artist who was underappreciated in his lifetime will have the maximum impact in bringing a ray of hope in India's small art market.

Personal taste and knowledge

Aesthetics is the philosophical study about beauty and art (which encompasses visual arts, music, and literature), and this field considers whether works of art have any merit. In saying that works of art having merit is simply a matter of personal taste, we are concluding that aesthetic judgments can be reduced to personal taste. This stand is plausible due to the presence of art and music revolutions, and how people continually debate about the definition of good art. However, it still appears intuitive to us that there is some objective standard of what makes good art, beyond our personal tastes, as Hume and Plato would argue for. Despite the possibility of the existence of objective standards, the epistemic nature of aesthetics is subjective. The endless debate over what makes good art is another reason why it appears that art is simply a matter of personal taste. People who believed in Mimesis argued that good art resembles an object in reality – a painting of a vase would be good if it looks exactly like the vase. However, the French accept their impressionistic paintings as good art despite their intentional blurring of the scenery. Other artists believed that good art expresses one's emotions well. Bach's preludes and fugues can be composed mechanically and emotionlessly, but are still considered good art, so the definition fails. These examples show how it is difficult and almost impossible to decide on a criterion of what makes good art. For any aesthetic judgment to be possible, then, a critic must accept his own paradigm and judge an art based on his assumption of what makes good art. If this were the case, then whether works of art have any merit is simply a matter of personal taste.

Kant would put a great emphasis on personal taste in aesthetic judgments because he believes that an aesthetic experience is a free play of imagination and understanding. When we are in awe at a piece of art, say, the Mona Lisa, the aesthetic appreciation occurs because of a free play of our imagination and understanding. We do not place any particular concept on the Mona Lisa, but enjoy its aesthetic beauty momentarily. Since people are living in different environments, the way their imagination and understanding are shaped will differ as well, so the 'free play of imagination and understanding' results in a subjective aesthetic experience for different people. Since any aesthetic judgment must be based on an aesthetic experience, the subjectivity of the experience causes the aesthetic judgment to be subjective as well. Therefore, the aesthetic judgments are a matter of personal taste.

Another argument for the objectivity of aesthetic judgment is made by appealing to Plato's world of forms. Plato believes that there is an ideal world of forms that exists beyond our world, and these forms are the perfect versions of the imperfect objects we observe in our phenomenal world. Then, there is also a perfect form of beauty in this world of forms. Considering how people are

continually debating over what makes good art, it does appear that they assume that an objective standard exists. If there were no objective standard of art, why would people debate about it in the first place? People would just accept that they are mere opinions. Thus, the fact, the debate exists shows how people already accept that an objective standard exists in aesthetics. This unknown standard is the form of beauty that we cannot gain access to, due to our limited ability to reason, resulting in debates. This Platonic account appears to be suitable for accounting for aesthetic debates, and accepting it necessitates the acceptance of the claim that there is objective aesthetic knowledge. Thus, it appears that there can be aesthetic judgments beyond personal claims.

In conclusion, it is highly likely that aesthetic judgments are simply a matter of personal taste because of the subjectivity of the concept of good art across time and the inability to decide on what makes good art. Even though we intuitively think that there is an objective standard, this 'objectivity' constructed by authorities are still strongly based on the personal taste of the authorities. Therefore, whether works of art have any merit is simply a matter of personal taste.

The relevance of critical writing and the role of Art Historians and Curators

What significance does criticism have in the art world is an important question, the way art has been perceived in the 20th and in 21st century is quite different to that of the previous century. Changes in the world and environment, new philosophies, new audiences, new functions and roles for art, new materials and processes, feminism, indigenous issues and politics; all have had implications for artists, art making, art writing, art criticism and collecting. Essentially, art historians document the significance of change and art critics document the significance of value. However, there is much crossover in art writing. Robert Hughes is an international art critic who writes with both historical references and a critical point of view. (Refer to his books *Shock of the New*, *American Visions*, *Nothing if not Critical*.)

The chief goal of art criticism is "understanding". We need a way of looking at art objects that will give an insight into the meaning and merits. The second goal is to increase pleasure. As a social motive, criticism allows discussion about art. A critic must have a wide knowledge of art through study and looking at art and a reasonable appreciation of the creative act either through experience or study. Critics should be able to judge quality in relation to form and content. He or she should open readers to new ideas and emotional qualities.

Styles of art criticism, Modalities and style of art criticism are dependent on purpose:

- Journalistic reviews of exhibitions, plays, books, and concerts help readers of "art events" to create the atmosphere of striving and rivalry that artists, collectors and general audience require.
- Pedagogical criticism is practised in museums, schools, colleges, and universities wherever art is taught. The teacher, curator or critic has the power to influence the students or audience.
- Scholarly criticism appears mainly in journals, usually the product of long study and specialisation. Academic critics can influence the reputations of artists.
- Popular criticism is practised by lay people and is not always informed by research, study or experience.

Interpretation, Explanation of a work of art involves discovering a meaning and its significance on the human condition. An important part of the critics' role is to discover and write about the intended and perceived meanings the work may have.

Critical judgment, Judgment is often decided upon a series of methods of examination. Formal evaluation refers to visual organisation: the relationships between the elements of the artwork, material and techniques. This form of interpretation is indicative of the structural frame. The subjective frame can be employed to determine the ability of the artist to communicate emotions vividly, irrespective of formal organisation. Instrumentalism investigates art that is reflective of social or moral issues: issues that are consequences of political, economic, and social occurrences. This perspective is typical of the cultural frame.

Forms of art writing, the practice of writing about art has become a crucial element in the art world and plays an integral part of the way an audience gains an appreciation or understanding of an artwork. The kinds of art writing range from the text on the wall of the museum accompanying the artwork to the descriptions offered in the local newspaper to the philosophical and often opaque writings found in art journals and catalogues.

The rise of Biennials vs. Commercial fairs and Public Art Exhibitions

One of India's first international arts festivals: the Kochi-Muziris Biennale.

Even since Venice introduced the world to the biennale in 1895, the word has been symbolic of a city's cultural dominance. Often, biennales demonstrate a region's perception through showcasing the direction the contemporary arts scene will go in coming seasons.

The biennale's theme centres very much on Kochi's history particularly, the spotlight was on Muziris. Muziris was a prosperous trading hub from the first century B.C. that supplied the world with everything from spices to precious stones. The city drew traders from as far as Rome, Greece and China. It was active up until the 14th century, when it mysteriously disappeared under the sea -- perhaps by a flood or tsunami. Excavations just outside Kochi a few years ago unearthed pottery, coins and various other artefacts that link the region to the Roman era, and suggest that, at last, Muziris has been found. The biennale founders have adopted the fallen port as a theme for the event.

The first edition of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale was set in spaces across Kochi, Muziris and surrounding islands. There were shows in existing galleries and halls, and site-specific installations in public spaces, heritage buildings and disused structures. Indian and international artists exhibited artworks across a variety of mediums including film, installation, painting, sculpture, new media and performance art.

Through the celebration of contemporary art from around the world, The Kochi-Muziris Biennale seeks to invoke the historic cosmopolitan legacy of the modern metropolis of Kochi, and its mythical predecessor, the ancient port of Muziris. Alongside the exhibition the Biennale offered a rich programme of talks, seminars, screenings, music, workshops and educational activities for school children and students of all ages.

Since 2008 Art Fair in the country augmented the pace for art activities with a global vision and such Fair provided a bigger platform not only for conventional art approaches but brought forward the practice of New Media Art across the globe. In 2012 the Fourth Edition of India Art Fair which was earlier known as India Art Summit successfully concluded in New Delhi. India art fair is the country's premier platform for modern and contemporary art across the globe. This edition featured most of the international and national galleries and leading artists to witness their original works, India Art Fair provide even a larger canvas of art engagements with featuring curated walks, video lounge, speaker's forum, art projects, book launches and other collateral events. Such art fairs across the country providing art students, artists, curators, art historians, gallerist, art educationist a wider platform for art and cultural dialogue and debate and rewrite the definition of Contemporary Art. This coherence of Biennials, Art Fairs, gallery, private

museums, collectors and curators provide an exciting condition for art market in India.

FAKE ART MARKET

Fake Art dates back more than two thousand years. Roman sculptors produced copies of Greek sculptures. During the classical period art was generally created for historical reference, religious inspiration, or simply aesthetic enjoyment. The identity of the artist was often of little importance to the buyer.

During the Renaissance, many painters took on apprentices who studied painting techniques by copying the works and style of the master. As a payment for the training, the master would then sell these works. This practice was generally considered a tribute, not forgery, although some of these copies have later erroneously been attributed to the master.

Following the Renaissance, the increasing prosperity of the middle class created a fierce demand for art. Near the end of the 14th century, Roman statues were unearthed in Italy, intensifying the populace's interest in antiquities, and leading to a sharp increase in the value of these objects. This upsurge soon extended to contemporary and recently deceased artists. Art had become a commercial commodity, and the monetary value of the artwork came to depend on the identity of the artist. To identify their works, painters began to mark them. These marks later evolved into signatures. As the demand for certain artwork began to exceed the supply, fraudulent marks and signatures began to appear on the open market.

During the 16th century imitators of Albrecht Durer's style of printmaking added signatures to them to increase the value of their prints. In his engraving of the Virgin, Dürer added the inscription "Be cursed, plunderers and imitators of the work and talent of others".

The 20th-century art market has favoured artists such as Salvador Dali, Pablo Picasso, Matisse and Klee works have commonly been targets of forgery. These forgeries are typically sold to art galleries and auction houses, which cater to the tastes of art and antiquities. As a matter of fact, during the occupation the painting which fetched the highest price at Drouot, the main French auction house, was a fake Cézanne.

Indian art market also witness fake works by well established artists and time to time it is covered by media with the statements by artists themselves for their fake replicas. The reason for such fake market in India is the growing number of art galleries and the collectors, and as a developing nation the life style of people is becoming more luxurious and not only that the people are becoming more aware about art and see art as an important area of

investment for a higher return in future, today media coverage play a vital role as any international auction flashes more quickly to the common people and such events has a strong impact on every one who make art, buy art, and look art.



Fake art market issues recently ascended during a sale by the Bangalore-based auction house Bid & Hammer. A number of experts questioned the authenticity of a Rabindranath Tagore painting titled *Nritya*, among other works in the sale. The Tagore closely resembled a painting in the collection of the institution Rabindranath founded, Santiniketan's Visva-Bharati University. Another lot, Nandalal Bose's *Woman Sitting Under a Tree*, appeared identical to a painting in the National Gallery of Modern Art's collection. Also questioned was the authenticity of paintings by stalwarts like K. H. Ara, M. F. Husain and BikashBhattacharjee.

The reaction of those in the art industry, such as Ashish Anand of Delhi Art Gallery and ArunVadehra of Vadehra Art Gallery, was to suggest the setting up of an official regulatory body and authentication committee. It is difficult to come to a solution to this problem, but today the galleries and the collectors are more concerned as they take an authentication certificated signed by artist with an image of the work, with medium and dimensions but difficult to monitor the older generation of artists in the country. In actual fact, Indian art requires less, not more, regulation. Expertise and transparency have been strangled by the Antiquities Act, which makes the owning and selling of antiquities difficult, their export illegal, and restricts trade in the work of a number of modern artists labelled national treasures, Rabindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose among them.

Where the authenticity of antiquities is concerned, technology comes into play. Most attempts at deception can be unmasked by accurately dating materials using techniques like

Carbon-14

It only dates organic material which for paintings and drawings means we can carbon-date canvas, wood and paper. For sculptures in addition to wood it can also carbon-date ivory, bone and horn. The accuracy is Plus or Minus 40 years. This is an 80 year range. It means that a piece of canvas carbon- dated to 1900 was produced some time between 1860 and 1940.

Dendrochronology

This is the name of the scientific wood dating method. It is the best dating method we have for panel paintings. Unfortunately, dendrochronology has many practical limitations. First of all you need to see the tree rings and in general, you only see a few rings because the panel has been cut on all sides. You may have a small panel cut from a very big tree. How many rings you see depends also on how the panel was cut.

Thermoluminescence

Thermoluminescence only dates ceramics, meaning clay that has been fired. The dates given by thermoluminescence are not precise because of common contamination problems. In the best of cases the range is 25 percent and in general it is 40 to 50 percent. This means that when the thermoluminescence result says that a terracotta sculpture is 400 years old, it is really between 200 and 600 years old.

Today Buyers develop relationships of trust with dealers. Certain individuals receive widespread recognition for their connoisseurship, and become established authenticators. Foundations publish catalogues, which are comprehensive listings of all known works by artists.

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