

MUGHAL PAINTING

In the previous lesson, we learnt about Medieval art. In this lesson, we will learn about Mughal painting. The style of paintings which flourished under the Mughal rulers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is known as Mughal painting. Humayun, the second Mughal ruler, brought the miniature painting tradition from Persia and continued for about three centuries in India. The first Mughal emperor of India was Babur, who was a man of aesthetic sensibilities. It is likely that there were some painters in his entourage however, paintings of his time is not available. The Persian master painters, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd-al-Samad, joined the court of Humayun, the son of Babur when Humayun retired from his exile in Persia. It was only under Akbar (1556-1606) that the Mughal art developed a distinct style of its own. It came into being as a result of a happy synthesis of Indian and Persian elements. He maintained an atelier in which around 150 painters were employed under the supervision of the Persian masters Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd-al-Samad. A larger number of manuscripts of Indian and Persian classics and historical chronicles were illustrated during his reign.



OBJECTIVES

After studying the lesson, the learner will be able to:

- explain the background and evolution of Mughal period miniature paintings;
- state the name of enlisted Mughal miniature paintings;
- identify the Mughal miniature paintings from others;
- mention the main characteristics of miniature paintings.

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- describe the method and materials used, place and style of enlisted miniature paintings.
- name the artists of the Mughal paintings.
- describe the origin of Mughal Art; and
- appreciate the beauty of colours and composition.

It is aristocratic and secular in nature-based immediately on observation. European pictures and engravings brought to the Mughal courts by the travellers influenced the Mughal paintings in the increased use of shading and linear perspective. To make a single painting, several artist, worked together according to their expertise in drawing, colouring, landscaping etc. Akbar's son Jahangir was himself a great connoisseur of art and took pride in his critical power of observation. Numerous portraits, court scenes and episodes from his own life allegoric paintings were executed with great masterly skill during his reign. Jahangir was an ardent lover of nature, and some remarkable studies of birds, animals, and flowers are known from his period.

The reign of Shahajahan was associated with great building activity and works of high technical excellence were produced. Fine paintings of his period are primarily of court scenes and idealised portraits.

Under the last great Mughal ruler Aurangzeb, patronage of art and architecture declined. Due to a lack of patronage at the Mughal court, painters migrated to Hyderabad, Rajasthan and the Punjab hill states. Aurangzebs's successors in the 18th century were addicted to luxury and the art of painting lost its earlier glory.

7.1 AKBARI PERIOD

Dear learner, you need to know the artwork found in the Akbari period.

Basic Information

Babur was an educated Timurid, and his observations and comments in his memories reflect his interest in nature, society, politics and economics. His vivid account of events covered not just his life but the history and geography of the area. Miniature paintings are small format paintings which were usually painted by an artist with minute details especially to be used in books or albums. The forward mark of the elephant, the movement of horses and the gestures of soldiers and the emperor adds to the dynamism of the hunting scene.

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Fig. 7.1: Babur hunting Rhinoceros

7.1.1

Title	:	Babur Hunting Rhinoceros
Artist	:	Unknown
Medium	:	Water colour on paper
Period	:	1590 – 1593 C
Style	:	Miniature/Persian Style
collection	:	National Museum, New Delhi



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General Description

The painting has been taken from the manuscript of Baburnama. The medium of paintings is watercolour on paper. It's a miniature painting. This miniature shows the hunt for the rhinoceros by Babur. In the background of the painting, there are hills with trees. The figures in the background are smaller than the figures in the foreground to achieve depth. The light shades of colour in the background and dark shades in foreground also help to show the perspective. The plants and animals were painted with rhythmic lines. Subject is rich in variety. The composition is well-packed with minute details like action, and motion in figures and decorative clothes. The elephant is decorated with a floral design with delicate lines with all details. The border of the cloth has a dark shade with rich colours. This picture shows a hunting scene in which Babur is shown killing a Rhino. The elephant is running after the rhino. The feeling of force and expressions of each portrait make this painting a great masterpiece of the Mughal period. There are only a few human figures in the background and foreground. They are running and trapping the rhino from all sides and the rhino is trying to escape from the trap and running fiercely. This painting brings forth the intensity of a real hunt. In Mughal miniatures, the outlines were drawn with a fine brush. The painter began to paint the sky first and then he painted the background. The figures were drawn after that and finally, colours were applied. The artist has used natural (earth) and mineral colours in this painting.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.1

Choose the most appropriate option:

- What is the subject of this miniature painting?
 - Hunting scene
 - Market scene
 - Busy road
 - Sunrise scene
- What are the influences on Mughal miniature painting?
 - Western
 - Persia
 - Modern
 - Italian

7.2 PRINCE WITH A FALCON (JAHANGIR PERIOD)

You have learnt the style of the Akbari period. Now you will know the style of the Jahangir period.

Basic Information

This miniature is taken from the Jahangir period and painted by Ustad Mansur. Ustad Mansur was a famous painter of Jahangir's time and also a very good portrait painter. It is an excellent example of Ustad Mansur's work in Mughal art.

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Fig. 7.2: Prince with a Falcon

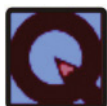
Title	:	Prince with a Falcon
Artist	:	Ustad Mansur
Medium	:	Govache, gold and ink on paper.
Style	:	Miniature
Collection	:	Los Angeles, Country Museum of Art, USA
Size	:	Height: 14.2 cm, Width 8.5 cm

General Description

Jahangir is known for his love of nature and patronage of miniature painting. Ustad Mansur, the artist of this painting, is known for the minuteness of his fine brush and

delicate sense of colours. 'Prince with a Falcon' is one of the excellent examples of painting by Ustad Mansur. Flat colours are used in this painting. Rich, bright colours like green, red, yellow ochre, black etc. are used. He is wearing a glove in one hand and holding a falcon as he stands against a flat background of the sky. Although no horizon line is drawn, the clouds and birds imply space in the painting. Ustad Mansur is known for his studies of birds. The claws of the falcon are tied with decorative strings and the bird's contour with linear outline is wonderful in the painting and there is a pleasant expression on both faces. The prince is admiring the falcon in his hand. The profile of the prince is shown in the painting. The artist has tried to achieve three dimensions by the colours as we can see the wings of the falcon which are spread in the air.

This painting is made on paper with opaque colours with a touch of gold and ink. The pigments used in paintings were obtained from minerals, ochres and vegetable extracts, lac dye and insects dyestuff. There were 5 basic colours; white was obtained from burnt conch shell and chalk, yellow from yellow ochre, red from red lead vermillion and green from green vegetables.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.2

1. What is the size of the miniature painting 'Prince with a Falcon'?
2. What type of medium is used in the painting "Prince with a Falcon"?
3. Who is the painter of the miniature painting "Prince with a Falcon"?

7.3 A BARBET (HIMALAYAN BLUE THROATED BIRD) JAHANGIR PERIOD

Learner, now let us learn about the painting of a Bird done by artist Mansur.

Basic Information

This miniature belongs to the Jahangir period. Jahangir was a great lover of nature. The maximum number of paintings on birds and animals were done in his period. 'A Barbet' is a famous painting by Ustad Mansur. Ustad Mansur was a famous painter of Jahangir's court. He was also one of the best Mughal portrait artists and was known for his wonderful studies of bird life. It is an example of a great piece of art from the Mughal period. The study of nature by the Mughal artist with delicate lines, stem of trees, leaves, and hills, and the use of nature study give a very real impact to these paintings.



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Fig. 7.3: A Barbet

Title	:	A Barbet
Artist	:	Ustad Mansur
Medium	:	Tempera
Period	:	Jahangir period, 1615
Style	:	Miniature
Collection	:	Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

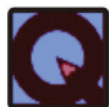
General Description

This painting is a fine example of bird study. Ustad Mansur specialized in depicting plants and animals. Barbet (Himalayan blue throated bird) is sitting on a branch of



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a tree in a pleasant gesture. The artist has painted the branches and leaves with delicate lines and colours. Perspective can be seen by the smaller leaves in the background and the big leaves in the foreground. The main subject is framed by an intricately executed border called Hashiya. The inner border is decorated with calligraphy. Outer border is decorated with floral ornament. The calligraphy is in Persian script. The bird Barbet has a sharp beak and round vigilant eyes. The bird's head is bent towards the branch. The colour of the bird is dark against the light background. It is yellow ochre with a tinge of blue in its feathers. The blue colour on the neck and bright red colour on the head of the Barbet are the centre of attraction. The colours in this miniature are rich and bright. Outlines were drawn with a brush using green colour. This miniature is done in tempera on paper. The pigments used in this painting were obtained from minerals, ochres and vegetable extracts, lac dye and insect dyestuff. There were five basic colours. Reproductions or copies were made with the aid of transparent paper or the animal's transparent inner skin or by punching the outline of the sketches on paper.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.3

Fill in the blanks:

1. The painting 'A Barbet' is a fine example of study.
2. The painter of the miniature painting 'A Barbet' is
3. The calligraphy is in script.

7.4 JAHANGIR HOLDING A PICTURE OF MADONNA

Basic Information

The painting 'Jahangir Holding a Picture of Madonna' is an example of the Mughal ruler's interest in different religions. It is a portrait of Jahangir with a picture of Madonna (Mother Mary). The respect for European culture can also be seen in this painting. A portrait means a painting or picture in which we can identify the individual by his face. Abul Hasan was one of the famous and dedicated artists of Jahangir's atelier. Learner, you know that it is an allegoric painting. Jahangir is holding the picture of Mary. His mother's name was Mariam-Uz-Zamam. In this context portrait of Mary is probably a reference to his mother.

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Fig. 7.4: Jahangir holding a Picture of Madonna

Title	:	Jahangir holding a Picture of Madonna
Artist	:	Abul Hasan
Medium	:	Tempera on paper
Period	:	Jahangir Period
Style	:	Mughal miniature
Collection	:	National Museum, New Delhi

General Description

A man of immense visual alertness, Jahangir gave special importance to portraiture. His period will be remembered in the particular and recognizable characteristics of the work of each of his artists. Abdul Hasan and Bishan Das developed their expertise as portrait painters during his reign. This small but warmly drawn portrait of Jahangir is one of the best studies of the emperor, and as also one of the best portraits the world has ever created. Jahangir, like his father, was liberal to all religions. His interest in Christianity is shown by holding the picture of the Virgin Mary. The emperor’s head is set in a nimbus with fine rays radiating from the circle. The portrait is small and placed at the centre of the composition, which is unique and different from the other portraits. The portrait is in profile, and has a prominent nose, a big head, soft colours and a golden appearance with minute details and delicate line, which is the main characteristics of the Jahangir school. The speciality of this painting is the various decorative borders around the portrait. The border is decorated with floral designs executed in gold. The inner borders are made differently as they are not symmetrical from all sides. Two rectangles with dark coloured borders in which manuscripts are written in rich colour on light background. In the upper rectangle, we can see two blocks in the corner with floral designs. In this work, the fine colour mixing, bold execution, rhythm in lines, well- packed composition with minute details, well-proportioned round face, and depiction of motion indicate an influence of European style. This miniature painting was done with tempera (watercolour) on paper. Earth colours were used on paper obtained from natural sources. The use of gold lines can be easily observed in the portrait. The brushes used were of various sizes and shapes. The finest brush used for drawing a single hair brush of different animals e.g. the Persian cat or the squirrel.



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INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.4

Fill in the blanks:

- 1. portrait was in the hand of Jahangir?
2. The painter of Jahangir holding a picture ‘ Madona miniature painting is



ACTIVITY

You will visit the library and collect some information regarding the Mughal miniature art. Now, you may express your feelings about the miniature form, colour used in the painting and theme of the painting in brief.

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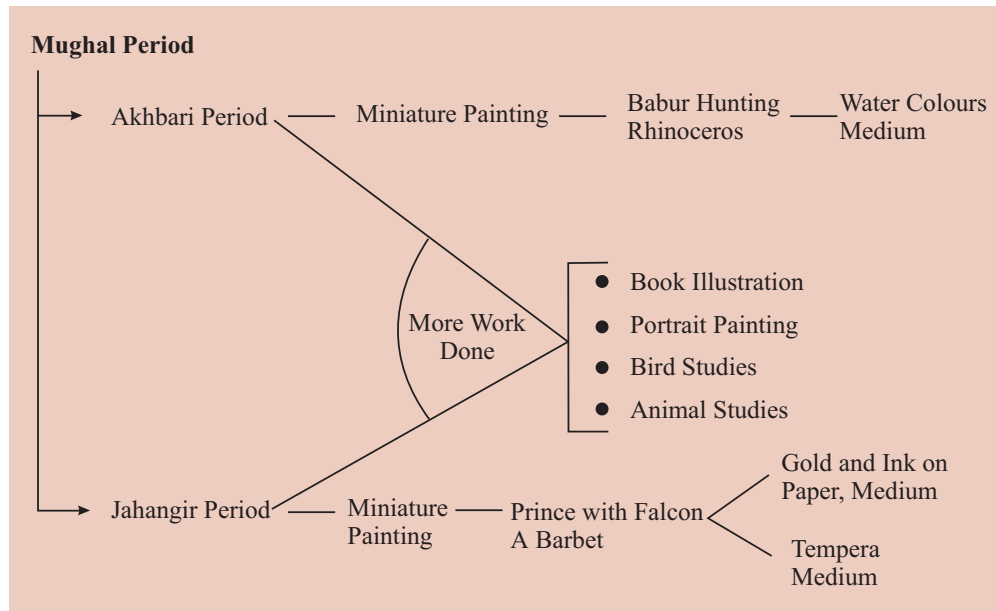


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WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT



LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learner can

- use the distinctive Mughal style in any of their objects;
- draw a composition with human and animal figures in the miniature style.



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Which type of pigments were used for making miniature paintings?
2. Which style affected the Mughal miniature? Describe in detail.
3. Write about the 'Babar Hunting Rhino' miniature painting?
4. Give a brief description of the painting 'Prince with a Falcon'?
5. Describe the title and artist of any two miniature paintings during Jahangir's period.
6. What is Mughal art? Explain its characteristic.
7. What type of colours were used in the painting 'A barbet'?
8. Where is the; 'Barbet' miniature painting displayed?

9. Who was the patron of this painting?
10. What is the medium of this miniature painting?
11. Write the period of the painting.
12. What are the colours used in the painting?
13. What was Jahangir known for?
14. How is depth suggested in work 'A Barbel'?



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

7.1

1. (i) Hunting scene
2. (ii) Persia

7.2

1. 14.92 × 9.53 cm.
2. Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper.
3. Ustad Mansur

7.3

1. Bird
2. Ustad Mansur
3. Persian

7.4

1. Virgin Mary
2. Abul Hasan

GLOSSARY

- Binder** The substance that holds the pigment particles together in a painting Linseed oil, egg yolk, acrylic resin emulsion.
- Earth Colour** Pigments which occur naturally in the ground, such as ochre, umber and sienna, yellow ochre. Brunt umber and burnt sienna are calcined earth.

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Form	The individual shapes and volumes, and their relationship, depicted in a work of art, whether figurative or abstract.
Outline	In the drawing, an imaginary line marks the boundary of an object or figure without taking into consideration light, shade, internal modelling or colour.
Miniature	Represented on a small scale.
Tradition	From generation to generation.
Portraiture	Study of the likeness of a person.
Tempera	Any paint in which pigment is tempered (mixed) with a water-based binding medium, usually egg yolk.
Manuscript	Hand-written book.