

# A study on Artist Alphonso Arul Doss's Painting: connectivity between Contemporary and Traditional paintings

**BALAJI VIJAYARAGHAVAN .S**, *Research Scholar, Department Visual communication,  
SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Tamil Nadu, INDIA*  
E-Mail: [bs4265@srmist.edu.in](mailto:bs4265@srmist.edu.in)

**Dr. R. RAJESH**, *Head and Associate Professor, Department: Visual communication  
SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Tamil Nadu, INDIA*

---

## Abstract:

*Painting is a kind of language form. It takes many forms, depending on the time and occasion. Shapes are made up of materials that are available over time. Painting is the medium or tool to share the creator's inspiration and experiences. When a man is viewing a Contemporary painting, that person should focus and view deeply upon what are the shapes used, what are the colours applied in the painting, and the way the style used in paintings, on which it is based on. In this research article, the researcher focuses on the artist Alphonso Arul Doss's paintings that are highly inspired by traditional paintings. Many clear things can be seen in this study by accurately quoting the extent to which it is a reflection of traditional paintings. This article also interprets and analyses artist Alphonso Arul Doss's contemporary art that is connected to traditional techniques.*

**Keywords:** Paintings, Traditional paintings, Contemporary painting, Artist Alphonso Arul Doss.

---

## 1.1 Introduction:

Contemporary painting involves the search for involvement, which is deeply ingrained in every painter, and the essence of nature and the approach reflected in each artist's work, which he or she has found with his or her senses, is reflected in the Indian heritage paintings at places such as the Ajanta, Ellora, Chittanavasal, Tanjore Big Temple, and Kanchipuram Kailasanathar Temple. The wall paintings, somehow manifest themselves in the works of the painter. Alphonso Arul Doss said that looking for reflections in the traditional paintings in their paintings, it would be a crutch to know the extent of the edition created by the works of the painters in other Contemporary paintings, and an opportunity to gain clarity on the invisible things about Contemporary paintings and painters.

## 1.2 Objectives:

The main objectives of the article are;

- To study the growth and development of Painting or murals,
- To study the painting works of Alphonso Arul Doss, and
- To analyze Alphonso Arul Doss's work that connects Contemporary and traditional painting.

## 1.3 Significance of the Study:

Artists followed the unique style of painting of each empire and used painting as a medium to record their culture, based on religious beliefs and so on. In such cases, paintings have taken many forms. So now we consider this type of painting as a traditional painting. The other form of painting that travels is contemporary.

The contemporary painting reflects each artist's unique style of painting; it is easy to see that these types of paintings have a hint of traditional painting. Artists express intuitive reflections in their paintings, it is easy to see that the impact of traditional painting on work is easily penetrated. Here, Dr. Alfonso Aruldoss' painting of a young girl is compared with traditional paintings.

In this research paper, the scale of the figure in the painting of the young girl, the tone of the traditional painting, the background, the balanced landscape, and the way the colors are used is explained, mainly compared to the traditional painting.

## 1.4 Methodology:

Content analysis is one of the most important research tools used to determine data quality. The researcher can analyze the relationship, meaning, and existence of certain ideas through content analysis. Analyze based on headlines, historical documents, books, media, and newspapers. In terms of method, this research is conducted to support the objectives of the process. To achieve these goals, various contents are analyzed, including documents by historians and experts on the history and value of paintings.

The content analysis method compares and clarifies traditional painting and contemporary painting; this research paper examines the scale of the figure in the painting of the young girl, the tone of the traditional painting, the balanced landscape, and the way the colors are used.

## 1.5 Painting or Murals:

Painting is a kind of language form. It takes many forms, depending on the time and occasion. Shapes are made up of materials that are available over time. Painting is the medium or tool to share the creator's experiences.

A mural is a work of art that is done directly on the wall, ceiling, or large permanent surface. A notable feature of the mural is that the architectural elements of the space are in sync with the image.

## 1.6 Traditional paintings:

Evidence of cave paintings dating back more than ten thousand years has been found around the world, especially in India. Until the end of the Mughal Empire, the traditional paintings were depicted as scenes from religious stories, monarchies, as befits the respective period. In palaces, lofts, temples, walls and ceilings they were painted as murals and preserved and developed as traditional paintings. These kinds of traditional paintings emerged in different nuances with the imagination of the painters as they adapted to each empire. Painting was often used to beautify temples and palaces.

Traditional paintings developed in this way, based on a certain scale, with measurements for human figures, animals, trees, plants, vines, etc. For example, if a human figure is depicted in a painting, the figure may be more or less proportional. The width of the middle finger located in the palm of the human figure depicted in this way is calculated in inches and their facial structure is calculated and drawn from the top to the sole of the body depending on it.

This is the method of measurement mentioned in the Chitra Sutra. So many methods have varied according to the region of the respective kingdoms, such as wall paintings, Miniature paintings, as per the respective painting type. And the colors are painted with naturally available compounds. These are extracted from rocks, barks, leaves, flowers, plant stems, and soil to create various colored compounds.

### 1.6.1 History of traditional painting

#### a) Mughal Paintings



Mughal painting is a form of painting in South Asia, especially in North India. The visual works for these painting stories are therefore drawn. It came out of Persian-derived paintings. And paintings adorned the palaces of the Mughal Empire in the 16th-18th centuries. Mughal paintings were more subtle and realistic than Persian paintings. Animals gained prominence over plants. The paintings also feature royal events, wildlife, hunting scenes, and war scenes.

#### b) Rajput Paintings

The Rajput paintings, which were integrated into the royal

families and families of Rajasthan, flourished from the 17th century onwards with various Rajput paintings gaining prominence in the 18th century. Such paintings are a reflection of the community of artists in Rajasthan and the way of life of the traditional people. There are also paintings as a testament to the rule pride and heroism of the Rajputs.

c) **Mysore Paintings**

Mysore painting is one of the traditional paintings of South India. Now the state of Karnataka has reached its peak through the art schools that have gained capital in Mysore. Gold threads are used in these paintings as well as in the Tanjore paintings. The theme of the painting is mythology and images of gods and goddesses. These types of paintings are beautiful and intricately carved to captivate the audience.

d) **Tanjore Paintings**

Tanjore paintings are traditional art of South India. Developed in Tanjore in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. These paintings were of ancient visual significance. The deities gained to design the aesthetic. Decorated with silk threads and glass-colored pieces.

Tanjore painting was recognized as a Geographical Code by the Government of India in 2007 and 2008.

Due to the artistic interest of Indian women in these paintings today, their involvement in painting and the development of painting is on the rise worldwide.

e) **Kangra Paintings**

Kangra painting Ganga is named after the former princely state of Himachal Pradesh. This painting is famous in the Pasoli School of Painting of the Eighteenth Century. This painting method later spread to Mandi Arki Nalagar places. Currently known as Bahari painting. In the 17th and 19th centuries, the Rajputs suffered and were given support.

f) **Madhubani Paintings**

Madhubani painting is one of the most important forms of Indian painting. This type of painting focuses on the Mithila region of Bihar and Nepal. These paintings are intricate and intricately shaped. Festivals Scenes of religious rites gain prominence. The paints used in Madhubani paintings are also made from plants and herbs. These colors are bright. Instead of a brush, these paintings were made with twigs, matches, and fingers.

### **1.6.2 Traditional painting in Tamil Nadu**

Painting plays an important role in the development of human life, from rock paintings found in caves to contemporary painting. From the Sangam period onwards the Cholas decorated the murals with myths as their architectural work.

Kanchipuram Kailasanathar temple paintings are also very famous as Pallava paintings, and the Chitthannavasal cave paintings are painted to reflect the principles of the Jain religion. Tanjore Big Temple Inner prakara paintings depict religious myths. The murals are systematically painted with naturally available color combinations, reflecting the clarity of the painting technique of Tamil Nadu.

## **1.7 Contemporary paintings:**

### **a) Development of Contemporary painting**

Globally, the language of painting, as shown in fossils in caves and rocks dating back to the Stone Age, has undergone many natural changes and is still in front of our eyes today. Its development is based on the religious culture of human life around the world, with available natural and artificial color combinations, with a variety of paintings on different objects, walls, temples, stories of religious doctrines, and visuals.

In its sequel, the artist's thought takes the form of thought and is emotionally visualized. Western art style underwent various evolutions and grew. At the same time, the painting of countries like China and Japan was unique. Similarly, Indian traditional painting was unique in that, as time went on, paintings transformed many innovations into paintings, which are the various stages of development of contemporary painting.

### **b) Contemporary paintings in India**

Even after the fall of the Mughal Empire, the forerunners of contemporary painting from the beginning of the English Empire were exposed to the outside world. It was during this period that traditional Indian traditional paintings came to an end. Moreover, the painters of this period acted intending to retain the essence of traditional painting in their works. Culture In the epic myths they made various attempts to manipulate the essence of the traditional painting without leaving the essence of the painting in the paintings of the systems. Ravi Varma's paintings were also prominent, especially as these paintings infiltrated Western essence in the name of Indian cultural divinity.

Indian paintings offer an aesthetic continuum that stretches from early civilization to the present day. Indian paintings, which initially depicted religious beliefs and values, have now developed into a collection of different traditions and cultures. Here is a list of paintings that are a summary of Indian culture and history for decades.

### **c) Contemporary painting in Tamil Nadu**

While painting is taking on different dimensions globally and developing at different levels in India as well, the work of painting, which developed after the fall of the Mughal Empire, is evolving in different contexts, as is the case in contemporary painting.

The role of the Madras School of Painting in the South is significant, let alone the contribution of the North, such as the Santiniketan and the JJ School of Arts. Roy Chaudhary, KCS Panicker, Danapal, Kanniyappan, Chandru, RB Baskaran, Dakshinamoorthy, Alphonsa Aruldoss, G Raman, RM Palaniappan, Karunamoorthy, Bhavani Shankar, Ravishankar. These paintings show the personal personality of the painters and the reflection of the traditional painting in their works.

Chennai College of Arts, Tamil Nadu College of Fine Arts, Regional Lalith Kala Academy Chennai Zone, Cholamandal Artist Village, Padappai Artist Village, and Kumbakonam College of Arts and their related works of art play a major role in the development of contemporary painting in Tamil Nadu.

### **1.8 Alphonso Arul Doss:**

Alphonsa Arul Doss was born in 1939 in Bangalore. He graduated from Government Arts College, Chennai. He joined the College of Painting where he studied as a painting teacher. He then served as principal of the college from 1992 to 1997. He got the National Award, India's premier award for painters.

He has revealed information about Indian traditional painting in his works. His paintings depict mainly three-dimensional oil paintings. He exemplified a quality similar to bronze sculpture in his paintings. He is skilled in drawing in pencil and charcoal. He is the one who is best at handling the light shadow theory. He continued his modern painting career after his college career and after retirement.

### **1.9 Interpretation and Analyses:**

#### **Young Girl**

Based on the anatomical measurements mentioned in the traditional painting and contemporary paintings, the given 'Young Girl' painting of Alphonse is been analyzed. However, in general, 80% of traditional anatomical measurements are not been followed in contemporary paintings.



- a) **Fingers:** Fingers are usually taken as the main yardstick in traditional painting. When a portrait is drawn, its measurement is human hand inches, based on which the eyes,



nose, forehead, neck, etc. are measured.

As mentioned in traditional paintings, no measurements are introduced in contemporary paintings, the expression of a painter's self-creation is revealed in his aesthetic works, although the painters who draw paintings based on the compositional style, with the tendency of traditional painting, it appears as if there is a certain amount of figurative measurements in its patterns.

In this painting, although the measurements do not fully follow the traditional painting style, the texture of the fingers is mirrored in traditional painting. The artist's familiarity with traditional painting is palpable, but deep involvement can be felt through the arrangement of the fingers on this painting.

- b) **Eyes:** When human figures are depicted in paintings, the eye is prominent. In traditional painting, the eye is drawn according to its size. The size of the eye is revealed to match the character of the figure depicted in the painting. Based on that, there are variations like peaceful gaze, spiritual meditative gaze, angry gaze, and peaceful gaze.

There are no restrictions to drawing with such a certain scale in Contemporary painting. The eyes are displayed in different ways, with the artist's autonomy as a form of thought, which we can easily see in Contemporary painting.

In this young girl painting by Dr. Alphonso Aruldoss, we can see the structure of the eyes painted in white color without filling any part. Although this painting gives the impression that the eye area is unfinished, it has been revealed as a completed painting as per the artist's claim. This painting can be felt in the eye area like traditional painting and Contemporary painting. This is his meticulous painting expression.

- c) **Colors:** In traditional painting, colors are drawn from naturally available materials. The colors thus obtained are made from a variety of natural materials such as tree bark, leaves, flowers, soil, and rock formations. The colors thus obtained are often developed depending on the area being painted. And the visual depictions are arranged on the backs accordingly.

Colors play an important role in distinguishing the foreground from the background, just as the painting corresponds to the places in the story.

The colors used in the modern painting are made from synthetic materials. The colors produced in this way, different types of colors are created according to the change of technological development and according to the thinking ability of the creator, the painting is suitable for creation. With the colors used in this way, the painter presents different layers in his work as the front part structure and the back part of the displayed figure. The paintings are drawn in this way make my eyes travel to many places by sight, and colors are used to attract the viewer's mind by making their travel within the painting.

The colors used in this painting have the hue of traditional painting but are made with synthetic pigments. His painting presentation In this painting, emphasis is placed on the young girl and he has created it with the color shade of traditional painting. And even though the area behind the young girl is painted flat, it looks as if a long gap has been created by the colors. This helps us to understand his colorful personality.

- d) **Composition:** Composition plays an important role in works of art. When painting, the lines drawn are colored to suit the figure and prominently projected. A basic feature of artwork is to center the figure and bring all the scenes drawn in the background into a proper framework.

In traditional painting, the figures are drawn according to the scenes and the scenes seen in the front and back are important. Similarly, when the colors and their handling are placed in a more uniform manner in the painting, the resulting appearance of the traditional painting draws the viewer's attention.

Although contemporary painting transcends any boundaries and does not define specific measurements, the figures displayed within the framework assigned to a painting must be properly arranged, which is revealed in the experience of the painter and the painting itself.

Regarding the painting of the Young Girl, the manner in which the image of the girl is highlighted, the manner in which the colors are handled, and the skill and experience of the artist who draws the painting within a limited range are clearly understood through this work. The red-colored "kumkuma tilak" attracts the audience, parallel to this is the chimney lamp placed to the right of the young lady behind which the full moon is arranged as if combined with the color at the top, balancing the forms of the painting. Such a combination of images can be seen in these paintings.

## 1.10 Conclusion:

Through this review article, it is possible that the great impact on the works of contemporary Indian painters can be a reflection of traditional paintings. Thus such paintings take the



opportunity to be an expression of aesthetics and to prevail over time. The dazzling ability of traditional paintings is one of the reasons why aesthetics have gained prominence in works of art. There is no alternative to the idea that paintings are timeless when they are reflected in the works of contemporary painters.

The personality of the form and colour in his paintings and the impact of reflection from which the reflection comes should therefore be an observer's quest. As an observer, this study of mine will set a precedent for measuring the extent to which traditional paintings have had an impact on his paintings, including the dimensions of traditional painting, and thus on other contemporary paintings and the works of painters. This will be an opportunity to gain clarity about contemporary paintings and the invisible things in them.

### 1.11 Reference:

Edith Tomory (1982). A History of Fine Arts in India and the West, First Edition, Orient Longman (P) Ltd, Bangalore.

KRISHNA CHAITANYA (1976) A History Of Indian Painting: Pahari Traditions | Exotic India Art, First Edition, Abhinav Publications, Hauz Khas, New Delhi, Delhi

KRISHNA CHAITANYA (1976) A History of Indian Painting: The Modern Period, First Edition, Abhinav Publications, Hauz Khas, New Delhi, Delhi

SANDHYA KETKAR (2017) The History of Indian Arts, First Edition, Jyotsna Prakashan, Mumbai, Maharashtra

Rakhee Balaran and Partha Mitter (2022) 20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary, First Edition, Thames and Hudson, USA

Nunkalai (July 1985) Monthly magazine, Tamilnadu oviyanunkalai kuzhu, Chennai

Retrieved from: The Art of Painting in Ancient India – Chitrasutra (1) <https://sreenivasaraos.com/2012/09/18/the-art-of-painting-in-ancient-india-chitrasutra-1/>

Retrieved from: The Art of Painting in Ancient India – Chitrasutra (2) <https://sreenivasaraos.com/2012/09/18/the-art-of-painting-in-ancient-india-chitrasutra-2/>

Retrieved from: <https://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/art/alphonso-arul-doss-of-madras-art-movement-passed-away/article34393223.ece>

Retrieved from: <https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/mughal-painting/m06rzv2>

Retrieved from: <https://wrytin.com/brahmneetkaur/rajput-paintings-k13tspi8>

Retrieved from: <https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-art/paintings/mysore.html>

Retrieved from: <https://www.tarangarts.com/paintings/tanjore-painting>

Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kangra\\_painting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kangra_painting)

Retrieved from: <https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-art/paintings/madhubani.html>