



Harkrishan Lall's Contribution to Delhi Silpi Chakra

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Abstract

During the time of independence, the artists related to progressive artists group (PAG) did a joint exhibition with the artists of Calcutta Group in Calcutta. In a meantime, Indian artists began a quest for their individual styles, bringing forward innovative ideas and new techniques. Delhi Silpi Chakra (DSC) group emerged in 1949, as a post partition phenomenon a number of artists from the Lahore art school migrated to Delhi. An eminent painter Harkrishan Lall was joint the emerging art group which is known as DSC. Lall was a distinguished painter who has been painting people and landscapes from more than four decades. He also made a valiant effort in taking a new direction through his paintings. The contribution of Lall is remarkable and his paintings also played the vital role for enhancement of DSC.

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Introduction

The India's independence from colonial rule might have strengthened the idea of modernism in Indian art. Freedom also brings freedom of expression to every extent of life in India, which leads towards individualistic vision in art ushered in an era of challenge as well as transgression in art. The so-called artists of transition, for instance, seem to be engrossed in a contemplation of simpler pursuits of the everyday life. In 1951 Progressive Artists Group (PAG) artists did a joint exhibition with the artists of Calcutta Group in Calcutta. In a meantime, Indian artists began a quest for their individual styles, bringing forward innovative ideas and new techniques. Delhi Silpi Chakra (DSC) group emerged in 1949, as a post partition phenomenon a number of artists from the Lahore art school migrated to Delhi. It was a time of confusion, trauma and the artists felt the need to be self-reliance. They also continued the quest for a national style of expression, turning to local craft traditions for inspiration in this direction.

The members of DSC group came together in the tumultuous year of India's Independence, 1947, in its new capital, New Delhi. It's founder the senior sculptor teacher B.C. Sanyal left Lahore for Delhi during Partition and several members were refugees. As a break way faction from the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society (AIFACS), the group was formed in 1949, on the principle beliefs of a greater meeting between the artists and writers, and that art had to come closer to the people-famously, they brought art exhibitions to the lanes of Delhi's Chandni Chowk and Karol Bagh. Harikshan Lall was one of the famous Punjabi painter, who join this

group and contribute his paintings in various exhibitions related to DSC. The Silpi Chakra group interacted actively with artists and continued operating well by the 1960s (Mago, 1998).

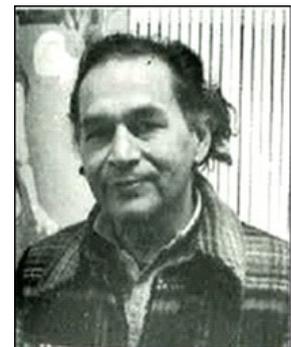
Objective of the Study

The research paper is concerned with the following research objectives:

1. To indicate the contributes of Harkrishan Lall to DSC
2. To Analysis the painting of Harikrishan Lall with reference to theme, style, medium and techniques of paintings.
3. To find out the different symbols and stories in paintings or artworks of Delhi Silpi Chakra group.

Harkrishan Lall: Life Sketch & Contributions

Harkrishan Lall was born on 8th March, 1921 in Ludhiana, Punjab and died on 6th September, 2000 in Kottakal, Kerala. Lall was one of the distinguished Punjabi painter who painted everyday life and landscape for almost half of a 20th century and he was an active member of the DSC and official five Artists Delegation Soviet to visit Soviet and Poland in 1953. He participated in



Harkrishan Lall
(1921-2000)

Fig. 1. Courtesy of Nature magazine

many group exhibitions in India and abroad, and received numerous awards including the Gold Medal from Calcutta Fine Arts Society (1960) and Gold Medal from Bombay Art Society (1961). He had many successful one-man exhibitions (Singh, 2008).

He was a distinguished painter who has been painted people and landscapes from more than four decades and stood tall on the art scene. He tried in his art to create an Indian landscape by amalgamating various influences, such as that of impressionists like Pierre Bonnard and the post-impressionists like Cezanne and Van Gogh but also by Ajanta murals and Pahari miniatures. Whatever the source of inspiration, the one significant aspect was the desire to create a painterly style. His earliest works engage with the partition in which he re-lives the pain of people rent from their roots with extreme violence and aggression. Later he turned to romantic landscapes using pure colour to explore the harmonies of nature in his work, becoming expressionist in his approach using thick impasto and texture in this works. (Mago, 1988).

Painting Analysis of Harkrishan Lall

Lall's played significant role for emergence of DSC. The exhibited famous paintings in various exhibitions related to Chakra are listed within, Melons for Market (1940), Merry go round (1940), Lake palace-udaipur (1950), Rudra prayag (1951), City Scape-Udaipur (1961), Sunset (n.d.), Village in pangi (n.d.) etc. As per the requirement of the study, some famous paintings were analysed in the following paragraphs.

Painting No. 1: Melons for Market

Theme: This painting depicts a story of Melons for Market. In this painting artist at the time was in search of the 'picturesque', and the exotic Indian scenes. Artist captured a field of melons scene through in brush. His powerful rendering of contemporary themes with the traditions, customs and sensibilities of Indian heritage. *Style:* Artist used in this painting realistic-cum-impressionistic manner. *Medium:* Artist used oil and canvas in this painting. *Technique:* Artist has used above painting little thick layer of colour. Swift strokes executed the contours in a little swift impasto manner that both the styles and subject matter (theme) exude the charm and playfulness often found in local life art. The artist creation through of a painting is its visual format: the arrangement of its lines, shapes, colours, tones, and textures into an expressive pattern (Painting No. 1).



Lall, H. (1940). Melons for Market. Oil on canvas, 87×61 cm.
Coll. Sh. Krishan Khanna

Painting No. 2: Sunset

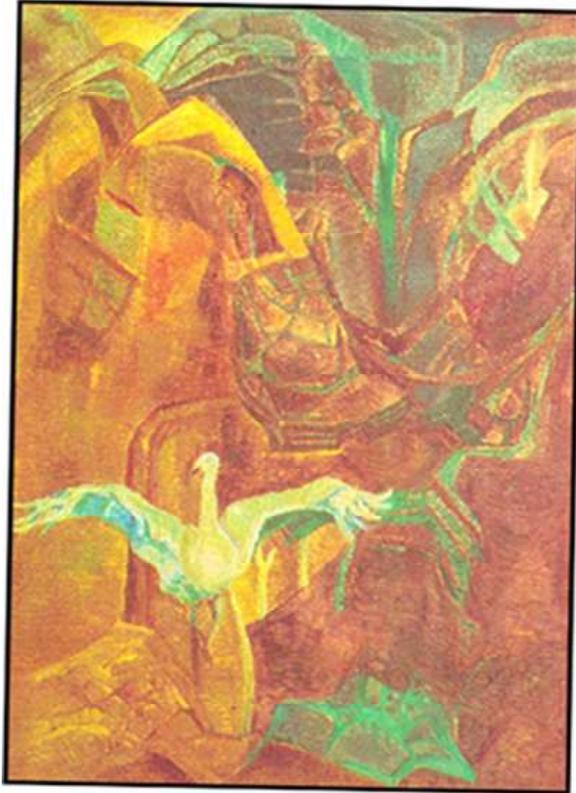
This painting depicts a scene of sunset. The theme of the landscape seems like the beauty of nature. *Style:* Artists used in this a realistic cum abstract and expressionistic way. The red sun being the focal elements. The different horizontal strokes of brushes give a impression semi abstract style. *Medium:* Sanyal used oil colour medium. In this painting artist has spread the limited range of colours.



Lall, H. (n.d.). Sunset. Oil on canvas, 107×88 cm. New Delhi:
Coll. NGMA, Acc. No: 2226

Painting No. 3: Rocks & Birds

Lall believed that the original idea was the most important element in any creative art work. Whole painting full of different forms and well-constructed The swan and birds was clearly visible in this painting. *style* The colour application is expressive brush strokes and giving effect of three-dimensionally. His vision on nature was always poetic, as was his personal form of expression.



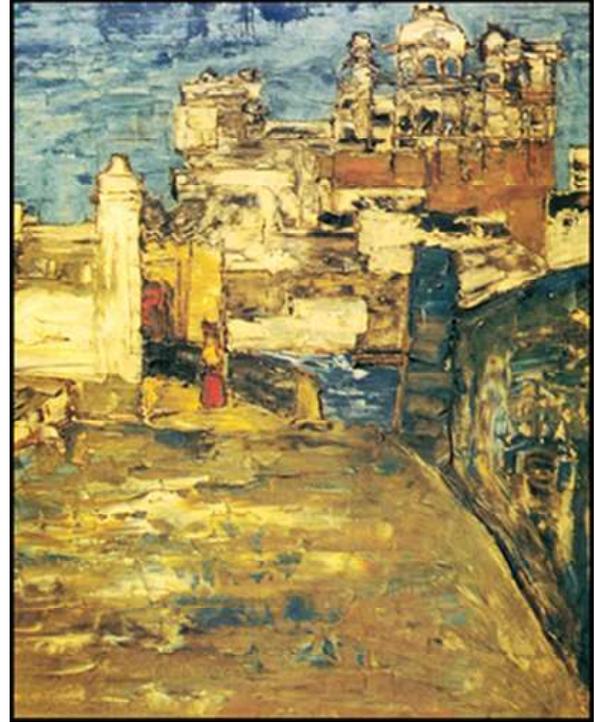
Lall, H. Rocks & Birds

Painting No. 4: City Scape-Udaipur

This painting depicts a story of City Scape-Udaipur. The paintings of Lall is an expression of deeply felt urges infused with a freshness of artistic approach. Painted spontaneously in unusual harmonies of colour, his paintings possess an instant appeal.

Conclusion

There are certain elements of fantasy in his later landscapes of quiet and still forms that he created during his roamings in the valleys and mountains of Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, and desert towns of Rajasthan; two contrasting regions. But then he in his later works, has always projected a suggestion of rest and repose of tranquillity, of brooding stillness. Lall was a distinguished painter who has been painted people and landscapes for more than five decades. Influenced not only by the impressionists like Pierre Bonnard and the post-impressionists like Cezanne and Van Gogh but also by Ajanta murals and Pahari miniatures. He has endeavoured to create works in a truly painterly manner. His themes however have gradually changed from the intense expression of the horrifying experience of partition to romantic landscapes structured in semi-Cezannesque style. Harkrishan is one of the pioneers



Lall, H. (1961). City Scape-Udaipur. Oil on canvas, 81.5×61 cm. Coll. Trilok Sud

of Indian modern art who was applying him seriously to landscape painting. This served as a stimulant for the later painters following the art of landscape painting. (Prem Singh, 2008)

Lall painted people and landscape for more than five decades and stood tall on the art scene. He tried in his art to create an Indian Landscape by amalgamating various influences, such as that of impressionists like Pierre Bonnard

The paintings of Harkrishan Lall exhibited in various exhibitions play the significant role for upliftment of DSC. He also made a valiant effort in taking a new direction through his paintings. Some famous painting, those exhibited in various exhibition entitled as Melons for Market (1940), Merry go round (1940), Lake palace-udaipur (1950), Rudra prayag (1951), City Scape-Udaipur (1961), Sunset (n.d.), Village in pangi (n.d.) etc. Harikrishna Lall art work 1950 picture of participation displayed and disinherited poor of the country through overtime emerge the early modern landscape making broadly defined panoramic scene depicting Villages of Himalayas backwaters of Kerala bright Sun City of Rajasthan

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