

## The Intellectual and Aechnical Dimensions of Indian Madhubani murals

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### Introduction:

Madhubani is one of the folklore or tribal Indian arts that dates back to approximately the fourteenth century and is practiced in the regions of Mithila or Madhubani and in the cities of Jitwarpur, Ranti, Darbhanga, Saharsa and Purnea in Bihar (northeastern India) and the neighboring parts of Terai. In Nepal, the word (Madhubani) means (honey forest) where trees and nature are part of most works of art, as if it is a celebration of nature.

City women have specialized in this art as they pass it on to their daughters, but now men are also participating in it to meet the growing demand for it commercially.

**Research problem:** lies in the knowledge of the intellectual dimensions of the Indian Mahhubani tribes and the extent to which murals painting has been affected by them from a plastic and technical point of view.

**The aim of the research:** Identify the mural works related to one of the cultures of the ancient world inherited until now in the State of India, including its intellectual, plastic and technical values.

**The importance of the research:** Study of mural works from an intellectual, plastic and technical aspect, and their application by contemporary painters of murals in India.

**The research hypothesis:** The presence of mural paintings of neighboring cultures with a civilization extending for thousands of years that are still in place until the twenty-first century, and are being revived in a continuous manner with the addition of some contemporary changes.

**Research boundaries:** -Temporal boundaries: the fourteenth century to the twenty-first century.

- Spatial boundaries: Mithila Madhubani in India.

**Research methodology:** Analytical, descriptive and historical approach.

### Key words:

mural painting, Mahbani tribes, India, myth, thought, technique, traditional, Assortment values.

### The technical dimensions of Madhoubani murals: -

Madhoubani art depends on two types of holders, either it is executed on the walls (from mud, cow dung and neem juice) and becomes mural works called "Bhitti Chitra", meaning graffiti, or it is executed on the floors and is called "Aripana", and it is painted with colored rice paste (red, green, yellow, black and scarlet), but now it is practiced on paper and hand-made "Pata Chitra", and natural colors made from vegetables and mineral oxides are used, along with some other secondary colors extracted from flower grinding, making the colors vibrate with airiness and joy( Figure 1), but in some contemporary mural works, these natural colors are replaced by acrylic colors (Figure 2). The artist also uses his fingers, twigs, pens, brushes and matches to paint.



Figure (1) a mural of Madhubani art, natural pigments, by Mahasundari Devi, at the artist's house, Ranti Village, Bihar, India



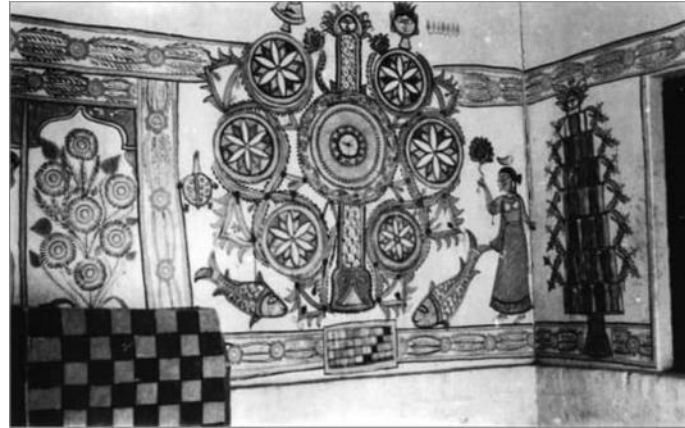
Figure (2) Madhubani paintings on Bihar Sampark Kranti Express, executed by village women, acrylic, carried out in 2018, Bihar, India

### The intellectual dimensions and their impact on the plastic values of Madhubani's murals:

Each festival or event is concerned with specific forms of mural works that are appropriate to the event, such as childbirth, marriage and death. For example, any new home must be decorated from the inside with a set of murals, so three rooms or places are allocated for their implementation, which is "Ghosain-ba-ghara" room Family God (Figure 3), "Kohbar ghar" newlyweds room (Figure 4), "Kohbar ghar ka koniyan" The balcony outside the newlyweds' room (Figure 5).



**Figure (3) Ten-cubit goddess Durga (Pravati) presides over the Ghosain-ba-ghar room from her central position above the mantelpiece, 1919 AD, natural pigments, Rajnagar Palace, Rajnagar District, India.**



**Figure (4) Kohbar ghar room mural. Natural pigments, Pt Vaidyanath Jha's house, 1935 AD, Darbanga District, Methila, India.**



**Figure (5) balcony of kohbar ghar ka koniyan, with the goddess Ganeshia (elephant), natural pigments, the twentieth century, by the artist Mahasundari Devi (1922-2013), at the artist's house, Ranti Village, India. Bihar.**

Madhoubani's art is characterized as a folk art, and its designs are characterized by symmetry design and flatness, that do not leave an empty space inside, so the spaces are filled with decorations consisting of flowers, animals, birds, and geometric shapes. usually they are drawn on a white background, with a decorative frame drawing for the work, and the characters are depicted. Flat abstract in the middle of the work, and the faces are with bulging eyes and pointed noses, so the face is depicted in a lateral position (profile) while the eye is drawn completely (the face), and the rest of the body is depicted



Figure (6) a painting entitled "Kohbar" Marriage Symbols, 2004 AD, Methila Institute of Art, Madhubani District, India.

from the front corner with side feet. It is also called symbolism, as it has many symbols that need interpretation related to specific meanings, as they express the experiences, ideas and culture of this community, so its plastic elements consist of plants and trees such as bamboo and lotus sticks representing (male and female), and animals and birds such as lions (symbolizing the king), elephants (to the Hindu god Ganshia, son of Lord Shiva and his wife Pravati), fish (fertility and procreation), parrot and peacocks (love and romance), turtles (the union of two lovers), and reptiles such as snakes (representing protection), the moon and the sun (indicating long life and preservation). These elements are used to decorate the bride's room and this style is called Kohbar Style (Figure 6).

### The styles of Madhoubani murals are divided into five types (Bharni, Kachni, Tantric, Godhana, Kohbar):-

**Bharni style (meaning filling):** In this style, the outlines of the design are drawn in black with a wide thickness, and the interior spaces are filled with bright colors such as red, orange and yellow with some decoration (Figure 1).

**Kachni style (calligraphy):** in which the decoration is used to fill the design areas by means of different types of lines that are precisely parallel, and the different sizes of the points, and the thickness of the lines is according to the design, and only black and scarlet are used in coloring with a white ground (Figure 7).

**Tantric style:** It is a style that follows texts that came in books of the Vedas called (Tantra) and represents the form of treatment between genders (male and female), symbolized for them by a bamboo stick or bamboo and lotus flower, and drawing and coloring is done according to what is mentioned in these texts.

**Godhana style (meaning tattoo):** Different or similar design elements are repeated in the form of concentric circles or rectangles in parallel lines, all the design is in black and some designs are in other colors (Figure 8).

**The Kohbar style:** It is the method used in the murals of the newlyweds' house (previously explained) and it is mostly red to indicate its sacred importance, (Figure 9) in which lotus flowers are circular in red and next to them, there are bamboo sticks (bamboo) in green.



Figure (7) painting executed in Kachni style for decorative elements, Methila Institute, 2019 AD, Methila, India.



Figure (8) a painting illustrating the Godhana style, by a village artist from Jitwarpur village, Bihar, India.



Figure (9) Kohbar ghar room, natural pigments, 20th century, by Mahasundari Devi, artist's home, Bihar, India.

### Research results:

- Madhoubani's murals are distinguished by their originality and representation of the heritage of the Methila city, as they embody Hindu mythology and the tribal life of this city in an innate and abstract symbolic way, as it depends on natural materials in the colors used and the bearing surface.

### **Recommendations:**

To benefit from these Indian heritage arts, which preserve their artistic legacies and this tradition to this day, by making use of our ancient Egyptian heritage and learning from the plastic and technical aspects and benefiting from it in the application of contemporary murals.

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