# Stylistic Divergence in Rajasthani Miniature Painting: A Comparative Study of Mewar and Marwar Manuscripts

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**Abstract**

Rajasthani manuscript or miniature painting, renowned for its unique identity despite a distinctive synthesis of external influences such as Mughal, Iranian, Pahari and other indigenous traditions, flourished between the 17th and 19th centuries in major styles rooted in local courtly patronage and indigenous aesthetic traditions of Rajasthan, of which the early Mewar and Marwar paintings hold an invaluable place in Indian art with their distinctive regional stylistic vocabulary and iconographic preferences. The aim of this paper is to explore the stylistic variations of the regional visual vocabulary of Mewar and Marwar, which often focuses on Vaishnava themes such as the Bhagavata Purana and the Ramayana. In addition, the paper also examines the influences of other styles on Mewar and Marwar from an art-historical perspective. This style of painting, which flourished under the patronage of Rajput rulers, is associated with the harmonious influence of Rajasthani courtly aesthetics and Mughal sophistication and a strong Vaishnava devotional ethos. Based on a comparative analysis, this paper examines the intricate details, symbolic colours, stylistic variations, spirituality and narrative eloquence of Mewar and Marwar manuscript paintings. It also locates the miniature painting traditions of these regions within the broader history of Rajasthani art, with insights into the dynamics of regional diversity as well as cross-cultural interactions in these paintings characterized by figurative expressions.

**Keywords**

Manuscript Painting, Mewar and Marwar Schools, Stylistic Differentiation, Courtly Patronage, Narrative Iconography

## 1. Introduction

The Rajasthani School of art evolved from ancient Indian traditions under Rajput kings. Initially influenced by Mughal art, it later became distinctly Indian. While not originally miniature, it primarily focused on mural art. Despite Mughal invasions affecting Rajasthan, Mewar remained a stronghold, fostering the early growth of the Rajasthani School. Subsequently, it thrived in various cities like Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Kishangarh under rulers like Kishan Singh and Raja Sawant Singh. Rajasthani art embodies Hindu sentiments and Indian sensibilities. A large portion of Indian miniature painting comes from Rajasthan. These miniatures are endowed with warm colors, primitive vigor, directness of expression, and everything that suits the unique land of Rajasthan. After the wall paintings of Ajanta, Bagh etc., the Pala and Jain styles started in India in the ninth century in which small paintings were made on palm leaves.

Miniature art in Rajasthan traces its roots to the Rajput courts of the 16th century, evolving under the influence of Mughal art, local traditions, and religious themes. The kings of Mewar, Marwar, Bundi, Kota, and Kishangarh nurtured this art as a symbol of royal pride and cultural sophistication [1].

There's debate among scholars about the origins and details of Rajasthani art in Indian painting. However, research and historical evidence indicate that it emerged and developed between the 17th and 19th centuries. Dr. Anand K. Coomarswamy, in his book "Rajput Painting" (1916), was the first to mention and describe the miniature style. He categorized medieval art into Rajput and Mughal styles. As research progressed, scholars like Basil Grey and O.C. Ganguly revealed different styles within Rajput art, leading to the classification of Rajasthani and Pahari styles.

Scholar Anand Coomaraswamy in 1916 coined the term ‘Rajput Paintings’ to refer to these as most rulers and patrons of these kingdoms were Rajputs [2]. He, specifically, coined it to categorise and differentiate this group from the much known Mughal School of Painting. Therefore, Malwa, comprising princedoms of Central India, and the Pahari Schools that comprises the pahari or mountainous Himalayan region of north-western India was also in the ambit of Rajput Schools. For Coomaraswamy [2], the nomenclature represented the indigenous tradition of painting prevalent in the mainland before the conquest by the Mughals. Studies in Indian paintings have come a long way since then and the term ‘Rajput Schools’ is obsolete. Instead, specific categories, such as Rajasthani and Pahari are employed.

After independence, Rajputana became Rajasthan, as described by Colonel Todd in 1829. Hence, Rajasthani painting refers to the art tradition that thrived in this region.

During the pre-medieval period (7th to 12th century), Rajasthan saw significant developments in art and literature. Illustrated manuscripts like "Shravan Pratikraman Churni" (1260) and "Supasanahchariyam" (1422-1423) display early Rajasthani painting influenced by Jain and Gujarat styles.

After the 15th century, illuminated manuscripts such as the Kalpsutra of 1426, Basant Vilas Pattachitra (scroll painting) of 1451, and Gita Govind of 1450 played crucial roles in shaping the Rajasthani School. This school of painting evolved a unique style, blending Jain and non-Jain scriptures with regional elements and classical art principles.

Medieval illuminated manuscripts from the 12th to 15th centuries, like the Adipurana painted in 1540 and the Mahapurana of the same year, showcased the development of the Rajasthani School. They depicted local features mixed with exaggerated poses and symbolic depictions of nature. The Ragamala series of paintings from 1605 by Nasiruddin at Chawand further strengthened the authenticity of the Rajasthani School's origins, particularly in Mewar.

In the early 16th century, the Mewar School, influenced by the Gujarat style, ushered in a new era in Indian painting. It merged elements of the medieval Bhakti Movement and Ritikavya, depicting themes from Shringara Kavya and Bhakti Ras. The Rajasthani School excelled in painting themes like Ragamala, Barahmasa, Ritu-Varnana (seasons), and Nayak-Nayika Bheda, adding new depth and detail to these subjects.

Before the advent of paper, miniature paintings were executed on palm leaves. However, the invention of paper in the 12th century revolutionized the illustration of texts, allowing for greater ease and detail in painting. Over time, miniature paintings shifted from palm leaves to Vasli (paper) to ensure their permanence.

Dr. Ratan Parimu published a research paper on a manuscript of the Bhagavata Purana, some pages of which he discovered in a private collection in Mumbai. He found in these pages many elements of the Chaurapanchasika (a set of 50 verses written by Bilhana, a Kashmiri pandit, in the eleventh century), as well as some common features with the Hamzanama, which was painted in Akbar's workshop. Dr. Parimu thus concludes that this Bhagavata Purana, borrowing some of its features from the Hamzanama, could have been produced within a few years of the completion of the latter.

Dr Parimoo [3] conjectured that either the Hamzanama model of illustrative painting had come into circulation soon after it was completed, or the artist, who illustrated this Bhagavata Purana, had access to the Mughal court. He ignored a third, and perhaps more logical alternative, that both, the Bhagavata Purana and the Hamzanama, inherited these features from a common pool, and that was the Chaurapanchasika model of early Indian paintings.

No one can deny the exceptional merit of Mughal art, but to discover in it the roots of the entire Indian miniature painting style is perhaps excessive. Before Mughal art, India had a 1,000-year-old tradition beginning with the wooden covers of Gilgit manuscripts that were painted in the early seventh century and the Central Asian Buddhist miniatures of the seventh to eighth centuries to the Mandu Kalpasutra, dated AD 1439, painted at Mandu in Central India.

Rajasthani painting clearly found its idiom and original form in the indigenous traditions and conventions of India. Scholars classify the entire Indian painting of the period before Akbar as either pre-Akbar or Sultanate art. Such an observation is merely incidental. From the second half of the fifteenth century a major change began to take place in Indian painting. Buddhist and Jain art was losing its importance, Bhagavat bhakti and Jayadeva's cult of devotional love for Krishna, beginning with his poem Gita-Gobind, brought a renaissance in Indian life. The painters of Rajasthan were painters in the true sense, not photographers. Scholars like Hermann Goetz, Karl Khandlavala [4], Ramgopal Vijayvargiya, Kunwar Sangram Singh added Ajmer Uniara, Deogarh substyles to the classification of styles like Bikaner, Marwar, Kota, Jaipur Shekhawati. Dr. Moti Chandra has given special importance to the paintings of Mewar, Kishangarh and Bundi because of their stylistic characteristics [5]. The mainstream of Indian painting took two different directions, one with greater prevalence of Islamic elements, and the other with indigenous Indian elements [6]. This art was largely pictorial. By the end of the fifteenth century, a group of paintings on secular themes emerged. Both art forms accepted it with equal enthusiasm, one serializing romances like Laur Chanda and Mrigavat, and the other, Chourpanchasika. Later, paintings depicting sectarian texts like Bhagavata Purana, Gita-Gobind, Bilva Mangal, Balgopal Stuti and others adopted the Chourpanchasika style and thus formed a stylistic group. This gave variety to the art of the period, which was dominated by Islamic elements, such as Sultanate art and the other, the Chourpanchasika style. Along with this, it seems that a folk art also prevailed in this region of Rajasthan. Thus, broadly, when Rajasthani painting was born in its miniature form, there were four important art styles, namely Sultanate, Chourpanchasika, sectarian and folk art.

Rajasthani painting found its original idiom in the Chourpanchashika style and not in Mughal art. In fact, even Akbar's early works inherited many elements from this style. Leaving aside the early Jain Ragmala of the sixteenth century, which is probably the work of Sirohi artists, three early schools of Rajasthani painting, even if we go by the reported material, have their pioneering works on ragas and raginis-the Chavand Ragmala set of Mewar, the Chunar Ragmala set of Bundi and the Pali Ragmala set of Marwar. The Pali Ragmala has a strong touch of folk art and its trees are considered to be similar to the trees depicted in the paintings of the Chourpanchashika group. In symbolism, the type of trees and the overall background of the Chavand Ragmala are largely a continuation of the Laur Chanda and Chourpanchashika traditions.

### 1.1 Research Questions

What are the defining stylistic characteristics of Mewar and Marwar manuscript paintings?

How did the historical context influence the artistic styles of Mewar and Marwar paintings?

How do the themes and iconography differ between Mewar and Marwar paintings?

### 1.2 Methodology

•Detailed visual analysis of selected manuscript paintings from both Mewar and Marwar, focusing on elements such as composition, colour and form.

•Comparison and contrast of paintings to identify unique stylistic elements.

•Examination of historical records to understand the context of the paintings.

### Styles & Themes of Rajasthani Painting

**Table 1**. Type of Syles.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Mewar Style** | Chavand style, Udaipur style, Nathdwara style, Deogarh style, Savar style, Shahpura style and the art of Banera, Bagore, Begu Kelwa etc Thikana. |
| **Marwar Style** | Jodhpur Style, Bikaner Style, Kishangarh Style, Ajmer Style, Nagaur Style, Sirohi style, Jaisalmer style and Ghanerao, Riyan, Bhinay, Juniya etc. thikana art. |
| **Hadoti Style** | Kota, Bundi and Jhalawar styles |
| **Dhundar Style** | Amber style, Jaipur style, Shekhawati style, Alwar style, Uniara style and Jhilay, Isarda, Shahpura, Samod etc. thikana art. |

This overview of regional schools is organized in Table 1, which shows the typology of Rajasthani painting styles. Rajasthani painters rarely saw any contradiction in combining romance with religion or the mundane with the transcendental.

To achieve this broad objective, they often turned to the divine model of Radha and Krishna. The legend of Radha and Krishna provided ample opportunities to depict various romantic moods and situations while also transcending the ordinary to reach spiritual heights. Krishna and his leelas, dominate Rajasthani miniatures. Other popular themes in Rajasthani miniatures revolve around the feudal lifestyle. During the 16th century, Vaishnavism, particularly the worship of Rama and Krishna, gained popularity in various regions of India, thanks to the Bhakti movement. Krishna, in particular, was revered not only as a deity but also as the epitome of ideal love. This concept of divine love was depicted in art, blending sensuality with mysticism. Radha symbolized the soul's devotion to God, especially in paintings inspired by the Gita Govinda, a 12th-century Sanskrit poem by Jayadeva, showcasing the love between Radha and Krishna and later codified in visual form through archetypes such as those shown in Figure 1.

Another influential text was the Rasamanjari by Bhanu Datta, which explored various emotional states and character types, providing inspiration for artists despite not explicitly mentioning Krishna. Similarly, the Rasikapriya by Keshav Das delved into the complexities of love through the characters of Radha and Krishna, aimed at pleasing elite courtiers. These textual and devotional influences are collectively synthesized in Figure 2.

Kavipriya, also by Keshav Das, celebrated love in its tale, including vivid descriptions of seasonal changes and their impact on lovers. Bihari Satsai, composed by Bihari Lal, offered moralistic wisdom through aphorisms, often depicted in paintings at the courts of Jaipur and Mewar. The broader cultural and cross-regional factors that shaped such works are further illustrated in Figure 3.

Ragamala paintings portrayed musical themes, while legends like Dhola-Maru and Sohni-Mahiwal, along with epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata, inspired various schools of painting [7]. Additionally, paintings captured a wide array of scenes including court gatherings, battles, celebrations, and daily life activities, providing rich varieties of historical and cultural imagery [7].

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy aptly emphasized that-‘’Rajput art conjures a magical world. In this realm, all men exude gallantry, women radiate beauty and passion, and animals-both wild and domesticated-befriend humans.

The Ashta-Nayika is a collective name for eight types of nayikas or heroines as classified by Bharata in his Sanskrit treatise on performing arts-Natya Shastra. The eight nayikas represent eight different states (avastha) in relationship to her hero or nayaka which has listed in Figure 1. As archetypal states of the romantic heroine, it has been used as theme in Rajasthani painting, literature, sculpture as well as Indian classical dance and music.

As per Ashta Nayika, there are eight nayikas.

| # | Name | Sanskrit name | Meaning |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Vasakasajja Nayika | वासकसज्जा नायिका | One dressed up for union |
| 2 | Virahotkanthita Nayika | विरहोत्कंठिता नायिका | One distressed by separation |
| 3 | Svadhinabhartruka Nayika | स्वाधीनभर्तृका नायिका | One having her husband in subjection |
| 4 | Kalahantarita Nayika | कलहांतरिता नायिका | One separated by quarrel |
| 5 | Khandita Nayika | खंडिता नायिका | One enraged with her lover |
| 6 | Vipralabdha Nayika | विप्रलब्धा नायिका | One deceived by her lover |
| 7 | Proshitabhartruka Nayika | प्रोषितभर्तृका नायिका | One with a sojourning husband |
| 8 | Abhisarika Nayika | अभिसारिका नायिका | One going to meet her lover |

**Figure 1**. Type of Nayika in Rajasthani painting.

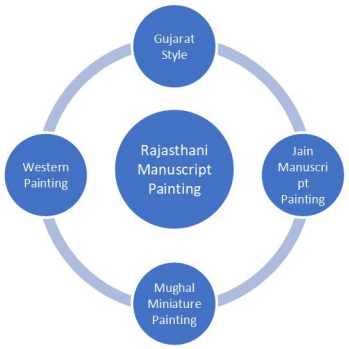


**Figure 2**. Key factors contributing in Rajasthani miniature painting.

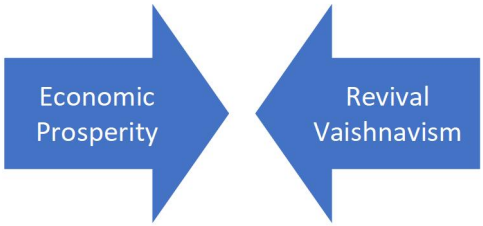


**Figure 3**. Factors influencing Rajasthani miniature painting.

## 3. Mewar Manuscripts Paintings


**Figure 4**. Map of Mewar Region.

The Mewar style of painting featured simple ornamentation and primary colors like red, green, and yellow earth tones [4]. The regional scope of this style is clearly shown in Figure 4, which maps the Mewar region. Men were depicted

with oval faces, prominent noses, impressive mustaches, large eyes, and wore Udaipur-Mewari or Mughal turbans, waist sashes, and simple ornaments. Women were shown as small and innocent, with straight pointed noses, fish-like eyes, and sunken chins, wearing chunri and gabagbara attire and simple ornaments.

This Western Indian style of painting was characterised by a strictly two-dimensional perspective articulated in a flat division of space; angular human forms; and faces in profile with the subject's further eye protruding into space. While the style flourished under the patronage of affluent Jain individuals, it also remained static but that served a conservatory purpose for the region's artistic idiom against the growing influence of the art styles of the Mughals and the Delhi and Deccani sultanates.

Notable works in the Mewar style include Sahibdin's Rasikpriya and Bhagavata Purana, as well as later series like Manohar's Ramayana and Ragamala [5]. During the reigns of Jagat Singh I and Raj Singh, Mewar art flourished, with Raj Singh establishing the shrine of Shrinathji at Nathdwara. Subsequent rulers like Jai Singh, Amar Singh II, and Sangram Singh II continued the tradition, with a shift towards portraiture, court life, and various subjects including religious themes, hunting, and harem life. The period of Sangram Singh II is considered the golden age of Mewar painting, with many artists creating significant works like Gita-Gobind, Bhagavat Purana, and Dashavatara. Their names and patron kings are listed in Table 2.

Under Sangram Singh II, court scenes depicting darbars, festivals, hunts, and other activities grew larger and more detailed, providing a comprehensive record of the ruler's public life. The influence of Mughal painting merged with the distinctive style of Mewar artists, resulting in dynamic compositions with consecutive narration and multiple viewpoints.

Jai Ram, an artist from the early 18th century, introduced landscape conventions from Mughal painting into Udaipur scenes. The tradition continued under Ari Singh, although some artists, like Bagta, brought order to the earlier chaotic style.

Despite a decline in the early 19th century, the Udaipur style was revitalized by artists like Chokha and Baijnath [8]. European influences started to emerge, but the focus remained on court activities until the abolition of princely powers in 1949, ending royal patronage for Mewar painting.

Mewar paintings from the past showcased simplicity in ornamentation and used primary colors like red, green, and yellow earth tones, depicting nature in an attractive yet straightforward manner. The paintings typically featured men with oval faces, prominent noses, impressive moustaches, and traditional turbans and sashes, while women were depicted as small and innocent, dressed in traditional attire with simple ornaments.

Notable works of the Mewar style include Sahibdin's Rasikpriya and Bhagavata Purana, as well as later series like the Ramayana and Ragamala. During the reign of Jagat Singh I and Raj Singh, Mewar art flourished, with Raj Singh even establishing the shrine of Shrinathji at Nathdwara to promote Vaishnavism.

Subsequent rulers like Jai Singh and Amar Singh II shifted focus towards portraiture, court life, and various everyday scenes. The golden age of Mewar painting is often attributed to Sangram Singh II, during which many artists produced significant works depicting religious and literary subjects.

Mewar paintings are characterized by confident lines and an earthy color palette, often featuring ochre and olive tones punctuated by bursts of vivid colors, especially red [9]. The paintings typically depict gods, Rajput figures, and other Hindus in a strict profile view, with only one eye visible, conveying nobility and grace [10]. Depictions of foreigners, such as Muslims or Europeans, employ a "two-eyed" perspective showing both eyes in a three-quarter or frontal view.

The landscapes are detailed, reflecting Mewar's fertile plains, gardens, buildings, and the nearby Aravalli range [9]. Human forms in Mewar paintings are less angular than those seen in earlier works, with architectural, decorative, and natural elements rendered meticulously. The style matured under the patronage of Jagat Singh I, incorporating elements from the Mughal school and emphasizing emotional tone through the use of color. Later works during Amar Singh II's reign shifted towards court scenes, portraiture, and greater visual depth, featuring distant horizons and more natural colors.

The eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of the Nathdwara sub-school, focusing on devotional themes centered around the Shrinathji Temple [8]. Political flux in the late eighteenth century led to a decline in court painting in Udaipur, with artists like Bagta and his son Chokha rejuvenating the tradition and experimenting with different styles. However, the nineteenth century saw stagnation in Mewar painting, with works continuing to follow earlier conventions despite brief influences from British artists.

Marwar painting, also known as the Marwar School, developed from a blend of local art styles and influences from other regions. Early influences can be traced back to the murals of Ajanta, particularly seen in the Mandor door. Initially influenced by the Mewar School, Marwar painting gained recognition as a separate school by the mid-16th century. The Marwar style also shows connections with Gujarat, evident in the use of Gujarati language and script in some manuscripts.

The paintings associated with the Mewar school are characterised by confident lines and an earthy palette of colours such as ochre and olive, punctuated by occasional bursts of vivid colour, especially prominent shades of red. The faces

of gods, Rajput figures and other Hindus are rendered in a strict profile view revealing only one eye, connoting nobility and grace. In contrast, depictions of foreign subjects such as Muslims or Europeans employ the do-chashmi ('two-eyed') perspective showing the farther eye, either in a three-quarter or frontal view. Landscapes are rendered in great detail, deriving from Mewar's context as a region of fertile plains dotted with gardens and buildings and flanked by the Aravalli range to its west**.**

### 3.1 Artist

**Table 2**. Prominent Mewar painters with their illustrated epics and patron kings.

| Painter | Epic | Patron king |
|---|---|---|
| ● Hiranand Charitram | ● Supasanah | ● Maharana Mokal |
| ● Sahibdeen Priya | ● Ragmala, Geet Govinda, Rasik | ● Jagat Singh-1 |
| ● Manohar And Sahibdeen | ● Aarsh Ramayana | ● Jagat Singh-1 |
| ● Jagannath | ● Shukar Kshetra Mahatamya, Bhramar Geet Saar | ● Maharana Raj Singh |
| ● Kamalchandra | ● Bihari Satsai | ● Sangram Singh-Ii |
| ● Sahibdeen | ● Shravak Pratikraman Churni | ● Rawal Tej Singh |
| ● Dhansar | ● Kalpasutra | ● Maharana Lakha |

### 3.2 Sahibdin

Sahibdin was a prominent Indian miniature painter from the Mewar school of Rajasthan painting during the 17th century. Despite being Muslim, he was highly sought after by Hindu patrons and created valuable Hindu-themed artworks. His paintings blend elements of the popular Mughal style with traditional Rajput style. Some of his notable works include musically themed "Ragamala" series from 1628 (Figure 5), illustrations of the Bhagavata Purana from 1648 (Figure 6), and artwork for the Yuddha Kanda of the Ramayana from 1652. Sahibdin's style combines the figure style of the Gujarati era with new influences from Mughal art, such as detailed mountain landscapes.

Bhairava ragini
From a Ragamala series
Early Rajput, perhaps Mewar, 1520-40
Victoria & Albert Museum IS 110-1955

Sorath ragini
From a Ragamala series
By Nusrati, Chawand. Mewar, 1605
British Museum 1978.0417.0.3

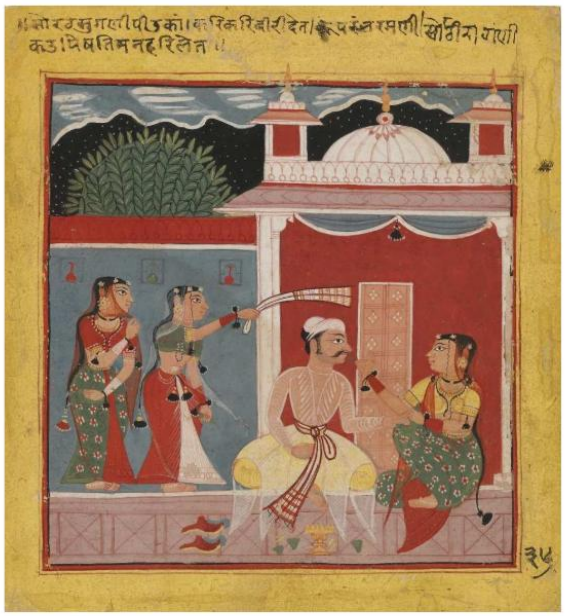

**Figure 5**. Early Ragamala illustration (Mewar).

**Figure 6**. Bhagavata Purana folio (Mewar).

Before Akbar's Mughal army sacked the old capital Chitor in 1568, painting in Mewar followed a non-naturalistic style. This style featured conceptual rather than realistic views of the world, with figures depicted in silhouette against flat backgrounds, all in profile view, and from a strictly horizontal perspective. This approach, reminiscent of Jain paintings, helped avoid the appearance of figures floating in space. Despite Mewar's resistance to Akbar, cultural activities continued, exemplified by the Ragamala paintings from their temporary capital Chawand in 1605. These were painted by the Muslim artist Nusrati or Nasiruddin. By 1615, peace had returned to Mewar, with Rana Amar Singh submitting to Prince Khurram, Jahangir's son, and establishing his court at Udaipur. Here, he focused on expanding the old palace. Subsequent rulers like Karan Singh and his son Jagat Singh occasionally attended the Mughal court, where they

received lavish gifts from Jahangir. This period marked the beginning of Mughal influence on Mewar painting, reflected in portraits such as Figure 7 and court scenes such as Figure 8.

The Emperor Jahangir and hand-maidens
School of Sahib Din
Udaipur, 1620-30
British Library Add.Or.5578

Malagauda Ragaputra, from a
Ragamala series
Sahib Din, Udaipur, 1628
Former S C Welch collection

**Figure 7**. Mughal-influenced portrait style (Mewar).

**Figure 8**. Court scene from Mewar school.

Between the Chawand Ragamala of 1605 and the next dated document of Mewar painting, a Ragamala from 1628 by the artist Sahib Din during the first year of Rana Jagat Singh's reign, there's little evidence of painting activity at the Mewar court. Karan Singh was occupied with finishing the new palace at Udaipur. During this time, some paintings in the 'Popular Mughal' style, a simplified version of the imperial Mughal style, were likely created by visiting artists in Mewar. Additionally, the court acquired high-quality Mughal paintings. The Popular Mughal style combined elements of Rajput painting with the narrative style of Mughal art, allowing figures to be depicted in space and meaningful relations with each other. This development was significant for Rajput schools aspiring to illustrate epic texts on a large scale. Works such as Sahibdin's Rasikapriya folio (Figure 9) and his Gita Govinda illustrations (Figure 10) demonstrate this stylistic evolution.

In this portrait of Jahangir, created by Mewar artists, we can see Mughal influence adapted to Rajput taste. Jahangir sits on a throne in what appears to be a landscape, surrounded by female attendants. The artist Sahib Din, who became the principal artist of Jagat Singh's reign, initially showed reluctance to incorporate such influences, as seen in his Ragamala of 1628. While the format of the pages has changed to a rectangular upright shape, with text panels at the top, figures still stand on base lines and are depicted from the front. However, there are Mughal-inspired elements like the costume and turban of the nayaka resembling Jahangir's, with a double patka around his waist and a more intricate design. Sahib Din also adopts the older Mughal practice of darkening the armpits of male characters.

Krishna's hidden vision of his beloved, from
Keshav Das's Rasikapriya
Sahib Din, Udaipur, 1630-35
Private collection

The Stubborn Heroine, from Keshav
Das's Rasikapriya.
Sahib Din, Udaipur, 1630-35
British Library Add.Or.5634

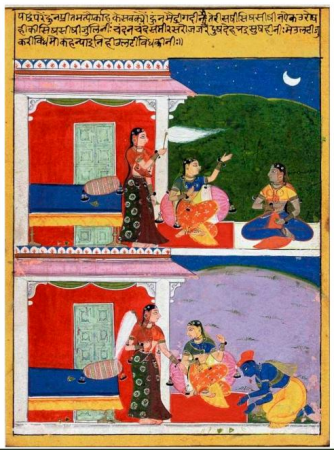

**Figure 9**. Rasikapriya folio by Sahibdin.

**Figure 10**. Gita Govinda illustration (Mewar).

Throughout the 1630s, Sahib Din experimented with a more expansive style, exploring the use of registers to differentiate time and space within the same painting. In his Rasikapriya of 1630-35, there's a movement towards Mughal naturalism. In one scene, Krishna is depicted behind a hill, suggesting his invisibility as he imagines his beloved Radha. Radha is shown partly perched on her chaise longue, partly within it, reflecting Sahib Din's attempt to convey depth and perspective.

While Sahib Din continues to use traditional composition techniques, such as placing figures on base lines, he also introduces innovations, like placing some figures in the middle of mats. Sahib Din's Ragamala of 1628 was followed by several other works in the 1630s, including a Gitagovinda and more Rasikapriyas. He served as Jagat Singh's major artist, leading the studio and influencing Mewari artists' portrayal of the human figure with his stylized rendering.

**4. Marwar Manuscripts Paintings**


**Figure 11**. Map/illustration of Marwar region.

In 1678, Jodhpur came under Mughal control until Aurangzeb's death in 1707, when Ajit Singh reclaimed his kingdom. The Mughal influence introduced equestrian portraiture, which flourished with the arrival of Dalchand at the court of Abahai Singh. Trained in Delhi, Dalchand epitomized the formal painting style of 18th-century Marwar. After Dalchand, Jodhpur's portrait style became relatively flat with bright colors. By 1720, this style had spread to various regions like Ghanerao and Nagaur. Vijay Singh further patronized art, commissioning large illustrated manuscripts of Vaishnava texts. The geographical extent of the Marwar region where these styles thrived is illustrated in Figure 11.

Marwar painting reached its peak under Man Singh's reign (1803–1843), who supported the arts and commissioned vibrant manuscripts, particularly of Nath sect texts. Artists like Amar Das, Shiva Das, and Bulaki flourished during this time. The tradition ended during Jaswant Singh II's reign (1873–1895), who embraced Western influences and recorded court life through photography, marking the end of Marwar painting.

Illustrations of the Gita Govinda and the Sur Sagar, dated 1650-51, now in the Gopi Krishna Kanoria collection, and a Ragamala, dated 1650, now in the National Museum, New Delhi, were painted. The paintings of this period are characterized by primitive vigour and stylization of trees. Primary colours, such as red, blue and yellow, are lavishly used.

Under the patronage of Maharaja Jaswant Singh in the 17th century, Marwar painting flourished, depicting court life, royal portraits, and themes from Krishna's life. Mughal influence can be seen in costumes and ornaments, though facial features remained Rajput in essence. During this period, paintings reflected subjects favored by royal patrons, including mythological and lyrical themes.

The late 18th century saw Marwar painting characterized by lavish costumes, vibrant colors, and an emphasis on human figures. In the 19th century, the style became even more ornamental, depicting primarily courtly life. This included works of equestrian portraiture, such as the example shown in Figure 12, which demonstrates Mughal-influenced grandeur, and depictions of courtly gatherings, as illustrated in Figure 13, highlighting the ornamental splendour of Marwar court life.

The Jodhpur [Marwar] style, which emerged in the 18th century, is known for its bold lines and primary colors, influenced by local preferences. Mughal influence is evident in the use of costumes, with men wearing high turbans and women adorned in red dotted dresses. Golden color, characteristic of Mughal art, is prominently used. Female jewelry is depicted with rounded hands and flower motifs, showing detailed study of body parts by the artists.

**Figure 12**. Marwar equestrian portrait

**Figure 13**. Courtly life depiction (Marwar).

## Paintings

"Chandra Kunwar-ri-bat" is a story preserved in Prachya Vidya Prateshthan, Jodhpur, with illustrated copies dating back to 1742, 1781, and 1784 AD. Some paintings based on this story are also found at Rajasthani Sodh Sansthan, Chopasani, Jodhpur. The authorship of the story is uncertain, but the poet Kalash is believed to be the author based on evidence from a poetic work. The story revolves around Prince Chandra Kumar, son of Amarpuri ruler Amer Sen, who gets lost while hunting and ends up in the city of Trimapapuri. There, he falls in love with the wife of the city's chief. When Amer Sen searches for him, the chief frees the prince, and eventually, the king of Trimbapuri marries his daughter to Chandra Kumar. The story focuses on themes of love and is straightforward in its poetic approach. It was composed in 1740 AD.

"Dhola Maru" is a widely sung love story in Marwar, Rajasthan, with an anonymous author. Some scholars attribute it to the poet Kallol. It's a popular folk tale that transcends specific regions and is depicted in various art styles, particularly in Marwar, Bikaner, and Shekhawati. Dated and illustrated versions of the story from 1779 and 1833 AD exist. The tale of longing and reunion is depicted visually in Figure 14.

**Figure 14**. Dhola-Maru love story illustration.

The story revolves around the love between Dhola, son of Raja Nal, and Marvani, daughter of Pugal. Marvani was married to Dhola at a young age due to a famine in Pugal. Later, Dhola was married to Malvani, the daughter of the king of Malwa. Attempts to summon Dhola back to Marvani failed due to Malvani's jealousy. Bards were then tasked with conveying Marvani's longing through songs. Dhola eventually returns to Marvani, overcoming obstacles with her help and the blessing of a saint. They live happily together with both wives in Narvar.

"Phoolji-Phoolmati-ri-bat" is a renowned love story among the people of Rajasthan. It's centered around the love affair involving a third party, known as 'parkiya.' Shri Nathu Ram Vyas from Jodhpur is credited as the author. Illustrated copies of this story can be found at Prachya Vidya Pratisthan, Jodhpur, dating back to 1777 and 1833 AD. Scenes from this romance are often painted, such as those shown in Figure 15.

The story unfolds during the reign of Rana Raj Singh, where Phoolmati, the daughter of Ganga Ram Mehta, is married to Bhojraj, the son of Sah Manirama. Two years into their marriage, Phoolji, the son of Sirohi ruler Rao Akhey Raj, falls deeply in love with Phoolmati at first sight. They often meet by the Pichola Lake to express their love for each other. Artists have depicted scenes from this romantic tale in various artworks.

**Figure 15**. Phoolji-Phoolmati story scene.

## 5. Techniques & Materials of Miniature Painting

Paintings across different regions in India share similar techniques, with slight variations in color palettes influenced by the artist's preferences and local resources. Some areas use specific colors more abundantly due to their availability.

Watercolors are commonly used because they can be easily wiped off or reactivated even after drying, unlike oil colors which attract dust and crack upon drying [11]. Artists prefer watercolors for their ease of use, adaptability to climate, durability, and ability to withstand the test of time in hot regions.

In executing the paintings in northern area, central India and at Golkunda and Bijapur in south, the same technique and colours have been used. All have created paintings by applying on paper, a thick coat of natural earth, mineral, metal, vegetable and other colours. This technique is termed as tempera. All have used water colours as their media.

Easy understandable reason for this is that all the art centres of the country abounded in dust and where moisture comes only in the rainy season. The water colours dry instantaneously and therefore the dust could not get stuck over them.

## 6. Conclusion

In my exploration of Mewar and Marwar miniature paintings, I've uncovered fascinating insights into the rich artistic traditions of Rajasthan. Mewar painting, rooted in a blend of local Rajput and Mughal influences, showcases intricate detailing and vibrant colors, reflecting themes of mythology, court life, and royal patronage. The gradual incorporation of Mughal elements over time demonstrates the dynamic cultural exchange between the two regions.

On the other hand, Marwar painting, also known as the Marwar School, emerges as a distinct artistic style characterized by bold lines, primary colors, and ornate detailing. Influenced by local preferences and Mughal aesthetics, Marwar paintings depict scenes of courtly life, royal portraits, and themes from Krishna's life with a unique flair.

Both Mewar and Marwar miniature paintings offer a captivating glimpse into the socio-cultural landscape of Rajasthan, portraying not just artistic excellence but also reflecting the patronage of royalty and the fusion of diverse artistic traditions. Through their intricate brushwork and vivid imagery, these paintings continue to captivate and inspire audiences, preserving the cultural heritage of the region for generations to come.

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