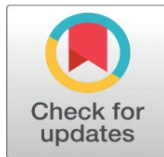
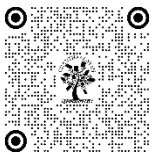


URBAN FOLKLORE ON WHEELS: "CHILAKALURIPET RICKSHAW PAINTING PHENOMENON"

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ABSTRACT

The iconic popular visual representation of cinema and religion through ricksha paintings were unique in Chilakaluripet region. It represents the way of life in coastal region. Regional commercial artist created unique language of rickshaw paintings. This paper explores cultural vibrance in popular art. Many of these paintings are also reflections of the local worship culture.

Rickshaw art is personalised bodywork of cycle rickshaws, celebrating of Hand painted visual culture of this region. A Gudu (Top covered) rickshaw is the name given to this kind of vehicle. Along with visuals I also look at the basic functions of these ornamental paintings and themes and the regional culture. I conclude by reviewing recent modifications to modern rickshaw paintings. To uncover more precise information on the work, qualitative research techniques are used.

Keywords: Visual Culture, Popular art, Rickshaw paintings, Popular visuals, regional art, Local culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rickshaw art is a painted kind of popular commercial art that portrays the vernacular forms of iconography. Rickshaw paintings serve as cultural emblems that showcase mass culture and everyday beauty. This art form reflects the idolization of matinee idols in South India. Cycle rickshaws are very used for transportation in many rural areas in the Andhra region. Famous South Indian film stars like Senior Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, Akkineni Nageswara Rao, Krishna, Chiranjeevi, Nagarjuna, Balakrishna, Venkatesh, and actresses such as Jaya Prada, Sridevi, Jayasudha, and Jayamalini. Adorned on cycling rickshaws.

Hand-painted commercial art added a distinctive style to various surfaces such as shop fronts, business advertisements, and sign hoardings. Chilakaluripet is renowned for commercial art. Bicycle rickshaws are a common and cost-effective mode of transportation in many rural and semi-urban areas along the coast of Andhra Pradesh. Various locales will feature Hollywood stars, renowned local leaders, and a diverse array of animals and birds. It can also be seeded at regular intervals. This painted tradition in the region began in the 1980s, before the introduction of auto-rickshaws.

Later, the art of painting has thrived. Chilakaluripet is well-known for its hosting of painting workshops and functioning as a centre for manufacturing unit assembly. This colourful decoration also influenced other types of vehicle art in the region, such as trucks and tractors. Truck paintings originated in Bangladesh and Pakistan. Lahore. Over numerous decades, this coastal area celebrated the arts of film, stage, and literature. This has influenced the artistic techniques of Chilakaluripet rickshaws. In the mid-1990s, this place became known as a centre for truck art. This study will specifically concentrate on manually operated rickshaws in the Chilakaluripet district situated along the coastline of Andhra Pradesh. "To encounter street graphics in India is to experience a metaphorical slapping of the visual senses, from a fleeting glimpse of an abstract letter in psychedelic colours to the textures and complex narratives of the film hoardings of southern India".¹

This article will utilise qualitative techniques. The methodology uses rigorous techniques to evaluate the existing literature on popular art and current visual culture, along with collecting information through informal and unstructured interviews with craftspeople and laymen. The primary goal is to analyse the various cultural influences present in rickshaw paintings. This paper will investigate the influence of cinema on artistic practices and methodologies.

2. POPULAR CINEMA IMAGES AND VISUAL CULTURE

In recent years, cinema has become extremely popular in India, particularly in the Andhra region. This neighbourhood was previously famous for its theatre performances and dramas. Multiple modern performers have depicted roles in films based on mythical stories. Equivalent to that of a theatrical performance. These individuals significantly impacted people's lives, resulting in the establishment of a culture of admiration within the general populace. Fan culture intensifies to a condition of extreme frenzy in several coastal locations of Andhra Pradesh. The hero's companions are also divided in this way. People's beliefs and attitudes are often influenced by both political and cinematic factors. Urban areas are filled with advertisements for commercial products. Advertisements endorsed by movie celebrities have gained popularity in southern India. The rise of cinema and television technology has brought significant changes to the lives and cultures of the people in the region. The worship culture is evident through the display of film cut-outs and banners in front of cinemas, market areas, and bus stations. Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, a veteran actor turned politician, is revered as a deity in this area for his portrayal of Lord Krishna in all seventeen of his Films.

People were profoundly influenced by it, to the point where they idolised him as if he were divine. Matinée idol culture emerged in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu around the 1970s. It peaked in the 1980s. Current studies on the influence of film on the public, especially when it is politically motivated, primarily concentrate on cinema's participation in politics. This involves analysing how cinema is used as a tool for political propaganda and how influential persons use their appeal to succeed in politics.

Chilakaluripeta is a small municipality located in the Guntur District, inside the Coastal Andhra Region. South India region. In regions where agriculture is the primary source of income. Most individuals reside in the lower and medium socioeconomic levels.

Modern artists are producing visual artworks inspired by content found on the internet. Historically, posters were utilised for printing images. Derived from many sources. The image depicts Lord Saibaba placed in the centre. After becoming famous, other Hindus in the Andhra region started to worship him.

Many modern temples have been built recently. This rickshaw artwork frequently features well-known images from the modern day. The selection of subjects or images is limited. Rickshaw artisans outside choose to depict either movie heroes or images of deities, while inside, rickshaws are decorated with landscapes with swan motifs. The rickshaw's design results in a compact overall composition.

Artists strive to create vivid images using bright colours within the confines of space. The enamel colours were used to decorate these wooden panels. They use a small variety of vivid brushstrokes to enhance their depiction of human figures, creating a resemblance to African mural art. The painting styles closely resemble African colour palettes. Sign painters who specialise in painting rickshaws shared their insights on colour composition and the unique demands from rickshaw owners for decorating their cycle rickshaws." The rickshaw artists transmit their knowledge and skills to the apprentices by applying the hands-on-training method"²

Nandamuri Tarak Rama Rao is a famous lead actor in Telugu films. The list includes actors Krishna, Shoban Babu, Krishnam Raju, Chiranjeevi, Nagarjuna, Balakrishna, V Venkatesh, and actresses Sridevi, Jayaprada, and Jayasudha. Ramba and Soundarya are commonly portrayed by rickshaw painters. The rationale behind the painted images stems

¹ Keith Lovegrove Graphicswallah-graphics in India, Laurance king Publishing Ltd.2003.

² Firoz Mahmud, The Rickshaw and Rickshaw Painting in Dhaka City, <https://saarcculture.org/>.

from two unique perspectives. The rickshaw owner's favoured pick is number one. Another aspect to consider is the appeal to commuters.

The exterior of rickshaws provides more room for decoration than the interior. Artists in this area persist in utilising the method of choosing landscapes from greeting cards or calendar artwork for their creations. Many sign painters still rely on outdated images found on the internet. Despite his borrowing, they persist in painting in a style evocative of posters or calendar art. For thirty years, the artistic style for portraying film protagonists has stayed the same. These phenomena began in the coastal region in the 1980s and developed into a highly embellished condition. In recent years, the decorative element has diminished in size. "The sphere of visual culture including cinema, advertisement, Pata rolls, newspaper cartoons, with the part of culture that is usually called ³"popular "or "public".

3. ARTISANS/RICKSHAW PAINTERS

The Telugu cinema film industry moved from Madras to Hyderabad during 1990s. Many sign board artists moved from Madras to settle in Vijayawada, Nellore, and other places in Andhra Pradesh. The cinema hoardings workshops established in Vijayawada. Commercial artist Easwar is a prominent figure known for his substantial contribution to the advancement of Telugu and Tamil cinema poster designs. These designs are the primary visual inspiration for many local artists in the Telugu and Tamil Nadu regions.

Multiple movie poster design workshops have occurred in Nellore and Vijayawada. The programme offered guidance to all the artists in the area. Some people are passionate self-taught artists. Only a few individuals seek to get skills from seasoned artists. They will start practicing after mastering the necessary skills. During my data collection, I interacted with many commercial artists and rickshaw pullers in the region and had formal interactions with them. Participating in this activity will improve my understanding of the historical context, cultural traditions, and lasting customs of the location. This greatly impacted both popular and commercial art. In addition to interacting with the artist community, I also spoke with several shops and local vendors to understand their perspectives on the societal impact of visual aspects. The recent increase in the number of individuals engaged in the arts has had a substantial and deep effect on the situation. The rickshaw paintings were solely created at workshops situated in the Chilakaluripeta Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh. Before selecting the artwork, begin the process of painting the rickshaw painter. Sign artists collect visual depictions of movie stars or gods for guidance. Some paintings bear a resemblance to Pata paintings from Chitrakaras of Bengal. The paintings in this region exhibit a style reminiscent of pata scroll paintings.

Rickshaw owners sometimes choose popular photos. Artistic representations like the Taj Mahal, the Namaste image, and various landscapes are aesthetically pleasant. The choice of imagery was based on the owner's deity. Up to six figurines can be painted on the panel. The main character should personify the heavenly entity, while the other two characters should symbolise famous individuals from the world of film.

The coastal area is decorated with old-fashioned signboards, intricately painted by local artists, that surround several streets and market centres. Traditionally, advertisements for products and stores have been displayed on shop shutters. This tool is used for customer communication. At this place, I met sign painters and discussed their expertise and inspirations. Several people talked about their operational processes and faced technological difficulties.

Applying enamel colours to large wooden panels, creating visual representations of images, and addressing real-time challenges. Moreover, I came across numerous street painters during my time at the location. Juniors created initial sketches, while Graff and seniors completed the images, which were then shared among this group of artists. Once the junior artists have added colour to the images, the senior artists will make any required adjustments to the final drawing. The senior artist adds the final decorations and intricate details.

Some surfaces may be appropriate for using traditional pigment blending methods. Temple paintings in this region primarily utilise this method. An artist works in multiple locations simultaneously. They are impacted by diverse surfaces in this area.

Independent artists often interact with local workshops, while other times they work independently. They choose to have their own workspace because of the reduced income from workshop owners. Unemployed artists may find work in the fields of home construction and agriculture.

Many of them are in a deteriorated state. These folks should be acknowledged as a form of artistic expression and granted financial assistance from the government for their sustenance. The global implementation of digital flex technology has led to the eradication of commercial artist roles on a worldwide scale. The rickshaw pullers are transient migrants with

³ Uwe skoda, birgit lettmann, India and its visual cultures. Community, class and gender in a symbolic landscape. Sage publication, 2018.

families living in their villages. Many of them are from farming households with limited and decreasing land ownership. The rickshaw's body has undergone substantial repairs on both the wooden and metal panels. They will have limited space for painting, namely on the underside of the seat.

4. RICKSHAW BODY PAINTING DESIGN

Rickshaw art is a form of traditional and popular art. India is a popular place for rickshaws. The main techniques used in rickshaw art are manual painting and hand-stencilling. Artists use a variety of materials such as enamel paint, stencils, and brushes to create colourful and lively designs. These designs often include cultural or regional motifs like religious symbols, animals, or landscapes. The result is an outstanding and lively display of street art that enriches the streets of Chilakaluripeta with brightness and charm.

5. RELIGIOUS IMAGES ON RICKSHAWS

In the Chilakaluripet region, Hindu deities are frequently depicted on rickshaws, whereas there are less images of Muslim and Christian characters. This is due to the absence of rickshaw pullers in the Christian Muslim community. They work at bicycle repair shops, poultry and lamb enterprises, and food vending establishments. Christians show more involvement in many small businesses. Promotional imagery related to Christianity can also be found on many surfaces, such as school walls and public venues. Only the Dargah and Masjid have Muslim motifs.

6. CONCLUSION

Rickshaw art is a captivating aspect of Asian art that reflects the cultural and historical influences of the regions it is found in. The art form of rickshaw decoration, ranging from vibrant embellishments in Chilakaluripet to intricate hand-painted motifs in India and Pakistan, effectively reflects the cultural vibrancy of these regions. The art of rickshaw paintings has been shaped by local cinema and political climate, influenced by informal discussions with sign painters. The rich heritage of visual cultures encompasses a diverse range of narratives focused on cinematic imagery and the veneration of heroes. The regional art culture of Chilakaluripet is notable for its liveliness, with a sizable mural displaying film visuals. Recently, there has been a significant shift in the use of images in cinema, with many artisans relying on pre-made images from the internet.

The rickshaw art exhibits a cohesive hue scheme and vivid colour palette, with photographs chosen based on the owner's preferences. The images accurately represent both worship culture and contemporary visual culture, requiring interpretation through a contemporary cultural lens.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None

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