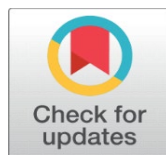
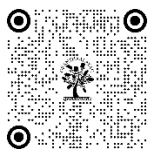


# CULTIVATING CREATIVITY: THE EMERGENCE OF ART SCHOOLS IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

Education stands as a cornerstone in the advancement of any nation, serving as a catalyst for progress and enlightenment. It acts as a key, unlocking doors of opportunity and enriching the intellect of individuals. Concurrently, art, a timeless facet of human civilization, bears witness to the unique essence of every society throughout history. However, education not only fosters the appreciation of art but also cultivates a liberated and conscientious mindset. Thus, education in the arts emerges as a conscious endeavor, wherein individuals strive to transform and elevate their lives. The inception of art schools in India finds its roots in the colonial era, particularly under British rule, where the modern education system took shape. Consequently, the establishment of formal institutions for artistic education in the country can be attributed to this pivotal historical period.

**Keywords:** Art Education, Art School, Art School in India, Indian Art Education,

## 1. INTRODUCTION: HISTORY OF ART EDUCATION

Throughout history, art has been synonymous with “craft” or skill across various ancient civilizations. In Egypt and Mesopotamia, pictorial representation was highly valued. The Middle Ages saw the flourishing of art, with artists who trained in workshops attached to royal palaces and temples.<sup>1</sup> The Greeks prioritized education, trying to provide comprehensive instruction across all fields. During this period, painting and sculpture were often classified alongside other crafts such as tailoring and leatherwork.

The Renaissance era marked a significant development in art education, influenced by masters like Leonardo da Vinci, Michealangelo and Rapheal. Although they did not establish formal educational institutions, their work and ideas played

crucial role. Michelangelo, for instance, received instruction at an academy sponsored by Lorenzo de' Medici, where artists were granted creative freedom.

In England, the formal history of art education began with the establishment of the Royal Academy of Arts in London on December 10, 1768. This institution was governed by a council comprising an elected president and eight other members.<sup>2</sup> In India, the British East India Company, founded in 17th ce facilitated increased European influence, which intensified with the establishment of art schools teaching Western techniques.

## 2. ENTRY OF BRITISH IN INDIA

The discovery of a water route to India by Vasco da Gama attracted the Portuguese, French, English, and other European groups to India for trade. However, it was primarily the Portuguese, French, and English who established a significant presence. The Mughal Empire in India remained powerful until the reign of Aurangzeb, after which the British established their dominance. The British also took control of the education of handicrafts and arts, attempting to teach painting to Indians based on the model of the Royal Academy of Arts in London through the Government Art Schools. The establishment of several prominent art colleges in India followed.

## 3. FORMATION OF ART SCHOOLS

In 1853, to expand experimental art from a commercial and industrial perspective, the Department of Science and Arts was established in South Kensington, London. This department took over the Government School of Design, South Kensington, which had been operating since 1837 and is now known as the Royal College of Art. In 1845, additional teachers were appointed in South Kensington, but controversy arose regarding the objectives of the art education system and the balance between different art activities. To address this, the School Council of the School of Design developed a detailed curriculum and created a uniform art education system and policy, known as the "South Kensington Art Education System." This system was implemented uniformly across all art schools in London and was also adopted by India's first art school, the Madras School of Art.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1**



**Figure 1** Charles Nicolas II Kochin (Del) and Benoit Louis Prevost (Sculpture) "The Study of Drawing from the Bump and from Nature", 1763 Paris France

**Source** [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Charles-Nicolas-II-Cochin-del-Benoit-Louis-Prevost-sculp-Letude-du-dessin\\_fig3\\_346605434](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Charles-Nicolas-II-Cochin-del-Benoit-Louis-Prevost-sculp-Letude-du-dessin_fig3_346605434)

- **Govt. College of Fine arts, Chennai (1850):** The Madras School of Art was established in 1850 by Dr. Alexander Hunter, a craftsman of the Madras Regiment. In 1852, the local European rulers took over the school, renaming it the “Government School of Industrial Art.” From 1876 to 1884, Robert Chisholm, an architect of the Madras Presidency, transformed it into an architectural workshop aimed at fostering interest in art among the Indian populace, where European oil painting was taught. In 1884, E.V. Havell from England became the principal and introduced functional changes to the curriculum. He sought to integrate Indian ornamentation and craftsmanship into the school's teachings. Sculptor Deviprasad Rai Chaudhury was later appointed as the first Indian principal. He energetically promoted the Bengal School and the ideas of influential European artists, giving shape to novel thoughts and advancing Indian art.

**Figure 2**



**Figure 2** Prized Students from Madras University Year 1865

**Source** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government\\_College\\_of\\_Fine\\_Arts,\\_Chennai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_College_of_Fine_Arts,_Chennai)

**Figure 3**



**Figure 3** Govt. College of Fine Art, Chennai

**Source** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government\\_College\\_of\\_Fine\\_Arts,\\_Chennai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_College_of_Fine_Arts,_Chennai)

After Deviprasad Rai Chaudhary, K.C.S. Pannikar was appointed as the principal in 1957. During his tenure, a fervent embrace of abstraction emerged in the field of sculpture, characterized by progressiveness, individual expression, and adherence to professional standards. In 1961, the institution underwent a renaming, becoming

the "Government College of Arts and Crafts." Today, it is recognized as the "Government College of Fine Arts." Affiliated with Madras University, the college provides undergraduate and postgraduate programs in fine arts.<sup>5</sup>

- **Government college of Art and Craft, Kolkata (1854):** The genesis of the Industrial Art Society dates back to 1854, when it emerged as a collaborative initiative between Indian and European enthusiasts, distinct from governmental involvement. Situated initially in Chitpur, it coincided with the operation of the 'School of Industrial Art', helmed by pioneering instructors M.T. God and Agyar.<sup>4</sup> By 1864, governmental oversight of the school was established, culminating in the inauguration of an art gallery in 1876. Noteworthy exhibits included landscapes, architectural renderings, depictions of Indian life, and attire, alongside technical drawings, predominantly crafted by British artists. The year 1885 marked the commencement of instruction in the traditional Indian art form of wall painting, underscoring a significant expansion in the Society's educational scope.

On July 6, 1896, Principal E.V. Havell, previously stationed at the Madras Art School, assumed leadership at the Calcutta Art School, initiating a pivotal transformation in its educational framework. Recognizing the oversight of Eastern artistic traditions in the prevailing foreign-centric curriculum, Havell orchestrated a paradigm shift. With approval from Viceroy Lord Curzon, he orchestrated the sale of European paintings to fund the establishment of an indigenous art gallery. This gallery showcased a rich array of artifacts, including brass vessels from Nepal, replicas of Ajanta paintings, and Mughal-style miniature paintings, curated to celebrate India's rich artistic heritage.

Subsequently, Havell enlisted the expertise of Shri Abanindranath Tagore, appointing him as Vice Principal in 1891. Tagore's visionary approach introduced elements of Chinese and Japanese artistic techniques into the curriculum, fostering a more inclusive and diverse learning environment. Furthermore, Havell's initiative extended to the recruitment of Ishwari Prasad from Patna and fresco artists from Jaipur, enriching the school's offerings with comprehensive mural training.

**Figure 4**



**Figure 4** 1st Batch Students of Govt. College of Art and Craft Kolkata Along with their Teacher

Source <https://www.forbesindia.com/article/live/the-power-of-ideas-in-art/41175/1>



Figure 5



Figure 5 Govt. College of Art and Craft Kolkata

Source <https://www.collegebatch.com/5272-government-college-of-art-and-craft-campus-tour-kolkata>

These strategic initiatives bore fruit, attracting a surge of students to the institution, many of whom would later emerge as influential art educators across India. Consequently, the Calcutta Art School became intertwined with the burgeoning National Art Movement of India, leaving an indelible mark on the country's artistic landscape.

In 1909, the reins of leadership passed to Percy Brown, who introduced further reforms aligned with the methods espoused by the esteemed Royal Academy of Arts, perpetuating the institution's commitment to excellence and innovation in artistic education.<sup>6</sup>

- **JJ school of Arts Mumbai:** The inaugural art classes commenced on March 2, 1857, encompassing a broad spectrum of disciplines, including design and engraving. Initially, the curriculum extended beyond drawing and illustration to encompass modeling and metal crafts, with instructors sourced from England to impart expertise. Upon integration into British governmental oversight, Lockwood Kipling assumed the mantle of the first teacher, succeeded by Terry, who introduced a pedagogical focus on shadow, light, and geometric perspective. This instructional approach involved the meticulous rendering of flora and wooden models to elucidate these principles.

Subsequently, from 1898 to 1915, Mr. Cecil Burns assumed leadership as principal, albeit without a particular affinity for Indian art. The tenure of Burns was followed by the appointment of Gladstone Solomon from 1919 to 1936, whose indelible mark on the contemporary art scene of Western India is widely acknowledged. Solomon endeavored to align the institution's pedagogy with the methodologies practiced in prominent art schools of France and Britain. His emphasis on painting proficiency and a nuanced understanding of color theory, drawing proportions, and adept utilization of diverse mediums underscored his commitment to fostering comprehensive artistic proficiency among students. In 1936, Charles Gerard assumed the position of Principal, bringing with him a progressive outlook that embraced the contemporary artistic movements sweeping across Europe. He facilitated an introduction of students and faculty to avant-garde techniques in graphical design, color theory, and textural exploration, fostering a deep engagement with modern artistic practices. Gerard's leadership also marked a

departure from tradition as he encouraged the adoption of Impressionist painting styles among students.

**Figure 6**



**Figure 6** Solomen, Mary Handerson, Dhopeswarkar, Franadis Master, Dhond and their Students

**Source** From Personal Collection of Dr. Vishwnath Sable (Dean – JJ School of Arts Mumbai)

**Figure 7**



**Figure 7** Dept of Painting JJ School of Arts Mumbai

**Source** From Personal Collection of Dr. Vishwnath Sable (Dean – JJ School of Arts Mumbai)

Following the dawn of independence, concerted efforts were made to enhance the curriculum, leading to the establishment of specialized classes focused on Indian art under the guise of the "Indian Design Class." Principals like Griffiths and Solomon played pivotal roles in instigating a renewed appreciation for indigenous artistic traditions, urging students to embrace 'Indian techniques.' However, the legacy of hallucinatory realism and entrenched British academic methodologies persisted within the institution. Despite these challenges, the concerted efforts of visionary leaders paved the way for a gradual transition towards a more inclusive and culturally rich artistic curriculum.

- **Rajasthan School of Arts, Jaipur (1857):** Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh II of Jaipur established the Madrasa-e-Hunri Salt Art College within the confines of the Badal Mahal, nestled within the illustrious City Palace, in 1857. The inaugural principal appointed to helm this artistic venture was Valentine Cameron Prinsep. In 1866, it underwent a nomenclatural transformation, emerging as "The Jaipur School of Arts," a moniker that underscored its

growing stature in the realm of artistic education. By 1886, it had further evolved into the esteemed "Maharaja's School of Arts and Crafts," a testament to its expanding scope and influence.

The pivotal recognition of the Art Diploma in 1964 marked a significant milestone in the institution's journey, heralding an era of distinguished appointments of high-profile art educators at the governmental level. In 1988, the institution found a new abode within the historic confines of the "Rajasthan School of Art," where it continues to thrive.

Noteworthy Bengal School luminaries such as Asit Kumar Haldar, Shailendranath De, Hiranmanya Choudhary, Ramgopal Vijayvargiya, Kushal Kumar Mukherjee, T P Mishra, among others, lent their expertise to the institution, adorning it with their illustrious tenures as Principals, Vice Principals, and Acharyas, thereby enriching its legacy and stature within the artistic milieu.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 8**



**Figure 8** Rajasthan School of Arts Jaipur, Entrance

**Source** Personal Collection

**Figure 9**



**Figure 9** Students of Mayo College of Art Lahore (1875)

**Source** [http://lahore.city-history.com/mayo-school-of-industrial-art-later-national-college-of-arts.html#google\\_vignette](http://lahore.city-history.com/mayo-school-of-industrial-art-later-national-college-of-arts.html#google_vignette)

**National college of arts Lahore (1857):** In Northern India, another influential institution emerged under the tutelage of Lockwood Kipling, aimed at nurturing excellence in decorative and experimental arts among craftsmen. This school, rooted in the rich cultural tapestry of Lahore, once a prominent center of Mughal heritage, now thrives as the National College of Arts in Pakistan. Founded in 1875,

its inception marked a pivotal moment for the training and empowerment of local artisans, craftsmen, designers, and artists. The curriculum of this esteemed institution encompassed a diverse array of subjects, ranging from pewter craft and architecture to the casting of copper artifacts and engineering principles. With Lockwood Kipling assuming the role of the inaugural principal, the school embarked on a journey of artistic innovation and skill development. Following Kipling's tenure, the reins of leadership were passed to Samrendranath Gupta, a distinguished alumnus of the Bengal School and a protege of Shri Abanindranath Tagore. Under Gupta's guidance, the institution flourished, furthering its commitment to fostering artistic excellence and cultural preservation in the region.<sup>9</sup>

- **Kala Bhawan, Vishwabharti University Shantiniketan:** 1919 In December, the illustrious institution of Shantiniketan was inaugurated, heralding the dawn of a new era in artistic education with the establishment of Kala Bhavan. With an initial cohort of five students and five teachers, this visionary endeavor laid the foundation for what would later evolve into the esteemed Visva Bharati University.

**Figure 10**



**Figure 10** Rabindranath Tagore with Nandalal Bose at Shantiniketan

**Source** <https://www.amazon.in/Tallenge-Nandalal-Rabindranath-Santiniketan-MultiColour/dp/B0BRG2WQQG>

**Figure 11**



**Figure 11** Kalabhawan Shantiniketan

**Source** Personal Collection



Founded in 1919 by the venerable poet Shri Rabindranath Tagore, Kala Bhavan emerged as a beacon of artistic excellence within the Indian educational landscape. In its inaugural year, Nandlal Bose, a protege of Abanindranath Tagore, assumed the mantle of principal, imbuing the institution with his artistic vision and expertise. Additionally, Asit Kumar Haldar, a distinguished artist, served as an esteemed art teacher until 1915, contributing significantly to the early development of Kala Bhavan. Over the years, luminaries such as Nandlal Bose, Ramkinkar Baij, Asit Kumar Haldar, Somnath Hore, and KG Subramaniam, among others, have made indelible contributions to the rich tapestry of Kala Bhavan's legacy. Revered as a veritable "pilgrimage of art," Kala Bhavan has flourished as a nurturing ground for artistic expression, offering comprehensive education across five main branches: painting, sculpture, design, graphic art, and art history. Degrees and diplomas conferred by Kala Bhavan serve as testament to its commitment to excellence and innovation in visual arts education.<sup>10</sup>

- **Govt. Fine art College Indore 1927:** Indore, once the capital of the illustrious Holkar dynasty, flourished under the visionary leadership of Queen Ahilyabai. In 1927, Maharaja Tukojirao Holkar, recognizing the importance of artistic education, established the Art School in Indore. Under the stewardship of Superintendent Shri Dattatreya Damodar Devlalikar, the institution embarked on a mission to nurture artistic talent in the region. Inspired by the prestigious JJ School of Art in Mumbai, Maharaja Holkar envisioned a similar establishment in Indore, dedicated to the pursuit of artistic excellence. From 1927 to 1960, the college served as a hub of artistic education, preparing students for a myriad of examinations, including those conducted by the JJ School of Art in Mumbai. Devlalikar's unwavering dedication extended beyond the classroom as he accompanied students to Mumbai for examinations, ensuring their success and fostering a culture of excellence. Over the years, the Indore Art School has garnered acclaim, boasting a roster of distinguished alumni including luminaries such as N S Bendre, Devyani Krishna, M F Hussain, D J Joshi, and Chandresh Saxena. Their contributions have not only enriched the artistic landscape of Indore but have also left an indelible mark on the broader Indian artistic milieu.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 12**



**Figure 12** Govt. Institute of Fine Arts Indore

**Source** From Personal Collection of Mrs Gunjan Yogi (Studio Assistant –GIFA Indore)

Figure 13

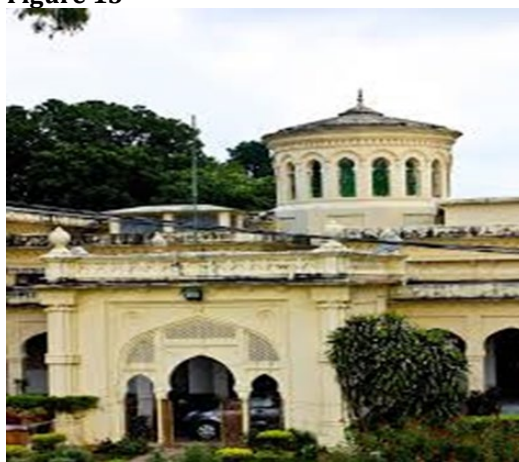


Figure 13 College of Arts and Crafts Lucknow

Source <https://lucknowobserver.com/lucknow-college-of-arts-and-crafts/>

- **College of Arts and Crafts Lucknow 1911:** Established in 1911, Lucknow's Art School was led by Mr. Nathaniel Herd as its first principal. Offering a diverse curriculum ranging from fine arts to industrial arts, the school flourished as a hub of artistic exploration. In 1925, under the stewardship of Asit Kumar Haldar, the first Indian principal, the curriculum underwent significant revisions, placing a greater emphasis on Indian art. Renowned artists like L.M. Sen and Bireshwar Sen enriched the institution as art teachers, influencing generations of aspiring artists. With luminaries such as Sudhir Ranjan and Professor Madan Lal Nagar among its ranks, the Lucknow Art School earned a reputation as a cradle of artistic excellence.<sup>12</sup>
- **College of Fine arts Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala – 1888:** Established in 1888 by Maharaja Moolam Thirunal Rama Varma IV of Travancore, the institution initially known as Maharaja School of Arts Travancore offered courses in painting, ivory work, pottery, and metallurgy. In 1930, it was placed under the Department of Industries, and by 1957, it gained recognition from the Directorate of Technical Education. A significant milestone occurred in 1975 when it was elevated and affiliated with the University of Kerala as 'The College of Fine Arts'. Today, the college offers BFA and MFA courses in painting, sculpture, and applied art.<sup>11</sup>
- **Govt college of Fine arts Thrissur kerala 1910:** In 1910, a Technical Commercial Industrial School commenced operation, dedicated to providing industrial training to artists for commercial production. During the tumult of the Second World War, it was redesignated as the "Govt Trade School", a reflection of its evolving role. In a landmark development in 1975, the institution was elevated to the esteemed status of the "Govt College of Fine Art". By 1988, it expanded its offerings to include a comprehensive five-year National Diploma in Fine Arts. Subsequently, in 2000, the college forged an affiliation with the University of Calicut, ushering in a new era as it commenced offering bachelor's degree programs across three core streams of fine arts: painting, sculpture, and applied arts.<sup>11</sup>
- **Department of Painting, Vanasthali Vidyapeeth:** In 1935, Banasthali Vidyapeeth, a pioneering institution for women's education, was founded by Hiralal Shastri. Recognized as a deemed university by the Government of

India, it stands as a testament to the commitment to female empowerment through education. In 1937, Prof. Devkinandan Sharma established the Department of Painting at Banasthali Vidyapeeth, marking a significant milestone in the institution's artistic endeavors. Notably, it is one of the few institutes offering professional training in both the Jaipur technique and Italian technique of wall painting. The Arts department at Banasthali Vidyapeeth confers BA and MA degrees, enriching the academic landscape and fostering artistic excellence among its students.

**Figure 14**



**Figure 14** Dept. of Painting, Banasthali Vidhyapeeth

**Source** Facebook profile of Mrs Annapurna Shukla (Assis. Proff,- Banasthali Vidhyapeeth)

**Figure 15**



**Figure 15** Dept. of Painting, College of Art New Delhi

**Source** Facebook profile of Ashwini Kumar Prithviwasi (Dean College of Art New Delhi)

- **College of art New Delhi – 1942:** Established in 1942 by the Ministry of Education, the College of Art, New Delhi, emerged as the inaugural art department of Delhi Polytechnic. Initially encompassing a diverse array of disciplines such as architecture, commerce engineering, applied science, and technical design, it swiftly evolved into a hub of artistic innovation. With the inception of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the college blazed a trail by introducing courses in painting, sculpture, and applied arts, pioneering the award of the "National Diploma in Art". Today, the College of Art offers a comprehensive range of degree programs, including BFA and MFA

courses in Painting, Applied Art, History of Art, Printing, Sculpture, and Visual Communication. Renowned painters such as Mira Mukherjee, Eric Bowen, Rameshwar Broota, and Dheeraj Chaudhary have made significant contributions to the college's illustrious legacy, enriching the artistic landscape of both the institution and the nation.<sup>11</sup>

- **Faculty of Fine arts, MSU Vadodara 1950:** Established in 1881 as Baroda College, MS University underwent a transformation in 1949 when the last ruler of the Baroda state, in honor of his grandfather Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad III, elevated it to university status. Thus, it became known as Maharaja Sayajirao University. One of its notable departments, the Faculty of Fine Arts, was established in 1950, marking a significant milestone as the first fine arts department in Independent India to offer a full degree course. Today, the Faculty of Fine Arts at MS University, Vadodara, offers BVA courses in Painting, Applied Art, Art History, and Sculpture, contributing to the enrichment of India's artistic landscape.<sup>12</sup>
- **College of Fine arts, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Bangaluru 1964:** Chitrakala Parishad, initiated by the Government of Karnataka in 1960, was dedicated to fostering the growth of visual arts. In 1964, the Parishad established the Nanjunda Rao Art School, aiming to broaden art education within the state. By 1964, it gained recognition as an art center under the auspices of Chitrakala Parishad and the National Academy of Fine Arts, New Delhi. This art school underwent a significant transformation in 1983, evolving into the esteemed "College of Fine Arts," with its Fine Arts degree accredited by Bengaluru University. Today, the College of Fine Arts offers BVA and MVA courses in Painting, Sculpture, Applied Art, Graphic Art, and Art History, contributing to the advancement of artistic education in Karnataka.
- **Govt. college of art Chandigarh 1951:** The Government College of Arts, Chandigarh, holds the distinction of being the sole arts college in North India after Delhi. Following the partition of the country in 1951, it emerged as a branch of the Mayo College of Art, Lahore, under the moniker "Government School of Art and Crafts." Initially established in Shimla, the erstwhile capital of Punjab, this art school offered comprehensive five-year diploma courses in painting, sculpture, and commercial art. Notably, S L Parashar served as the principal, with Satish Gujral as the vice principal during this period. In 1962, the art school underwent a significant relocation to Chandigarh, the newly constructed capital of Punjab, where it was rechristened as the 'Government College of Art.' Presently, the college offers B.F.A. and M.F.A. degrees across various disciplines including painting, sculpture, graphics, and applied arts, furthering its legacy as a hub of artistic education and innovation in the region.<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 16**



**Figure 16** Govt. College of Art Chandigarh

Source <https://gcart.edu.in/>

**Figure 17**



**Figure 17** Visual Arts Dept., BHU Varanasi

Source Facebook Page – Faculty of Visual arts BHU

- **Faculty of Visual arts, Banaras Hindu University Varanasi 1950**  
Banaras Hindu University, also known as Kashi Hindu Vishwavidyalaya, stands as a prestigious central university established in 1916. Notably, in 1920, the renowned Kalavid Padmavibhushan Rai Krishna Das founded the illustrious "Bharat Kala Bhawan" museum within its premises, showcasing a remarkable collection of approximately twelve thousand Indian paintings spanning various styles.

Building upon this rich artistic heritage, the Faculty of Visual Arts was established in 1950, further solidifying the university's commitment to artistic excellence. Today, it stands as one of India's premier art institutes, offering Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) and Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degrees across a diverse array of disciplines including painting, commercial art, textile designing, plastic art (sculpture), and pottery ceramic. This esteemed institution continues to nurture and inspire the



## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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