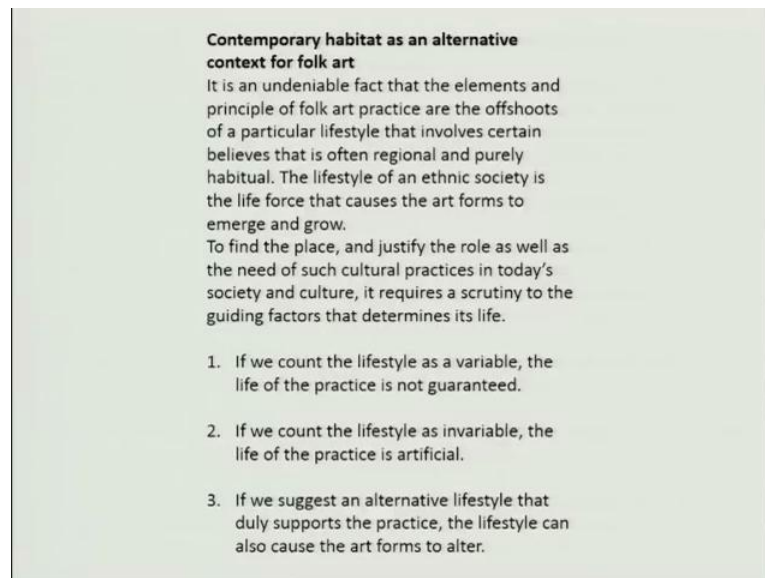


Folk and Minor Art in India
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Lecture - 42
Alternative Context: Place of Folk Art in Contemporary Lifestyle

So, let us discuss the topic of looking at folk art from Alternative Context, where the context is changing. It is not being produced in the traditional surrounding where it originated from, but its finding its new place and that is giving it some kind of substitution context.

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Contemporary habitat as an alternative context for folk art

It is an undeniable fact that the elements and principle of folk art practice are the offshoots of a particular lifestyle that involves certain believes that is often regional and purely habitual. The lifestyle of an ethnic society is the life force that causes the art forms to emerge and grow.

To find the place, and justify the role as well as the need of such cultural practices in today's society and culture, it requires a scrutiny to the guiding factors that determines its life.

1. If we count the lifestyle as a variable, the life of the practice is not guaranteed.
2. If we count the lifestyle as invariable, the life of the practice is artificial.
3. If we suggest an alternative lifestyle that duly supports the practice, the lifestyle can also cause the art forms to alter.

So, in that topic we must try to find out the place of folk art in the contemporary life style which is very important for it. Contemporary habitat as an alternative context for folk art, it is an undeniable fact that the elements and principle of folk art practice are the offshoots of a particular life style that involve certain believes that is often regional and purely habitual. The life style of an ethnic society is the life force that causes the art forms to emerge and grow. To find the place and justify the role as well as the need of such cultural practices in today's society and culture, it requires a scrutiny to the guiding factors that determines its life.

So, there are three factors that we may consider for now: one - if we count the life style as a variable the life of the practice is not guaranteed, two - if we count the lifestyle as in

variable the life of the practice is artificial, three - if we suggest an alternative lifestyle that duly supports the practice the lifestyle can also cause the art forms to alter. The third option ensures a survival of the practice in new circumstances which can support the practice to cope up with the contemporary art seeing and (Refer Time: 02:38) to the need of the modern art market. But to appreciate the new art forms as an outcome of an alternative condition the society also needs adequate preparation, if the contemporary demand suffers from any sort of ethno maniac syndromes the folk art will die in stagnancy. If folk forms are hypothetically set in a symbolic relationship with main stream modern art they cannot mutually benefit from each other unless there is a right awareness. The folk imaginaries are influenced the main stream artists and provoke their thoughts and visions towards innovative solutions in India, Europe and many other countries are seen.

So, I will discuss quite a few very crucial point in this context, not too reach to a conclusion as much as to analyze the topic and continue the research and slowly it may land to a different conclusion that provides us with some possible solutions. So, these three points where the lifestyle is fixed and the practice is changing, the other context is where the lifestyle is not changing and the practice is going on in artificial mode let see how they can be counted. As we discussed in our previous lecture that what is remaining constant is it the style and identity the ethos or anything more, what is crucial? To some extent we have come to some conclusion that if the stylistic identity the recognisability, the aesthetic quantum as well as the making of it and the expression that comes through it the value, the ancient value system if that is constant then our purpose is solved. We may say that the culture is sustaining, it is leaving, but then what are the other alternatives lets short down a few points to our mind to elaborate that idea into the form of a discussion.

Folk has drawn elements from classical art and ancient literally sources that gave it some kind of regimentation in their principle objectives. They work as a restriction the artist knew very clearly for themselves what has to be done and it also provided the artist with some bit of a convenient. They knew that the thought is decided it is there in one place and they are worked to explode the style and reach the excellence. As the art works are highly skill based everybody had to get tuned to certain community skill which is common for all. So, it is more like a training where everybody comes down to a common

platform and practice. So, this is perhaps the most discrete point that separates primitive art and folk art to a level whereas, primitive art has a ageless quality to it that its basic the kind of style that we get to see would never change, its acceptable universally wherever we show primitive art we know that they have a certain bit of an appeal to people regardless of their cast, grade, authenticity, nationality, and so on.

So, folk art, for it is literally inclination does not remain and instinctive and spontaneous practice as primitive art does. Folk art follows a strict foundation that governs the order of phase deviation the presence of symbolic and allegorical images which often has a very strong literally base to it, they connected to some strong literature and the symbols are then deciphered by people who are acquainted with that particular literary ethos or the literary exposure. So, the allegoric images symbols lots of signs and icons which are that we see which is also highly cultural specific that we get to see here and that are mostly mandatory rather than arbitrary.

The aesthetic continuum of contemporary practice is not free from traditional elements either in them, we see reminiscent of the past, but they are invaded with individualistic expression. The contemporary range of multifaceted and valid colored imageries that is like available now around us and full of promises of originality and innovativeness the kind of artistic freedom that is providing them with the kind of innovative images that they are incorporating in their artworks; that is important. And then, this is something where it is when we see that there perhaps a margin from a traditional foundation by means of fresh observation. So, its skill observation and listeners the sense of creating a space that kind of an expertise and many other things like any other art forms that is working together to give it the right expression which is appreciated and seriously taken by a large mass all over the globe in fact.

The study of folk art was related to the field of anthropology for a very long time and it found its significance there more than anything else, but this is not something what is in the practice right now. It is only where recently that the revision in the area of pedagogic study of history, justified the complete nature of visual history by including visual studies and history of art and the inclusion of woken minor art into history of art justifies it even better. The general notion about folk painting in common people is full of association with the ancient, the materialization of the contemporary range of serious art work is still a matter of a larger awareness that we are discussing here, the way folk art is

being viewed also needs some bit of a renewal for the same reason, the contemporary aesthetics that confirm to the essentials of its origin and try with individual expression today needs a proper tracking from the part of the viewers. The people who are seeing them buying them, appreciating them, preserving them, collecting them, curating them, and the many other people who are getting involved in to the thing those who are being instrumental to shift the pyridine to a different pyridine and we are coming to the topic slowly.

So, let us also discuss about the new methodology of viewing and appreciating contemporary folk art that may justify the viewing to a like to fit to a parallel culture where folk and minor art will also be viewed with the same sentiment that we hold for any other art forms. We should not separate them or look down upon it or in fact, like we may feel that we hold some special consideration in favor of folk art, none of these activities would duly justify its importance. So, if it has the required quality we should also see it from a proper perspective. So, as we discussed that we should also bring down or way of looking at it as description analysis interpretation, judgment coming down to some conclusion, comparison, comparing the tradition with other traditions comparing folk art with main stream academic art practices.

Looking at folk art from the perspective of community beholders to plea set as graphite or public art and the thing has tremendous possibility to give it the proper facelift that folk art needed. And also looking at them from the three layered vision where it is not only the thematic content or the thematic analysis or the symbolic values the iconic features the iconographic aspects are viewed, but it is seen from a purely semiotic perspective where we approach towards a visuals in terms of their elementary value - how strong the lines are, how expressive the line qualities is very important to see how the color combination is used here. Because most of the time we see that folk arts color combinations are mandatory, rather than arbitrary and that puts the values slightly down for a reason that the expressive qualities are not counted in most of the cases when we know that somebody used a red because using red was auspicious and compulsory it just occurs to our mind that this is connected to some superstition or some believes which are very backward.

So, we start looking down upon them and we do not value the expressive urge that the folk artist also holding like any other artist in this own world. So, it is very important to

see things and also encourage the entire viewing by providing us with that particular freedom and not thinking that they are bound to continue with certain thing. The identity can be maintained in many other ways, it is also true in a context that maybe an example well make it more lively and clear to you that it may happen that often we feel that everybody is getting trained under certain tutelage whether master painter is teaching them to be uniform. So, what about the individual identity is it only the use of the subject matter or the individual art towards can be identified, but that is happening.

In fact, the master painters they are most of the times sensitive that we can only make it out when we interact with them, they say that it is a same line applied by to three different people some lines are arrogance, some lines are calm, some lines are strong, some are weak and that is how the like as we say for any other relevance of art. The expression, its quality of art that an art we reveal ourselves according to Tagore and not the objects so much, that should also apply for folk and minor art where we look at it from a purely semiotic point of view and that is very important.

So, it takes us with to a different direction to look at them and conduct a serious viewing for folk art we should not take it for a granted we should spend time looking at them and understanding the inter cases of them. So, I would like to coat Roma Chatterji in this context she is author of this very recent book I will speaking with pictures folk art and the narrative tradition in India. In this book along with many other comments that I am going to enter in because I recommend my students while taking of this course to read this book because of the kind of work that is produced and the way it is conducted and the way it is written with lot of concern and knowledge that shows her involvement and that is the reason we value her opinions and observation to a large extent.

In the conclusion of our course I think I must read out quite a few things from that particular book which is done in a very recent context. This study of folk art that strategically chooses Ramayan as a traditional theme throughout, in the course I chose Ramayan with the purpose that it should not divert you from many different stories and apart from Mansamangal I used Ramayan throughout so that we can discuss the visual elements more than anything else.

So, it is more like seeing Ramayan in different style which is like of course, a common thing. So, it was a slightly strategic from my part to choose Ramayan for the entire

course. So, the episodes from the epic in single frame and narrative scroll that was described in the courts and the formats are based on the same story with distinctively different regional styles that we saw. They follow the common visual idiom typical of folk paintings, there we see the space that is the usually two dimensional they had been no through dimensional illusion of depth that was created there. So, two dimensional in general that no intention at all to create any kind of other visual depth which is otherwise very European and scientific and that perspective that is like known as linear perspective where we have all the lines converging into one or two points or the multiple perspective of Egyptian art that is also not seen in this context.

So, the compositions are dominant with linear qualities and all the characters and objects are confined in well defined contour lines. So, I will read from Roma Chatterji. So, she is writing - The Ramayana is more than a text however it is a mitten narrative, made up of corpus of different tailing available to successive generations by the diverse performative traditions through which it is invaded. Each new tailing assumes knowledge of pre-tailing, the relationship of previous Ramayana texts allows a certain freedom to later composers. Since the story is already known composers are free to this member the text and to de-touch particular episodes for fresh enactment or commentary.

This is very important to know that a story which is told many a times and being retold the artist gets a particular freedom. So, the choice of stories are also very interesting when we say that the traditional connection as we discussed in our point that if we feel that the artist should free themselves completely from there the choice of subject matter they should not choose stories from any traditional root we must also see then where to look for. The new stories have to come into the scene. So, an observation made from the modern deflection of the age old saga includes elements like speech bubbles that we have seen and after the comics' scripts pattern in a Kalamkari in Sri Kalahsthi style we see that they using speech bubbles they are writing things and co-operating many other things into that.

So, we have discussed all this new elements that is providing the art work with certain freedom and at the same time they are using all those stories for some convenience. At the same time when they moving to some new stories we need to find out better means of that. So, the story should also have some bit of pictorial possibilities to it. So, the story should been enriched with many images and so on.

So, I would like to read from Roma Chatterji a little bit to elaborate that concept. So, with that in our next lecture we are going to move to another very crucial discussion, I will read from Roma Chatterji to understand her opinion and I will also show you quite of few existing example in the physical form and discuss about the possible shift in pyridine how the context can be changed and also the art works can get a new medium in its technical possibilities.

So, in our next lecture we are going to talk about the possibilities of pyridine shift when we are changing the means of execution in terms of the medium that we are expressing our ideas. When we see that the new elements like speech bubbles are getting added in to the paintings; that means, it has some possibilities of visual story telling that it already had traditionally now it can also work as a new medium of storytelling with a form of a graphic book perhaps and that has been explode, so we need to understand what are the different means of the pyridine shift.

The two things that come to our mind very readily that are the comic books and animation, because you know when the images and storytelling they are involved into certain (Refer Time: 23:49). These are the two things that we can quickly understand, but then Roma Chatterji was involved in some of these project and I would like to read out from her research some of her experiences and also show you some of the existing works though like in a limited number, but just to give you some idea how the pyridine can be shifted and how to justify that, it is the only option or there are other things that suits the context based on the three points that we discussed in this lecture.