



# DEVELOPMENT OF VISUAL IDIOMS OF SCULPTURAL ART AND CONTEMPORARY INDIAN SCULPTURE ARTIST DURING POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

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## ABSTRACT

*The Indian Sculpture School has made remarkable progress in a short period of time, particularly during the period between 1930 and 1960 when Ramkinkar Baij created sculptures representing various "isms." Baij's accomplishments paved the way for the future of modern Indian sculpture. The representation of religious characters has been a consistent theme in traditional Indian art over the centuries. The British Regime played a significant role in the development of modern art in India, with various art schools and centers emerging in the country. Post-independence, Indian contemporary sculpture established its own unique vocabulary. Ramkinkar Baij was a pioneer in this regard, combining elements of contemporary western sculpture with pre-classical Indian sculptural ideals. The fusion of styles continues to be a trend in modern Indian sculpture, with artists interpreting Indian mythology and history with accents of European art forms and styles. Famous Indian sculptors and upcoming artists are showcased, such as Anish Kapoor, who combines digits with notation in his aesthetically appealing installations. The development of modern Indian sculpture has been influenced by the expansion of modern art movements in Europe, but the history of contemporary modern art in India has been distinct from that in the West. The emergence of art colleges in metropolitan cities like Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay during the mid-nineteenth century provided training in Western methods. The establishment of the School of Industries by Dr. G. Buist in 1850 and the School of Art by Dr. Hunter marked the beginning of "modern" art in India. The study aimed to analyze the works and achievements of modern Indian sculpture and the development of visual idioms of sculptural art during the post-independence period. Data was collected based on emerging artists in Indian contemporary sculpture from 1980 to 2000. The analysis revealed that Indian sculptures began to strip down established dogmas and develop works emphasizing the simplicity of outlines and minimalism.*

**Keywords:** visual, idioms, art, Indian, sculpture, artist

## INTRODUCTION

The Indian Sculpture School worked just on courses to create the same history in a short span of three decades, which is astounding given that it took centuries for Western sculptures, such as prophets and structuralism, to cover the whole evolution of numerous 'isms'. Between the years 1930 and 1960, Ramkinkar was responsible for erecting sculptural souvenirs on each of the representative "isms." This accomplishment is named after Ramkinkar. His achievements have allowed him to see further into the future than ever before (Mago, 2001).

## History of Indian Art: Styles

The representation of religious characters (idols and gods) from the three major faiths practised in India Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism has been a pattern that has persisted over the centuries in traditional Indian artwork. Cave paintings and sculptures uncovered from prehistoric eras often represented human, mythological, ornately adorned animal, and other animal forms. Other animal species were also occasionally shown. Throughout the entirety of the mediaeval period, Islamic and Indian art continued to depict a variety of human figures. Neither one of the traditions gave up on the practise. Each individual means of artistic expression is extremely praiseworthy due to the presence of a specific feature that distinguishes it from the others.

## Sculptural Growth during British Regime and Decolonization through Nationalism

After the middle of the nineteenth century, when Western academic art training first started to be formally taught in India, various art schools and centres such as Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras began to emerge in the country. These schools and centres were primarily focused on the practise of painting. These art schools and centres stood in stark contrast to the royal art tradition practised in India's most important kingdoms. Not only was the old method of teaching art considerably different from how it was being taught now, but the activities that were being taught were also pretty different. There is considerable doubt that the majority of these centres originated in India's more recent cities such as New Delhi, Baroda, Chennai, Lahore, Nagpur, and Indore, amongst others, where there were essentially no pre-existing artistic vocabulary to speak of. They rapidly developed into centres of artistic activity, complete with thriving communities of artists, patrons, galleries, prize-giving organisations, and educational institutions, thereby creating an ecosystem that fostered the art form and encouraged its dissemination. These centres of artistic activity are now known as cultural nexuses.

Even if the financial ecology and environment were necessary for their development, some of them have vanished due of genteel neglect. This is despite the fact that these factors were vital for their growth. Artists who contributed to the creation and distribution of concepts connected with Indian modernism were shaped by the most famous art institute and its teaching staff. This institute was responsible for moulding the artists who contributed. The year 1854 marks the beginning of both Calcutta's rise to prominence as a prominent and prolific art centre as well as the beginning of the function of the Government College of Art and Craft, which was formerly known as the School of Industrial Art.

## Development of Visual Idioms of Sculptural Art during Post Independence Period

It is feasible to trace the beginnings of modernism in Indian sculpture all the way back to the beginning of the 20th century and its acceptance of academic art traditions from western countries. This may be done by looking at early examples of modernist sculpture in India. Sculptors who attended art schools in Britain and trained in the academic realist style tended to focus their work on secular themes. This was a departure from the norms of ancient and mediaeval Indian painting, which mostly concentrated on images of gods and other figures from mythology. During this historical period, sculptures were created in order to meet the demands of the newly formed upper and middle socioeconomic strata. An excellent indication of the ingenuity of Indian sculptors is the powerful and nearly hyper realistic realism that was popular throughout this time period.

Only in the 1940s and 1950s did Indian modern sculpture create its own distinct indigenous vocabulary, which is most eloquently expressed by the works of Ramkinkar Baij. Only in the 1940s and 1950s did Indian contemporary sculpture establish its own distinct indigenous vocabulary. In order to prove his argument, he took a fresh look at both western and traditional Indian customs and then blended them in a modern context. He established his own distinctive style by working with unconventional substances such

as cement, gravel, and concrete and he drew inspiration for his artwork in the landscape of rural areas and in the cultures of indigenous people (Berkson, 2000).

Experiments with wood and stone, in which the essential qualities of the solid block were maintained, came to be the hallmark of the decade of the 1950s. During the next two decades, sculptors developed new ways to connect with the material, the subject matter, and the shape of their works by employing a broad variety of techniques.

### **Twentieth Century Cultural Milieu through Indian Art and Culture**

The development of modern art in India has been closely linked to the expansion of modern art movements in Europe, despite the fact that the history of contemporary modern art in India has been rather distinct from that in the West. This has been the case for a long time due to the fact that both India and Europe have been hubs of cultural invention. After the middle of the nineteenth century, additional art colleges were created in the metropolitan cities of India such as Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay in order to give training in Western methods in a methodical manner. These cities included Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. After then, in the year 1600, the British East India Company was established in India. This led to the events that followed. It was during this period when what is considered to be the beginning of "modern" art in India took occurred. When Dr. G. Buist, editor of the Bombay Times, established a School of Industries in 1850 with the intention of educating those responsible for the creation of Indian art-craft, the seed was planted for the idea of creating a School of Art. This educational institution was known as the School of Industries. Dr. Hunter had previously founded an institution of art and craft in Madras that was remarkably comparable to the one he was currently operating.

At the beginning of the 1850s, the British were of the idea that the artistically oriented people of India might potentially achieve a certain degree of proficiency in painting and sculpture if they were supplied with the right supervision. This was the belief held by the British. At the schools of art that were going to be recommended, students were going to be instructed in the fundamentals of painting, drawing, design, and modelling. In addition, ornamental ceramics and metalwork, as well as wood carving and turning, were intended to be taught at these schools, but students wouldn't be compelled to use pricey machinery for these types of projects. In order to conduct a study, three art schools were set up in India: one in the city of Madras, one in the city of Calcutta, and one in the city of Bombay.

### **Modern Indian Sculpture: Works and Achievements**

Returning in 1968, the art critic made a remark regarding the formal trend of a young sculptor while talking about a single show that was put on display at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kolkata. The city of Kolkata played host to the show. Despite the fact that it featured supernatural undertones, the reviewers made sure to highlight the fact that it was based on a programme that effectively combined "rhymes with monumentality" in "clean, sweeping lines." This was something that the critics did not miss to bring out. For a sculptor by the name of Sushen Ghosh, who was twenty-eight years old at the time, the metaphorical mesh was only a matter of time until it was completely abandoned and changed into what was widely referred to as "abstract."

In the year 1970, Sushen Ghosh made the decision to further his education by enrolling at the Goldsmith College of Art in London. His goal was to get an advanced diploma. Sushen was motivated to investigate the possibilities of a more profoundly pure form as a result of his release with the Tate Gallery of the British Museum as well as a wide array of other original art. In addition, his proximity to a particular dominant section of modern art rated abstract rather than nature also played a role in inspiring him to pursue this line of inquiry. Nevertheless, Santiniketan was most likely where the voyage got its start. When Sushen was in the presence of modern art from Europe, he got the vivid and profound sensation that the sculpture by Ramkinkar Baij stood out favourably in contrast to the other works of art.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study on Modern Indian Sculpture: Works and Achievements
2. To study on Development of Visual Idioms of Sculptural Art During Post Independence Period

## RESEARCH METHOD

The data for the analysis has been collected on the Basis Of Emerging Artists in Indian Contemporary Sculpture from 1980 to 2000. The methodology adopted for the research is based on descriptive method. Both primary and secondary data have been used for the study.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Two contemporary Indian artists namely Ramkinker Baij and Anish Kapoor have been chosen for the analysis. Their works, styles, themes and techniques are selected as the subject of research.

### 1. Ramkinker Baij

Baij was a prominent player in contextual modernism and a pioneer of contemporary Indian sculptural art. He was born on May 26, 1906 and passed away on August 2, 1980. Baij always trusted his own instincts.

He was also a sculptor and graphic artist in addition to being a painter. As an early modernist, he often created works that were stunning examples of how classical Indian style could be tastefully mixed with a western form of art.

He was skilled in the use of a variety of materials, such as local stones and metal, which he employed in the production of avant-garde works of art.

He spent much of his time researching traditional communities since he was so deeply preoccupied with the activity that took place every day. The work below is one by Baij titled "The Santhal Family" that strikes me as being quite similar. The sculpture is regarded as the country of India's first modernist work of art to be displayed in a public space. It depicts a family of the Santhal tribe—a mother, father, kid, and dog—moving to a new home and taking their few belongings with them.

Ramkinkar's style is unique because it skillfully and tastefully combines elements of contemporary western sculpture with pre-classical Indian sculptural ideas. This produces a highly distinctive style. He had little choice but to embark on his own because there had never been a significant Indian sculpting tradition that he could have drawn on to his financial advantage, save from the well-known memorial and religious sculptures. He had no other choice than to start his own company. He was naturally left with no choice but to go out on his own. He became the first real exponent of modern Indian sculpture and was acknowledged as the first genuine exponent of modern Indian art because he brought the first truly contemporary sensibility to Indian sculpture while remaining deeply rooted in the place he grew up in. His corpus of work is frequently cited as one of the most important additions to the lengthy history of the medium.



**Figure 1: *Santhal Family*, 1938**

It is generally agreed that *Santhal Family*, a sculpture created by Ramkinkar Baij in 1938, was India's first piece of modernist art to be shown in a public setting. It's a strangely identifiable piece of artwork that depicts a Santhal family—a mother, father, child, and dog—moving their few things as they start a new life. The family is seen going from one place to another. The family consists of the mother, the father, the child, and the dog.

Cement concrete was used in the construction of several of his sculptures rather of more expensive materials like as stone, copper, or plaster of Paris. This compound was blended with laterite stones, which, at the time, were readily available in enormous amounts everywhere around Santiniketan. It was used in the construction of Santiniketan. Because he works in a variety of materials, each of his outdoor sculptures has a personality and atmosphere all its own. They give off the impression of having sprung from the ground, much like the termite mounds that can be seen coming up out of the red mud in Santiniketan. They are never lifeless or boring, but always colorful, earthy, and rough.

### **The *Santhal Family*, a creation of Ramkinkar Baij:**

Baij was completely enthralled by the lack of order that characterizes the Santhals' way of life. Baij was able to have a close look at the Santhal people as a result of the fact that their tribe lives in and near Shantiniketan. Their exuberance and the frenetic pace of life immediately enthralled him. Baij's goal was to convey the basic joys and spontaneity of his subjects via the sculptures and paintings he created. The colossal *Santhal family* sculpture, which was erected between 1938 and 1939, never ceases to amaze and captivate the audience that comes to see it. This sculpture depicts a Native American family quite realistically, complete with a dog, two children, and an adult. The members of the family are seen clutching a variety of material possessions, and the overall picture of the sculpture continues to engage spectators' senses and imaginations in a number of different ways (Fig:1).

### **Mill Call, a creation by Ramkinkar Baij:**

This piece of artwork, which shows mill workers rushing off to work after hearing the alarm siren, is both sorrowful and appropriate for the audience's age. Even though Baij intended to reflect the changing lifestyles of the Santhals, who are otherwise spontaneous, joyous, and love to music and dance, people might relate it to modern working women who must leave the house and go to work, putting aside all cares about the home. This is despite the fact that Baij attempted to represent the changing lives of the Santhals.

### **Sujata is a creation of Ramkinkar Baij.:**

*Sujata*, which was Baij's first sculpture to be displayed at Shantiniketan, is a beautiful representation of his profound admiration for the forms seen in nature. It seems as though a fantastical beast is making its way through Shantiniketan thanks to the artwork, which blends in with its environment so expertly that it creates the impression that it was made there.

Not only did the artwork of Ramkinkar Baij, such as the Thresher, which was made in response to the Bengal Famine that occurred in 1943, convey sensitive human sensations, but it also expresses the artist's ideas on the social changes that are taking place in the nation.

The unique imagery, interplay of light and shadow, and unconventional placements in each of Ramkinkar Baij's exhibited works of art at Kala Bhavan never fail to captivate viewers. Studying the sculptures at Shantiniketan, which is located close to Panthashala, may provide visitors with a whole fresh outlook on life.



**Figure 2: Yaksha and Yakshini**

Carl Khandalawalla, a renowned authority in the field of art criticism, urged the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to seriously consider the possibility of printing the numbers "Yaksha" and "Yakshini" on the reverse sides of the currency. The idea made by Ramkinkar Baij was chosen as the winner after artists had the chance to participate. The male "Yaksha" art form was developed from the "Parkham Yaksha" statue in the Mathura museum, while the female "Yakshini" art form was derived from the "Bisnagar Yakshini" in the Calcutta Museum. You may find both of these statues in the corresponding museums. The museums devoted to any of these disciplines may contain one or both of these monuments.

The excerpt below describes an experience Ramkinkar Baij had while creating the iconic Yaksha-Yakshi statues that are situated outside of the Reserve Bank of India in New Delhi. The Gandhi statue that Baij worked on while he was living in Assam is also mentioned in passing; the state of Assam plans to demolish and rebuild the statue. Ironically, Baij believes that the Gandhi statue will endure the test of time and the elements because of the robustness of its bronze construction (Fig: 2).

Jawaharlal Nehru believed that once India gained its independence, the nation's public structures, many of which were large and imposing monuments, might be used to "encourage Indian artists to function in some way." He saw it in this way. It is possible to ask sculptors, designers, and other creative people for their cooperation. Nehru intended to use the public spaces in order to "encourage Indian artists to function in some way." The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was either building new structures in New Delhi, Madras, and Nagpur during the time, or it was seriously considering doing so. A committee was formed so that the idea could be researched and so that the committee could offer recommendations on the issue. This committee suggested that the statues be erected on each side of the main entrance of the RBI headquarters in New Delhi, with one sculpture representing "prosperity through industry" and the other representing "prosperity through agriculture." Both sculptures would be placed in front of the RBI office's front door."

## 2. Anish Kapoor

Since the 1980s, Anish Kapoor has been one of the most influential figures in the world of contemporary art, particularly in the realm of Indian modern sculpture. While Kapoor was born in Bombay, India in 1954, he has called London his home and place of employment ever since the 1970s. He is recognised for his large-scale installations that provide a challenge to the viewer's understanding of space and form. To produce aesthetically appealing works, he frequently uses materials such as pigment, stainless steel, and mirrored surfaces.

"Cloud Gate" may be seen in Chicago's Millennium Park, "Turning the World Upside Down" can be found in Jerusalem, and "Armadillo Vault" can be found in London's Olympic Park. These are just some of Kapoor's most well-known works. He has also produced a large number of smaller sculptures, such "Shooting into the Corner," which is cannon that fires red wax out of a corner, and "Marsyas," which is a big trumpet made of PVC that hangs from the ceiling. Both of these sculptures are examples of his work.



**Figure 3: Marsyas, 2002**

The artwork of Anish Kapoor has been shown at a wide variety of exhibitions and places all over the world. Some of these venues include the Tate Modern in London, the Pompidou Center in Paris, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential artists of his time and is known for pushing the envelope of what may be accomplished in modern sculpture. He is widely considered to be one of the most significant artists of his age.

Anish Kapoor is widely regarded as a pivotal figure in contemporary Indian sculpture and has exerted a considerable impact on the world of art since the 1980s. Kapoor was born in the year 1954 in Mumbai, which is located in India; nevertheless, since the 1970s, he has made London his permanent residence and place of employment. It is common practice for him to employ elements like as color, stainless steel, and mirrored surfaces in the production of works that are aesthetically pleasing. His large-scale works challenge the viewer's preconceived notions of space and form, which has earned him widespread acclaim.

Some of Kapoor's most well-known works are the "Cloud Gate" in Chicago's Millennium Park, "Turning the World Upside Down" in Jerusalem, and the "Armadillo Vault" in London's Olympic Park. In addition, he has created a great number of smaller sculptures, such as "Marsyas," a gigantic PVC trumpet that hangs from the ceiling, and "Shooting Into the Corner," a cannon that blasts red wax out of a corner. Both of these works are examples from his "Small Sculptures" series (Fig: 3).

The Tate Modern in London, the Pompidou Center in Paris, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York are just a few of the institutions and exhibition spaces that have shown Kapoor's work in the past. It is said that he is one of the most influential artists of his generation and that he is always pushing the boundaries of what is considered achievable in contemporary sculpture.

### The Cloud Gate

Kapoor produced Cloud Gate, a site-specific sculpture that is installed in Millennium Park in Chicago. He continued his use of large-scale works and reflecting surfaces in this piece. The sculpture is 33 feet tall and 66 feet long, and it has been given the moniker "The Bean." It was inspired by the silver colour and thick viscosity of liquid mercury. The sculpture is made up of 168 polished stainless steel panels that have been welded together seamlessly to create the illusion of a single object. In the same way as his Sky Mirrors, the surface of the structure that looks like a bean reflects a changed picture of its surrounds, including the well-known buildings of Chicago (Fig



Figure 4: Cloud gate, 2006

### CONCLUSION

There is more of a tendency towards a fusion of styles, in which modernist Indian sculptors interpret Indian mythology and history with the accents of European art forms and styles. This trend is more prevalent than ever before we showcase well-known Indian sculpting artists in addition to sculptors of the younger generation who are just coming into their own and have already produced an impressive body of work. While Kapoor was born in Bombay, India in 1954, he has called London his home and place of employment ever since the 1970s. He is recognised for his large-scale installations that provide a challenge to the viewer's understanding of space and form. To produce aesthetically appealing works, he frequently uses materials such as pigment, stainless steel, and mirrored surfaces. This combination helped him develop a natural sense of synthesising digits with notation, which was ultimately represented in the environmental and interior sculptures he created. The virtue he received from his teacher Ramkinkar while working as a constructive modeller for rendering realistic figures in structural or geometrical style was responsible for the fact that his environmental and indoor sculptures have gelled with the surroundings. This was due to the fact that his environmental and indoor sculptures have gelled with the surroundings.



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