INTACH

Jamini Roy

(1887- 1972)



MOTHER AND CHILD

A 20th century modern art piece, currently residing in National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi

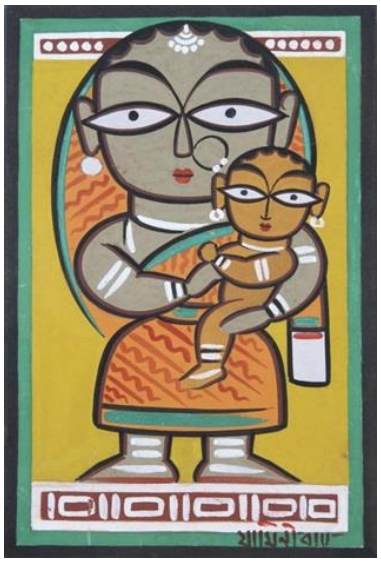
The painting, ‘Mother and Child’ is one of the classic example of Jamini Roy’s style. The use of earthly colours and the touch of folk traditional style of art were features of Jamini Roy’s unique style. He did get inspiration from Kalighat paintings (as seen in the huge eyes) but infused it with folk art and his calligraphic brush strokes.

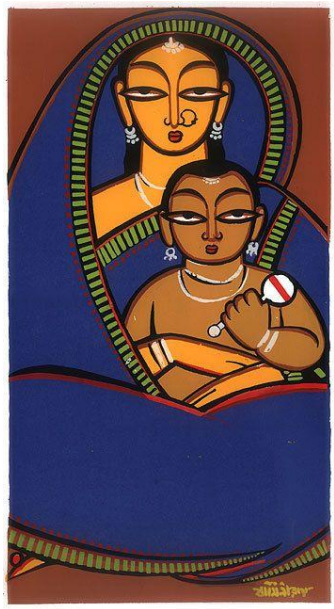
In the painting, the mother is standing in a *tribhanga* pose, her body bending at the neck, the waist and the knee. This gives a very aesthetic ‘S’ style pose to her which is complemented by the upright child on her hips. The figures can also be considered that of Yashodha and Krishna, even if it is not explicit. The colour of earthly red has been used on the background and the Mother’s sari; yellow ochre for skin; white for jewelry and basic designs; green for leaves; and black for curving outline. The medium used is tempera which is a feature of Roy’s later works.

The painting shows the evocation of the tenderness that bound the relationship of any mother with her child. The theme of ‘Mother and Child’ is a very common imagery. It is almost a rite of passage for painters to create the theme in their own style. Maybe it is the expression of raw emotions and undulated love that draws artists to this theme.

Jamini Roy, himself, has created several paintings on the theme of ‘Mother and Child.’ One of the earliest (1921) is that of a Santhal women guiding her child. We see first hints of the artist’s stylization and simplification of figures. We also see the influence of the oriental style, a feature of Bengal School of Art. Most of his other works titled ‘Mother and Child’ are from the later part of his life and thus are created in his own unique style.





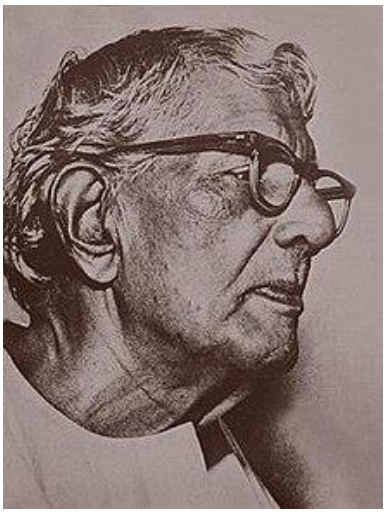


Background- Bengal School of Art

The first art schools established in India in the late nineteenth century by the British were focused on Industrial Art. The style of these schools was influenced by the European teachings. At the same time, there was documentation of Ajanta frescos and Mughal and Pahari miniatures. The influence of these indigenous arts of India is seen in the works of the artists of the early twentieth century who rose up as torchbearers and revivers of Indian art and culture. These artists were considered belonging to the Bengal School of Art. In their hope to combat colonial culture, it looked for inspiration in not only in India but in the Far East. It imbibed indigenous and oriental artand represented the nationalistic struggle.

Jamini Roy

Jamini Roy had been a student at the Government School of Art, Calcutta and thus been influenced by western style in his early days. Later when the Bengal revival school emerged, he engaged in that style for a while. His paintings of Santhal paintings were inspired by the Bengal School.



Jamini Roy, though considered to be a part of the Bengal School of Art, soon moved away from the elitist approach of the Bengal School and was not a supporter of "propaganda of Eastern Art." In mid-1920s, he started seeking inspiration from folk-art traditions such as scrolls, Kalighat paintings, Puja images, local toys and dolls, and ritual artifacts. His use of firm and majestic curves and simple forms were adopted from Orissan and Jain manuscript illustrations of the medieval period. His palette included the mineral and vegetable dye used popularly in villages. This included Indian red, yellow ochre, cadmium green, vermillion, grey, blue and white. The medium of tempera began to be preferred.

He slowly moved away from the poetic style of Kalighat and towards a more decorative style. He did retain some of the characteristics like the large eyes and the oval faces.Later he started searching for his own style. Soon, his artistic impulse became rooted in his childhood growing up in Beliatore village in the Birbhum district of the once undivided Bengal.He created a strong individualistic style by infusing subtlety and

sophistication to the simplistic Kalighat paintings. Roy styled himself as a *Pathua*, the Bengali folk painter. His free repetitious approach originated from there.

Jamini Roy's subject matter was often the Santhals of the Bengal countryside and their love of music and dance. He was also drawn to Christian imagery, and drew paralles between Madonna and Baby Jesus with Yashodha and Krishna. There was no religious significance in these paintings, which remained secular images.

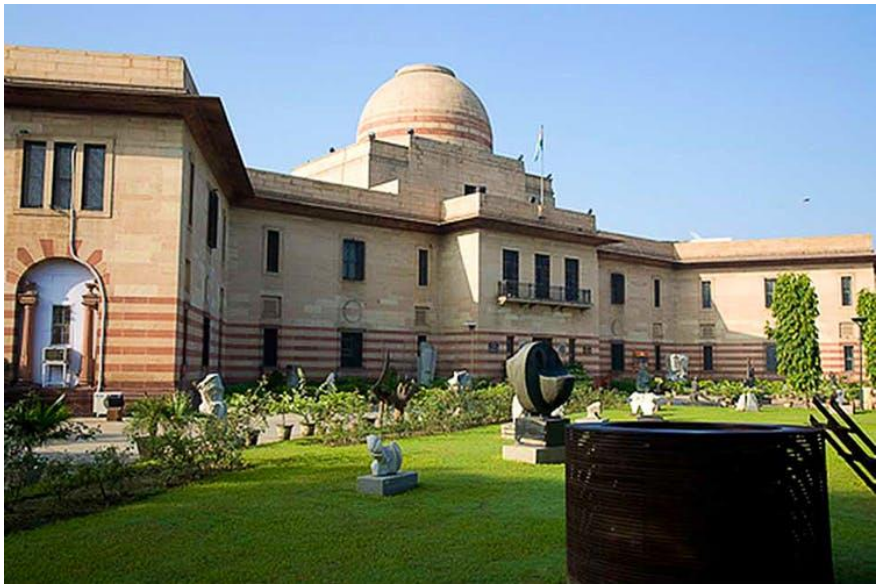
Jamini Roy's works has been criticised for their lack of imaginativeness. The pieces are not considered thought provoking and generally just decorative. Roy set out to create his own style away from the elitist contemporary style but ironically his style is being re-produced almost in a factory style to for the current elite.

But Roy's work has a nationalistic significance as the contemporary nationalistic struggle was also trying to free itself from Western imposition and trying to retain self-identity. Also his works helped in the revival of indigenous art forms, especially folk art. His style is considered 'Folk Modern' and he is considered one of the founding fathers of Modern Indian Art.

National Gallery of Modern Art

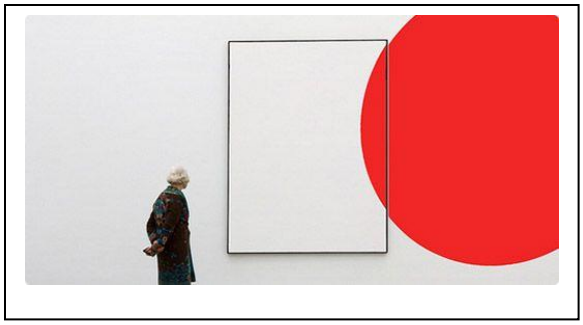
After Independence, the need for a national art gallery was expressed to the then Prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Thus the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) was formally inaugurated on 29th March, 1954 and Herman Goetz was appointed as the first curator. The building chosen for this prestigious gallery was the Jaipur House which was designed by Sir Arthur Bloomfield in Lutyens style. Renowned sculptors like D.P. Roy Chowdhury, RamkinkarBaij, Sankho Chaudhuri, DhanrajBhagat andSarbari Roy Chowdhury had showcased their works.

The gallery functions under the authority of the Ministry of Culture and has branches in Bengaluru and Mumbai. The collection features the growth of Modern Art in India, starting from mid-nineteenth century.



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