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Introduction

1.1 Background

Art of 20th century both in the Western and Indian context has displayed a resultant culmination of various influences, factors, and philosophies. The most profound development in this era resulted in the birth of abstract art primarily in the West, preceded by other avant-garde movements such as Post-Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, Fauvism, etc. A hint of abstract art or the roots of abstraction can be traced back to the 19th century Post-Impressionist artists such as Cezanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh. During this time, the distortions of form and color became a vital aspect in their works, which was a breakaway from the limitations of Impressionism. Since abstract art is a result of the culmination of various preceding events, movements, philosophies, technologies, etc. it becomes a vital importance to study these various backgrounds.

Indian art witnessed and underwent much transformation and dynamism during the last couple of centuries. The result of such dynamism could be found in the works of Indian abstract artists of post-independence era. The 20th century Indian artists' long struggle for redefining themselves met with various influences both of older indigenous traditions and from the 20th century Western avant-garde movements as well. Primitive art and tantric diagrams and concepts provided much aid to not only the Western avant-garde artists, but also for the 20th century Indian abstract artists while struggling in their quest for identity and artistic expression. Others dug deeper into their own past experiences in a quest for self-expression and in the pursuit of the non-phenomenal underlying truths of the universe. The results of these endeavors found expression in the works of post-independence abstract artists such as K.C.S Paniker, V.S. Gaitonde, Ram Kumar, Laxman Shreshtha, and Prabhakar Kolte through colors, patterns, and even

scripts. Such factors and the universality of the nature of abstract art make it necessary for it to be studied and analyzed from the perspective of various philosophical viewpoints of art and aesthetics from both Western and Indian context so as to understand them better.

The mode of abstraction and the visions of the artists in Post-Independence Indian art and 20th century Western Modern art have differences in their approach and ideals. However, without a doubt the roots of the avant-garde movements in Modern Indian paintings could be traced back to the trends and developments in the Western Modern art movements [1].

Modern Indian art has gone through various phases in history to reach where it is now. From the various influences from the “Company school” to the traditional folk and tribal art, many Indian artists have a dynamic mixture of influences. Indian artists have struggled to learn the trends in the Western scenario and at the same time to retain their Indian ideals and identities in their works. Going through various sources, books, publications and journals, it is found that Western Modern artists such as Cezanne, Kandinsky, Klee, Picasso, etc. have had profound influences on the modern Indian artists and as especially in abstract artists such as V.S. Gaitonde, Prabhakar Kolte, Ram Kumar, etc.

Certain philosophical backgrounds of art from Greek thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle to 20th century modern thinkers such as Croce, becomes quite relevant. Such philosophies of art arise from the question of what actually is the nature and purpose of art. Art is an important and vital aspect of human experience. “But the question is where does the artistic impulse originate? The exact definition of art has been debated and argued for centuries among philosophers. “What is art?” is the most basic question in the philosophy of aesthetics which implies the question of the nature of art and what it truly is. Again, this implies two subtexts: the essential nature of art, and its social relevance or purpose or lack of it. The definition of art generally falls into three categories: Imitation, Representation and Expression [2].

Ancient Greek philosopher such as Plato first came up with the idea of art as “Mimesis,” which, in Greek, means copying or imitation. For this reason, the primary meaning of art for centuries was defined as the representation or replication of something that is pleasing, beautiful or meaningful. Roughly until the end of the 18th century, a work of art was evaluated on the basis of how perfectly and masterfully it replicated its subject.

This definition of "good art" has had a profound and visible impact on modern and contemporary artists. People placed a high value on very lifelike portraits such as those by the great masters like Michelangelo, Rubens, Velasquez, Rembrandt and so on. As such, this raised questions about the value of 'modern' art such as the cubist distortions of Picasso, the Fauvist abstracted figures of Matisse, and the pure abstractions of Kandinsky. While representational art still continued to be practiced today, it is no longer the only measure of value in art.

Abstract art as a movement is a breakaway from the conventional thought of representational paintings. This style of painting displays distortions and simplifications of forms and uses abstract elements such as geometric shapes, forms, unnatural colors and a variety of textures which are not normally seen in our natural surroundings. These elements are used to depict a painting which can evoke certain moods and interpretations depending on the viewer. Many eminent and budding artists express themselves through these various elements and techniques and forms which result in an abstract painting. Slowly, the usage of distortion and simplification developed further and finally resulted in complete abstraction such as in the works of Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian and Kazimir Malevich, where the compositions are made up of squares, rectangles and lines [3].

The abstract mode of expression or representation has a universal language in so much that abstractionists experiment and play with pure forms that are entirely created not to represent a particular object that are either man-made or seen in nature. The forms are exclusively personal manifestations of the artist's innermost abstract thoughts, emotions or ideals. The color and pattern exists as an end in themselves as some artists are only interested purely in the formal qualities of the paintings [4]

The notion that a work of art should possess an inner meaning, or to have a kind of representation of ideals or values were rejected by some of the artists and critics of the 20th century. They felt that art should be free from all such representation, even if it is representing super-sensuous elements such as emotions or passions. They felt that the forms in the paintings should stand for nothing else but themselves. Neither the artist nor the viewer should seek for any inner meaning or the content in the artwork [5]. The form or the formal qualities of the painting takes precedence over the content in such approach. Meanwhile, for other artists it is a mode of expressing and representing their emotions, states of mind and ideals through colors and patterns. The forms stand in for something

else, other than themselves. Some of these notions and influences can be seen in the works of modern Indian artists as well, although Indian artists always strove to maintain their Indian identities and ideals in their works.

The Post-Independence era in India was also a time for dynamic developments in the field of art. Artists began to explore new techniques along with experimentation using new materials and mediums. During this time of development, artists had begun to break away from all the traditions and standards set by the Company school, as well as the nationalistic notions developed by the Bengal school. The artists were finally free to express their creativity in an unrestrained and progressive manner. This new revolution gave rise to a whole new generation of artists and a phase in Indian art unlike anything before in the Indian art scenario. Even though the idea of distortion, simplification and abstraction were already present in Indian art right from ancient times as in the meditative patterns of tantra art and the distorted and simplified figures in various folk arts, abstraction for the sake of abstraction in the modern context developed rapidly in the post-independence era. Many of these artists took inspiration from the indigenous sources such as visual representations in tantra art and folk art.

Such dynamism in the works of the 20th century artists invites critical perspective from various art and aesthetics theories. Relevant Western and Indian thinkers' perspectives play an important role in the fulfillment of the studies of their works. Greek imitation theory also plays an important part as well, seeing that abstraction went against everything that was once thought about art in the earlier times. Moving on further, into the development during the more recent years has witnessed the developments of theories of Philosophers such as Kant, Hegel and Croce, and their parallels from India with figures such as Tagore and Coomaraswamy.

The influence of abstract art on the early 20th century art scenario was so great, profoundly stirring up the minds of critics, artists and spectators alike that throughout the 20th century, their legacy encompassed the significance of the principles of Impressionism. One of the biggest legacies that abstract art left for the modern artists was the breakaway from representation of natural objects and surroundings, leaving the artists to exercise more freedom over the picture plane. This breaking away from the boundaries of representation also invites not only one, but a multitude of art and aesthetics theory of both classical as well as modern era. Another important aspect of 20th century art would

be its inter-connectivity with various exotic and indigenous sources. Tribal African masks as well as eastern cults of India and other oriental traditions came to influence Western modern art profoundly, and in turn the dynamism created in the works of these Western artists influenced the works of 20th century Indian artists. The relevant art and aesthetics theories in such inter-connections are a complex conglomeration of various philosophical principles which requires further critical studies.

1.2 Review of Literature

Croce (1909) is a translated version of Croce's *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic* by Douglas Ainslie. It elaborates Croce's view regarding Aesthetics and is relevant to this paper for his theory of Aesthetics as Intuition-Expression. Many of the modern artists started searching for new ways of approaches to art, and Imitation and Representation were transcending towards Expression. So, Croce's theory becomes relevant while analyzing the 20th century modern artists and their works [6].

Boas (1927) covered significant areas concerning the important features of primitive art in which he has taken into account, symbolism in art, the representational aspect of art and the formal elements of art. He also discussed about the eastern mystic art such as Tantra, its diagram such as the Yantra and its formal elements and underlying principles. Furthermore, he discusses the other art-forms such as music, literature and dance. Other primitive art discussed in his books include Paleolithic paintings, utilitarian items like cutlery, hats, pottery, and baskets [7].

Jenkins (1942) provides an analysis of the theory of Imitation and Expression. These two theories are compared and analyzed on what basis they can overlap and contradict with each other while applying them to artworks. The comparative study of the Imitation and Expression theory becomes a relevant and crucial part of the study concerning the nature of abstract art and how it evolved and came into being in the past few years [8].

Coomaraswamy (1945) critically analyzes Jenkins' article discussing on the relationship between Imitation and Expression. Coomaraswamy expresses his viewpoint on certain statements on the relationship between these theories [9].

Dasgupta (1960) discusses broadly on some of the special features of Indian art. The uniqueness and principles of Indian art are discussed. The symbolic aspect and the idealism in Indian art are critically highlighted in his book. Besides the features of Indian art, he also talks about the various Indian schools of philosophy in art and their aesthetic

theories. Significant thinkers such as Sri Sankuka, Buddhagosa and Coomarasawamy are also mentioned [10].

Fingesten (1961) discusses the co-relationship between the initiation of abstract art in the West and the influencing spiritual aspects of the East. Works of significant Western artists such as Mondrian are referred in his article. Fingesten, has also given reference to important tantric diagrams such as the Sri Yantra. Occult element had huge impact on the West and becomes a crucial part of the study [11].

Mukerjee (1965) dives into the principles of Rasa theory and the core values of Indian aesthetics. It discusses about the Indian artists need for detachments and achieving universality through meditation. It discusses about the derivation of Rasas from the three Gunas. Furthermore, the article also talks about the connection between rasa and color and their significance. The article explains the color symbolism behind the various rasas. The article also talks about the differentiation between abstraction and symbolism with realism and naturalism [12].

Pandey (1965) provides a brief overview of the prominent aesthetic theories of India are highlighted in this article. It discusses some of the most basic concept of the meaning of art and how it evolved in the Indian psyche since ancient times. He highlights some of the important figures as Bharat Munni, author of the Natya-Sastra and Avinavagupta. He also highlights on the reaction against Imitation [13].

Ringbom (1966) discusses the various aspects of the pioneering works of abstract art. The spiritual factors influencing these works are also discussed. The mysticism and spiritualism of the East played a vital role in the development of early 20th century modern art in the West, especially towards the development of abstraction. These influences from the East were established in the West by figures such as Blavatsky through Theosophy and Ringbom has given his insights on these influences in his article [14].

Hodin (1967) highlights the revolution of the newly emerging avant-garde movements of the early 20th century. It discusses about the protest of modern art against the academism of the West. The limitations of traditional Western art which was thoroughly challenged by the 20th century modern movements are discussed [15].

Osborn (1970) provides an introductory to the works of fine arts. The book traces the trends of various forms of art such as painting, sculpture and print-making up to the

1970s. The book highlights certain significant artists, avant-garde movements which are relevant to the study [16].

Alfert (1972) dives into the crucial relationship between African tribal art such as the tribal masks, and the influences they had on the works of modern artists such Picasso and Vlaminck. African tribal art would have far reaching influences in the context of modern art. The bold distortions in the works of cubists such as Picasso were aided by the influence of African tribal masks. The German artists also appreciated the African tribal art for its sentimental values rather than its formal qualities [17].

Rawson (1973) is another one of Rawson's book concerning the art of Tantra, it highlights the significant aspects of the ancient art of Tantra. Tantra becomes a vital point in the study because it serves as an important bridge between the eastern spiritualism and mysticism to the modern 20th century trends in Western art. The book highlights various imagery which are a conglomeration of various elements such as eroticism, mathematics and metaphysics. Tantra has been a guiding principle for not only for 20th century Western artists like Klee and Mondrian but also for Indian artists such as S.H. Raza, G.R. Santosh, and Biren De [18].

Nandi (1975) elaborates on the aesthetics theories on the various modern Indian thinkers such as Rabindranath Tagore, Brojendranath Seal, Sri Aurobindo and Abanindranath Tagore. Nandi puts forth the aesthetic theories of these thinkers and gives comparatives to Western thinkers like Croce, Hegel, Tolstoy, Derrida, etc. Through the book it is found that the Indian thinkers have similar ideologies as well as differences [19].

Kandinsky (1977) is a translated version of *Uber das Geistige in der Kunst*. It highlights one of the most essential documents in the history of modern art. It is a ground-breaking work in the crusade to free art from its traditional links to material reality. The book was originally written by the renowned non-objective painter Wassily Kandinsky and it describes Kandinsky's own concept of painting and manifests the ideas that were influencing many other modern artists of that time [20].

Whittick (1977) states that Aristotle seems to have expounded a very vast interpretation to the concept of mimesis which includes the idea of what people think of imitation and representation of feelings and emotions which leads to expression. He further states that all kinds of art are a form of expression and that there can be no expression without an external subject which exists outside independently, including the artist's emotion. To represent such external subjects and human feelings and emotions is mimetic in

Aristotle's perspective and the view that art forms such as music are non-representational and abstract would appear to be contradictory with the concept of mimesis in this sense. The application of the Greek concept of mimesis is difficult and it can mean anything from copying appearances to the indefinite expression of vague emotions and it is open to multiple interpretations [21].

Vatsyayan (1977) discusses about the various relationship between Indian classical dance and the various other popular art forms of India such as music, drama, painting and sculpture. He has explained thoroughly, the various symbolic poses and gestures concerning the classical dances of India. He has also made comparisons between the significance of the human body in Indian art to that of the Greek art [22].

Schapiro (1978) focuses on the works and aesthetics of the 19th and 20th century. The section which discusses on the aesthetics of abstract art was particularly relevant to the study. Schapiro highlights some of the important figures such as Courbet, Van-Gogh, Picasso, Mondrian and Gorky. He also discusses further on the humanity of abstract painting [23].

Brooks (1981) explains the dynamics of abstract art. Brooks traces back its development throughout the early 20th century, all the way to the 1960s. He highlights the practical understanding on the usage of colors, patterns, negative and positive spaces. He also highlights on the usage of unconventional materials such as collage and card boards instead of paintbrushes [24].

Plato (1982) discusses about art as imitation. This particular edition is an english translated version of the Republic. Republic is one of the most important books while studying the ancient Greek art and aesthetics theories. The Republic covers an area on aesthetics in its fifth and ninth chapter. The book is a philosophical dialogue by Socrates which covers a range of topics from, politics, justice, and metaphysics and in the later part covers a part on aesthetics, literary theories and criticism as well [25].

Curtin (1982) discusses the nature of Formalism in the modern context and how the idea of Formalism differs from one thinker to another. Curtin stresses specially on the statements made by Roger Fry and Clement Greenberg. He also stresses on the influence of Kantian ideologies on Formalism and by extension, the abstraction in Modern art [26].

Whitford (1984) provides an insight on the Bauhaus school of art and design which was established in Germany during 1919 by Walter Gropius. The Bauhaus movement was one of the most influential movements of the early 20th century. In the Bauhaus movement, they concentrated on the growing relationship between art, craft, society and technology. They sought to unite art with industrial designs, and that was the most important achievement of the Bauhaus. The movement also led to the development of 20th century Modern art as well. Bauhaus abandoned many traditional features of fine arts education and was more deeply concerned with intellectual and theoretical approaches to its subjects [27].

Hagberg (1984) discusses about the properties of the theory of Imitation and how it is relevant while observing and analyzing 20th century modern abstract works. He discusses in detail about how imitation in art can not only be photographic imitation, but something that symbolizes an idea or expression [28].

Read (1985) gives an insight on the development of Western Modern art from around the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century. The modernist movements were some of the most radical and dynamic art movements in history. Different isms brought about different approaches to art and different philosophies along with it. Roughly beginning around the mid-20th century with art movements such as Realism and later on with the development of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, artists such as Cezanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh provided a path for future isms such as Fauvism, Expressionism, Cubism, Futurism and many more [29].

Dube (1985) highlights the works, principles and doctrines of the avant-garde movement of German Expressionism. The German Expressionists played a vital role in the later developments of other 20th century movements and art traditions inclined towards abstraction, including both Western and Indian. The most profound root of abstraction can be observed with the advent of the Expressionist [30].

Arnason (1986) covers the various trends in Modern art. Modern art can be seen as the art movements that arose with movements such as Realism, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. Art changed radically with the coming of Modern art. Art became very liberal and free from the bounds of patronage. Impressionist of the 19th century introduced such freedom in working on art. Brushstrokes became visible, sketchy and art on a whole became more expressive and personal rather than being representational. Artists such as Paul Cezanne, Paul Gauguin, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, etc. began to

introduce some of the most radical ideas in art during their own time. Expressionist such as Wassily Kandinsky also introduced the significance and the beauty of going abstract. Colors became more expressive, and the art became more liberal and free from the burdens of rules and regulations of academics [31].

Narayanan (1986) highlights the symbolism behind the sculpture of Nataraja. The symbolic dance of Shiva, depicted in the Nataraja sculpture has been one of India's most prominent figure in studying Indian art history. From a comparative viewpoint, the sculpture of Nataraja holds deeper symbolic meaning behind the gestures of the figure as compared to that of Greek sculptures [32].

Sheppard (1987) provides an insight on the various art and aesthetics theories throughout the centuries and discuss extensively on beauty, forms, aesthetics appreciations and the interconnection between art and ethics. It puts forth various theories by different philosophers of various eras [33].

Kant (1987) explores one of the most significant aesthetic theories. This edition is a translated version of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Kant is important from a philosophical standpoint because his aesthetic theories have long reaching effect on future developments in art and aesthetics theories such as Formalism which are very significant form of approach to the 20th century art [34].

Thomson (1987) gives an insight into life and work of one the most important pioneer of Western Modern art and one the lead figure of the Post-Impressionism movement, Paul Gauguin. The Post-Impressionist went beyond the limits of the Impressionists' focus on light and its qualities. The Post-Impressionists found a way to depict their subject in a deeper and more dynamic fashion with bold use of color and expressive brushstrokes and heavy distortion of figures. Gauguin also had a very unique approach to his art. He is also a very popular and significant artist despite the fact that he was also a very controversial and contradictory artist [35].

Appasamy (1987) follows the various indigenous sources in Indian art. Art in India have had a variety of influences including Persian influences of the Mughal and the West, but India also have some Indigenous sources such as the folk art and tantra art also. The source of tribal and folk art in India had a profound connection with rock art. Conferring to the everyday life of the group, it displayed a chronological advancement in the theme and character of drawings. Indication of the artistic aptitude of people in the form of

paintings and carvings in rock shelters beginning from the Mesolithic period (8000 years BP) was found which the earliest form of art was documented [36].

Purohit (1988) provides an insight on the rise of Modern art in India. The main artists who were the innovators of modern Indian art were the sculptor such as Ramkinkar Vaij who was regarded as one of the first modern Indian sculptor. Post-Independence also gave rise to more radical group of artists such as the PAG. The chief contribution of the PAG in modern Indian art was developing the attitude that even if their idea of modernity was enthused by western modernity, its members had implemented an extremely proficient attitude in terms of their own resourcefulness and their association with the world. It would be inherited by the next generation of artists who followed in their paths [37].

Tomory (1989) provides an insight on the developments in art both in India and in the West. India and western European countries have very diverse culture and tradition but both practices art in their own way. Art is an important and vital aspect of human experience. Art has changed its shape and shifted traditions as humanity travel through history both in the Indian and the Western context right from the prehistoric era to classical antiquity, the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, the world wars and the contemporary ideals in the West. In India, from the period of the Indo- Sumerian, Kusana art, Mazdean and Aryan art to early Buddhist art such as the magnificent rock cut caves of Ajanta and Ellora, which holds some of the most classical examples of Indian frescoes and sculptures. Folk Art of India such as Warli paintings, Kalamkari, Mithila, etc. are also highlighted [38].

Gage (1990) discusses on the relevance and significance of color in the western modern art context. Color is still a comparatively less discussed aspect in the western modern art context. The interplay between colors and patterns in abstract art becomes an important factor for discussion while studying the works of the early 20th century artists. The modern school of color study is most largely studied in Germany depending upon the tradition of aesthetic formal qualities as well as philosophical phenomenology [39].

Smith (1991) serves as a crucial guide for studies on ancient Greek Hellenistic art. The book guides the reader to various aspects of Hellenistic sculptures such as its theme, and the various types of sculptures ranging from narratives, athletes, rulers and gods [40].

Harrison (1993) gives an insight on the influence of primitive art on modern art movement such as Cubism which in turn influenced abstraction. , it is observed that significant modern artists such as Paul Gauguin and Pablo Picasso also took inspiration from primitive and folk sources. In the work of Pablo Picasso, ‘Les Demoiselles d’Avignon’, Picasso has abandoned all the traditional methods of representational painting and has heavily distorted the figures using sharp edges and a kind of geometric arrangement. In addition to the painting exhibiting an innovative new way of approach to art, it also has influences from African tribal masks [41].

Ockvirk (1994) highlights some of the most basic essential elements of art. It includes the introduction to certain aspects such as line, shapes, texture, color, content, etc. It also traces back to some of the important histories of the development of art throughout the years [42].

Tolstoy (1995) presents a translated version of Tolstoy’s ‘What is Art?’ which highlights his Expression theory in which he states that art is a form of communication between the artist and the spectator. Tolstoy’s communication is relevant in relation with the Expression theories of philosophers such as Croce, while studying the 20th century modern art of the West as well as India [43].

Sambrani (1997) provides a visual guide to some of the most prominent 20th century modern Indian artists especially the developments in their works in the Post-Independence era, where art was becoming more progressive, it gives details on the works of various Indian artists along with images of their artworks. The book includes artists such as V.S. Gaitonde, Ram Kumar, K.C.S. Paniker, J. Swaminathan, K.G. Subramanyan, S.H. Raza, among many more [44].

Barasch (1998) takes a step back to the emergence of Impressionism in the far reaching development that stems from the late 19th century all the way till the blossoming of abstract art in the early 20th century, highlighting artists such as Kandinsky, Mondrian and such. The book also gives insight on the influences of primitive art such as the African tribal masks, and their significance in the development of some of the most important Avant-garde movements such as Cubism, along with artists such as Picasso and Vlaminck [45].

Gupta (1999) provides an insight on the account of the aesthetics principle of both Indian and Western philosophy. Various traditional and modern aesthetics principles are

discussed in the book. Various philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and Croce are highlighted. The more recent writers and critics such as Veron, Tolstoy, Fry, Bell, etc. are given importance. The book is divided into two parts in which the first part concentrates on Indian aesthetics. Different schools of philosophy and different writers on aesthetics have given their own subjective views on the relation between art, beauty and aesthetics [46].

Khanna and Kurtha (1999) highlights on some of the major events, traditions and artists of India beginning from the late 19th century with artists such as Raja Ravi Verma, all the way to the works of the artists during the 1990s. The book also elaborates on significant figures such as Rabindranath Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gil, Jamini Roy and the P.A.G [47].

Kaul (2000) traces the life and works of Indian artists, G.R. Santosh, who is one of the most significant proponents of Neo-Tantra art. The book shows, Santosh's developing years and how he studied Kashmiri Shaivism to pave his way towards Tantra and a unique form of abstraction through indigenous sources [48].

Gaut and Lopes (2001) highlights on the long running history of art and aesthetics theories from Greek times with thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle along with medieval aesthetics and modern thinkers such as Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, etc. Criticisms on Formalist theory are also highlighted. An insight on Post-Modernists thinkers as Barthes, Derrida and Foucault are also given. In the later chapters, an insight on the individual arts such as sculpture, painting, architecture, literature, music, dance, etc. are also discussed. Each chapter is written by different authors [49].

Mago (2000) gives useful and well detailed information on the history of Indian art and its different phases throughout the past century. It is carefully written in chronological order and hence gives a good exploration of the different phases of Indian art. Spearheaded by artists such as Raja Ravi Verma and then later on the emergence of the Bengal Renaissance with artists such as Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose during the Swadeshi, helped Indian art to maintain its Identity and Indianess which were previously robbed of by the coming and influences of the British. Later on more dynamic artists such as M.F. Hussain, F.N. Souza, S.H.Raza, V.S. Gaitonde, Tyeb Mehta changed the face of Indian art radically. Through this book, it is made clear the various influences of the Indian artists that work with abstraction [50].

Mitter (2001) provides a clear study on art history of India from the earlier days from around 5000 years ago, right up till the contemporary period. Indian art has had a long history right from the ancient times where monumental Buddhist and Hindu sculptures began to emerge and right till the modern times, where now it displays a wide variety of fusion of style from Western art as well as indigenous sources. The book guides the reader through all these long years of the development of art in India with varied themes and purposes. The book explores the Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, colonial as well as post-independence and contemporary artists of today [51].

Nitin (2001) discusses in detail about the various components of the diagram of the Yantra. He discusses about the significance of the dot, lines and the geometric shapes such as triangle, square, circle and lotus. He explains how these elements function as a composite whole [52].

Pippin (2002) discusses mainly on the aesthetic principles and views of Hegel in accordance with the aesthetics of abstract art. Hegel is considered to be one of the most important modern philosophers and his aesthetics theory is crucial in understanding art as it is. His theory develops on the ones left behind by Kant, and further develops on them putting into consideration, the content of the artwork. The social, cultural and historical relevance becomes a factor for Hegel. For Hegel, the emphasis on only pure forms was not enough and aims towards the absolute [53].

Smith and Wilde (2002) highlights some of the major contributions to art and aesthetics theories beginning from ancient Greek theories such as mimesis, along with philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, Renaissance art theories all the way to modern theories, which highlight thinkers such as Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, etc. The book also gives insight on post-modernist thinkers such as Derrida and Foucault written by different authors for each chapter [54].

Mattick (2003) elaborates on the crucial roles that art plays in our lives. It digs deeper into the nature of art. It contrasts the world of art with everyday life. It explores the everyday life of modern society in accordance with the art of its time. The difference in class in society and gender differences are also provided in the book. It involves art with the life of the people. It also includes the works of modern artists like Picasso, Derain, Manet, Warhol, Pollock and many more [55].

Jhaveri (2005) provides the brief understanding on 101 Modern and contemporary artists of India which includes artists such as V.S. Gaitonde, Ram Kumar, J. Swaminathan, K.G. Subramanyan, S.H. Raza, Biren De, Nasreen Mohammedi, Satish Gujral, M.F. Hussain among many more. The book is useful in picking out artists which are relevant to the study and those that can be used as further for the study [56].

Adams (2006) gives insight on the origins and development of art in the western countries. The book gives a thorough analysis of the different eras and periods in Western art. The book illustrates works beginning from the prehistoric periods such as *The Venus of Willendorf*, and further developments in Egyptian and Greek civilization and their art. The influences on art with coming of Christianity and then the renaissance followed by other major art styles of the Baroque, Rococo, Neo-Classicism and Romanticism, and finally the dawn of modern art with the arrival of French Realism and Impressionism which were followed by Post-Impressionism. Some of the major artists in history emerged such as Monet, Manet, Cezanne, Gauguin, Klimt, Kandinsky, Malevich, Mondrian, and many more [57].

Tekiner (2006) highlights some of the important perspectives regarding formalist art criticism. Important figures such as Greenberg are mentioned. Formalist art criticism becomes an important approach to the art of 20th century, especially the non-objective nature of abstract art [58].

Verdi (2006) gives a well detailed information on the life and works by Paul Cezanne who is also considered as the father of Modern art. He is an artist of the Post-Impressionism movement of the late 19th century. Heavy distortions and abstraction can be seen in art from around this time. Figures become sketchy and unfinished, along with distorted body proportions. Paul Cezanne is one of the most influential artists in the history of modern art. He has also motivated and inspired generations of artists and different avant-garde movements. His critical approach to nature and distinctive technique of constructing form with color influenced the art of the Fauves, Cubists and consecutive groups of avant-garde artists [59].

Mitter (2007) gives insight on the development of Indian art after 1920. After a long period of suppression of Indian art by the British Company school, Indian art was revitalized by the advent of Western modernism. The book provides key developments and influences backed up by a rich collection of images. Mitter has also highlighted some of the most crucial aspect in the development of 20th century Indian art, such as the 1922

Bauhaus exhibition in Calcutta which introduced India to Western modernist trends. The works of artists such as Paul Klee would have long lasting influences on the upcoming generations of Indian artists of both the pre-independence and post-independence India. The book also traces some of the important links between primitivism and modernism in India [60].

Pandey (2008) focuses on the various aspects of Indian aesthetics and philosophies of various forms of art such as painting, music, poetry, drama, dance, etc from hundreds of years ago. It states the history of Indian aesthetics in a very well detailed manner. The scope of Indian aesthetics is highlighted throughout this book. The religious origins and the history and evolutions of the arts and its principles through time are stated as well [61].

Jahan (2008) is a critical study on post-independence abstract artists of India such as K.C.S. Paniker, S.H. Raza, Jamini Roy, Nasreen Mohammedi, and Jeram Patel and their influences from Western art traditions as well as indigenous sources of India such as folk art, tribal art and tantra art. The book contains introduction of Indian painting of the fifty five years of Post-Independence era and which many of the radical artists of the time are highlighted and the brief insights to these artists are also given. Influences from the West such as Expressionism movement, Cubism, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism along with artists such as Paul Cezanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee are highlighted. Influences from these artists are repeatedly mentioned throughout the chapters of the book [62].

Dixon (2008) compiles the works of various artists of different eras and isms and concentrates mostly on Western context. It also gives views on ancient Japanese, Chinese and Persian art as well. It takes the reader right to the beginning of ancient prehistoric times all the way to modern day contemporary art. The most helpful and significant feature of the book is its use of a wide range of pictures such as the artists' works. The book divides different eras chronologically so as to help the reader better understand the trends, principles and philosophies of a particular time [63].

Habib (2008) traces some of the most crucial and essential literary criticisms and theories that developed throughout the ages. It covers a wide chapter from ancient Greek thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle focusing on classical literary criticism with their intellectual and political backgrounds. The book further emphasizes on the traditions of rhetoric.

Further sections in the book provides insight on the more early modern period figures such as John Locke, David Hume, Edmund Burke, etc. The book also traces the developments of the early 19th century period which are concerned with the doctrines of philosophers such as Kant and Hegel. The section which highlights the 20th century developments shows figures such as Saussure, Roland Barthes, Derrida, Foucault and many more [64].

Davies., et al (2009) presents an exquisitely well-detailed insight on the various stages of art throughout history. The first edition was published in 1966 and this eighth edition was published in 2009. The book provides a survey of western art from the ancient prehistoric times to the contemporary art trends of today. It elaborates on various eras in art and different periods and isms [65].

Sinha and Panda (2011) explores the development and the various aspects of Kalighat paintings. Kalighat paintings are one of the most important folk painting traditions of India. It is crucial in the development of 20th century art of modern India because many a number of 20th century Indian artists were influenced by folk traditions including the likes of Jamini Roy who found his magnum opus from the influence of Kalighat paintings. The book also provides insights on contemporary artists working in a Kalighat style painting while incorporating a modern twist to it [66].

Friedwald (2011) illustrates the life and works of German Expressionist, Paul Klee. He is a particularly important individual to study because many 20th century modern Indian artists were inspired from his work. Artists such as K.G. Subramanyan, V.S. Gaitonde, Nasreen Mohammedi, Prabhakar Kolte, etc. were inspired by Klee's approach. The book is a journey through Klee's life and it is demonstrated through various narratives, prudently selected passages from his personal notes and letters, captivating authentic photographs and a rich assortment of his works from amazing, rarely seen childhood drawings to popular and iconic paintings and lesser acknowledged treasures [67].

Alderton (2011) discusses the importance and significance of color, shape and music and the crucial interplay between these elements in modern abstract art of the early 20th century. The article highlights important artists such as Kandinsky, Mondrian, Kupka, etc. The impact of theosophy and the underlying spiritualism of colors and shapes are highlighted taking into consideration some of the works of the above mentioned artists. The validation of the spiritual dimensions of the universe in the modern artistic pursuit for

internal realities is also explored. The article also ventures into the principles of Kandinsky's book *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. The underlying non-physical aspects of the universe and art itself are discussed in this article [68].

Goswami (2012) discusses the various aesthetic theories of both the West and the East. The author elaborates on the theories of certain figures such as Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Leibniz, Baumgarten, Kant, Hegel, Croce, Freud, Tolstoy, Nietzsche, Eliot among many other Western figures regarding aesthetics. The author has also elaborated on Indian aesthetics such as that of Bharat's *Natyasastra*, Sri Sankuka, Abhinava Gupta and various theories of *Rasa* and *Dhvani* [69].

Rawson (2012) provides a perspective to philosophies, ideologies and practices of tantra and tantric sacraments. The author uses simple words and languages to describe a very complex web of the human psychology, sexual desires and practices. It talks about tantric rituals and worships of the diagram for men to find the genesis of being. Pictures are well labelled and captioned so that readers can understand the images and thereby understanding the concept that much more. Different kinds of stylized sculpture and paintings relating to tantra are also shown in this book [70].

Pandey (2015) presents the second volume of *Comparative Aesthetics* and it concentrates on the Western aesthetics and philosophies, various theories of various forms of art such as painting, sculpture, architecture, music, poetry, drama, dance and such. Art has had radical changes throughout the years in the Western context, and many philosophers of those times came with different views and principles regarding art. Starting from the Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, right up till Modern philosophers and theoreticians, who according to the current situation of the society and art in general came up with their own ideals and philosophies [71].

Kulkarni and Chauhan (2015) provides an insight on some of the significant doctrines of various Indian trends of thought regarding art, aesthetics and philosophy. Coomaraswamy's invaluable contributions to the domain of traditional as well as modern Indian art are discussed. The book has also provided various quotes from other significant figures of the Indian art scene [72].

Duchting (2015) traces the significance of the body of works done by Kandinsky. Kandinsky being one of the pioneers of modern abstract painting of 20th century is a

crucial figure in studying the proponents of abstraction. His influence on the works of Post-Independence Indian artists makes him crucial for the study [73].

Anfam (2015) explores the development of post 2nd world war developments in New York. The emergence of Abstract-Expressionism in New York and the various ways it affected art in the Post-war era. Abstract-Expressionism was a new radical form which took the art world by a storm. Important Abstract Expressionism artists such as Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, Frank Stella, Ellsworth Kelly, etc. are mentioned in this book and proper details about their subject, theme and approach are mentioned [74].

Rathus (2015) provides an insight on the fundamental theories of art, the very nature of art and its reference with the study of art history. It starts with the basic concepts of how to understand and comprehend a work of art through the study of subject, content, form and iconography. It further gives detail on visual elements of design. Art has wide variety of genre, and it has changed overtime in a most radical way. The book gives insight on these different stages of art such as the study of mediums and techniques, comparison and contrast of various styles such as Realism, Expressionism and Abstraction. It goes on further to illustrate the importance of line, types and qualities of line, actual, implied and psychological lines [75].

Zimmer (2015) dives into the mystical concepts in Hindu mythology are explored in this book. It journeys through various stories and their underlying metaphysical concepts regarding the spiritual aspect of life which transcends beyond the material world [76].

Gayford (2017) provides an insight on one of the most important renaissance artists and also one of the greatest artists of all time. Michelangelo was an extraordinary artist who had skills not only in sculpture but also painting as well. During his lifetime he covered a vast amount of work which are monumental and a treasure for the history of art. He was also the longest living of the great High Renaissance which includes others like Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Titian. He lived his life towards the coming of mannerism as well after the High Renaissance. Michelangelo has created some of the most iconic artworks in history [77].

Mohamad and Hamendi (2018) questions the 19th century movement of “Art for Art’s Sake”. It was a revolutionary turn in art during the 19th century and questioned the utility of art in society. Art for Art’s sake expounded important literary theory such as

‘Formalism’ which would become a very important mode of approach to the Modern artists and their work [78].

Aristotle (2019) is an English translated version of the original *Poetics* as written by Aristotle himself. This book covers a lot of ground on the early Greek aesthetics, literary theories and criticism. It is also a response to the established interpretation of art and aesthetics theories previously put forth by Plato in his ‘Republic’. Aristotle recognized art as not just blind and faithful imitation but selective representation in an idealized manner. It elaborates on the significance of tragedy in drama and the emotional response from the viewer. The condemnation of art by Plato is steered into a more positive impact by Aristotle in the *Poetics* [79].

Pathloth (2020) discusses about the principles of the various *rasas* in Indian aesthetics. It takes into account Bharata’s *Natyashastra* and uses it as an interpretation for the Kuchipudi dance. The article also talks about the various accompanying emotions for each *rasa* along with their *bhava*. It also gives insight on the various colors and presiding deity of the *rasas* [80].

1.3 Statement of the Problem

- What are the various philosophies and ideologies of abstraction in 20th century Indian art?
- How much the philosophies of the Western modern movement influenced the nature of abstraction in 20th century Indian art?
- What are the perspectives, similarities and differences between the Western philosophy of art and Indian philosophy of art?
- What are the various aspects and properties of traditional and modern theories of art that can be used to reanalyze the nature of abstraction in post-independence Indian art?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- To conduct a philosophical analysis on the nature of abstraction in 20th century Indian art.
- To determine and study the various influences of both Western and indigenous sources in the abstraction of 20th century Indian art.
- To study the perspectives, similarities and dissimilarities between Western and Indian philosophy of art.

- To analyze the nature of abstraction through various traditional, and modern theories of art on the artworks of V.S. Gaitonde, Ram Kumar, K.C.S Paniker, Laxman Shrestha and Prabhakar Kolte.

1.5 Limitations

The study is limited to the works of 20th century post-independence Indian abstract artists highlighting the paintings of V.S. Gaitonde, Ram Kumar, K.C.S Paniker, Laxman Shrestha and Prabhakar Kolte.

1.6 Research Gap

Abstraction in Post-Independence abstract art of India has had a variety of influences both from Western sources as well as Indian ideologies. As a result different artists have different approaches. For some, it is the purely formal interplay of unrecognizable forms such as swashes of colors, shapes and patterns existing independently, whereas, some dive into an exploration of the non-physical, spiritual domain of nature and the universe. However, apart from the artists biographies, exhibition catalogs, art curators and art historians accounts on their works, such explorations and approaches to their works have not had proper analyses from a philosophical perspective. This study focuses particularly on the philosophical aspects of post-independence Indian abstract art, and to provide critical analyses of the nature of abstraction through an application of various art and aesthetics theories. This study attempts to not only study the artists' background and their works but to apply various theories to their works to give a more critical analysis. A comparative study of the 20th century Indian art and their Western counterparts and influences can further help in providing more in depth study.

1.7 Scope of the Study

Abstraction has become one of the most important and powerful mode of expression for artists from the beginning of the Modern art movement and still continuing into the Post-Modern era. Even in India, abstraction has become a powerful tool for artists to express themselves freely without sticking to the laws of representational art. Artists are free to distort and create a world of their own using different styles and modes of abstraction. The freedom to express oneself, or giving a powerful emphasis on social issues, or even the artists own personal feelings and moods are made all possible and solid through the use of abstraction. But, due to the flexibility of its formal qualities,

sometimes abstract art is misused by artists who lack skills and also misinterpreted by people with limited knowledge on the language and the philosophical perspectives of viewing and appreciating abstract art. Therefore, a thorough philosophical analysis can provide much appreciation for the beauty of abstract art.

1.8 Data and Methodology

The data is collected from primary as well as secondary sources. The primary data is based on visiting libraries, art galleries, museums, etc., along with collecting exhibition catalogs and biographies. The secondary data sources will be based on reviews, books, references, published and unpublished thesis, internet sources, journals, magazines, and newspaper clippings.

The methodology is applied through analytical data mainly by library work which includes studying art and aesthetics theories from various primary and secondary sources which are used to provide further critical analysis of the documented artworks.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis has been divided into six chapters. The first chapter provides a general background study of abstract art in general, along with introductions to the post-independence artists whose works are the main topic of study. The chapter also gives a brief introduction to some of the popular art and aesthetics theories along with the relevant philosophers and thinkers concerned with the theories. Furthermore, the chapter also provides relevant review of literature which were consulted while conducting the research, statement of the problem, Objectives, limitations, research gap, scope of the study, data and methodology, along with the organization of the thesis.

The second chapter introduces the various developments in Western art starting from ancient Greek art, Medieval art, Renaissance art, art of the Romantic movement, all the way to the development of the modern movement which took initiation with the development of Impressionism, Post-Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism which gradually paved the development of Fauvism, Expressionism and Cubism, which in turn finally led to the burgeoning of pure abstraction. All of these phases in the history of Western art are discussed while taking into account, the relevant art and aesthetics principles of notable figures such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and Croce.

The third chapter discusses relevant Indian aesthetic principles along with the dynamic changes and developments in 19th and 20th century Indian art of both the pre-independence and post-independence era. The various influences from Western modern art along with India's own folk art traditions are discussed through the perspective of relevant figures such as A.K. Coomarswamy, Rabindranath Tagore and Abanindranath Tagore.

The fourth chapter discusses and analyzes the work of post-independence Indian abstract artists V.S. Gaitonde, Ram Kumar and Laxman Shreshtha. Their unique approach to abstraction and the various aesthetic theories that adheres to their approach are thoroughly analyzed. Comparatives of their works are also made with their Western counterparts.

The fifth chapter elaborates on the works of post-independence Indian abstract artists K.C.S Painker and Prabhakar Kolte and analyzes them through relevant art and aesthetics theories. The emphasis on pure colors, patterns and the complete elimination of any representational values in the works are thoroughly analyzed and discussed.

The sixth chapter provides the analytical summary of each chapter from the first chapter to the fifth chapter. After this, from the analysis of each chapters, the final conclusion of the whole body of the research is provided. The final section of this chapter provides the suggestion for further research.

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