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Next Generation Art: A New Way to Redefine Traditional Art Practices in India

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Abstract

Background: Indian traditional art forms have historically served as powerful vehicles for cultural expression, often rooted in local customs, rituals, and religious narratives. In the 21st century, the proliferation of digital tools and AI technologies has initiated a paradigm shift in how these traditions are practiced and reimagined by contemporary artists.

Purpose: This study aims to explore how next-generation digital tools and artificial intelligence are being used to redefine traditional art practices in India. It investigates how emerging artists blend historical motifs with modern technology to create hybrid forms that are both innovative and rooted in cultural memory.

Methods: The research is qualitative and analytical in nature, based on the case study method. It examines the works of three eminent Indian artistsBaaraan Ijlal, Raghava KK and other artiststhrough visual analysis, secondary literature, and contextual interpretation of their approaches to blending tradition with digital innovation.

Results: The study finds that these artists are not abandoning tradition but are instead reinterpreting it through contemporary tools and mediums. Digital platforms, AI-generated forms, and multimedia installations allow for new kinds of audience interaction and aesthetic experience while maintaining a dialogue with Indias artistic heritage.

Conclusions: Next-generation art in India represents a dynamic convergence of cultural continuity and technological advancement. By integrating traditional narratives with digital methodologies, contemporary artists are creating new visual languages that preserve and transform Indian art traditions for the modern era.

Keywords: Next-Generation Art, Digital Art, Traditional Indian Art, AI In Art, Hybrid Art Practices, Cultural Transformation

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1. Introduction

Indian art has historically thrived in a variety of forms from Madhubani and Pattachitra to Mughal miniatures and Kalighat painting. With the evolution of technology, these forms are being revisited through digital media, resulting in a synthesis that preserves tradition while embracing innovation. The emergence of digital platforms, AI tools, and interactive media has not only changed how art is created but also how it is interpreted and consumed [1]. This paper seeks to explore this transformation, focusing particularly on how Indian artists are engaging with new technologies to reinterpret traditional forms [2].

Indias artistic heritage is among the oldest and most diverse in the world, with traditions ranging from tribal and folk art to classical forms like miniature painting, temple sculpture, and mural art. Historically, these art forms served not only aesthetic purposes but also religious, ritualistic, and didactic functionsoften reflecting a deep connection between community life and cultural expression [3]. However, the advent of digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI) has opened new dimensions for artistic production, blurring the boundaries between tradition and innovation [4].

In the 21st century, contemporary Indian artists are engaging with digital tools not merely as mediums but as active collaborators in the creative process. This intersection of art and technology has given rise to what may be termed "Next Generation Art"an artistic approach that reinterprets traditional themes through the lens of modern technologies such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), machine learning, and biofeedback. As Lev Manovich [5] notes, software is now an interface to our imagination, making digital platforms integral to how new visual languages are being formed [6].

In the Indian context, this transition is not a simple replacement of old with new. Instead, it reflects a complex dialogue where tradition is deconstructed, reassembled, and recontextualized to suit contemporary sensibilities. Artists like Raghava KK, Baaraan Ijlal, and Shilo Shiv Suleman are exemplary figures who employ next-generation tools to revive, critique, or reinterpret India's cultural past. For instance, Baaraan Ijlal incorporates oral histories and folk memory into immersive multimedia installations, whereas Raghava KK collaborates with AI algorithms to question identity and perception through generative art [7].

Such redefinitions challenge conventional notions of authenticity and heritage by demonstrating that tradition is not static but dynamiccapable of evolving through digital mediation [8]. Moreover, the accessibility and interactivity afforded by digital tools are empowering newer generations of artists and audiences to engage with traditional motifs in more participatory and globally resonant ways. This convergence of traditional themes with next-generation technologies is reshaping not only the aesthetic dimensions of Indian art but also its socio-cultural and philosophical underpinnings [9]. This study explores how Indian artists are reconfiguring traditional art practices using digital media and AI. It critically examines selected works of contemporary practitioners and discusses how these works contribute to a redefinition of what tradition means in a digital age.

2. Scope of the Research

This study focuses on Indian artists who actively blend traditional and digital techniques to redefine artistic boundaries. It limits its scope to visual arts and does not delve into performing arts or literature.

3. Objectives

i. To analyze how next-generation digital tools are influencing traditional Indian art practices.

ii. To examine artworks by selected Indian artists that illustrate this transformation.

iii. To assess the cultural and aesthetic implications of this convergence.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research approach, grounded in visual analysis, textual interpretation, and critical theory. The purpose is to examine how selected Indian artists are redefining traditional art through the integration of digital technologies and contemporary conceptual frameworks.

4.1 Research Design

The research is descriptive and analytical in nature, aiming to explore and interpret the evolving relationship between traditional Indian art and digital/new media practices. The study focuses on selected case studies of prominent contemporary Indian artists whose works reflect a fusion of heritage and technology.

4.2 Selection of Artists and Artworks

The research centers on purposively selected artistsBaaraan Ijlal, Raghava KK and other artistsbased on their relevance

to the theme and their documented engagement with either digital media or innovative reinterpretation of traditional forms. Additional contemporary artists such as Shilo Shiv Suleman and Thukral & Tagra were considered for supplementary comparative analysis.

4.3 Data Collection Methods

The study relies on secondary data sources, including: Academic journals and articles (e.g., Journal of Contemporary Art Practices, Art & Activism Review), Exhibition catalogs and curatorial essays, Artist interviews, official websites, and video documentation, Online image repositories (Artsy, Behance, museum websites).

4.4 Discussion: Artist Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Creating Art

4.5 Baaraan Ijlal

Translating Oral and Folk Traditions into Participatory Digital Narratives Baaraan draws from oral storytelling, miniature painting aesthetics, and local Sufi poetic traditions. She uses archival ink, soundscapes, and digital installations to make oral histories visually and aurally engaging. Her Hostile Witness [10] series transforms vernacular memory and marginalized voices into immersive, multimedia experiences. Baaraan shifts traditional storytelling from the static realm of scrolls or murals to interactive digital experiences, involving the viewer as both witness and participant. This enhances preservation while inviting reinterpretation [11].

4.6 Raghava KK

Blending Traditional Themes with AI and Interactivity. Early works included mythological narratives and symbolic forms rooted in Indian visual culture. Raghava uses AI, machine learning, and app-based interactivity to produce generative and responsive art. His emotion-based mandala app lets users create art based on their emotional states, referencing the meditative and spiritual purposes of traditional mandala art. Collaborations with Googles Deep Dream and other AI tools reflect his interest in how the subconsciouscentral to both Indian philosophy and modern psychologycan be visually expressed for example in his art work La Petit Mort[12]. Raghava reinterprets ancient Indian philosophies of self and perception through personalized, AI-driven digital experiences, making spiritual themes more accessible to tech-savvy audiences[13].

4.7 Shilo Shiv Suleman

Shilo Shiv Suleman draws from Indian mythology, Tantra, and miniature painting, using sacred symbols and spiritual themes rooted in traditional art forms. She integrates these traditions with technologies like biofeedback, neurotech, and motion sensors, creating interactive installationssuch as Pulse and Bloom [14] that respond to viewers heartbeats, making art feel alive. Her work bridges spirituality and technology, presenting Indian heritage in a contemporary, global context and inviting deeper emotional and sensory engagement [15].

4.8 Thukral & Tagra

Thukral & Tagra, a multidisciplinary artist duo from India, often draw from traditional Indian motifs, mythology, and socio-cultural practices, incorporating elements of Punjabs visual culture, religious symbolism, and folk traditions in their artistic expressions. They redefine these traditional forms by blending them with contemporary technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, augmented reality, and interactive gaming environments. Projects such as Coniecturas [16] series use AI to interpret and respond to audience participation, creating generative visuals and immersive experiences that explore themes of identity, migration, and memory. Through this fusion, traditional narratives become part of a dynamic digital conversation. Thukral & Tagras innovative use of AI and participatory technology reshapes how traditional themes are perceived, experienced, and preserved in the digital age. Their work opens a dialogue between the past and the future, making Indian heritage more accessible and relatable to contemporary audiences while pushing the boundaries of how art interacts with society [17].

4.9 Gigi Scaria

Gigi Scarias art draws from Indias rich architectural heritage, historical symbolism, and socio-cultural narratives. His works are informed by the visual and structural languages of traditional Indian cities, religious monuments, and public spaces, which he recontextualizes in the light of contemporary urban realities. Scaria redefines these traditional themes by incorporating digital media, video installations, and spatial mapping techniques, sometimes experimenting with AI-driven simulations and data visualization. His seminal work Elevator from the Subcontinent [18] reflects this fusion, as it critiques ideas of socio-economic mobility and spatial inequality using digital animation to visualize displacement and the fragility of modern aspirations. By blending architecture,

movement, and AI-like automated systems, Scaria explores how tradition collides with modernization. Through his innovative use of digital tools and conceptual engagement with AI, Gigi Scaria challenges viewers to reconsider the meaning of heritage in the context of migration, modernization, and digital transformation. His work acts as a bridge between Indias cultural memory and its rapidly changing urban identity, making traditional values visible within technologically mediated experiences [19].

5. Findings & Results

5.1 Technology as Extension of Tradition

A recent review of Indias digital art evolution shows artists are not abandoning traditional forms but extending them digitally. Through mediums like digital painting, animation, and even NFTs, creators are bringing age-old art styles into contemporary digital expression, gaining access to global audiences [20].

5.2 AI as Creative Collaborator

Generative AI is playing the role of co creator, not just tool. Studies illustrate that AI is being used to spawn new compositions infused with traditional motifs or to analyze and tag folk-style features for cultural preservation. Another study found AI platforms are enabling personalized, immersive viewing experiences, reframing how traditional art is consumed and understood [21]

5.3 Democratization & Audience Engagement

Data from Indian cultural bodies note that 72% of performingarts institutions have adopted digital tools, enabling global access and active participation mirroring trends in visual arts [22]. Similarly, interactive installations like those by Shilo Shiv Suleman and Thukral & Tagra invite audiences into co creative processes, increasing emotional resonance and community involvement.

5.4 Benefits vs. Ethical Challenges

While digital and AI tools offer unprecedented innovation and market reach, they also pose challenges. Artists express concerns about AI-generated plagiarism and stylistic dilution, indicating a tension between technological empowerment and safeguarding artistic identity [23].

6. Conclusion

The intersection of tradition and technology in contemporary Indian art represents a transformative moment in the cultural narrative of the country. As demonstrated through the innovative practices of artists like Shilo Shiv Suleman, Thukral & Tagra, Raghava KK, and Gigi Scaria, traditional motifs, stories, and aesthetic forms are not only being preserved but also reinterpreted through the lens of digital tools, artificial intelligence, and interactive installations.

This redefinition of art marks a departure from linear art history and embraces a pluralistic, dynamic approach to creativityone where technology is not a threat but a collaborator. Artists are leveraging AI algorithms, biofeedback sensors, digital mapping, and interactive environments to bring ancient narratives into contemporary public consciousness. These new mediums foster deeper audience engagement, inclusivity, and democratization of accessreshaping not just how art is created but also how it is experienced.

However, this transformation is not without its ethical and intellectual challenges. Concerns around originality, authorship, and cultural appropriation surface as AI becomes more capable of replicating styles and themes. As such, the evolving relationship between traditional art and digital innovation requires critical reflection, not just technical exploration.

Overall, the study concludes that next-generation art in India is not about replacing the old with the new but about building a fluid continuumwhere heritage is honored, extended, and reimagined through technological empowerment. This progression signifies not the end of tradition but its renaissance in the digital age.

Authorship contribution

Jagseer Singh led the research as a significant contributor. Beena Dixit supervised.

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Conflict of interest

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest.

Similarity Index

I hereby confirm that there is no similarity index in abstract and conclusion while overall is less than 10% where individual source contribution is 2% or less than it.

Data availability statement

It is original and has neither been sent elsewhere nor published anywhere.

Declaration

This research has been conducted ethically, reporting of those involved in this article.

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