



The impact of globalization on Indian visual arts and contemporary creative painting

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Abstract

Indian visual arts reflect the country's rich cultural heritage, historical experiences, religious traditions, and social diversity. This paper examines the impact of globalization on Indian visual arts and contemporary creative painting, tracing their evolution from traditional forms, including Buddhist murals, Jain paintings, Madhubani art, and Mughal miniatures, to modern and contemporary artistic practices. It explores how global cultural exchange, technological developments, digital platforms, and international exhibitions have expanded artistic experimentation, collaboration, and global visibility. The paper also analyses Indian paintings as social texts that communicate moral values, cultural identities, gender roles, and historical narratives, highlighting their pedagogical and research significance. Furthermore, it highlights government initiatives supporting artistic development and identifies challenges such as inadequate funding, limited infrastructure, art forgery, commercialization, and the marginalization of indigenous traditions. The study emphasizes balancing global influences with cultural preservation to ensure the sustainable development of Indian visual arts.

Keywords: Globalization, Indian visual arts, contemporary creative painting, cultural identity, digital art, artistic heritage, technology, cultural preservation

Introduction

Art is a form of creative expression through which individuals communicate their ideas, emotions, cultural values, and experiences. Indian art reflects the country's rich cultural heritage, historical developments, religious beliefs, and social diversity. Indian visual arts, particularly painting, encompass traditional forms such as Mughal miniatures and Madhubani, alongside modern and contemporary artistic expressions. These art forms represent India's cultural identity while demonstrating the continuous evolution of artistic practices. The transition from traditional to modern Indian art gained momentum during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries under the influence of colonialism, the Swadeshi movement, and emerging ideas of nationalism. Artists such as Raja Ravi Varma and the Bengal School contributed significantly to this transformation by combining Indian traditions with Western artistic techniques (Sengupta, 2022) ^[1]. Subsequently, modernist artists such as M. F. Husain, F. N. Souza, and S. H. Raza challenged conventional artistic boundaries by experimenting with new forms, techniques, and philosophies while maintaining connections with Indian cultural identity (Mstafa *et al.*, 2020) ^[6]. Globalization, defined as the growing interaction and interdependence among nations, societies, economies, and cultures through international trade, communication, and information technology, has further transformed the production, circulation, and interpretation of Indian visual arts. Although globalization facilitates cultural exchange and international recognition, its effects remain uneven across social and cultural contexts, sometimes contributing to the erosion of regional identities and local traditions. The emergence of digital technology has accelerated this transformation by providing artists with innovative tools, interactive mediums, and global platforms for creating, exhibiting, and distributing their work. Consequently, digital art has expanded opportunities for experimentation, international collaboration, and commercial engagement,

while raising concerns about cultural representation, appropriation, and authenticity (Jain & Roy, 2022 ^[1]; Oppenhaffen, 2021). Therefore, globalization has created both opportunities and challenges for Indian visual arts. Preserving regional artistic traditions while engaging with contemporary technologies and international influences is essential to maintaining cultural diversity and ensuring that Indian art continues to contribute meaningfully to the global artistic landscape.

Background

Indian art is one of the world's oldest and most diverse artistic traditions, reflecting the subcontinent's cultural heritage, religious beliefs, and historical experiences. Spanning more than 5,000 years, it has evolved through interactions between tradition, innovation, and external influences. Its earliest expressions include prehistoric cave paintings at Bhimbetka and the artistic remains of the Indus Valley Civilization, particularly the bronze Dancing Girl and animal-motif seals, demonstrating the significance of nature, symbolism, and spirituality ("Retracted: Holographic Projection Technology in the Field of Digital Media Art," 2023; Raveh, 2023) ^[4, 9]. During the Mauryan and Gupta periods, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain art flourished through stupas, pillars, sculptures, frescoes, and rock-cut architecture, as exemplified by Sanchi and the Ajanta and Ellora caves. The medieval period witnessed the development of regional traditions, including Chola bronze sculptures and magnificent temple architecture at Khajuraho and Konark. Subsequently, Persian, Central Asian, and Islamic influences contributed to Indo-Islamic architecture and Mughal miniature painting, while monuments such as the Qutub Minar, Humayun's Tomb, and the Taj Mahal exemplified cultural synthesis. British colonial rule introduced European artistic techniques and Company paintings, while the Bengal School encouraged the revival of indigenous artistic traditions. Raja Ravi Varma combined Indian mythological subjects with European academic

techniques, contributing to modern Indian art. Following independence, artists such as M. F. Husain, S. H. Raza, and F. N. Souza explored abstraction, expressionism, and modernist approaches, negotiating tradition and modernity (Mao & Jiang, 2021) ^[5]. In the contemporary era, globalisation and digital technologies have further transformed Indian visual arts by expanding creative possibilities, international collaboration, and audience engagement while raising concerns about cultural identity and the preservation of regional artistic traditions.

Literature Review

Khanwalkar, Seema (2014) ^[3] examines the semiotic significance of modern Indian art, arguing that its interpretation should extend beyond intended meanings to consider Charles Sanders Peirce's concept of the "Interpretant." The study highlights the continuity and discontinuity between traditional and modern artistic practices and emphasizes the relevance of semiotic theory in understanding contemporary Indian artists' engagement with politics, social justice, and cultural traditions. Similarly, Shobha (2018) ^[12] explores the semiotic interpretation of modern Indian painting and visual art, emphasizing the importance of understanding new artistic expressions through their meanings, objectives, and interpretative possibilities rather than conventional artistic frameworks. Asmita Sarkar (2020) ^[10] investigates contemporary South and Southeast Asian diasporic painters through Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception and embodiment. The study highlights how material experimentation, sensory experiences, cultural backgrounds, and art-historical influences contribute to artistic expression and create works with broader human significance. Porwal, Tina (2019) ^[7] discusses the transformation of artistic practices from natural colors and traditional techniques to computer-assisted illustrations. The study also highlights the growing influence of consumerism and commercialization on the art world, arguing that market forces can create both opportunities and challenges for artists, particularly those from middle-class backgrounds. Mohsina Aaftab (2017) examines the changing representation of women in contemporary Indian art, tracing their portrayal from Ajanta paintings, Mauryan and Buddhist art, Khajuraho sculptures, and Mughal and Rajasthani miniature paintings to modern works. The study considers the representations of women in the paintings of Raja Ravi Varma, Amrita Sher-Gil, and M. F. Husain, highlighting gender, identity, and changing artistic perspectives. Collectively, these studies demonstrate how Indian visual arts negotiate tradition, modernity, cultural identity, gender, technology, and commercialization, providing a foundation for examining the impact of globalisation on contemporary Indian art.

Indian Visual Arts and Contemporary Indian Painting

Indian visual arts represent the country's rich cultural heritage, historical experiences, religious beliefs, and diverse social identities. Among the various forms of visual expression, painting occupies a significant position in documenting India's artistic traditions and evolving cultural landscape. Indian paintings serve as vibrant windows into the nation's cultural diversity, weaving together tradition, heritage, mythology, and identity. Through delicate brushstrokes, expressive forms, and distinctive color combinations, these artworks bring to life the customs,

beliefs, stories, and everyday experiences of different communities. From the magnificent murals of the Ajanta caves to the intricate miniature paintings of the Mughal period, Indian painting has played an important role in preserving historical narratives and communicating cultural values across generations. Traditional Indian paintings are closely associated with religious practices, folklore, regional identities, and community life. Art forms such as Madhubani, Warli, Pattachitra, and miniature painting demonstrate the diversity of artistic techniques and cultural meanings across different regions. These paintings not only reflect aesthetic sensibilities but also provide insights into social relationships, spiritual beliefs, and historical transformations. However, Indian visual arts have continuously evolved in response to changing political, economic, and cultural circumstances. During the colonial period, Western artistic techniques influenced Indian painters, encouraging new approaches to representation, perspective, and composition. Artists such as Raja Ravi Varma combined European academic techniques with Indian mythological themes, contributing to the development of modern Indian painting. Contemporary Indian painting reflects an increasingly diverse artistic environment in which traditional practices interact with modernist experimentation, global influences, and digital technologies. Artists explore themes such as identity, gender, urbanization, environmental concerns, social inequality, and cultural displacement through diverse visual languages. Globalization has further expanded opportunities for international exhibitions, artistic collaborations, and digital dissemination, enabling Indian artists to engage with wider audiences. Nevertheless, these developments also raise questions about cultural authenticity, commercialization, and the preservation of indigenous artistic traditions. Examining traditional and contemporary Indian painting therefore provides a deeper understanding of the relationship between art, society, and cultural identity, highlighting the enduring significance of visual arts in representing India's evolving position within the global cultural landscape.

Buddhist Painting



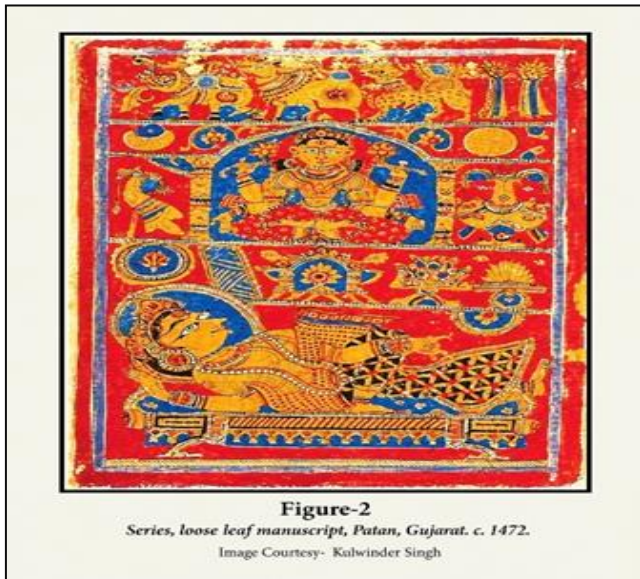
Figure-1

*Bodhisattva Padmapani, Cave 1, Ajanta Caves,
Maharashtra, India*

Image Courtesy:- Kulwinder Singh

The Indian mural tradition played a significant role in shaping Buddhist painting, social values, and cultural practices. Buddhist murals, particularly those found in the Ajanta Caves, represent a remarkable synthesis of artistic expression, spirituality, and narrative storytelling. These murals illustrate Buddhist scriptures, the life of Gautama Buddha, and Jataka tales depicting his previous births. Through detailed compositions, vibrant colors, expressive figures, and symbolic imagery, the paintings communicated Buddhist teachings to diverse audiences, including those who could not access written scriptures. Beyond their religious significance, these murals provide valuable insights into the social, cultural, and economic conditions of ancient Indian society, portraying royal courts, traders, ordinary people, clothing, ornaments, and everyday activities. Their visual narratives promoted ethical values such as compassion, non-violence, generosity, self-discipline, and spiritual enlightenment, contributing to the integration of Buddhist philosophy into social life. Furthermore, Indian Buddhist murals influenced artistic traditions beyond the subcontinent, particularly in Southeast Asia and Tibet, through the movement of monks, traders, religious texts, and artistic practices. Their narrative representations of Buddha's life, previous births, and spiritual journey helped communicate fundamental Buddhist concepts, including karma, rebirth, and enlightenment. Thus, the Indian mural tradition functioned not merely as a form of religious decoration but also as an important medium of education, cultural exchange, and philosophical communication, demonstrating the enduring relationship between visual art, religious belief, and social transformation.

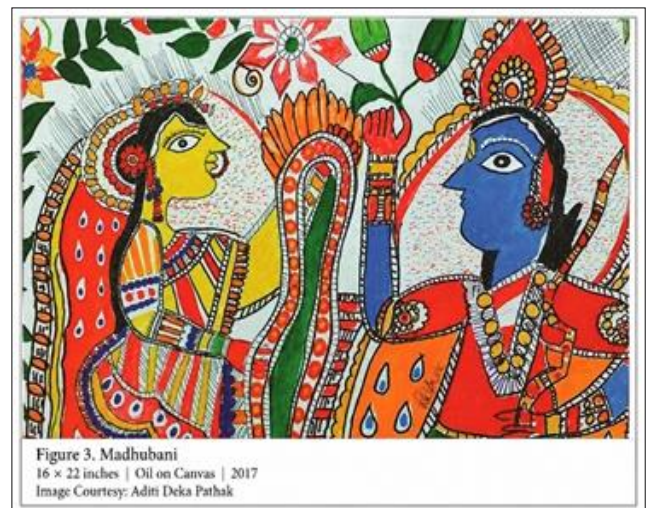
Jain Paintings



Jain painting represents an important component of Indian visual arts, reflecting the rich spiritual and cultural heritage of Jainism. These paintings communicate fundamental Jain principles, including non-violence (ahimsa), self-discipline, liberation, and spiritual enlightenment. They frequently depict the twenty-four Tirthankaras, particularly Mahavira and Parshvanatha, in meditative or preaching postures, symbolizing wisdom and spiritual guidance. Geometric

patterns and cosmic diagrams illustrate Jain cosmology and the journey towards liberation, while manuscript illustrations bring sacred texts, such as the Kalpasutra, to life. Jain paintings also incorporate divine figures and mythological beings, combining religious symbolism with intricate decorative details. Their distinctive features include vivid colours, elaborate ornamentation, fine lines, and carefully structured compositions. Regional traditions, particularly those of Gujarat and Rajasthan, have significantly contributed to the development of Jain miniature painting and manuscript illustration since the medieval period. These artistic traditions reflect the patronage of Jain communities and their commitment to preserving religious knowledge. Furthermore, Jain painting has influenced the broader development of Indian miniature painting, demonstrating the enduring relationship between artistic creativity, religious philosophy, and cultural heritage.

Madhubani painting



The Madhubani painting Village Scene with Women in Celebration represents the vibrancy of rural life and the significant role of women in preserving the cultural heritage of the Mithila region. Characterized by natural colors, intricate linework, and elaborate decorative patterns, the artwork portrays women participating in celebratory activities associated with religious rituals, marriage ceremonies, or harvest festivals. The composition incorporates geometric designs, floral patterns, and animal motifs, reflecting the close relationship between human life, nature, and spirituality. In Mithila culture, women have traditionally played an essential role in transmitting artistic knowledge, ritual practices, folklore, and cultural values across generations. Consequently, Madhubani painting functions not merely as a decorative art form but also as a medium of storytelling, social continuity, and collective identity. As illustrated in Plate 1, the carefully crafted artwork by author and visual artist Aditi Deka Pathak captures the distinctive characteristics of Madhubani painting through its vivid color palette, intricate patterns, and symbolically rich imagery. The painting highlights the cultural ethos, ceremonial traditions, and ancestral narratives embedded in Mithila's artistic heritage. Furthermore, it demonstrates how traditional visual arts preserve regional identities while providing women with

opportunities for creative expression, cultural participation, and the intergenerational transmission of indigenous knowledge.

Mughal Miniature



The Akbar Hunting Scene, a notable example of Mughal miniature painting, illustrates the artistic sophistication, imperial grandeur, and cultural richness of the Mughal court. The painting portrays Emperor Akbar engaged in a royal hunt, surrounded by nobles, attendants, and various animals, carefully depicted through intricate details and vibrant colours. The dynamic composition captures the excitement of the hunt while highlighting the hierarchical organisation of the royal retinue. Influenced by Persian artistic traditions and enriched by Indian techniques, Mughal miniature painting is distinguished by its precise linework, elaborate landscapes, expressive figures, and balanced compositions. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the hunting scene carries political and cultural significance, presenting hunting as both a royal pastime and a demonstration of imperial authority. Akbar's prominent position symbolizes his leadership, physical prowess, and perceived command over the natural world. Furthermore, the painting provides insights into Mughal courtly life, royal customs, and the relationship between art and political power. Thus, the Akbar Hunting Scene exemplifies how Mughal miniature painting combined artistic excellence with imperial representation, historical documentation, and cultural expression.

Indian Paintings as Social Texts: Expressing Moral Principles and Social Norms

Indian paintings function as social texts that communicate moral values, gender roles, cultural beliefs, and communal identities beyond their aesthetic significance. They frequently portray social expectations and idealized virtues, reinforcing cultural continuity and collective memory. For instance, Madhubani paintings often depict women in relation to fertility, childbirth, domestic responsibilities, and community celebrations, while Rajput and Mughal paintings represent ideals of honor, loyalty, authority, and hierarchical relationships. These artistic representations preserve historical experiences, oral traditions, and social practices that may be overlooked in written historical accounts.

Analyzing such visual narratives enables researchers to examine social norms, power relations, gender identities, and cultural transformations across different historical periods. Consequently, Indian paintings serve not only as instruments of cultural preservation but also as potential means of social criticism and reinterpretation.

Indian Painting: Pedagogical and Research Implications

Indian paintings offer valuable resources for developing visual literacy and promoting interdisciplinary learning across history, sociology, cultural studies, and art education. Their integration into educational curricula encourages students to interpret visual symbols, understand historical contexts, and critically engage with their cultural heritage. This approach strengthens analytical thinking by connecting visual representation with textual knowledge and lived experiences. From a social science research perspective, paintings complement written documents by providing visual evidence of social rituals, community relationships, everyday life, and historically marginalised perspectives. Their examination can reveal cultural meanings and social experiences that conventional historical narratives may underrepresent. Furthermore, visual analysis enables researchers to investigate the relationship between artistic representation, social structures, and collective identities. Therefore, Indian painting should be understood not merely as an artistic tradition but also as an educational resource and a valuable methodological tool for reconstructing complex social realities. Its continued study can contribute to culturally responsive education, interdisciplinary scholarship, and a deeper understanding of India's diverse cultural heritage.

Visual Arts Industry in India: Government Initiatives and Regulatory Environment

The visual arts industry in India receives institutional and financial support through government initiatives, cultural organizations, museums, and national and international exhibitions. These initiatives aim to preserve artistic heritage, encourage emerging artists, strengthen cultural institutions, and promote Indian art globally. The Scheme for the Award of Scholarships to Young Artists in Different Cultural Fields provides financial assistance for advanced training in dance, art, and music. According to the scheme details cited by India Culture (2016), 400 scholarships are awarded annually, with each selected artist receiving ₹5,000 per month for two years to meet expenses related to training, books, art materials, equipment, and travel. Similarly, the Museum Grant Scheme, administered by the Ministry of Culture, supports the establishment of new museums, the development of existing institutions, the digitisation of art collections, and professional training. Its scope includes museums displaying paintings, antiquities, folk art, textiles, crafts, and other cultural objects, including virtual and theme-based museums (Ministry of Culture, n.d.). Among India's major art institutions, the Lalit Kala Academy, established in 1954 as an autonomous national academy and granted statutory authority in 1957, promotes visual arts through exhibitions, cultural exchanges, and international collaborations. Its objectives include acquiring and conserving artworks, organizing national and international exhibitions, maintaining specialized libraries and documentation centers, and promoting research through seminars, lectures, and conferences (National Gallery of

Modern Art, n.d.). Together, these initiatives strengthen India's visual arts ecosystem by supporting artistic development, cultural preservation, public engagement, and international visibility. An effective regulatory environment, alongside institutional funding and digital preservation, remains essential for protecting artistic heritage and ensuring sustainable growth in the contemporary visual arts industry.

Challenges Facing the Indian Visual Arts Industry

The Indian visual arts industry faces several challenges that restrict its sustainable growth, including insufficient public funding, inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of skilled professionals, art forgery, limited regulatory oversight, and low public awareness. Government support remains a major concern, as inadequate budget allocations and the underutilization of cultural funds have affected the development of museums and other artistic institutions. Public museums often depend on government funding for maintenance, restoration, and daily operations, while limited partnerships with private organizations further constrain their financial resources. Consequently, art organizations increasingly rely on corporate sponsorships, international foundations, charitable trusts, and individual patrons to sustain their activities ('Getting Museums to Trend', *The Hindu*, 2016; 'India's Neglected Museums', *The Hindu*, 2015). Inadequate infrastructure is another significant obstacle, as many museums and galleries experience poor maintenance, insufficient lighting, outdated facilities, limited technological integration, and ineffective visitor engagement. These shortcomings restrict public access to art and reduce opportunities for emerging artists to exhibit and sell their work ('Seven Challenges Museums in India Are Facing', *The Heritage Lab*, 2016). Furthermore, low salaries, inadequate professional training, and the absence of specialised leadership contribute to a shortage of qualified museum personnel ('Six Major Challenges Facing Indian Museums', *The Indian Express*, 2016). Art forgery presents additional risks, as counterfeit artworks and falsified provenance documents undermine artists' reputations, collectors' confidence, and market credibility. The absence of consistent authentication procedures, transparent pricing, and effective oversight also creates opportunities for fraudulent transactions and financial irregularities ('How Counterfeits Compete with the Great Masters in India's Fledgling Art Market', *The Economic Times*, 2014) [3]. Moreover, limited art education and inadequate public exposure restrict the development of artistic appreciation and informed collecting practices. Investment in visual arts also remains comparatively low, partly because some buyers view artworks primarily as speculative financial assets rather than cultural experiences ('Growth in Indian Art Paves the Way for Wealth Management', *The Economic Times*, 2013). Addressing these challenges requires stronger public investment, improved infrastructure, professional training, comprehensive art education, reliable authentication systems, and greater transparency in art transactions.

The Impact of Globalization on Indian Visual Arts and Contemporary Creative Painting

Globalization has significantly influenced Indian visual arts and contemporary creative painting by facilitating the exchange of artistic ideas, techniques, materials, and

cultural perspectives across national boundaries. Since the liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1990s, Indian artists have gained greater exposure to international art movements, exhibitions, galleries, biennales, and digital platforms. This interaction has encouraged artists to experiment with new styles and approaches while reinterpreting traditional Indian art forms in contemporary contexts. Consequently, Indian visual arts increasingly reflect a dialogue between indigenous cultural traditions and global artistic influences (Suhr, 2018) [14]. In contemporary creative painting, globalization has expanded the range of themes, techniques, and media available to Indian artists. Traditional elements such as Madhubani motifs, miniature painting, folk narratives, religious symbolism, and regional patterns are frequently combined with abstraction, conceptual art, mixed-media techniques, and contemporary visual languages. These artistic combinations allow painters to explore issues such as identity, migration, urbanization, gender, environmental change, consumerism, and cultural transformation. Global exposure has also encouraged Indian artists to question conventional artistic boundaries and develop individual styles that communicate both local experiences and universal concerns (Qiu & Zhang, 2023) [8]. Technology has further strengthened this transformation by providing artists with access to digital drawing tools, graphic design software, online exhibitions, and social media platforms such as Instagram and Behance. These platforms enable artists to display their work internationally, connect with collectors and fellow practitioners, and participate in wider artistic discussions. Digital technologies have also encouraged experimentation with digital painting, animation, and interactive visual forms (Kim & Chung, 2023) [4]. However, globalization also presents challenges, including the commercialization of artistic expression, the dominance of international market trends, and the possible marginalization of indigenous traditions. Unequal access to technology and global art networks may further limit opportunities for emerging artists. Therefore, the impact of globalization on Indian visual arts is not simply a process of adopting foreign influences; it involves negotiating the relationship between cultural heritage and contemporary innovation. The continued development of Indian creative painting depends on artists' ability to engage with global developments while preserving cultural distinctiveness and expressing India's diverse social realities (Joshi *et al.*, 2023; Ye & Li, 2022) [11].

Conclusion

Indian visual arts and contemporary creative painting represent the dynamic relationship between cultural heritage, historical experience, social transformation, and artistic innovation. From Buddhist murals and Jain paintings to Madhubani art and Mughal miniatures, Indian artistic traditions have preserved religious beliefs, moral values, regional identities, and collective memories across generations. The emergence of modern and contemporary painting has further expanded artistic expression by introducing new techniques, perspectives, and interpretations of Indian society. Globalization has accelerated this transformation by facilitating international cultural exchange, artistic collaboration, and access to global exhibitions and digital platforms. Consequently, contemporary Indian artists increasingly combine traditional motifs and indigenous knowledge with modern artistic

techniques to address issues such as identity, gender, environmental change, urbanization, and social inequality. However, globalization also presents challenges, including commercialization, cultural homogenization, unequal access to technology, and the possible marginalization of regional artistic traditions. Inadequate funding, limited infrastructure, art forgery, and insufficient public awareness further restrict the growth of the Indian visual arts industry. Government institutions, museums, galleries, educational organizations, and cultural bodies therefore have an important role in supporting emerging artists, preserving artistic heritage, strengthening professional practices, and promoting public engagement with art. Integrating Indian paintings into educational and research practices can also enhance visual literacy and encourage a deeper understanding of the country's diverse cultural experiences. The future of Indian visual arts depends on achieving a meaningful balance between global engagement and cultural preservation. Rather than viewing globalization solely as a challenge or an opportunity, artists and institutions should approach it as a process of creative negotiation through which traditional knowledge and contemporary innovation can coexist. Such an approach can strengthen the international visibility of Indian art while safeguarding its cultural distinctiveness and ensuring its continued relevance in an increasingly interconnected world.

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