

Lesson No.	Title of Lesson	Module No.
8	Pioneers of Contemporary Indian Art	3

### Brief Introduction

- Due to influence of British Raj, there was a general decline in traditional Indian art at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Indian artists started looking at their heritage with a positive approach to advance from the earlier European colonial art.
- Famous artists of contemporary Indian art:
  - **Raja Ravi Varma**
  - **Abanindranath Tagore**
  - **Nandlal Bose**
  - **Benode Behari Mukherjee**
  - **Rabindranath Tagore**
  - **Jamini Roy**
  - **Amrita Shergil**

### 8.1

#### HAMSA DAMAYANTI

##### Particulars

Title : *Hamsa Damayanti*

Artist : *Raja Ravi Varma*

Medium : *Oil on canvas*

Date : *1899*

Collection: *National Gallery of Modern Art,  
New Delhi*



### Appreciation of the Painting

- It is one of the most famous works of **Raja Ravi Varma** painted in 1899 in oil.
- **Damayanti** has been depicted as the most beautiful woman wearing red sari, listening to messages from her lover narrated by the swan (**Hamsa**).
- The standing figure of **Damayanti** and her posture is fascinating.

### Develop your understanding about the Painter

- He was the most celebrated artist of India with a revolutionary vision.
- He gained reputation for his oil and water colour techniques.
- Indian mythology is portrayed in a series of his works.
- He is popularly known for his paintings depicting episodes from the stories of **Dushyanta-Shakuntala**, **Nala-Damayanti** and from the epic **Mahabharata**.

**Evaluate Yourself**

- 8.1.1 Whose influence caused general decline in Indian art in the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century?  
8.1.2 What is the medium used by **Raja Ravi Varma** in **Hamsa Damayanti**?

**Answer**

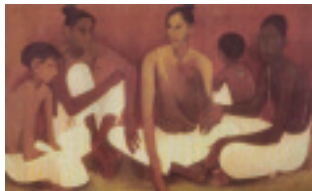
- 8.1.1 British Raj.  
8.1.2 Oil on canvas.

**8.2**

**BRAHMACHARIES**

**Particulars**

*Title : Brahmacharies*  
*Artist : Amrita Shergil*  
*Medium : Oil on canvas*  
*Date : 1938*  
*Collection: National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi*



**Appreciation of the Painting**

- The painting is a fine example of the understanding of the artist of Hindu faith which is still prevalent in the traditionalist South India.
- Five male **Brahmacharies** in an Ashram are shown as symbols of devotion in Hindu faith.
- Stress is laid on variety of colours-deep red background against white *dhotis*.
- The painting is composed on a horizontal plane with vertical placement of figures.

**Develop your understanding about the artist : Amrita Shergil**

- Her appearance is a great event in the history of contemporary 20th century art in India.
- Her visit to South India inspired her to produce the most remarkable works such as – **The Bride's Toilette**, **The Brahmacharies**, and **South Indian Villagers going to Market**.
- Her passion with which she handled the brush and the genius combining the training in west and views of east made her most popular.
- Her paintings show her love for the country and the life of its people.

**Evaluate Yourself**

- 8.2.1 Which part of the country inspired **Amrita Shergil** to produce her most remarkable works?  
8.2.2 Devotion to which faith is shown by **Brahmacharies** in the painting?

**Answer**

- 8.2.1 South India.  
8.2.2 Hindu faith.
-

## 8.3

## THE ATRIUM

**Particulars**

Title : *The Atrium*

Artist : *Gaganendranath Tagore*

Medium : *Water colour on paper*

Date : 1920

Size : 12.5" × 9.5"

Collection: *Rabindra Bharati Society, Jorasanko, Kolkata*

**Appreciation of the Painting**

- It is a remarkable work and a fine example of cubist influence on the artist.
- **Cubism** is a style in art in which objects are represented in geometrical forms.
- The painting shows a fine blend of light creating dramatic effects with colours.
- The whole composition looks like a combination of various geometrical shapes put together.

**Develop your understanding about the artist- Gaganendranath Tagore**

- His important works from 1910-1921 were the sketches of **Himalayas**, and the life of **Chaitanya** through art in a sequence.
- Later in his career, he developed a distinct style of his own brand of **Cubism**, the core of which was to express in abstract geometric structures.
- He was also a great critic of his time, best known for his political cartoons and social satires.

**Evaluate Yourself**

8.3.1 What is the medium of the painting **The Atrium**.

8.3.2 Name the distinct style developed by **Gaganendranath Tagore**.

**Answer**

8.3.1 Water colour on paper.

8.3.2 **Cubism**.

**Do You Know?**

- Modern Indian art is very much related to the history of the country and the social conditions.
- The British period produced significant works under the Company School.
- The Bengal School established in Santiniketan served as a centre of artistic development.
- Artists of various background came together to give a new dimension to Indian art.
- The Bengal School provided a starting point to the movement of contemporary Indian art.