

UPSC IAS Prelims Examination: Mysore Paintings

Indian Art and culture is a diverse topic in UPSC IAS Prelims examination which is conducted by Union Public Service Commission. It includes cultural facets from ancient, medieval to modern periods. The UPSC aspirants find the questions asked from Indian art and culture segment, difficult to solve. There are many reasons for this. The major reason is the nature of being factual. Many of them find difficulty in retaining the names and factual data. Candidates can click here to find a better strategy to tackle this issue.

Origins of Mysore Paintings

Mysore paintings are an important form of classical South Indian painting that had its origins in and around the town of Mysore in the state of Karnataka. Under the patronage of erstwhile rulers of Mysore, this form of painting became a sign of aristocracy in the late 13th century. The distinct school of Mysore painting evolved from the days of the **Vijayanagar Empire** (1336-1565 AD). The rulers of Vijayanagar and their feudatories encouraged literature, art, architecture, religious and philosophical discussions. With the fall of the Vijayanagar empire after the Battle of Talikota, the artists who were till then under royal patronage migrated to various other places like Mysore, Tanjore, Surpur, etc. Absorbing the local artistic traditions and customs, the erstwhile Vijayanagar School of Painting gradually evolved into the many styles of painting in South India, including the Mysore and Tanjore schools of painting.

Facts about Mysore Paintings

- Mysore Painting is a form of classical painting seen in South Indian
- This painting is evolved in the Mysore city of Karnataka state, under the reign of the Wodeyar / Wadiyar Dynasty
- It was under the Wadiyar Dynasty patronage that Mysore school of painting touched its peak.
- It is quite similar to the Tanjore Paintings.
- Mysore Paintings make use of thinner gold leaves and need much more hard work.

Traditional Mysore paintings

- In the traditional Mysore paintings, all the raw materials were made by the artists, containing board, brushes, paints, and gold foil.
- The brushes were made of various materials, like camel hair, squirrel hair, goat hair, etc.
- Vegetable and mineral colours were used instead of poster colours and watercolours.
- Earlier the sketches were made by burning tamarind twigs in an iron tube. But now these sketches are made with the help of charcoal.
- Though the base was made of paper, wood, wall and cloth, rather than the only cartridge paper base used now.

Themes

- The most general themes of Mysore paintings comprise Hindu Gods and Goddesses and scenes from the Hindu mythology.
- The elegance, beauty, and complexity of Mysore Paintings leave the spectators enthralled.

History of Mysore Paintings

- Mysore School of painting reached its zenith under the rule of Raja Krishna Raja Wodeyar.
- After the Wodeyar rulers were supplanted by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, the patronage of Mysore paintings continued, even after the end of the **third and fourth Anglo-Mysore Wars**. The Wodeyars once again became the chief patrons after the defeat of Tipu Sultan.
- After the death of Raja in 1868, the artists started dispersing and the school touched the point of complete extinction.
- In 1875 Jagan Mohan Palace and Chitrakala School were established and revival of the Mysore Paintings.
- Late Sri Siddalingeswara Swamiji and late Shri Y. Subramanya Raju also contributed to this beautiful art form.

Centres

- Mysore School of paintings exists in Mysore, Narasipura, Nanjangud Bangalore, Tumkur, and Shravanabelagola.

How are Mysore paintings made?

- A lot of steps are involved in the process of producing a Mysore painting.
- The initial stage needs the artist to create a primary sketch of the image on the base, which includes a cartridge paper pasted on a wooden base.
- Afterwards, they make a paste of zinc oxide and Arabic gum, identified as 'gesso paste'.
- This paste is used to give a slightly raised effect of carving to those parts of the painting that need embellishments and it is allowed to dry.
- Then, the gold foil is fixed onto the surface. The remaining painting is prepared with the help of watercolours.
- After the painting is fully parched, it is covered with a thin paper and scrubbed lightly with a smooth soft stone.

Relevant Questions for Mysore Paintings

Under whose rule did the Mysore style of painting originate?

Although Mysore style of paintings had its origins in the glory days of the Vijaynagar Empire, it was under the reign of and patronage of the Wodeyars in the 1700s that this school of painting reached its zenith.

What is the unique feature of Tanjore painting?

Tanjore art can be characterized by rich, flat and vivid colours. Simple iconic composition, use of glittering 22-carat gold foils overlaid in the painting work and the Tanjore paintings are decorated mostly using semi-precious stones to bring out the glow to highlight ornaments, structures etc.

How are Tanjore paintings made?

A Thanjavur Painting is made on a canvas pasted over a plank of wood (Jackfruit or teak) with Arabic gum. The canvas was then evenly coated with a paste of French chalk or powdered limestone and a binding medium.