



Indian Silk Painting

Since the late middle ages silk has been used as a canvas for portraits and paintings. Under normal circumstances the paint used would "run" through the material. A special process known to specialised craftsmen and women in India, allows the silk canvas to "hold" the paint in vibrant detail. This process often makes the silk have a stiff quality and early appreciators of art thought the paintings were on paper. After closer examination they could actually see the fibres in some of the paintings and realised it was made on a canvas of silk.

Silk Paintings reached their height when India was under Moghul rule during the early 17th-19th century. Moghul kings promoted arts and literature and it is little wonder that many of today's paintings still have a "moghul" style quality to them. The hot spot for these paintings became the desert kingdoms of Rajasthan and the largest concentration of artists for this type of art can still be found there today.

Rich court life and religious themes are often depicted as a characteristic of this art form. Beautiful women are often found in these works of art along with vibrant gemstone colouring. The heavy use of gold leaf appears as another distinguishing characteristic.

These small piece of silk art often came about as workers obtained off-cuts and adorned the with beautiful design with the hope of selling and supplementing their income.

