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National Gallery of Modern Art

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National Gallery of Modern Art

Reviewed June 2015

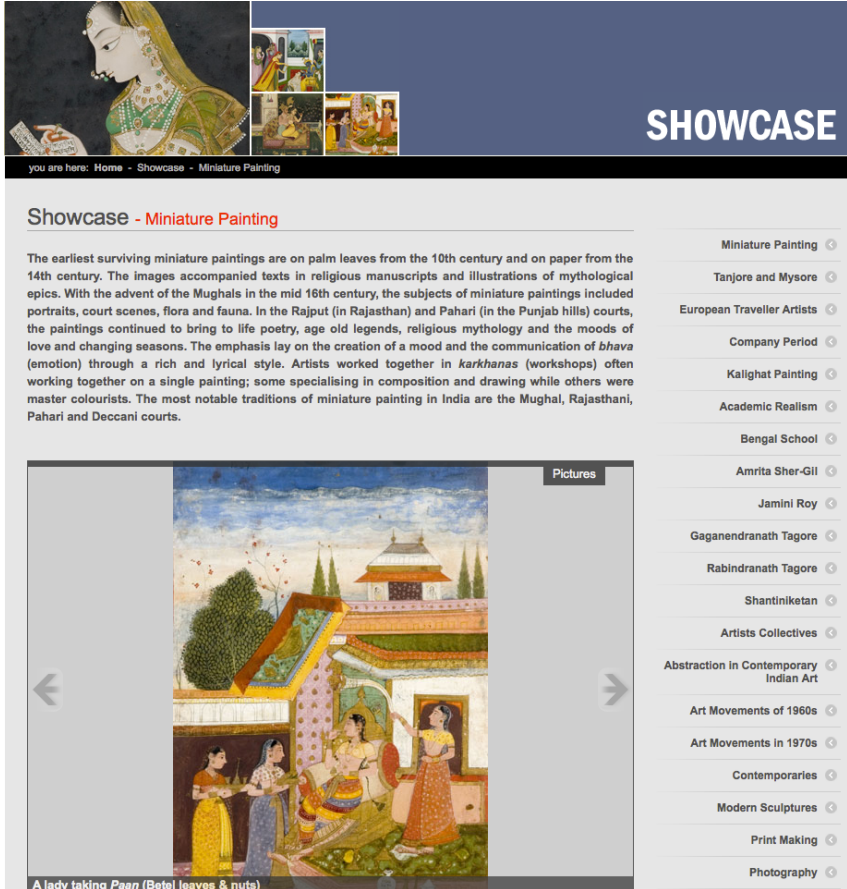
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The [National Gallery of Modern Art](#) (NGMA) was founded in 1954 at the Jaipur House near the India Gate in New Delhi, India. Today the NGMA holds a permanent collection of over 17,000 paintings, sculptures, prints, and photographs, including most of Amrita Sher-Gil's work not already in private collections, several hundred works by members of the Tagore family, and more than 6,700 works by painter Nandalal Bose. In 2009, the museum's exhibition space significantly increased with the addition of several new wings.

The strength of the NGMA and its website lies in its collection. Selections from the collection are on view virtually in the Showcase section of the website. Major modern art movements in India—and several notable artists—are profiled on showcase pages. Each showcase consists of a short essay paired with a



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Showcase - Miniature Painting

The earliest surviving miniature paintings are on palm leaves from the 10th century and on paper from the 14th century. The images accompanied texts in religious manuscripts and illustrations of mythological epics. With the advent of the Mughals in the mid 16th century, the subjects of miniature paintings included portraits, court scenes, flora and fauna. In the Rajput (in Rajasthan) and Pahari (in the Punjab hills) courts, the paintings continued to bring to life poetry, age old legends, religious mythology and the moods of love and changing seasons. The emphasis lay on the creation of a mood and the communication of *bhava* (emotion) through a rich and lyrical style. Artists worked together in *karkhanas* (workshops) often working together on a single painting; some specialising in composition and drawing while others were master colourists. The most notable traditions of miniature painting in India are the Mughal, Rajasthani, Pahari and Deccani courts.

[Pictures](#)

A lady taking Peen (Betel leaves & nuts)

- Miniature Painting
- Tanjore and Mysore
- European Traveller Artists
- Company Period
- Kalighat Painting
- Academic Realism
- Bengal School
- Amrita Sher-Gil
- Jamini Roy
- Gaganendranath Tagore
- Rabindranath Tagore
- Shantiniketan
- Artists Collectives
- Abstraction in Contemporary Indian Art
- Art Movements of 1960s
- Art Movements in 1970s
- Contemporaries
- Modern Sculptures
- Print Making
- Photography

selection of appropriate pieces from NGMA's collection. While the essays are at times remedial, the showcases remind visitors of the breadth and depth of modern and contemporary Indian art. The Artists Collectives, Abstraction in Contemporary Indian Art, Contemporaries, and Modern Sculptures showcases are superior as they contain more than twenty images, most of which are not typically included in traditional art history survey texts.

There are some significant

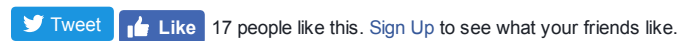
shortcomings to the NGMA website that may hinder the museum's stated objective of "... help[ing] people to look at the works of modern art with greater joy, understanding and knowledge by extending their relationship with our daily life and experiencing them as vital expressions of the human spirit."

The top half of the homepage consists of a looping virtual exhibition of selections from the permanent collection, delivered in Adobe Flash Player. Although it is a colorful and compelling introduction to the collection, Flash is inaccessible to visitors on Apple devices and most mobile screens. The Search by Artists link on the homepage does not allow site visitors to search the collection, but rather loads a non-searchable alphabetic listing of artists on the Collection page. The Search by Collection link loads the non-searchable Showcase page.

The website is available in English and Hindi. The Hindi version of the website appears to have been abandoned in 2009, and is subpar compared to the English site. The most current exhibition listed on the Hindi version of the exhibitions page occurred in 2009. This exhibition, SOAK, does not appear to be featured on the English version of the site. The Hindi collections page returns a 500 error (page does not exist). The Showcase is replicated on the Hindi version of the site, but the captions identifying each work of art are not included in the slideshow.

One may compare the NGMA website to the National Museum of India's website to see the potential for excellence in NGMA's digital footprint, should the NGMA choose to update their site. The layout of the two sites is strikingly similar, including the placement of major page elements and font choice. The National Museum of India's site complies with W3C standards, uses jQuery for the rotating virtual exhibition on the homepage, and, in general, provides a more intuitive site structure.

Despite the current shortcomings of NGMA's website, undergraduate students or others new to Indian art who are searching for examples of modern and contemporary Indian art would do well to investigate the freely available showcases.



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