

**Contemporary mural art- a dialogue
of public and private engagement
and contemporary painting- an
eclectic transcultural research-
based studio practice**

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Best Practice

1. Title of the Practice:

Contemporary mural art- a dialogue of public and private engagement and contemporary painting- an eclectic transcultural research-based studio practice

2. Objectives of the Practice:

To explore mural tradition as meeting point of multiple traditions of East and the West and to preserve different techniques of Indian and European tradition of mural painting both for interior of buildings and also as a public project, the contemporary mural art is practiced.

Contemporary painting focuses on a strong eclectic understanding of material and process-based application of image making of multiple traditions from different parts of the world. In this respect it derives inspiration from both past traditions of local practices and global approach to the pictorial application.

3. The Context:

Contemporary art practice today plays an active role in defining our relationship to our environment. With the changing character of the material and technological tools it is a challenge to keep material-based disciplines like painting and mural practice relevant to its time. As digital technology has replaced our imagination of image, painting plays an important role to re-activate the material sensibility and the physicality of the experience. So, designing and implementing courses in painting and mural, one has to incorporate the course structure as an integrated form of study, research and individual improvisation. It has to

incorporate different disciplinary methods as a visual signifier. Research has to play the role of both critical understanding of our social life and cultural history and also the material evolution of process and making. Individual improvisation has to acknowledge the constant transforming relationship of the private and public.

4. The Practice:

Different dialogues and conversations with digital technique and image transformations are being adopted in painting. Improvisation with photographic tools and images are being incorporated in the painterly process to generate an interdisciplinary approach to image making. Moreover, process-based improvisation with pigments and another painterly medium is also exercised. Mural is expanding its horizon from not only engaging with the traditional mediums but also engage with the new techniques like material collage and recycling of used materials like plastic and digital waste. Both painting and mural is responding more directly with the notions of memory through the dialogue with archive. An interdisciplinary research-based approach is introduced in the process and the content of the image.

Students conduct projects in public space and engage with the context of the local environment and develop site based mural projects in harmony with the environment. Contemporary painting makes the students aware of its local context, reality of life, culture and tradition and pursues them to explore an independent mind to develop a personal point of view of representation that reflects the

concerns of the everyday lifestyle and reality. It promotes a research based critical approach to image making as active cultural engagement.

5. Evidence of Success:

Painting has been one of the pioneering disciplines of Kala Bhavana that has produced practitioner who are performing actively in the contemporary art world both nationally and internationally. Great contemporary masters like K.G. Subramanyan, Jogen Choudhury, and more recent artists like Indrapramit Roy, Jayasree Chakraborty, Mithu Sen, Ashim Purakaystha and many others are important practitioners in contemporary Indian art today to name a few. Our students are both practicing as independent artist and successful pedagogues in different institutes. Many of our students are associated with different design, animation and film related institutions and practices also. Both faculties and students are regularly participating in exhibitions and also generating interdisciplinary research projects with critical and social dialogues in site specific practices and collective community engagement through the process of painting and expanding ideas of mural practice into community dialogues.

The result indicates that in the age of new technology and digitized world of new media there is an active role of hands on process-based practices that can bring back sanity in our environmentally challenged ecosystem and work as a balance to reclaim role of art as an inevitable aspect of our social and cultural life

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

With the increase in number of students, access to proper ICT facility is much required in individual studio situation. New project spaces are required, where students can engage with new media and multimedia practice on a dedicated level and translate these experiences into an active dialogue with our changing environment of social and cultural life. Mural being a very architectural medium an interface with architectural knowledge and facilities needs to be developed within the campus. Moreover, increase in the cost of materials is creating lots of difficulty for students to do exercises and innovative experiments. A facility for providing diverse materials as a free access to the students and collaborations with different industrial tools and mechanism are very much required.

7. Notes (Optional)

Today to adopt disciplines like mural and painting, proper studio facility like proper studio lighting, facility of animation and digital technology, proper ICT facility and large workshop spaces are very much required. Moreover, a proper access to archive and reference books of tradition of painting from different parts of the world is required for the students to constantly cross refer to different practices. Further, more introduction of permanent studio spaces for traditional practitioners as an active participant to academic practice and provide students with hands on experience of different process and its history is very much essential to sustain these traditional knowledges and make them part of the academic process for future.

Any Other Information regarding Institutional Values and Best

Practices which the University would like to include:

Finally, art practice is one of the most important aspect of University education as it provides the possibility of free thinking and critical social and cultural dialogue with our environment outside. A continuous free access to studio practice equipped with 24 hours internet facility is a must to provide the students an expanded time span of free thinking and imagination. Moreover, University education has to reclaim the free environment of access and mobility not only in terms of access to knowledge but also to nurture informal spaces of knowledge sharing and knowledge production which has been the core to the ideology of Visva-Bharati as a University, as a counter argument to the structured frameworks of the global University frameworks.