

Design Innovation- From The Banarasi Murals To The Fabric

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ABSTRACT:

Design is the soul of any textile and clothing. It can give attractive getup to even an ordinary fabric. Innovation and creativity are the need of designing, so that the curiosity is always there and the buyers wait for the new product. Textile art is a canvas of our surrounding, nature, art styles, folk arts and contemporary subjects. An artist draws the inspiration from these and translates his vision in the form of designs. These sources play a crucial role in design development, as well as in deciding the colour schemes. The characteristics, forms and novelty of a design depend upon the way a designer looks at the inspiring subject. This study is based on the idea of creating innovative and original textile designs by using Banaras wall paintings as a source of inspiration. The basic theme is to produce something new and untouched by incorporating modern elements in the old tradition to suit the present market. It also throws light on this art & its motifs while detailing every aspect of it. These Banarasi murals are used as a source of inspiration with the objective to preserve this age old art through textile forms.

KEYWORDS: Design, Clothing and Textile, Innovation, Inspiration, Wall Painting, Preserve.

INTRODUCTION:

Banaras has a treasure full of variety of art & craft. It's Gem & Jewels, such as Banarasi Sari, the Pink enamel work, wooden toys, Stone work, Bead work and many forms of religious textile are the hallmark of Banaras art. But the wall painting of this holy city is quite notable among all. It has a connection with every segment of Banarasi society and reflects the culture, tradition and even the history of the city. In fact, Banaras has an age old tradition of paintings on the walls of the house, temples, Dharmshalas and many other important places. Walls and facades of the buildings are decorated with vibrant murals made by local artists in the folk painting style. Interestingly nearly every aspect of the nature, human life, mythology, flora & fauna are used as a subject here. This mural art of Banaras is an extended folk form of the Classical art.¹ The artist puts every effort to paint it so meticulously that nearly everybody stops for a while to look at the fantastic images. Generally the pictures are created by the use of bright colours on the white surface of lime painted wall. The outcome is so vibrant that they are not missed by the eyes of the passers-by. This fabulous art has dominated the walls of the city for long, but ironically the upcoming trend of graffiti and deviation from the old traditions has taken its toll and this antique art has been decimated in the recent years. This has not only affected this art but the artists related to this are also suffering badly.

I chose this subject to preserve the traditional motifs of this unique art and make the people aware of its beauty. Forms and motifs of this mural are very rich and perfect to be translated in the fabric designs. These catchy motifs are the forgotten treasure of Indian art. They not only attract common people, but have also inspired me to use them for innovative designing. While roaming around the inner lanes of Banaras, one comes across varieties of these traditional murals. They are mostly on the auspicious occasions, such as marriage, religious rituals, festivals etc.² Here the motifs related to the occasions are pictured on

the wall. For example, the motifs of royal guards are made on the occasion of marriage as a symbol of welcome of the marriage procession.³

These murals are generally found on two places; on the roofs and outer & inner walls of the temples and the outer walls of a residential house.⁴ Some houses have these painting inside the premises too. Other than this, many shopkeepers get the pictures of Gods and Goddesses made in their shops as an auspicious symbol. Other than the general classification, the most interesting characteristic of the display is the identification of the caste of the owner of the house. The house of a *Ahir* (milkman) will have the pictures of wrestlers, fight between wrestlers, people exercising with mace and weightlifters, along with these, paintings of cows, buffalos and ox are distinct on a milkman's wall; similarly a *Dhobi's* (washer man) house will have the motifs of a man washing the cloths or a donkey with big bundle of cloths on its back. The walls of a *Baniya* (businessman) will have the picture of a man weighing commodities; a praying or worshipping *Pujari* (priest) denotes the house of a Brahmin and the hunting scenes are the peculiar symbols of the house of a *Rajput*(Erstwhile ruler caste).⁵

The motifs used in the murals are taken from the nature, religion, mythology and every walk of the life, i.e. flora and fauna, auspicious symbols and images, the most used forms are of animals and birds. Elephant and parrot were the most depicted forms in these wall paintings. Both of them have an important place in Indian religion and culture. From east to west and south to north, they are symbolised differently on different occasions in the country. Be it religious rituals or festivals, there symbolic presence is essential on every occasion in Indian society. Banarasi mural artists have imaged them in many variations.

MATERIAL & METHODS:

1.1- MOOD BOARD:

Next stage was to prepare a mood board. It plays a vital role in design making and helps in conceptualising the vision through visual arrangements of thoughts, ideas, colour scheme and forms. The mood is a combination of displayed images and text which emerges in the streamlined flow of ideas. While creating the mood board I considered several important factors such as age group, season, inspiration, colours, textures and material to be used. I detailed the idea and requirement in the text form to make it more easy and understandable

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RANGE DETAIL: This design series is developed with focus on working women. This is women's era and they are in every sector. She not only manages the house, but also wants to give her best performance on the working place. My purpose is to develop a fresh range of dress materials and sari for the working women, which will make them comfortable, confident, smart,

(Fig.-1) Mood board

as well as relaxed with wearing of a modern series of clothing with traditional designs on them. This clothing will fulfil their multiple requirements. A *chanderi* suit with these designs make the fabric elegant and graceful, which is what a women need. It will serve from households to office purpose

AGE GROUP: After an extensive research on the taste, preference and choice of the women folk of different age group, I developed the concept for the age group of 25 year to 40 years. This is the time when most of the women enter the professional field and simultaneously settle down to house hold life. This is the time when they need clothing which is comfortable in every position while giving them a smart look in different places. The blend of these beautiful designs with the sheen of *chanderi* fabric serves this dual purpose.

SEASON: The choice of clothing, colour and designs change from season to season. This series is specially developed for the summer season. This is the time when we need to wear light weighted cloth with soothing colours. The designs, motifs, fabric and colours scheme is chosen considering the needs of the summer season.

USED FABRIC: These design series has been developed on *Chanderi* fabric (cotton with silk yarn) with digital Printing.





(Fig. 3) Designs development with repeats

3.1-STORYBOARD:

Storyboard is the key feature of any product planning. It is said that ‘A picture is word a thousand words’ and this is how the storyboard becomes important. It helps to visually analyse the outcome of a designer’s research. Storyboard not only helps the designer to visualize the outcome of the effort, but also gets the viewer to understand the idea and intention of the design

(Fig.-4) storyboard-1 making in a better way. After intense research, I prepared a storyboard to describe the new version of the age old

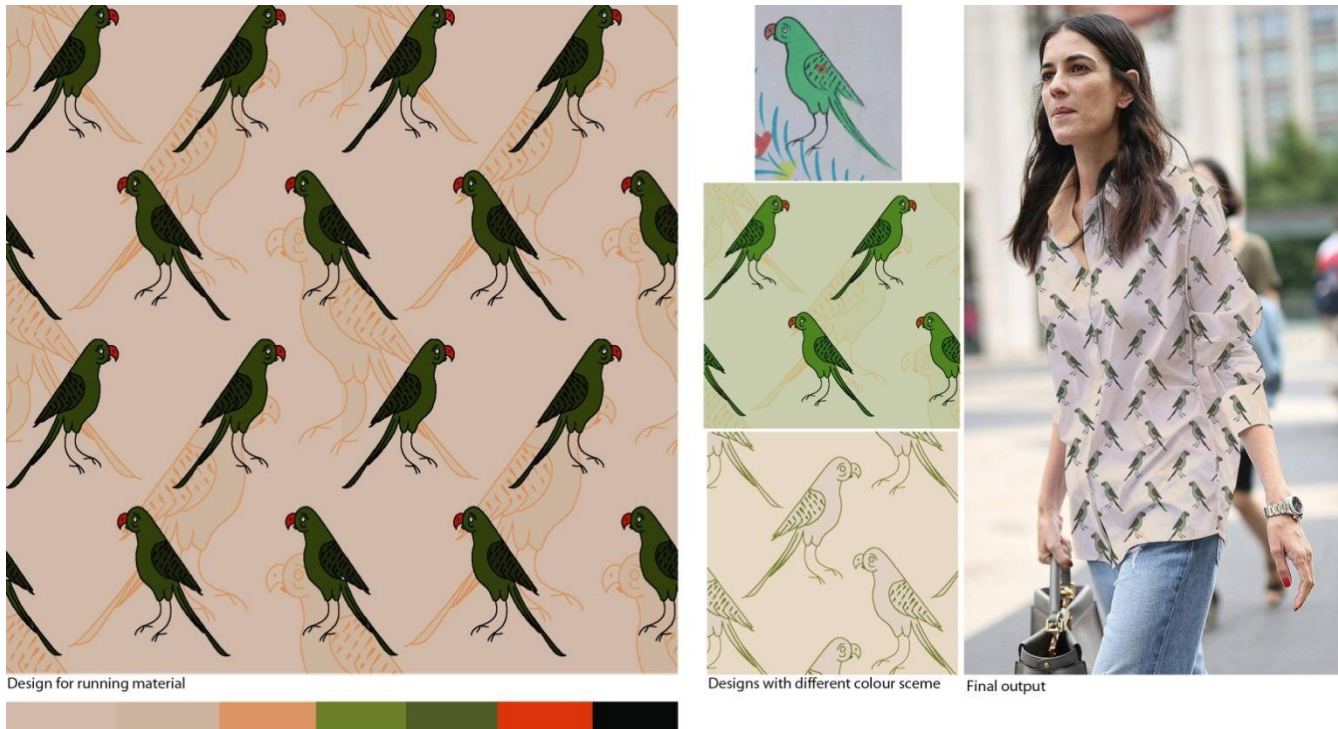
motifs to the prospective buyers. As all the designs can’t go with every product, thus it was important to select the designs according to the planned product. I selectively chose designs for the products and prepared a storyboard for each one of them.



(Fig.-5) storyboard-2

2.1- DIGITAL PRINTING:

Presently Digital printing is very popular medium of fabric printing. I chose this medium to present my designs in the best



format. This printing technology has changed the print possibilities to unlimited. It has made the printing operation designer friendly with its features of inexhaustible colour schemes, print of demand facility, high level design accuracy, sharp and hassle free high quality prints. It uses the ink jet printing techniques of 90's and its advanced features and accuracy is a boon to the textile world.⁹This technology prints is useful in creating customized textiles. The design is created using graphic design programmes and then converted to tagged image file format. I saved my designs in TIFF format for high accuracy and sharpness. TIFF is used in digital printing as it stores the images without losing the detail.¹⁰ I used *Chanderi* fabric for printing purpose which has different warp and weft threads. The fabric was treated with required solution to prepare it for dyeing and better absorption on colours. After going through the printing process, the fabric went through the fixing step (steaming & washing) which ensures the permanency of the design. After this final process the fabric gets ready to use for garment stitching.

OUT COME OF THE STUDY:

- Study of the traditional motifs of Banaras murals
- Social and religious importance of the images
- Understanding the themes and colour combination
- Developing an Innovative design series
- Creating independent series of designs with the source of inspiration
- Preservation of the wall painting motifs through designs
- Successful Fusion of old motifs with new techniques by attaining the best outcome

- Achieving the desired result by intense research and study of the subject

CONCLUSION:

This task was very challenging, as the wall painting tradition is near extinction in Varanasi. Very few old houses and temples have these murals on their walls. Most of them are difficult to visit and situated deep inside the narrow lanes of the city. Other than this the upper class of the society and modern house makers do not practice this tradition any more. The lime paint has been replaced by plastic and enamel paints, which don't have any scope for this art. Thus, it is now limited to the houses of weaker section and some temples only, who either cannot afford the modern paints or need to have the religious motifs on their walls. As like the destiny of other traditional arts, the deviation from this art too has resulted in the shifting of the artists to other professions. This has affected the quality of the wall paintings and images drawn in them. These innovative designs would be unique and unparalleled and quite a new addition to the textile history. This range of designs will make the people closer to their traditional art and culture.

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