

#DISCUSSION

Myriad Arts of Rajasthan



Fresco Art prevalent in Dhola Maru.

Artists and art experts participated and shed light on the diverse art forms of Rajasthan in two virtual sessions on Facebook recently.



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To safeguard, promote and create awareness about the different folk and traditional arts of Rajasthan, two online sessions were recently organized on Facebook. While one session was organized by Jawahar Kala Kendra on Fresco Paintings of Rajasthan, the other was themed on Folk Arts of Rajasthan and was organized by Delphi Council of Rajasthan. Below are snippets from the sessions.

The Intricacies of Fresco

Experts of fresco painting and famous artists, Dr Nathul Verma and Samdar Singh Khangarot Sagar participated in the discussion. Fresco Paintings of Rajasthan, during the programme, fresco painting, its technique and features in mural painting were discussed in detail. The session was moderated by Abdul Lateef Usta.

The discussion began with introduction to the technique of fresco and its types. Nathul Verma highlighted that a painting done on fresh or wet lime plaster usually on walled surfaces is known as 'fresco'. There are 2 techniques of fresco painting - Buon Fresco and Secco Fresco. Buon Fresco involves drawing and colouring on a wet surface. It is then beaten with special tools to absorb the colour in the plaster. This technique is also popularly known as Araish or Jaipuri Fresco.



Bundi style of Fresco

In Secco fresco, the mural is prepared and left to dry. After which, the painter can fill in the colour at any time. In this, mineral, chemical, and vegetable dyes are used and gum is also added to make these set colours.

Work using these techniques can be seen in temples, palaces or havelis. "The painter should choose the right mural (wall) with no moisture or cracks. He should also have complete knowledge of colours and tools. Materials like lime, marble powder and colour are most significant in fresco," he said.

Talking about Mural painting, the art expert said that it is an ancient art done on the wall using any means. Examples of this can be seen in the form of paintings made on rocks and cave walls.

Artist Samdar Singh Khangarot Sagar said that Rajasthan is a state rich in art and craft. Each area has a different kind of art form. Both the forms of fresco can be seen in abundance in the state in areas like Mewar, Amber, Marwar, Shekhawati, among others.



Abdul Lateef Usta in conversation with Dr Pankaj Dharendra.

These arts promote cultural harmony as well. A typical characteristic of folk art is 'artistic innocence', shared Usta. Adding to the characteristics of folk arts, Dr Dharendra said that no elaborate tools are required in folk arts. The use of local and natural substances as tools and pigments is significant in these forms of art.

The folk arts of Rajasthan such as Kavay, Phad, Toran, Aaliye, Pichwai, Mandana, Godna and Mehndi, among others were discussed in great detail. The need for conservation and promotion of folk painting of Rajasthan was also emphasized by the speakers. The history and cultural heritage of Rajasthan will survive through the display and protection of folk paintings, they pointed out. Furthermore, Rajasthan folk paintings were compared with folk paintings in the state in different states of India but from across the globe.

"I can understand if you left behind a Colonel. I can forgive you even if had left behind the GOC 2 Div." He paused, seemingly at a loss of words. "F**king shit bag, you went and left the Army Cdr on a f**king BSF picket and he is sitting on a charpoy right now." Jaya banged his glass on the bar counter, and lit a cigarette. Through a smoke ring, he kept staring at me. "You went and chopped up your tail rotor, and had the audacity to fly it right back to Chabua," he said softly. I thought I could make out a note of admiration in his voice. "Sir," I said pleasantly, "I shall go and pick up the Army Cdr first thing tomorrow morning." Jaya was my best friend, my guru, my only mentor, my only benefactor in all my years in uniform. "You will do nothing of the sort," he roared like a lion. "I shall pick up the Army Cdr myself," he said. "You".....he paused for effect. "You are f**king going on permanent detachment to Chakabama."



Wg Cdr Unni Kartha (Retd)
aka Cyclic is a retired IAF pilot with a penchant for storytelling

#PREDICAMENT

ing, the most adventurous thing that I could do at the age of 26. As usual, I dumped collective, descended to the deck, with the Mi-4's wheels touching the Subansary river, more like driving a 'Jonga' than flying an airplane. I zig zaged along the river, acutely aware of a theorem propounded by my earlier Sqn Cdr (Vir Narain). I whistled the morbid tune, taught to me by a navigator friend, it was called 'point of no return'. The Mi-4 was one hell of a helicopter to fly. In due course, we braved the weather and got out of the hills, to my recollection, around 1600 hrs.....

No.....in retrospect, I did not bring God in between and I did not consult with him either. I went mind dead for about four minutes while I contemplated the odds. In the fifth minute, I turned around and went back to a clearing near Passighat which I had over flown about ten minutes earlier. I went and landed on a valley ball court next to some tents and without switching off, I ordered the Army Cdr out. He was dumbfounded, initially loss of words. But when it came, he let it fly at me, alternating between request,

order, court marshal, pleading and jostling. Actually, he was a very fine man, a person I held in great awe. So I reasoned with him. "Course mate down, Sir," I said in clipped military parlance. "He needs me," I told him with finality. "You are the Tiger, the army is here, and they will take care of you," I think I told him. "Kempy is down there, I got to go before the Tigers get to him."

I think the Army Cdr made a request to take him along. I think I did not want to take him along lest I endanger his life. It is possible that I left him behind out of spite, for making me wait at all the places where we went and making me go through bad weather. I don't remember. It is quite possible. I was very young and impetuous.

Any way I then headed full throttle for Dulanmukh range. It was almost sunset by the time I reached there. I had to ask someone the general direction in which Kempy went down. I went and landed in front of the RSO's hut, and a WO ran out. He quickly pointed out the general direction and I was off the ground in a jiffy. The jungles reek a musty smell as the sun begins to set. I noticed it because I was at tree top height flying

It seemed Kempy (then Flt Lt Deviah, a course mate) had punched out from a Gnat earlier that morning over Dulanmukh after he got hit by ricochet, and the engine flamed out. None saw him punch out, none noted where the aircraft went down. The place as you guys know is thick jungles, with crazy wild animals. Just then my radio quit. That was not unusual. It was unusual if the radio ever worked in a Mi-4. We were quite used to flying the Mi-4 without radio, without navigational aids of any kind, without anything known or popular in aeronautics, all except a wing and a prayer.

Of Officers & Gentlemen 'KEMPY'S NOSE'



I went into a tizzy, 'hicum foomum', sudden rush of shit to the brain. I was beset by a moral dilemma. Do I pretend not to have heard about Kempy? Do I leave him there in the jungle and go home? Do I rationalise that I had no business to get involved? Do I make excuses that I had the Army Cdr on board? Do I make an excuse that it was going to be sun set, that the weather was bad, that I was about 40 miles north and headed in the wrong direction?

"God, I didn't even know if Kempy was dead or alive....." I said in monologue. "Oh God, my CO will make nice meat out of me," I said to myself in self defence. No.....in retrospect, I did not bring God in between and I did not consult with him either. I went mind dead for about four minutes while I contemplated the odds. In the fifth minute, I turned around and went back to a clearing near Passighat which I had over flown about ten minutes earlier. I went and landed on a valley ball court next to some tents and without switching off, I ordered the Army Cdr out. He was dumbfounded, initially loss of words. But when it came, he let it fly at me, alternating between request,

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Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week

Having a healthy heart can make all the difference in a person's life. Of course being born with a heart defect can significantly reduce that person's ability to interact with the world around them. Congenital heart defects occur frequently than many people know, and yet not much research has been funded into this cause. Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week hopes to change those perspectives, by informing people about what CHDs are and what they can do to improve those statistics.



around his chest. His nose was completely smashed and his face covered with blood. His nostrils were choked partially with dried mucus and blood, still oozing plasma. He was labouring for breath through his mouth, spasms raking his chest. I think he had been like that all day, while the search was on overhead, the villagers were frightened to touch him.

The sun by then had set or was about to set. I quickly got Kempy's helmet off, poured water on his face, cleaned his nose and mouth and made him drink some water. He seemed partially awake but he had no situational awareness or what happened to him. It also looked as if he had suffered a compression fracture of his spine. I knocked out the charpoy legs, loaded Kempy still on the charpoy into the Mi-4 and we went back to Chabua, unmindful of the missing portion of the tail rotor, the Mi-4 juddering and shaking all the way. 45 minutes later, when we landed, there was a big crowd on the tarmac, including the Station Commander and my CO, late Jayaraman.

Rimcolian Tradition

The docs took charge of Kempy, and I think he was flown to Calcutta, never saw him afterwards for a long time. The CO took me by the elbow and marched me to his jeep. Never said a word, he went straight to the bar, where Durga the ever smiling barman poured us both a large Rum with water, the favourite drink in Chabua. There were many others too in the bar. Jayaraman, took a sip and I think he could not control himself any more. "I don't know what to do with you," he said.

"First you broke the 12 o'clock rule," he waved the glass in my face. My untouched glass still on the bar counter. True to Rimcolian tradition, I always took bull shit standing at attention. In RIMC, it was believed that attention was the only safe position to ward off predation. "I can understand that you came out of the hills at 2 o'clock, I can forgive you if it went to 3 o'clock. But I cannot suffer in silence if you decided to clear the hills at sun set." His voice was quivering with emotion. There was pin drop silence in the bar. All drinks lay untouched on the bar counter. He took another sip.

"You got into bad weather," he paused. "No, not just bad weather, you f**king had to go and penetrate a line squall and mapped the Subansary river with your wheel to get out." I began to wonder where he had heard that one.

James was overhead Tezpur, in a Mig 21 acting like an airborne FAC coordinating search and rescue over Dulanmukh range. I heard arguments, between a Caribou, Chetak and James. The sensible guys in the Caribou and Chetak were calling off the search and going home due to impending bad weather and darkness. James was trying to order them back. I had no business to go anywhere other than directly east, back to Chabua, and get the Army Cdr off my back. Yet, curiosity overwhelmed me.

I flew over a large patch of open grassy space. I saw a large herd of frightened wild elephants scattering in all directions with their tails and trunks held high. "Kempy, where are you?" I shrieked over the noise of the wind and the Mi-4. Suddenly I heard him. I swear I heard him. It seemed the Mi-4 knew where to go to find Kempy. I swear I never flew it. It was the hand of God that held the cyclic.

I overflew a hut in another patch of grass, and I thought I saw about 50 people milling about. The Mi-4 turned around on its own and this time I could see clearly that there was some commotion on the ground. I closed the throttle, yanked the speed down and set down the helicopter in a small clearing with very tall trees all around. When I switched off, the helicopter started juddering and after the rotors stopped, I realised that I had hit a tree while landing. About 7 inches of all the tail rotor blades had been cleanly shorn off. I also discovered to my horror that the Russians had made the tail rotor with ply wood. But at that time I was not too worried about the tail rotor. I ran forward to find Kempy. Kempy was lying on a charpoy about 300 mtrs from the place I had landed, where the villagers had brought him out from the jungle. He appeared to be semi conscious, groaning with pain. He still had his helmet on, though the mask was dangling



Mi-4

Then I realised that the army may still be searching for their Army Cdr. "I can understand if you left behind an army captain," he said very softly. He took another sip of Rum and water. "I can understand if you left behind a Colonel, I can forgive you even if had left behind the GOC 2 Div." He paused, seemingly at a loss of words. "F**king shit bag, you went and left the Army Cdr on a f**king BSF picket, and he is sitting on a charpoy right now." Jaya banged his glass on the bar counter, and lit a cigarette. Through a smoke ring, he kept staring at me.

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"But for now, Barman....." he commanded, looking for Durga. "The drink will be on the house, put it all on Kartoos, he will pay for the drinks tonight." He then raised his glass, like a formal dining in night. "For now, let us drink to Kempy's nose." "To Kempy's nose," we replied in unison, drowning the glass of large Rum and water in one single bottoms up. That night, we

did bottoms up again and again, each time toasting to Kempy's nose. My bar book was closed that night, I had exceeded Rs 75, the bar book limit. Considering that Rum cost Rs 3.50 a bottle and water cost nothing, we drank around 22 bottles of Rum that night, all towards Kempy's nose. Assuming that there were around 28 of us that night at the bar, including the Gnat guys on detachment at Chabua, that was around 10 large pegs each, all for good cause, Kempy's nose. May be we all had one peg each and quite possible that Jagga Barar drank the extra 28 pegs. I think it was one of those nights when Jagga did not count the pegs using match sticks, lined up on the bar counter, one stick per peg. I think he lost count, like Counta Barar, who never counted.

Closing Act

Next morning I was packed off to Chakabama in the dicky of a Mi-4, and I am told I kept saying, "To Kempy's Nose" all the way from Chabua to Chakabama, rather silly of me. I stayed there for three whole months before Jaya related and brought me back. Kempy now has a wonderful nose. Makes him look very handsome and dignified. Every bit like his illustrious martial predecessors from Koorg. I cannot take the credit; it was the Docs at Calcutta who made Kempy's nose look Koorgi, handsome and accomplished. Me, I take back the credit only for the incredible act of closing my bar book in one night, cheering for Kempy's nose.

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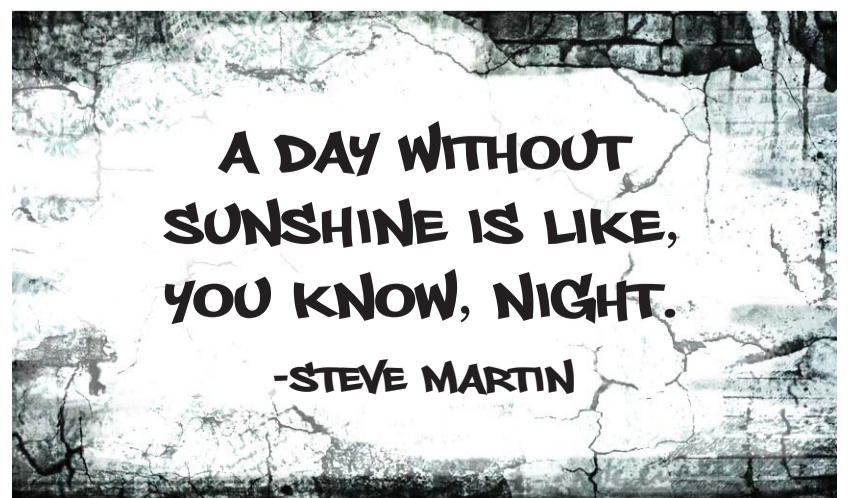
Unnikartha also known as King Fox: Wg Cdr Unni Kartha/Fox/37*

(All photos are for representational purpose only)



Subansaryvalley

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman