THE BIRDS

Moghul Miniature to Truck Art:

A Study in Visual Continuity

By

Sophia Mairaj Malik

ABSTRACT

From this experience the research question addressed the visual similarity in the birds painted on trucks in Pakistani truck art (as a motif of decoration) with the way the birds were painted during the Moghul period in the subcontinent specially during the time of Emperor Jahangir, and its revival during the British Raj for the British company paintings produced during the early 1800 by local artisans as part of the private collections of the British patrons serving in India.

The research further investigates substantial evidence to support this hypothesis. Although it is a much dispersed research and concrete data cannot be presumed, so through historic evidences of visuals, artisan records and books; continuity in the visuals of these motifs and how they have translated and evolved into the truck art has been discussed. The gathering of substantial evidence has not been the key motive behind the research. It has been more about making visual links to support the research.

The methodology included linking the representation of the motif of birds to British company paintings. As the area of research grew it was found that patronage for scientifically documenting the flora and fauna was always prevalent even during the early Moghul Raj and Pre-Moghul works as well. It is concluded that the modern truck art form is merely a continuity of these visuals as they evolved through all these time eras till the recent contemporary times. The research follows up on the design evolution and continuity of the motif of the birds into the popular art form of the trucks of Pakistan, commonly known as “Pakistani Truck Art”.