

The Art of India and Southeast Asia
Art 244 Fall 2012

Common Characteristics of Traditional Indian Art

1. Art must have *rasa*, an emotional reaction of pleasure and satisfaction that visual arts, music, poetry and drama can give to the senses and spirit of the viewer.
2. Reacting to art, the viewer becomes one with the art and all creation, to transcend the world and become one with Brahman.
3. Art must go beyond description to appeal to the viewer's heart and instincts, connecting the seen (unreal) with the unseen (but real) world.
4. Distinct sense of beauty
5. Voluptuous forms
6. Profusion of ornaments, texture and color
7. Visual abundance is considered auspicious and reflects a belief in the generosity and favor of the gods.
8. Symbolism enriches all Indian art with intellectual and emotional layers
9. Emphasis on capturing the vibrant quality of the world
10. Infused with the dynamics of the divine
11. Gods and humans, ideas and abstractions, are given tactile, sensuous forms, radiant with inner spirit.

Four Religions of India

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| 1. Brahmanism | 3. Hinduism |
| 2. Buddhism | 4. Jainism |

The four religions of India believe

1. Life around us is an illusion
2. Only Brahman, who is all inclusive, universal and external spirited reality that extends to all temporal and divine beings, is real and everlasting
3. The faithful should strive to ascend to Brahman
4. A person can ascend to Brahma through meditation. This discipline of the mind and body is known as *yoga*.
5. Worshippers must practice visualization of the gods. Artists create sculptures and painting in easily recognizable forms such as humans and animals to help with this visualization.
6. Places of worship, shrines and temples, are permanent and are architectural replicas of the microcosms of the universe the gods have created.

Sources: *Art Beyond The West*, By Michael O'Riley, Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 2002
Art History, By Marilyn Stokstad, Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 2002