

Indian folklore "Madhubani" as a source for creating printed children's textile designs

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Introduction:

Indian country has always been known as the land that depicts cultural diversity and traditional arts through its traditions, arts and crafts. Each region in India has its own style and artistic style that distinguishes it,

Indian arts and crafts enjoy great acceptance in the international market because of its popular aesthetic elements and originality Indian painting has flourished since ancient times and its paintings are characterized by distinctive colorful designs that are treated with dense elaborate motifs in a distinctive style. Printing, painting, dyeing and embroidery techniques are also among the techniques that characterize it, that's why this art considered as some important source rich for designers. And with the continued need to explore renewable and contemporary sources of design inspiration, especially with the spread of the era of digital arts and the era of technology that invaded all branches of life, especially the field of textile designs. Hence the need to explore traditional folk arts as a rich source of design ideas for children's textiles that express their inner world with its simple vocabulary and childish expressions, because of its spontaneity and simplicity that approach the world of children and its details, especially the art of Madhubani because of the richness of this art in artistic and plastic values that reflect the aesthetics of Indian folk art. Then **the research problem** was in the question: How can we take advantage of the Indian folk art heritage Madhubani as a source of inspiration for printed children's textile designs? **The research aims** at an analytical artistic study of some of the aesthetic values in Madhubani's art paintings and its impact on society and the environment, creating designs for children's fabrics inspired by this art. **The research aims** to identify the features of the art of Madhubani through an artistic analytical study of the aesthetic values of this art and to benefit from them in providing typographic designs suitable for children's textiles inspired by this art.

Keywords

folk art, Madhubani, Indian art

Research problem

How can we benefit from the Indian folk artistic heritage "Madhubani" as a source of inspiration for modern printing designs for children's textiles?

The importance of research: Studying the aesthetics of folklore art of indian Madhubani, as one of the sources of inspiration for designers in the field of designing printed children's textile through an analytical technical study of these arts and benefiting from that in presenting contemporary printing designs for children's textiles.

Research aims:

- Identifying the features of Madhubani art as one of the most famous types of Indian folk art and as a source of inspiration for design ideas.
- An artistic analytical study of the aesthetic values of Madhubani art, which is rich in many decorative units that are commensurate with the simplicity and spontaneity of children's drawings.
- Creating printing designs for children's fabrics inspired by the beauty and originality of this art by rephrasing and developing them using CAD programs.

Research hypotheses:

The research assumes that the aesthetic values of the Madhubani art paintings that take the character of Indian folk art can be a source of inspiration for contemporary printing designs for children's fabrics through artistic analysis and reformulation of these artistic creations.

Search limits:

Objective Limitations: A Technical Analytical Study of Some Madhubani Art Drawings

- The Application of Innovative Designs in Printing Children's Textiles.

Temporal limits: The study focuses on creating designs for printing textiles for children in the age group of 14-18 years.

Spatial limits: Madhubani district, India

Research Methodology:

Follow the artistic analytical approach to the topics of Madhubani art and its role in enriching the artist's imagination, and the applied approach in implementing some printing designs for children's textiles inspired by this art.

(1): First: Theoretical framework:**(1-1): Folklore:**

Folk art is one of the methods of expressing the identity of culture in the life of peoples, and folk art is a form of art that is associated with the simple ordinary person, this art is linked to a specific sect and society, and this style of drawing is done by a group of artists in the community, it is an art associated with a specific society, sect, and religion for any type of people with the aim of entertaining, decorating, and the special rituals associated with it to become later a permanent art for that region , among these folk arts that gained international fame due to its recognition is the paintings of Madhubani, (Thakur Upendra, 1982, p.28). The folk drawings in Madhubani gives an expression of some of the daily traditions and aesthetic values of these peoples and remind us of the primitive original life through their colorful linear drawings. Everyone in Madhubani, Bihar is an artist by nature, and until now most of its artists use watercolors and handmade paper while preserving the characteristics and traditional folk style of it and the subjects of the paintings.

(1-2): The Art of Madhubani:

It is a well-known type of Indian folk painting called "Madhubani", it is an ancient art that began as murals on the walls and floors of village houses in northern Bihar, as it can be seen on walls, public places and outlets for selling traditional crafts. Traditional families in India continue to make these paintings during celebrations. Its themes are a narrative of mythical events inspired by the historical repertoire of Indian mythology, themes of daily life and rituals, or depictions of social themes and motifs of animals and birds (Thakur Upendra, 1982, p.28).

Madhubani districts in North Bihar located at distance of 190 kilometers from Patna city where great cultural activities are practiced in a folk style by different folk artists, and it is an environment surrounded by lush green fields, tall palm trees and mango gardens in North Bihar. The unique village combines a wonderful natural and artistic beauty that embodies a creative atmosphere (Thakur, Upendra, 1964, p.6). This art which is done by a group of very simple housewives who do not go to any school to learn this painting, but rather from the inspiration of their traditions continuing from generation to generation, women express themselves through wonderful paintings created for all occasions. Women in the villages around Madhubani have been practicing this folk art for centuries, and about ninety-nine percent of the population of Madhubani district works in this field (Thakur Upendra, 1982, p.28). The Indian Madhubani created a place for itself in India and is becoming internationally famous and it is now recognized all over the world, and the Government of India is commending the initiation of programs to teach it.



Figure: (1,2) Madhubani women with their drawings

(1-3): Historical overview:

The origins of the Madhubani paintings are not known specifically, however it is believed that they appeared during the reign of King Janak, the ruler of the Kingdom of Mithila in the eighth or seventh century BC, when he requested the development of these paintings in order to capture the moments of his daughter Sita's wedding from which the Madhubani paintings (Mithila painting) in Mithila district in Bihar. Artists created these paintings using a variety of media, including their own fingers, or twigs, brushes, nib pens, and matches, until 1959, Madhubani art form was painted in India by a selected few upper-caste women in the villages around the city Madhubani. Then in 1960, another disaster befell Bihar in the form of a severe drought in the

late 1960s. (Thakur, Upendra, 1964, p.6). This prompted the entire (India Handicrafts Council) to encourage women artists all over Madhubani to convert their murals to paper as a revenue-generating venture, they were representing India in cultural exhibitions in Europe, Russia and the American states, which prompted their recognition at the national and international levels (Carolyn Brown, 2006, p55).

(4) Features that characterize most Madhubani paintings:

(4-1) Symbol use in Madhubani's drawings:

Most of the wall paintings were executed in the houses of the village, most of them are of legendary stories. It was noted that not all paintings are narrative in nature, as some of them depict nature; there are topics depicting daily life, plants and animals, and rural scenes from the concept of Indian mythology, Figure (1,2). It is an art that uses a method of symbolic expression of daily experiences and beliefs, and as such, symbolism, simplicity and beauty bring them together in one school of folk art, symbols used for their specific meanings, for example: The peacock is the national bird of India and its symbol is associated with romantic love and religion, the turtle symbolizes water and the union of lovers, the fish depict fertility, procreation and good luck, the lotus and bamboo represent the male and female sexes, the parrots symbolize love birds, and the snakes are protection and care, the sun and the moon represent life-preserving qualities. (Carolyn Brown, 2006, p55)

(4-2) Colors in Madhubani's paintings:

In Madhubani's paintings craftsmen used colors directly from nature, black and white from rice powder, green from apple tree leaves, blue and indigo from sikkot seeds, yellow from parts of the Sanjar flower or jasmine flower, and the pipal bark is boiled to make part of the saffron color, the red was made of kosum flower and red sandalwood to make the painting last long as well as to gain brightness. Recently, artificial colors and modern round brushes have been used to replace bamboo sticks with cotton heads and hard twigs that were used as brushes in the past, (Szanton, David, 2018, p36). These folk artists do not have any specific principles and rules to follow nor any instructions from books, rather their imagination and ideas played a very important role in art form (Szanton, David, 2018, p40).

(4-3) Lines:

Madhabani artists used lines in its various forms in their drawings, drawing human figures with abstract lines, and drawing some elements with double wide lines, with a space between them filled with thin intersections or diagonal lines to fill their spaces with decorative elements, and the broad lines are usually left without color in order to create visual depth and aesthetic taste, animal elements are often dealt with naturally. Likewise, the method of drawing the frame in Madhubani's painting is equally important as the subject, as the artist draws its elements in the form of two-dimensional images without a horizon or line or the use of perspective. The characters from the side view, the open spaces filled with flowers, plants and trees, and a frame drawn on the leaves (Rimpy Agarwal, 2007, p45).

(4-4) Painting elements:

Some artistic skills are used in drawing human figures, animals, and birds of tall shapes side by side to create breadth and create an impression of one scale, as their drawings relied on imagination, creativity, and the choice of colors and subject matter in a way that depicts the ingenuity with which these artists perform this task, and the most important thing that distinguishes the composition is its flatness and simplicity in style, therefore, these wall paintings have a wonderful simplicity and distinctive attractiveness. Diversity and creativity are what make them the most elegant of all the famous paintings in India (Rimpy Agarwal, 2007, p45).

Features of Madhubani art can be summarized in the points:

- Use of bold natural and artificial color.
- Use a double-lined border with simple geometric shapes or floral pattern.
- Use symbols, fonts, and styles.
- Simplicity of style, primitive drawing method,
- Draw shapes and people in an abstract way.
- Draw the characters' faces with large, bulging eyes and a nose protruding from the forehead.

(2): The artistic analytical study of "Madhubani" in terms of:

(2-1): Themes:

(2-1-1): Social themes:

The Mithila region near the Indo-Nepalese border has been the seat of commercialization of folk art, allowing people from all over the world to discover this ancient folklore of women's lives and creating a new source of gainful employment in rural India for women and their families. The paintings on display include examples of several subjects of the flowery and symbolic style of painting in Madhubani such as the theme of social ceremonial occasions such as wedding and marriage; some major religious themes, in addition to scenes from the royal court, and the use of imagination in expressing themes that reflect the culture of this society inspired by the customs and traditions, political or religious events, feasts and celebrations, daily activities, Figure (3,4).



Figure (3) A scene of the countryside in the morning in Madhubani - Figure (4) A scene from one side of the daily life of Madhubani women



Fig:(5) social celebrations in Madhubani – Fig: (6) A scene from royal celebrations

Madhubani painting is usually painted on the walls during festivals, religious occasions and other milestones in the life cycle such as birth, upanishad (sacred thread ceremony) and marriage. Madhubani's paintings mostly depict people and their association with nature such as the sun, the moon, and plants, along with scenes from the royal court and weddings. In these paintings, there is no empty space, but the gaps are filled with drawings of flowers, animals, birds, and even geometric designs. (Fig. 5,6) in which the harmony found in nature between animals, birds and plants.



Figure (7) A scene from wedding celebrations in Madhubani

Fig (7), the scene of the bride leaving for her new home (Sasural) after marriage. The scene deals with the puppets being used to transport in a car from her home to Sasural. It is noteworthy that even today in some places in Bihar, the brides are carried on a chariot, lifted by a few men with palaki on their shoulders, followed by the groom and relatives.

(2-1-2): Environmental theme:

Madhubani's paintings mostly depict people and their association with nature, natural objects like sun and moon, religious plants like tulsi along with scenes from royal courts and weddings. In these paintings, they include all the paintings that express the privacy of the natural environment with its vocabulary, including trees, rivers, fish, flowers, palms, or animals and birds in all their forms, and landscapes of fields and farms that had a profound impact on enriching the visual inventory of these artists. There is no empty space; The gaps are filled with drawings of flowers, animals, birds, and even geometric designs. The artist's style appears in simplifying shapes, elements, and color spaces, with indifference to perspective and focus on expressing the subject related to the culture of his environment. The artist was influenced by the

elements of his environment and transformed them into simplified symbols with delightful color details. Figure (8,9)



Figure (8,9) topics for elements of the environment, animals and fish

(2-2): Artistical analysis of aesthetic values of Madhubani's paintings in terms of: (line - color - composition):

(2-2-1): The first work :Social theme:

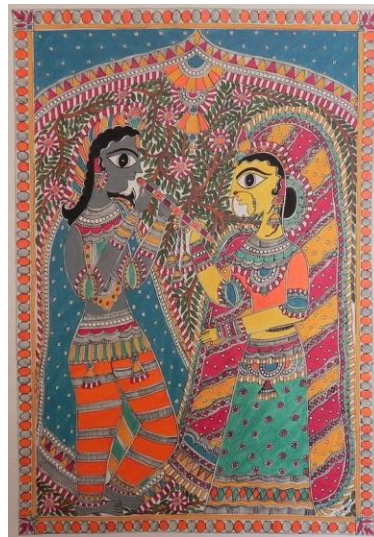
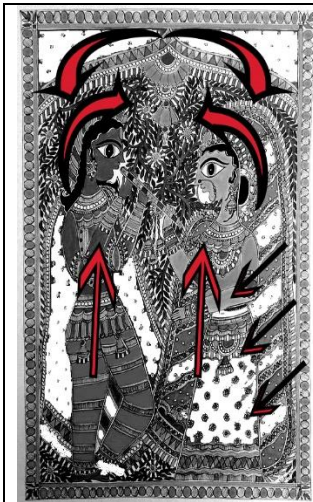


Figure (10): A painting of social celebrations in Madhubani

Tabl no (1): Shows how to read aesthetic values of Madhubani's paintings social theme in terms of design element of (line - color – composition):

Composition	Lines	Colors
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**Figure No. (13)
composition in Figure
No.10**

Fig No. (13) shows the distribution of elements to build the formation in plate. No. (10) Distribution of elements: in a balanced way in a native simplicity, so the main theme in the two figures of women from the village located in forefront of the composition indicate their main roles to the subject of the painting.

Symmetry: In placing the two figures in the scene oppositely to the right and left to achieve a balance between the two masses, while the decorative details with various lines and colors occupy most of the space of the composition in a manner that makes the viewer's eye on a circular tour within the painting, starting from the center point in the figures, to spread throughout the rest of it with the birds that spread above and below the formation at different points.

Central: It appears in the red arrows and refers to the two



**Figure No. (12)
directions of lines in
plate No. (10)**

Lines: Vary throughout the painting to give the illusion of vitality and spread so that they cover all areas of the painting and all lines are flat to transform all figures into two-dimensional shapes and draw the side view of the two characters drawn. The abstract lines fig (12) indicates the variety of details and lines. The big black eyes and in painting (11) drawing the position of the movement of the hands holding some flowers in a narrative style as if it is a part of a narrative scene that tells the festive events of women. Abstract lines in fig.12 shows the diversity of the directions of the lines and the illusion of movement in the frame: Through the spread of wavy and slanted lines to



**Figure No. (11) The colors in
painting No. (10,)**

The color group varied with bright and pure color gradations in all parts of the painting to inspire joy. The color red, fuchsia, and yellow are juxtaposed in some details, and the color fuchsia is next to green in some fashion details, in contrast that gives the painting glow and light in its details to give a joyful impression that is inspired of folklore arts to describe the joy of celebration of a social occasion. in Figure (11).

women, which are the master elements in the composition occupy the largest part of the area of the painting while the other decorative details above them spread from the center point in the branches of the trees that cover most of the painting area to focus on the main element in the composition.	give an illusion of movement and dynamism. Flatness: It is noted in the indifference to simulating proportions, perspective, and anthropomorphism. We also notice the interest in the decorative shape of the canary or the frame that surrounds the drawing and represents part of the work.	
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Tabl no (1)

(2-2-2): The second work: Painting with environmental theme



Figure (14): paintings of environment elements in Madhubani.

Tabl no (2): Shows how to read aesthetic values of Madhubani's paintings environmental theme in terms of design elements (line, color, composition):




Composition	Lines	Colors
		

Fig: (17) Composition in Fig (14).

<p>Equilibrium: It distributes its elements within the composition in semi-symmetric spaces to occupy the entire surface of the painting equally, so it begins in addition to the movement of the bird's body smoothly within the space of the composition while filling the void spaces in the floor with decorative details of plants and flowers in balanced blocks.</p> <p>Symmetry: As in Figure (17) of two parrots facing each other, right and left, as if they were reflected in a mirror.</p> <p>The elements' location in the center of the composition, the birds in cheerful colors that express the main theme, and the other elements come complemented in harmonious spaces with spontaneous inclusion.</p>	<p>Figure (16) Diagram of the lines in the painting Fig (14).</p> <p>Simplification: It comes from spontaneity and vision mixed with imagination, with the simplification of objects and spaces by distorting some lines of shapes, either by enlarging, minimizing, or deleting to summarize the shapes into elements and decorative units.</p> <p>Movement: The lines are drawn in the form of consecutive parallel arcs emanating from a central point in some details of the bird element, for example the tail of the parrot in figure (16) suggesting diffuse movement in the form of successive swirls that give the lines vitality.</p> <p>Flatness: Lack of interest in perspective and anthropomorphism. All the details of shapes inside the body of the birds and in the background are briefly depicted as linear inscriptions of a decorative nature.</p> <p>Using the symbol: By reducing and developing some forms while preserving their basic features and significance.</p>	<p>Figure (15) The colors in painting Fig (14).</p> <p>The painting includes elements of birds such as the parrot in Figure (14) with a color group of various cheerful colors and very bright, and filling the adjacent areas of decorations with contrasting and bright color groups to preserve the character of joy and movement, which is one of the most important features of the colors of Folklore in general. And here we notice that the features of international folk art converge with folk arts as they are similar in their symbols, colors, forms and essence because they are linked to society, man and the environment.</p>
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Tabl no (2)

3: Researcher Applications:

In the light of the previous technical analytical study, it was possible to apply a group of designs for printing children's fabrics, drawing inspiration from the paintings of the Indian folk art of Madhubani, with a contemporary vision that combines the merger between the originality of the idea and contemporary in five design experiments as follows:

Design Idea No:(1)



Fig (18): Madhubani's art - Fig (19): design idea no:1

Inspiration: &Main elements	The design is inspired by the theme of environmental elements, elephant and the fish drawn with flat abstract lines from a side angle, the decorative element is surrounded by various linear that fill all details in a repetitive composition with the characteristics of folk art.
Design idea: (line-color- composition)	Color group of olive green, brown and milky colors was chosen taking advantage of the aesthetic element of white in some details in background, with distribution of the composition in a mutual rhythm that achieves balance with reciprocal between element and background.
Printing Technique:	Repetitive printing using silkscreen or digital printing for a girl's dress, or transfer printing in a one-piece T-shirt for a child as in Figure 19.

Tabl no (3)

Design Idea No:(2)



Fig (20): Madhubani's art - Fig (21): design idea no:2

Inspiration: &Main elements	From Fig (20): Madhubani's art Elements of birds and trees, details of the painting were reduced and the focus is on only two elements to simplify and reduce the composition, and enlarging the basic element shapes in the center of the design after converting it into a group of lines and brief geometric shapes.
Design idea: (line-color- composition)	The main element in the design has been treated with different textures and size with its distribution in a diffuse manner overlapping with the background in a way that achieves the characteristics of folk art by using the pure colors of mauve, fuchsia and milky while preserving the textures in some areas of the elements and the floor.
Printing Technique:	Repetitive printing using silkscreen or digital printing for girls' dress fabrics and transfer printing in a one-piece design for girl T-shirt, Fig: 21

Tabl no (4)

From Fig (22): Madhubani's art.

Inspiration: &Main elements	From Fig (22): Madhubani's art. The color group was chosen as blue with rose, which suits the repetitive children's textiles, and distributing of the bird element within the composition with overlapping repetition with the background, in which the lines vary between soft lines in branches and flowers and the bird curved lines overlapping and interconnected in the repetitive elements.
Design idea: (line-color- composition)	In one-piece design a more diverse color group was chosen, while enlarging the size of the basic element of the bird in the center of the composition.
Printing Technique:	Silkscreen or digital printing for girls' dress fabrics and transfer printing in a one-piece design for girl T-shirt, fig: 23

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Design Idea No:(4)



Fig (24): Madhubani’s art - Fig (25): design idea no:4

Inspiration:	From Fig (24): Madhubani’s art
&Main elements	Color group was various degrees of violet, intertwined with red, mauve and fuchsia, which are the favorite colors of children on a rose-colored background with simple flat geometric shapes to create contrast that characterizes folk art and to inspire joy and vitality and distributing elements on the background in parallel various lines in the strieps with geometric motifs alternating between the element and the background.
Design idea: (line-color-composition)	Silkscreen or digital printing for girls’ dress fabrics and transfer printing in a one-piece design for girl T-shirt, fig: 25
Printing Technique:	

Tabl no (6)

Design Idea No:(5)



Fig (26): Madhubani’s art - Fig (27): Designidea no:5

Inspiration: &Main elements	From Fig (26): Madhubani’s art The decorative element of the peacock bird was selected as an element associated with the environment of Indian folk art in decorative vital soft lines, with abstraction of botanical elements in which the shape and floor overlap.
Design idea: (line-color- composition)	The color group of shades of blue with gray and touches of red color in some details was applied in a balanced exchange between the elements, simplifying it in brief lines and distributing them within the composition in balance.
Printing Technique:	Silkscreen or digital printing of a child’s shirt textile and transfer printing for the one-piece design of a child’s blouse, fig: (27)

Tabl no (7)

(٤): Results:

- The possibility of benefiting from the folk artistic heritage, especially the Indian folk art, Madhubani, as a source of inspiration for contemporary printing designs for children's textiles.
 - Achieving artistic analysis to the features of folk-art Madhubani, and studying the impact of the surrounding environment on their imagination and creativity to present contemporary children's textile designs.
 - Rediscovering the aesthetics of this type of folk art through an analytical study of the aesthetic values of some examples of his paintings in terms of: (subject - color - line - composition).
- Creating contemporary and innovative children's textile printing designs inspired by Madhubani art.

(5): Recommendations:

The research recommends the need to pay attention to study and analyze the various folk arts spread in various civilizations in general, and the Indian folk-art Madhubani in particular as a rich source for the textile designers to be inspired by designs that combine originality and contemporary.

- Preserving the heritage by producing contemporary designs that bear the characteristics of folk art that is on the verge of extinction with the spread of modern technology, especially in the field of textile design.

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