

Spectrum of life through art

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Abstract: *The idea of the "circle of life" has a special meaning in the world of art. It stands for the artistic exploration of how everything is connected and that existence is cyclical, as well as for the expression of beauty, meaning, and emotion through a variety of artistic mediums. The themes of birth, growth, decline, and regeneration are frequently explored by artists in their works, which serve as a reflection of the natural cycles of life. Through symbolic imagery, narrative storytelling, or graphic representations, they portray the essence of these stages. Artists may aim to awaken feelings, inspire ideas, or convey messages through their works that reflect the universality of human experience found in the cycle of life. The circle of life can be expressed artistically in a variety of ways, including through writing, music, dance, installations, photos, paintings, sculptures, and more. The interconnection of nature, the human life cycle, the passage of time, or the seasonal and environmental cycles are all topics that artists may examine. The circle of life is depicted artistically to inspire viewers to consider their own existence, to consider how transitory life is, and to enjoy the beauty present in each of its stages. It promotes a sense of awe and appreciation for the interconnectedness of all living things and the cycles they go through by inviting a deeper understanding and connection to the world around us. It encourages reflection and appreciation for the rich and lively nature of existence by inviting both artists and viewers to connect with the universal themes of life & stages.*

Keywords: *Continuity, Interconnectedness, Harmony, Growth, Balance.*

1. Artistic Approach to Life :

Art is both a teaching and a learning tool. It can be expressed through a variety of mediums, including painting, sculpture, music, dance, literature, and theater. A thrilling, empowering, and loving expression can be found in art. The human condition is shown through art. It includes all of our difficulties, feelings, concerns, and perceptions. Every part of humans may be conveyed through art, which is essentially how we see the world. Art is a creative act, a spiritual journey. It is a soul's expression. Every artist possesses a part of themselves that begs to be expressed. For addressing a soul's requirements, there are no rules. Resources aren't an obstacle to creativity. Initiation comes from creation. Since both the creator and the creation have the same core being, everyone can recognise authenticity in a picture or a piece of music. The artist is frequently referred to as a magician, although her work just reveals a more developed ability to channel fundamental truths.

Our shared experience with life, love, and death is what binds us as humans. Because it serves as a holistic entryway to a greater comprehension of people and the self, art is significant. In some way or another, we are all creative. We engage in our own conflicts, love and hatred, questioning, and, of course, reading the cosmos in our own special way. Art is not a sin or a virtue, a diversion or a luxury. It is life itself. People can come together via art, sharing joyful and personal experiences. In simple terms, art is a means of enhancing our lives with beauty, significance, and inspiration.

2. Circle of life in art :

Life is a very intricate and unusual phenomenon that is always running, turning, and changing in accordance with its nature. Everyone certainly goes through a life cycle based on the Rwa Bhineda principle, including life-death, joy-sorrow, sadness-happy, health-sickness, and others. Humans must learn to understand life in order to make it useful and consistent with its actual purpose.

Birth, survival, and death are all represented by the circle of life. There are numerous faiths and philosophical systems that embrace the concept of existence as a circle or a wheel. Different wheels or circles have various levels of depth. Life is pictured as a circle because it is a cyclical process. People are continuously being born and dying. The belief that the conclusion of one existence does not necessarily mean the end of life itself gives the circle its spiritual component. Many ideologies and faiths have the view that once humans leave this life, another one is waiting for them if they follow a particular path. Therefore, when a human dies, they are not truly dead but rather just revived to start a new cycle of life. The above painting by Symarani Dasi, titled "The cycle of birth and death," explores four key ideas: birth, disease, old age, and death. It is based on the spiritual realm of ISKCON's (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) Indian culture, which is rooted in Hindu texts.



figure 1: <https://i0.wp.com/physio.uwc.ac.za/pht402/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/08/circle-of-life-1.jpg?w=700&ssl=1>

The woman in white in the picture depicts birth and life, while the dark skeleton symbolizes death. The 11 human figures that are placed next to the skeleton and white woman symbolize the cycles of life and death. It depicts aging from conception through childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, adulthood, senior years, and finally death. The animals reflect the stages that everyone goes through before becoming fully human, with the human facing away from us. The symbol signifying infinity represents the continuation of life. Life is something that we all go through. Everyone goes through this cycle. Death is a truth that no one can escape.

3. Symbols depicting circle of life :

It is a figurative representation for new beginnings, development, demise, and rebirth. The following are some images frequently used to represent the circle of life:

Tree of life : The tree of life is a traditional symbol that serves as a reminder of our responsibility to guarantee each person the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The Tree of Life stands for knowledge, safety, power, and beauty. It extends both upward and downward, touching the soil. It connects the Upper and Lower worlds as well as Heaven. One of the most revered trees in India is the banyan tree, commonly referred to as the Vat or Bargad. It has been compared for ages to the shelter that God offers his followers. The Banyan tree is also referred to as the "Tree of Life" in other passages.

The Gond Tree of Life is a symbol for all that is good in life. The tree represents peace and unity because it is home to cheerful birds. The tree thrives when it is loved and tries to bring serenity and joy to those who care for it. The numerous connected branches represent the various parts of life itself and how they are incorporated with one another. The branches are living proof that all causes and effects in our life are intertwined.



figure 2: https://j3k5s6s3.rocketcdn.me/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/gond_treeoflife-600x856.jpeg.webp

The Tree of Life, Stoclet Frieze

In an experimental and modern way, Gustav Klimt's painting illustrates the idea of the tree of life. The branches' flowing symbols suggest the endlessness of life and creates a mysterious mood. The way the branches bend, turn, spiral, and curve represents the complexity of life as it forms a tangle of strong branches, massive vines, and delicate threads. The idea of the tree of life, which is frequently used to explain the concept of the tree of life in many cultures, religions, and ideologies, is a tree with branches reaching for the sky and roots growing into the earth below, forming the connection between heaven and earth. Another connection between the tree of life depicted by Klimt and the underworld is made to represent the ultimate determinism that rules over all living things that are born, grow, and finally return to the soil. The appearance of a single black bird focuses the viewer's attention to the painting's focal point. The artist depicts a mystical world using a wealth of symbols, gold paint, and other opulent techniques. Black birds have been utilized as a sign of death by various cultures, serving as a reminder that everything that has a beginning also has an end.



figure 3: <https://www.gustav-klimt.com/images/paintings/The-Tree-Of-Life.jpg>

Yin-Yang

The yin-yang symbol, occasionally referred to as the Tai Chi symbol, is made up of a circle that is split in half by a curving line. Typically, the yin side is represented by the black half of the circle, and the yang side by the white half. Near the center of each color's half is a dot of that color. The small dots indicate the idea that both sides bear the seed of the other, and the two halves are therefore intertwined throughout a spiral-like curve that divides the entire into semicircles. The cohabitation and unity of opposites to make a whole are shown by the white dot in the black region and the black dot in the white area. There are no absolute boundaries separating the two opposites, as indicated by the curved line. In this way, the yin-yang symbol represents both sides: contradiction, duality, unity in diversity, change, and harmony. Yin-yang also symbolizes the observation of the earth's shadow on the moon and the tracking of the Big Dipper constellation's annual position. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west, the direction of the measured shortest shadow is south, and the pole star points north at night. These measurements make up the four points of the compass. Thus, the annual cycle of the earth around the sun and the resulting four seasons are intrinsically linked to yin and yang.



figure 4: <https://images.fineartamerica.com/images/artworkimages/mediumlarge/1/yin-yang-scarlett-royal.jpg>

Mandala

Mandala (Mandalam, circle) is a Sanskrit word. A geometric arrangement of symbols is called a mandala. Any of the several ritualistic geometric patterns that are used in Buddhism and Hinduism to facilitate meditation and serve as symbols of the universe. The mandala acts as a hub for the forces of the universe. Overall, it symbolises a harmony between the body and mind that is built with clarity. It was initially intended to stand for completeness and serve as a model for the way that life is organised. In Indian homes, these are also used to create Rangoli patterns.

The word "mandala" is also used to describe one's "personal world" in the West, as well as the many components of a mandala or one's activities and interests, with the more significant components located in the middle and the least significant ones at the edges. Drawing one's own personal mandala might help one get a good sense of how their spiritual life is going.



figure 5: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fanindiansummer.co%2F2007%2F10%2Fcircle-of-life.html&psig=AOvVaw00EGD9hW8z8V-stL1FvA8Q&ust=1695729989794000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CBAQjRxqFwoTCMjZ4bTcxYEDFQAAAAAdAAAAABAE>

Sun and Moon

In many traditions, the sun and moon have diverse meanings, yet they all share one thing in common: their polarity. While the moon signifies peacefulness, beauty, and nurturing, the sun stands for firmness, strength, and power. Even though these two forces are different from one another, they work together to make the day and night appear complete. Because they each clarify darkness in different ways, these two stand for positivity. The sun's illumination extends beyond the day. It is the cause of development. As a sign of optimism during a dark night, the moon also offers warmth. The sun and moon are representations of rebirth, dreams, and creativity in many cultures and religions. They hold a prominent position in mythology and serve as spiritual icons. The sun represents vigor, energy, and life. The moon is related with feminine energy and signifies cycles, especially the moon's monthly phases. It stands for birth, growth, and the fullness of life. The periodic phases of life, birth, and death are represented by it.



figure 6: <https://images.squarespace-cdn.com/content/v1/61cc66f9e8f1cb7928c32c66/1641294173294-YA3ARYVO69W1UUC2WMMT/circle%2Bof%2Blife.jpeg?format=750w>

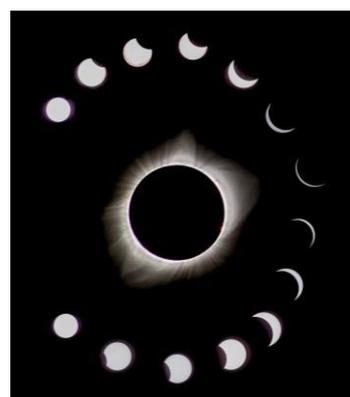


figure 7: Moon Phases

Spiral

It is thought that the sun was represented by a single spiral by the ancient Irish, with a clockwise spiral representing the setting sun in winter. The single spiral is a representation of the path to a higher level of awareness in the supernatural system and esoterica. It stands for the growth pattern and the energy that encourages, protections, and sustains life in nature. According to mystics, the single spiral represents how nature's consciousness manifests itself by beginning at the center and moving outward. It stands for evolution, awakening, growth, and progress. It also stands for life. The one spiral represents the brightness of the universe's energy. It represents wisdom and tenacity as well, making it the ideal

emblem for those who wish to advance. The spiral form appears frequently in nature. One of the most exquisite spiral manifestations is thought to be the shell of the marine mollusk nautilus.



figure 8: <https://sharoncummings.files.wordpress.com/2022/01/wildnautilusshellfb.jpg>

Traditional Art forms

India has a long history of folk arts, which are preserved by the numerous tribes who inhabit the interiors of different states. Art that is a component of a people group's culture, the knowledge and abilities of which are passed down through the generations from master craftsmen to youngsters. A few Indian paintings and works of art depict the cycle of life.

Wheel of life

In the Buddhist religion, the cycle of existence is symbolized by the wheel of life also called Bhavachakra. According to Buddhism, humans are constantly attempting to go around the three elements at the center of the circle: desire, hatred, and ignorance.

The achievement of enlightenment, according to them, is the only way to be freed from this cycle of rebirth. A soul can be born again into one of the wheel's five or six different realms. With the 12 stages of dependent origination encircled around the outside, the wheel itself is portrayed as being carried by a demon who stands for impermanence.

The majority of Tibetan Buddhist temples in Tibet and India have the wheel of life painted on their outside walls. To teach and propagate the Buddhist way of life to uneducated farmers and cowherds was one of the main goals of painting the Wheel of Life outside Buddhist temples. The words and information regarding the circle of life would be difficult for these folks to comprehend, therefore this painting was a terrific visual assistance for them.



figure 9: https://cdn.pixabay.com/photo/2013/12/02/10/29/china-222325_1280.jpg

4. Significance of Wheel of life

- Yama, the ruler of the underworld, is represented by the figure grasping the wheel of life.
- Yama's mission is to defend Buddhism and Buddhists.
- Yama carries the wheel of life in his hooves and stands for transience and death.
- The Buddhist term for suffering is dukkha. Suffering, according to Buddhist philosophy, is the true character of all existence.
- In order to symbolize the possibility of freedom, the Buddha is visible in each of the worlds.

5. Parts of wheel of life

- The three poisons of blindness, connection, and fear are represented by the figures at the center of the wheel.
- Karma is symbolized by the second layer of the wheel.
- The six realms of the cycle of existence are represented by the third tier of the wheel.
- The twelve linkages of dependent origination are represented by the wheel's fourth layer.
- The demon clutching the wheel stands for transience.
- Liberation from the cycle of existence is symbolized by the moon that is pictured above the wheel.
- Liberation is conceivable, as the Buddha is demonstrating by pointing to the moon.
- The three inner rings show how the three poisons of ignorance, attachment, and hatred cause both good and bad actions, and that karma is the outcome of these deeds. The six realms, which stand for the many forms of pain experienced during the cycle of existence, are ultimately created by karma.

6. Madhubani Art (Mithila Art)

The Mithila area of India and Nepal is home to the painting style known as Madhubani art (also known as Mithila art). It was first found in the Madhubani area of Bihar, India.

The majority of the subjects in Mithila paintings are individuals, often in relation to natural surroundings, scenes from ancient epics, and gods. Along with depictions of the royal court and public occasions like weddings, natural phenomena like the sun, moon, and religious plants like tulsi are also frequently painted. Generally speaking, there is never a blank spot in these paintings; instead, the spaces are filled with depictions of flowers, animals, birds, and even geometric patterns. Madhubani art primarily focuses on three themes: religion, social situations, and natural phenomena.

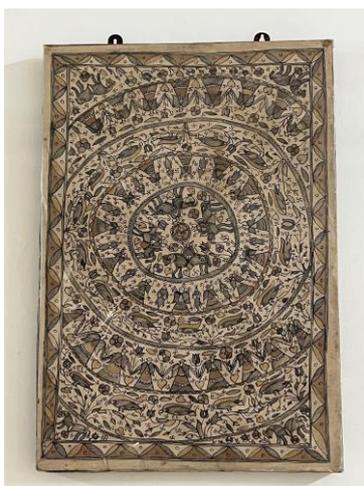


figure 10: Traditional painting displayed at Sir Vithaldas Thackersey College of Home Science (Autonomous), S.N.D.T. Women's University, Department of Textile and Fashion.

Since fish are seen as lucky in the Mithila region, Ambika Devi's painting of two fish swimming in a peaceful, rhythmic pattern frequently appears in Madhubani art. Fish are thought to represent Goddess Lakshmi, who provides many gifts of money and success, fish are also thought to bring a wealth of good fortune into the home. In this picture, the two fish swimming in a circle symbolize the circle of life, which goes on forever in the forms of birth, growth, death, and reincarnation. In contrast to the majority of highly coloured Madhubani paintings, this one uses only three colors: red, white, and black. In Madhubani painting, the color red is used to represent passion, vigor, energy, and fertility. Fish are interestingly used to symbolize fertility and abundance. The intricate yet fascinating impression of the fish swimming in water is created by the vivid red coloring combined with the strong, well-delineated black strokes on a white background. This imagery is furthered by the intricate geometric patterns painted on the fish's bodies. Fish are drawn frequently at festivals and wedding rituals because they are thought to be auspicious and will bring the family luck, wealth, and prosperity.

This Ambika Devi Madhubani painting depicts fish in concentric circles, giving the viewer a sense of balance, harmony, and togetherness. In Madhubani paintings, a circle of fish serves as a charm that protects from injury and negativity and even serves to fend off evil. These fishes in a circle represent abundance of fortune, money, and prosperity spiritually as a metaphor for spiritual unification, transformation, and the never-ending cycle of life.



figure 11:



figure 12:

7. Warli Art

Beautiful folk art known as warli was historically produced by tribal women in Maharashtra. The Warli and Malkhar koli tribes are indigenous to Western India and can be found on the northern suburbs of Mumbai. The term "Warli art" was first used to describe this art in the early 1970s. Through the paintings they create on the walls of their homes, tribal people express themselves in a vibrant manner.

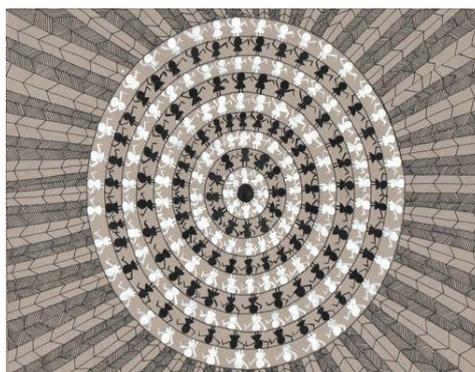


figure 13:

<https://artpaintings.in/wp->

The painting's primary feature is that it represents social life rather than legendary figures or depictions of gods. A loose rhythmic pattern is used to generate images of people, animals, and everyday scenes. On mud walls, Warli artworks are painted in white. The paintings, which often show scenes of human people engaged in activities like hunting, dancing, planting, and harvesting, are finely created and in execution resemble prehistoric cave paintings. This genuine Warli painting accurately captures life. The figures are people who continuously move from one circle to the next, and the concentric circles represent the circle of life. The use of dark colors in this artwork will give your wall energy while serving as a constant reminder that the circle of life keeps turning and that you should keep moving along with it.

The tarpa dance is one of the main subjects that is shown in numerous Warli paintings. Different village men take turns playing the tarpa, an instrument resembling a trumpet. Men and women circle the tarpa player while intertwining their hands. The dancers then follow him, never turning their backs on the tarpa as he turns and moves. The head dancer is instructed to move either clockwise or anticlockwise by the musician as she plays two distinct notes. The dancers play the part of the metaphorical snake, while the tarpa player takes on a role like that of a snake charmer. For entertainment, the dancers make a lengthy round in the crowd and attempt to encircle them. It is also claimed that the dancers' circle formation is similar to 'Circle of Life'.



figure 14:
<https://theacropolitan.in/wp->

8. Conclusion :

Art has the ability to awaken our awareness of the circle of life, allowing us to contemplate the beauty, fragility, and interconnectedness of existence. Through their creative expressions, artists invite us to reflect on our place within the larger cosmic order and inspire us to embrace the ever-turning wheel of life with gratitude and reverence.

Artists have also explored the circle of life through the portrayal of nature, documenting the interdependence of species, the cycles of seasons, and the delicate balance within ecosystems. Through their creations, they emphasize the interconnectedness of all living beings and the importance of harmony with the natural world.

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