



# KANGRA PAINTING

CRAFT DOCUMENTATION

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Accessory Design

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# CRAFT CLUSTER

The Craft Cluster Initiative program is envisaged to provide the students of NIFT systematic, continuous and regular exposure every year to the diversely rich and unique handlooms and handicrafts of India.

India has more than 6400 clusters. These have been typified as industrial, handloom, and handicraft clusters.



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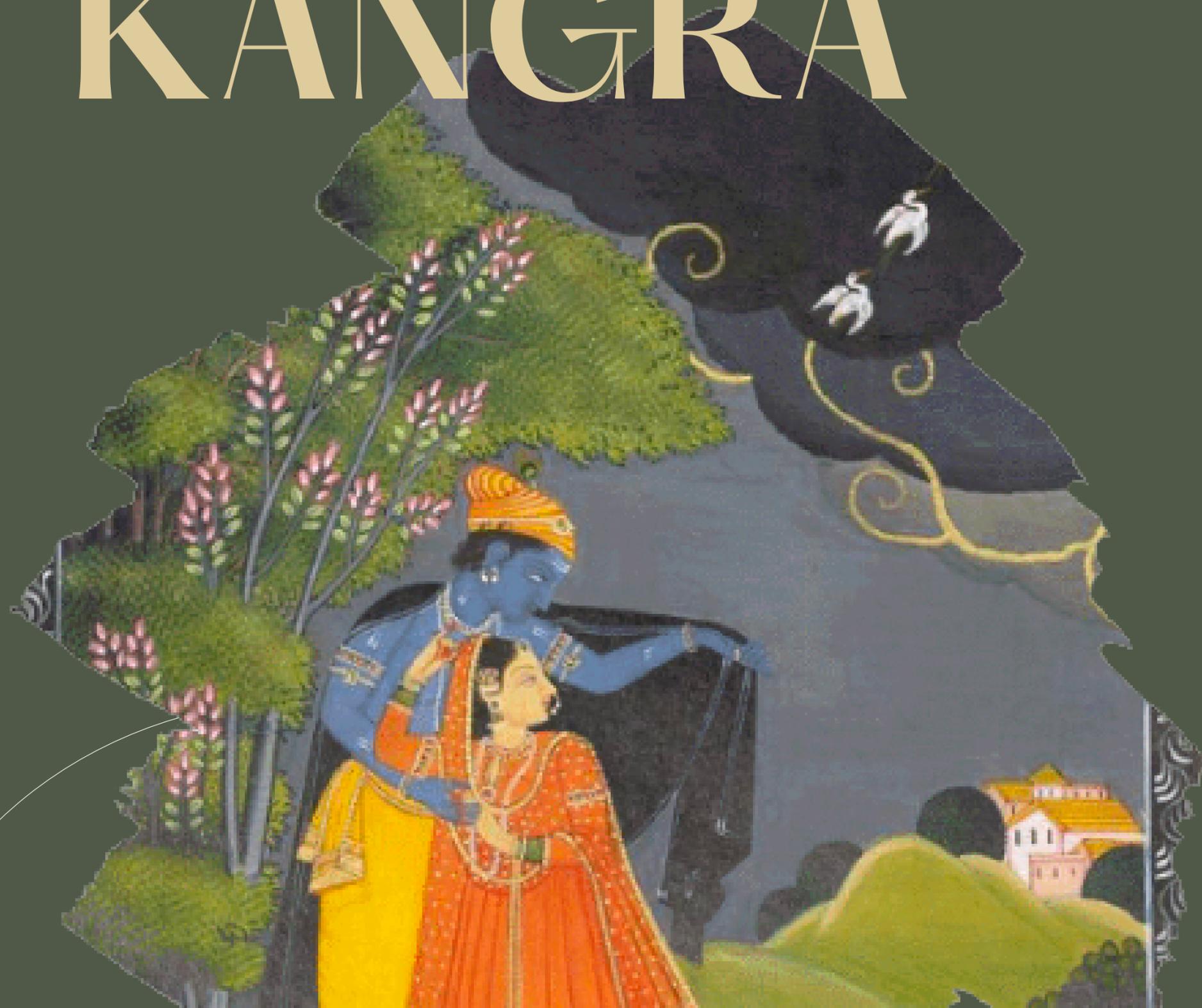
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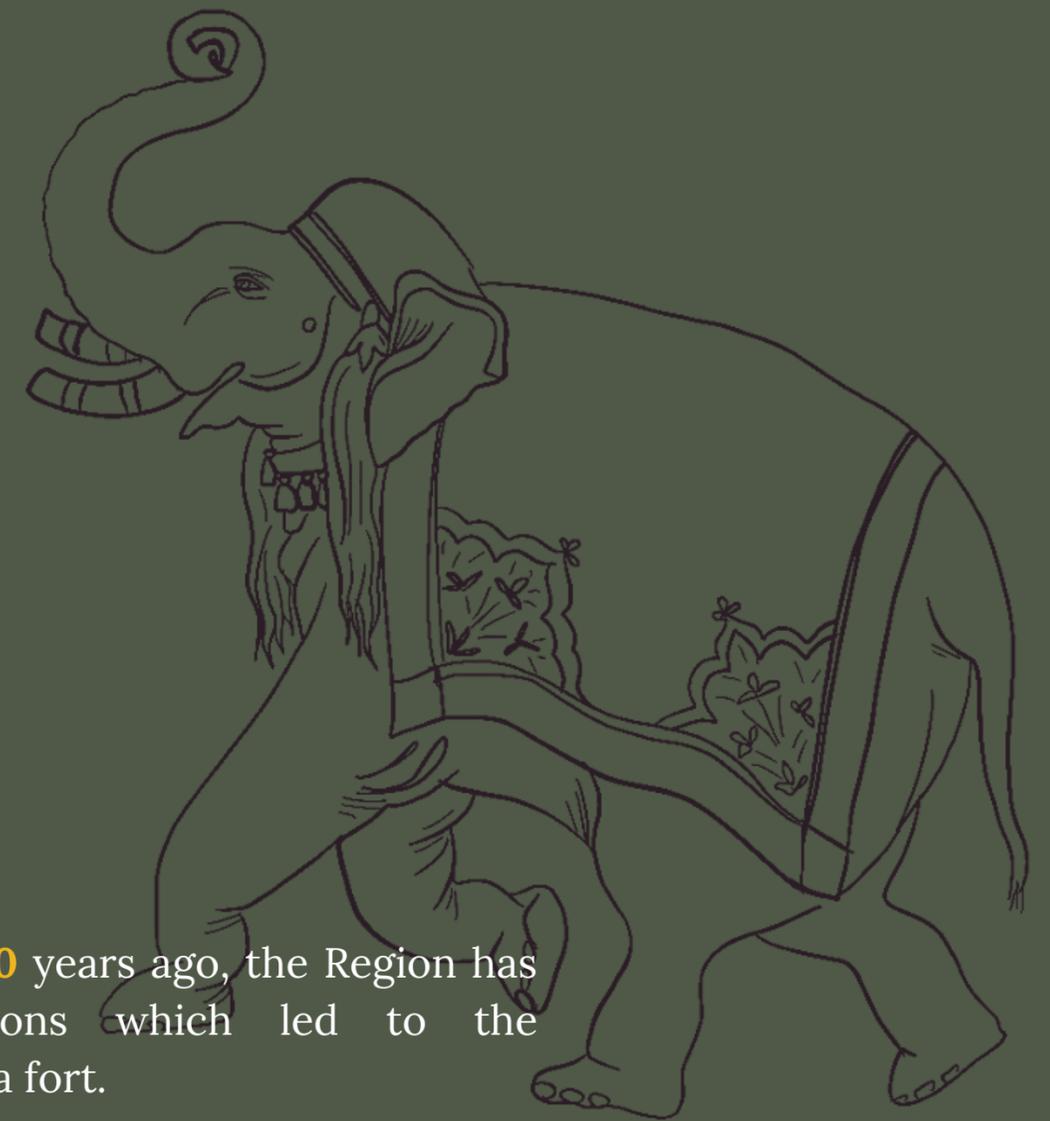
# KANGRA



kangra, located in Western Himachal Pradesh, is a region boasting **art and cultural heritage**. From archaeological history, Miniature paintings, and a history of bloodshed, war, and victory, Kangra is not only a cultural hub but also a region of celebrating traditional craft and joy. This research documentation aims to understand the art of Kangra Paintings in detail and uncover the various aspects that affect the art. Named after Kangra itself, Kangra painting is the **romantic and poetic pictorial art of the region**.

Home to the oldest Royal living dynasty, The **Katoch** dynasty, The region is the largest one in the state.

Established almost **3,500** years ago, the Region has faced multiple invasions which led to the strategically built Kangra fort.



# HISTORY

The Mahabharata states **King Susharama Chandra**, to be the founder of Kangra.

# CULTURE



Due to the multiple invasions, people were forced to take shelter in the hills, this led to the region becoming a religious and culturally diverse land.



In Kangra, a lot of fairs and festivals are celebrated by the people with great zeal and zest. The major folk dance of Kangra is known as Jhamakada which is beautifully performed by women in groups.

Pragpur (in Kangra, best describes the rich heritage of the region) is an ornamental village adorned with ancient traditions, architecture and culture.



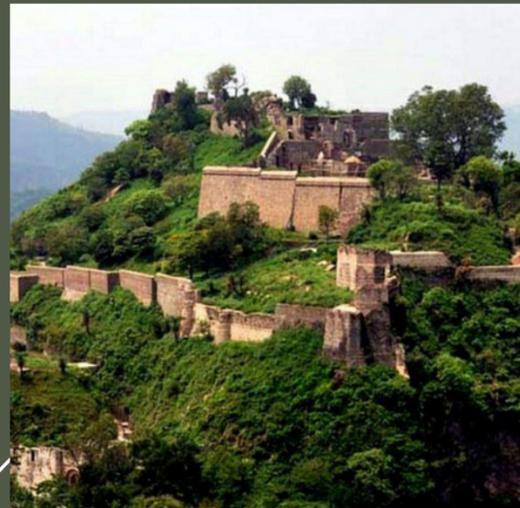
### ANDRETTA POTTERY

The Andretta Village pays homage to pottery making and holds workshops for the same.



### NATTI

An important dance form in the region.



### KANGRA FORT

The oldest fort in India and the largest in the region.



### THE KANGRA DEVI MANDIR

The Navratra festival is celebrated with a lot of joy at the Kangra Devi Mandir to pay Homage to Goddess durga.

# INTRODUCTION TO PAHARI SCHOOL

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Pahari painting is an important form of Indian painting , mostly performed in miniature forms, originating from **Himalayan hill kingdoms**.

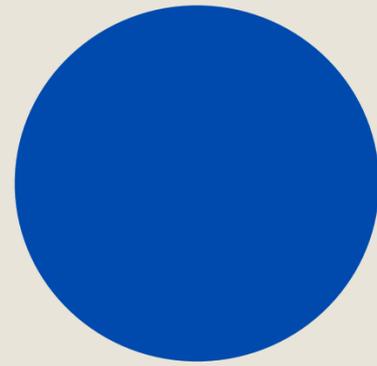
In Pahari miniature painting artists use **bright colours like red, yellow, blue and green in abundance**. Colours have been used symbolically.



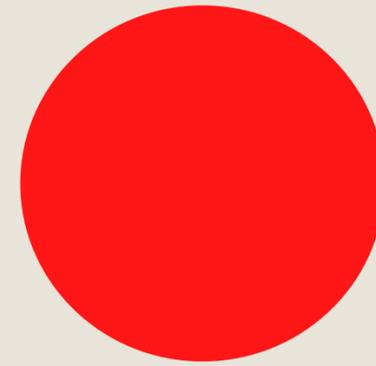
# COLOURS AND FEATURES



Yellow is the colour of spring season, light of sun and ripeness of mangoes. It also symbolizes warmth of Indian Spring Season and eagerness of lovers.



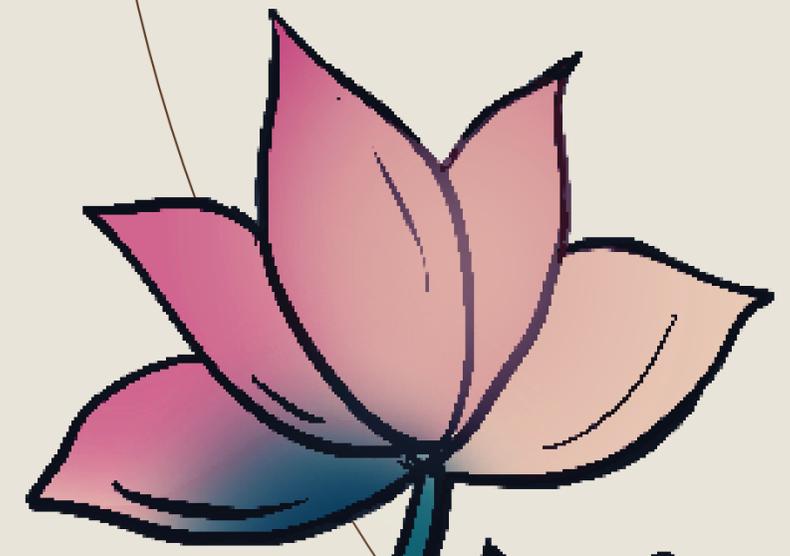
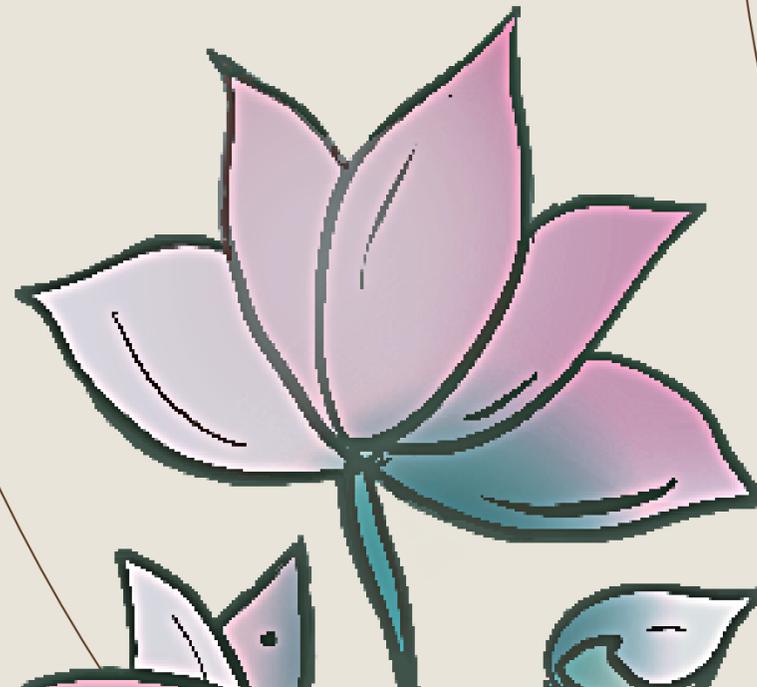
Blue is the colour of Lord Krishna and of clouds.

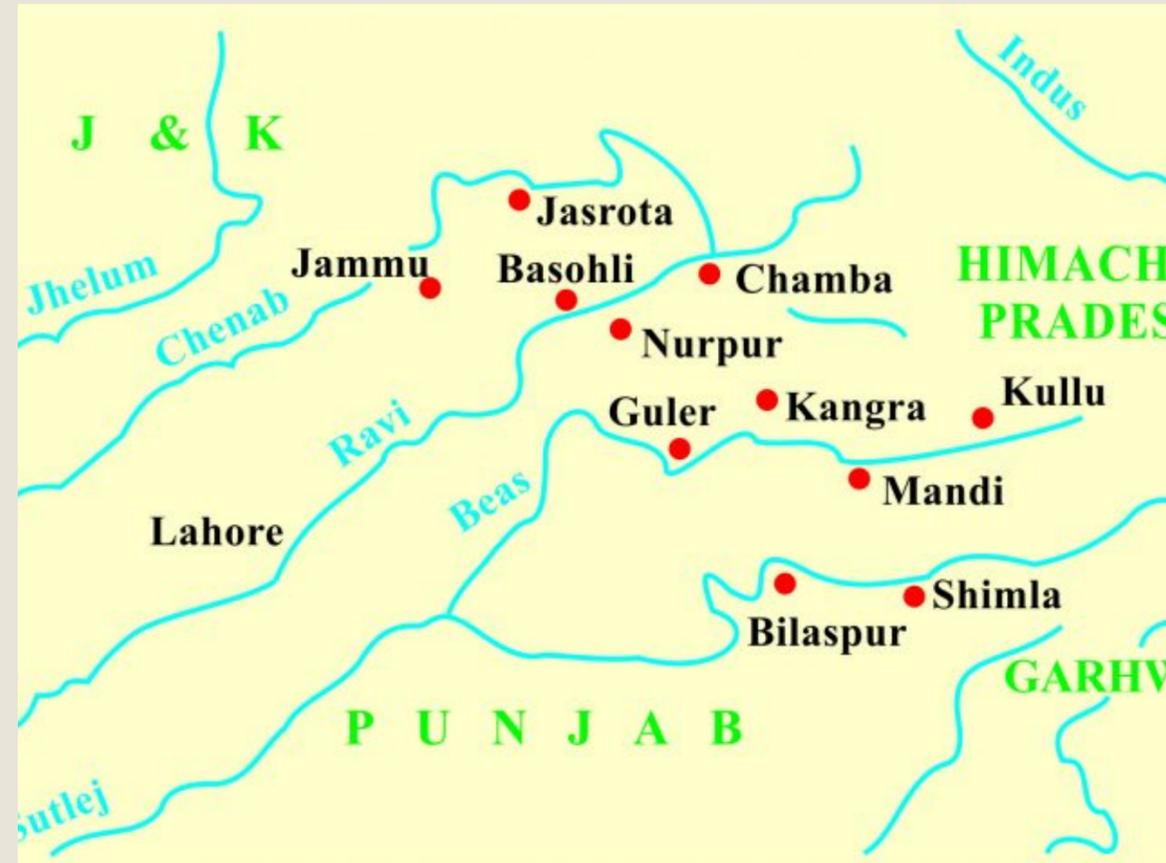


Red is the colour of love. The artists carefully chose the colours that create pleasant contrasts.



The paints are very often applied in a uniform and flat manner excellently, thus proving that flat application of colour can effectively create an aesthetic appeal.





# PAHARI PAINTING SCHOOLS



Jammu, Jasrota, Basohli, Chamba, Nurpur, Guler, Kangra, Kullu, Mandi, Bilaspur and Shimla

Basohli school



Bilaspur school



Shimla school



Mandi school



Kangra school



Guler school



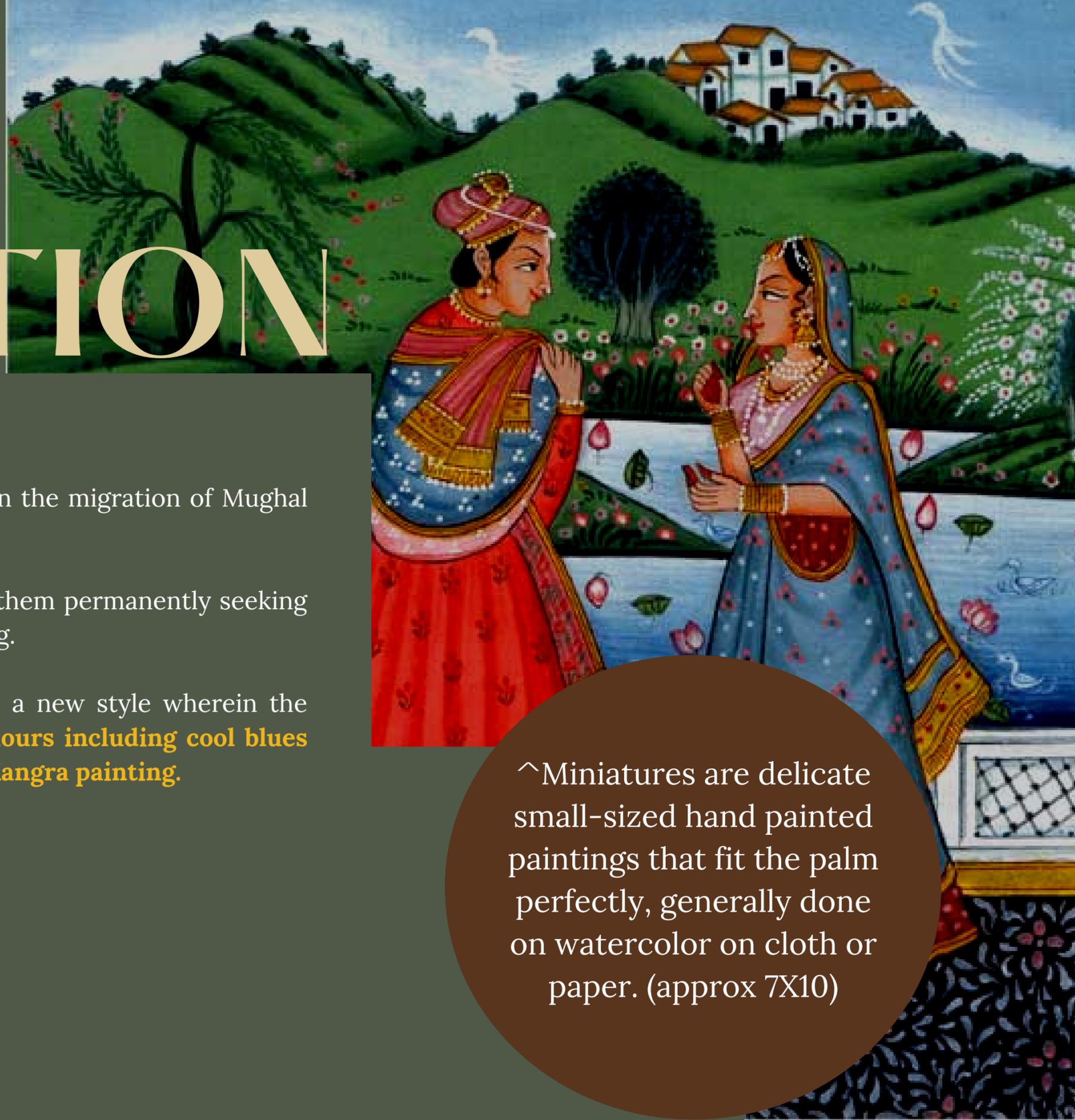
# KANGRA PAINTING

The natural beauty of the mountains gave refuge to artists who fled royal courts after the decline of the Mughal empire in the 17th century. A **synthesis of local art forms gave rise to the famous Kangra school of painting.** Masterpiece miniatures of this unique art style are on display in many reputed galleries around the world.



# INTRODUCTION

- Nadir Shah's invasion and conquest of Delhi in 1739 resulted in the migration of Mughal artists to the hills to escape the uncertainties of the plains.
- 
- Since these **artists found ready patrons in the hills**, it led to them permanently seeking refuge in the hills, hence founding the Kangra school of painting.
- 
- By the mid eighteenth century the Kangra artists developed a new style wherein the source of inspiration was the **Vaishnavite traditions. Soft colours including cool blues and greens, and a lyrical treatment of themes distinguished Kangra painting.**



^Miniatures are delicate small-sized hand painted paintings that fit the palm perfectly, generally done on watercolor on cloth or paper. (approx 7X10)



# KANGRA PAINTING CENTRES

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Guler, Basohli, Chamba, Nurpur, Bilaspur and Kangra.



# KANGRA PAINTING THEMES

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- The focal theme of Kangra painting is Shringar (the erotic sentiment).
- *The Gita Govinda* is composed by a 12th century poet named Jayadeva. It talks about the beautiful relationship between Krishna and Srimati Radhika and the gopikas of Vrindavana. The Gita Govinda is organized and divided into twelve chapters
- *The Satasai or Bihari Satsai* is a famous work written in the early 17th century by the poet Bihārī, in the language of Braj Bhasha dialect of Hindi spoken in the Braj region of northern India. It has Dohas, or couplets, on Bhakti, Neeti and Shringara.
- *Ashta Naayika (Nayika-bheda)* is the collective name given to eight types of Nayikas or the Heroines. These eight Nayikas showcase eight different types of states or Avasthas in association to her hero or Nayaka.
- *Sringara* is one of the nine rasas, usually translated as erotic love, romantic love, or as attraction or beauty. Rasa means "flavour", and the theory of rasa( Navarasa means nine emotions )is the primary concept behind classical Indian arts including theatre, music, dance, poetry, and sculpture

- **Nala is the king of kushwah Kingdom and the son of Veerasena. Nala is known for his skill with horses and for his culinary expertise. He marries princess Damayanti, of the Vidarbha Kingdom, and their story is told in the Mahabharata**
- **Ragmala or Ragamala (pronounced rāgmālā) is the title of a composition of twelve verses, running into sixty lines that names various ragas which appears in most copies of the Guru Granth Sahi**



# KANGRA PAINTING VS OTHER SCHOOLS

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- It portrays values which guided life in society, sentiments and passions pictured in the language of brush and color. Miniatures are steeped in religious faith as they depict Puranic tales and stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata in minute detail.
- Sensitive depiction of literary works RasikPriya, Sat Sai and Rasmanjari, GeetGovinda and other works refer to the awareness of people.
- In subordinate Pahari art styles, Garhwal miniatures are known for the same softness of colours and delicacy of beauty as have the miniatures of Guler.
- Fog like tender clouds and sensitively treated nature are typical of Garhwal. Hindur or Nalagarh in Bilaspur district sought its distinction in narrative subjects and in highly evolved symbolism.
- Well defined faces and costumes endowed with great realism, where each figure has its own distinct features and life-style, are specialities of Hindur art.

# FACTORS, TECHNIQUES AND FEATURES

- Drowned in the essence of the region, the Paintings take direct inspiration from the hills. The **plot is a touch of folk tales.**
- The Technique in Kangra painting is **minimal**. Hills are often portrayed in astonishing ways, full of emotions to make them look more appealing. The **eyes are painted as if they are in movement.** **The codes are very rare. The painter has full freedom and has the opportunity to film it in accordance with his inspiration.** This freedom is due to the diversity of images.



# The Main Elements

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Drawing design, bright colors and ultra-delicate decorations.



The painter uses a very **delicate** and soft brush. Before drafting the paintings, the tinted **silalaskot** is drafted in turquoise paper.



A coat of **white** is **painted which softens the paper**, then drawing a diagram with black and brown, finishing the painting after.

They use **clean red, yellow, blue and green.**



**Radha-Krishna or Shiva Shivaratri** are the main figures of each painting. Tho Non realistic, Feminine interaction is an important feature



**Nature** is an important aspect too, and the surroundings of the region are always celebrated here

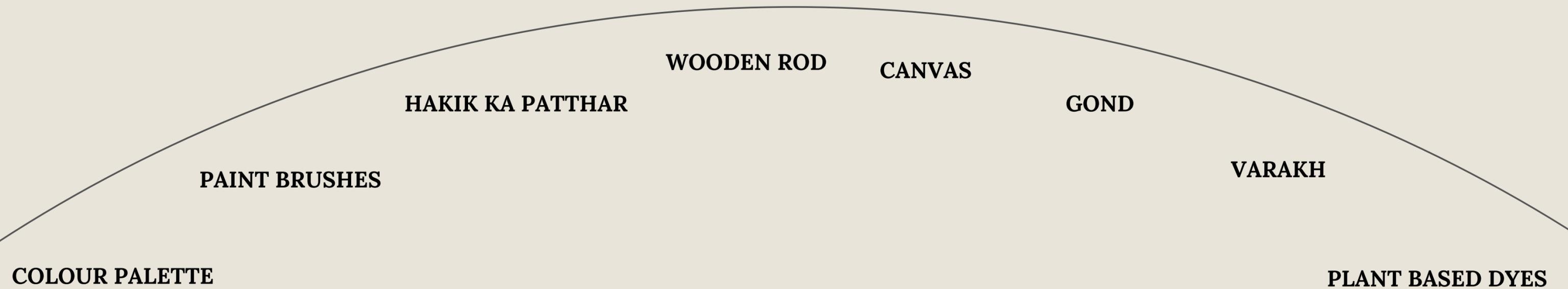


**Krishna Leela, gopis dancing to Shri Krishna's flute** is another favourite to paint.



# Tools and equipment used

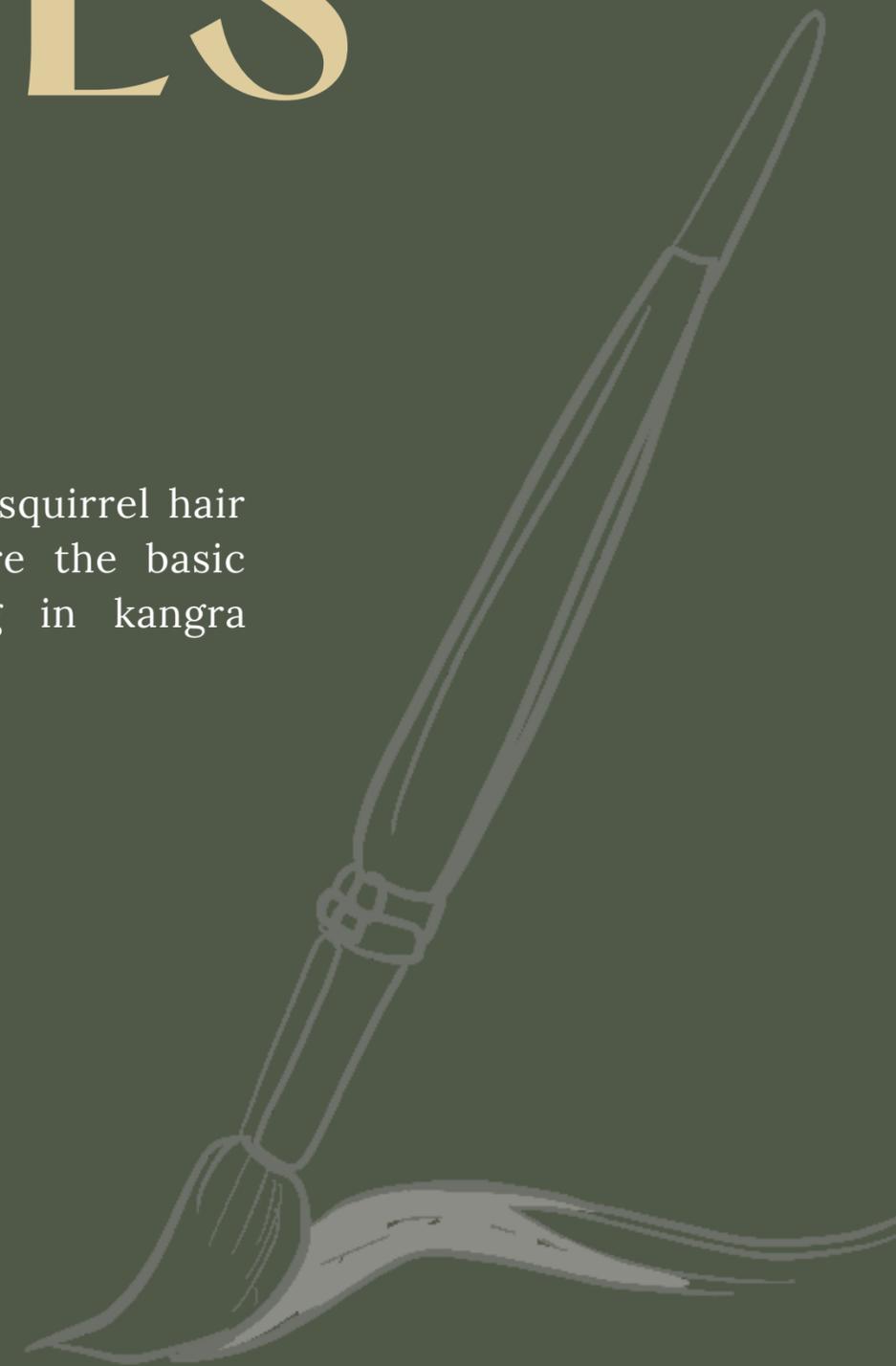
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# RAW MATERIALS



Organic and vegetable colors, squirrel hair brushes, handmade papers are the basic raw materials artisans using in kangra painting.



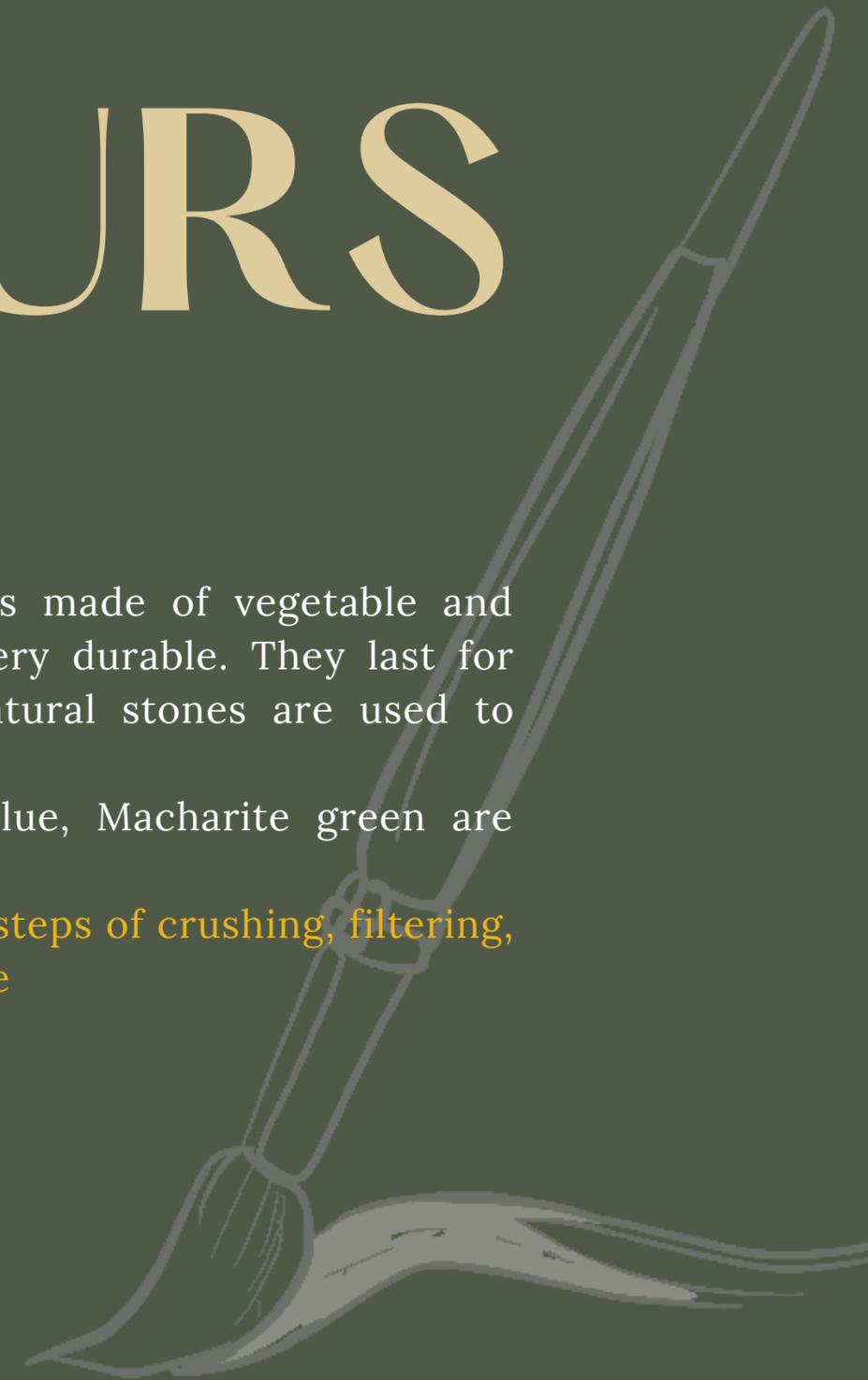
# ORGANIC COLOURS



The Kangra painters use colors made of vegetable and mineral extracts as they are very durable. They last for years on handmade sheets. Natural stones are used to make the same.

Different stones like Azurite blue, Macharite green are used for making colours.

They are made by following the steps of crushing, filtering, soaking and making it into a paste



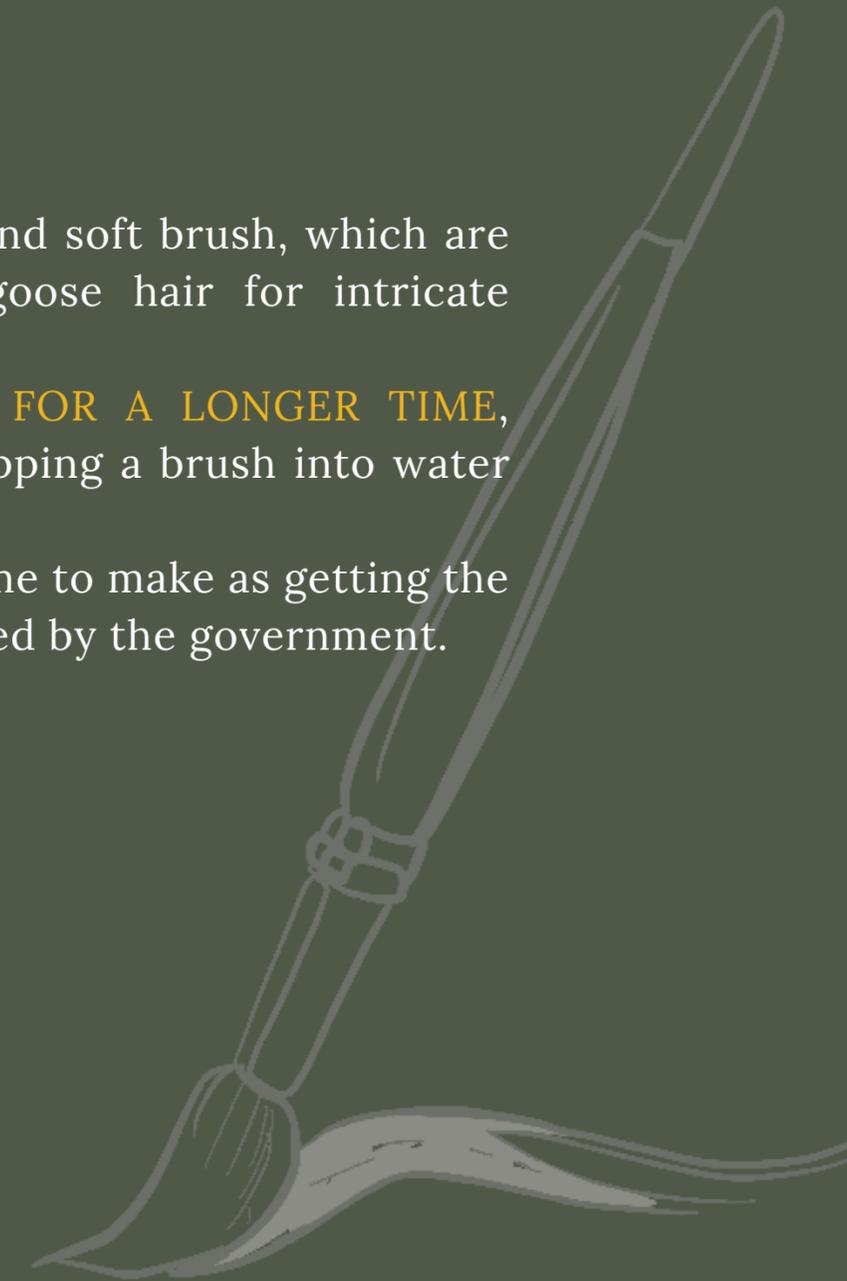
# NATURAL BRUSHES



The painters use a very delicate and soft brush, which are made up of squirrels and mongoose hair for intricate details.

**THESE BRUSHES HOLD WATER FOR A LONGER TIME,** which saves them the effort of dipping a brush into water frequently.

The steps tho easy, take a lot of time to make as getting the squirrel hair is hard, plus it's banned by the government.



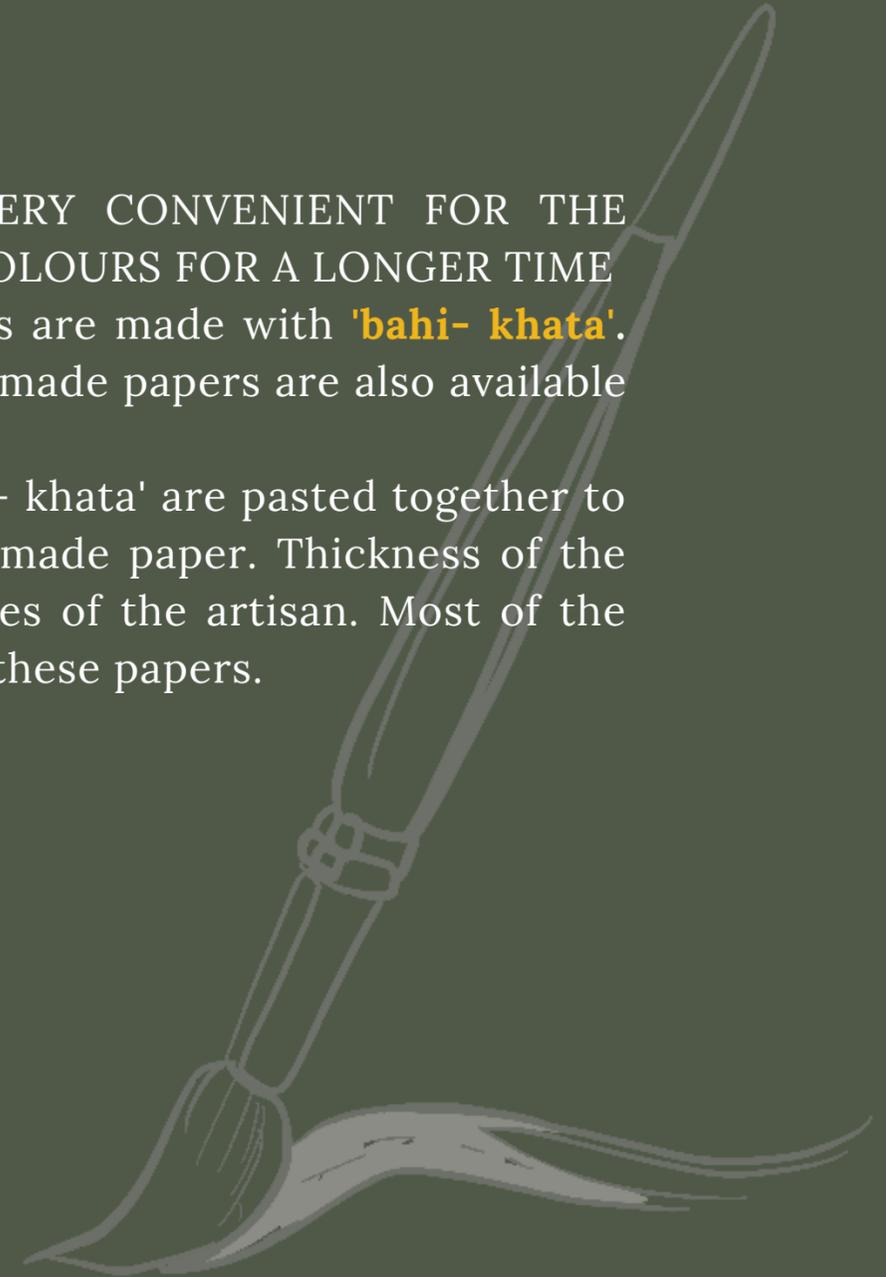
# BASLI SHEETS

(Handmade paper)



HANDMADE SHEET ARE VERY CONVENIENT FOR THE ARTISANS AS THEY HOLD COLOURS FOR A LONGER TIME. Traditional handmade papers are made with '**bahi- khata**'. now a days, readymade handmade papers are also available called '**basli**'.

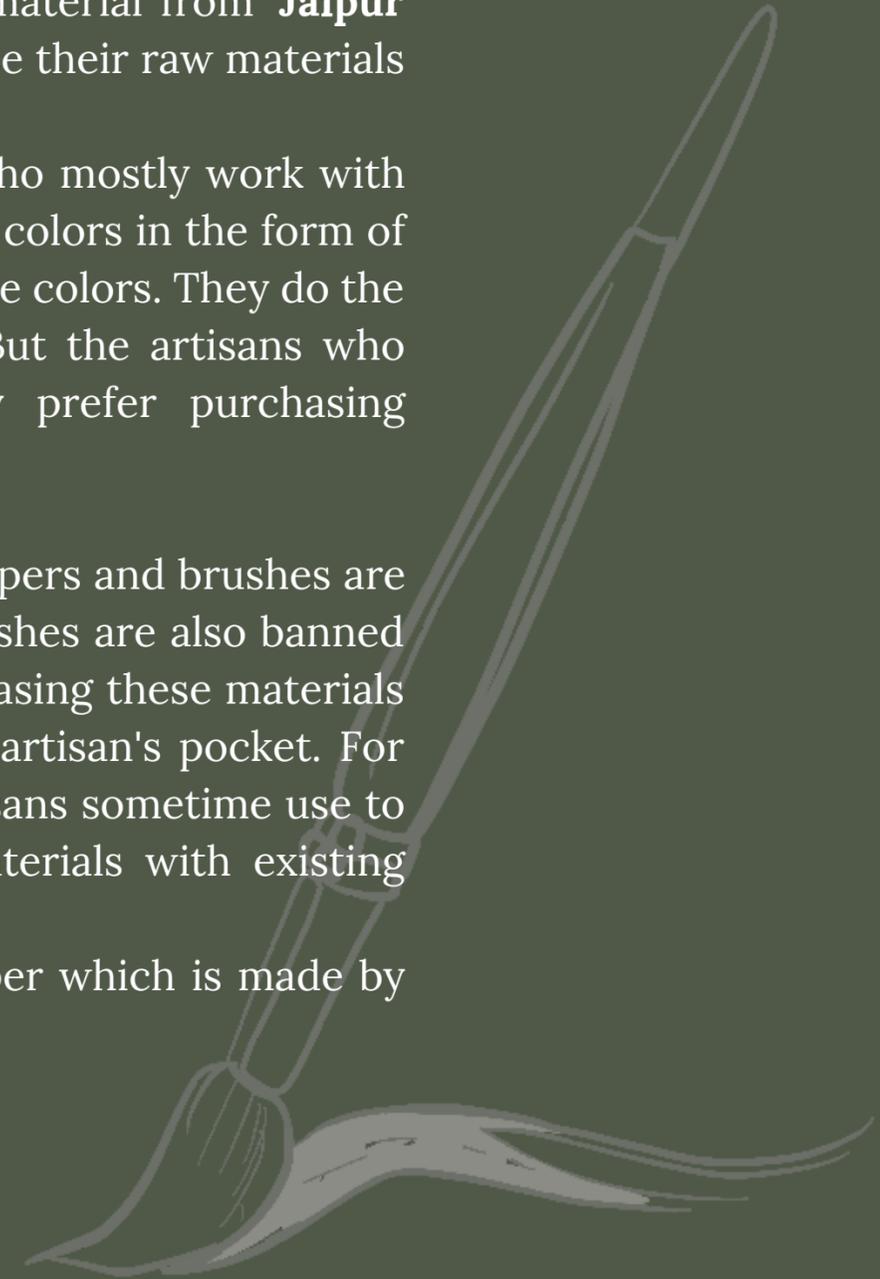
two or three sheets of 'bahi - khata' are pasted together to make a single sheet of handmade paper. Thickness of the paper depends on the choices of the artisan. Most of the older paintings are made on these papers.



# PROCURING RAW MATERIALS



- Artisans procure their raw material from '**Jaipur market**'. They either purchase their raw materials in **raw form or readymade**.
  - For example, the artisans who mostly work with traditional method, purchase colors in the form of stone and later process it to make colors. They do the same thing with brushes too. But the artisans who are new to this field usually prefer purchasing readymade materials.
- Natural colors, handmade papers and brushes are pretty costly, as squirrel brushes are also banned by the government so purchasing these materials in bulk can charge a lot on artisan's pocket. For avoiding extra expanses artisans sometime use to generate their own raw materials with existing product.
  - For example, handmade paper which is made by 'bahi - khata' paper.



# COSTING

The standard size of the painting is 7 x 10.



- The price of the painting varies from 8k to 10k depending on the details of the painting.
- The cost can also be reduced to 5k if the art has only one person or motifs.
- There is no designing charge to recreate old art work given by the customer.
- In packaging they usually cover it with tracing paper and courier it in an envelope or customers directly pick up their order.
- Their craft is not valued much locally as they find it costly, so the usual sales are made by foreigners or the person who is interested in them they order it directly from the artist.
- Some of the paintings, mostly reproductions of well-loved museum pieces, are ranged at Rs1,200 to almost Rs1 lakh. Some of the more experienced artists also develop their own inspiration and themes.

# CURRENT SCENARIO



**THE COMMISSIONS OF KANGRA PAINTINGS HAVE ALSO GONE DOWN IN NUMBERS AND THE RELIGIOUS ATTRIBUTE ASSOCIATED WITH IT HAS ALSO TRICKLED DOWN.**

Effects of the pandemic on the artisans-  
**NO RAW MATERIALS, NO TOURISTS,  
HENCE LESS EXPOSURE AND SALES.**

The constantly changing social , economic ,physiographic scenarios of time highly affect the style , characteristic and imagery of paintings.  
**THERE IS A SHIFT IN TECHNIQUE AND SUBJECT MATTER.**



# THE KANGRA ARTS PROMOTION SOCIETY

- This society is an NGO based in Dharamshala working to **uplift Kangra painting**, and provide the art with the required exposure.
- The society **regularly holds workshops**, in Kangra and in Metropolitan cities so that the art reaches a better stage.
- They also attempted to commercialize the art (through sarees) to sustain artists.

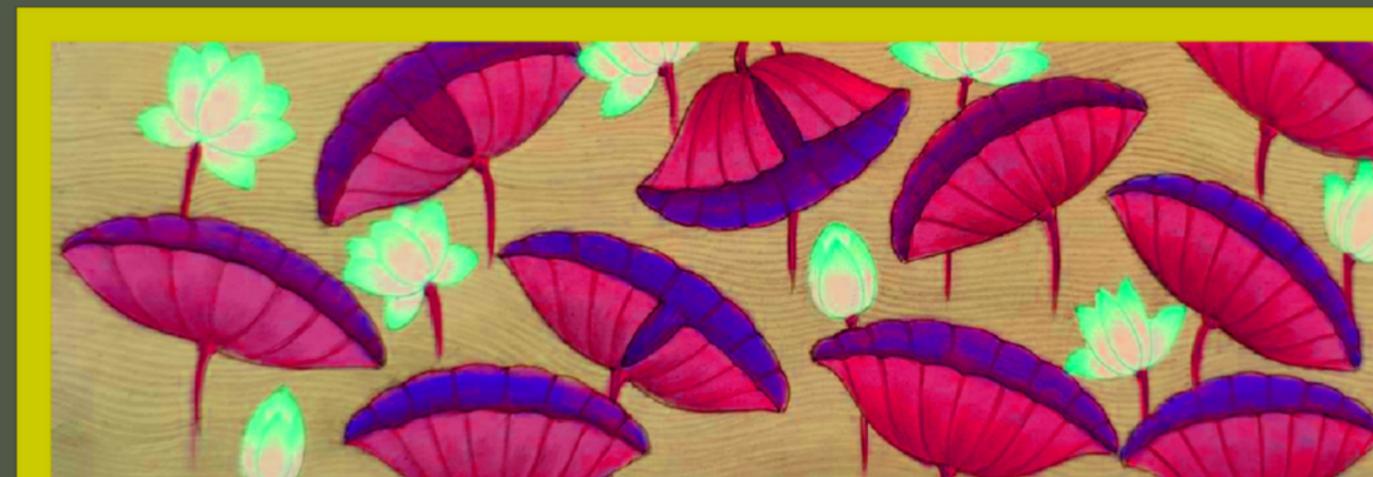
## ABOUT

### Kangra Arts Promotion Society (KAPS)

Kangra Arts Promotion Society (KAPS), is an NGO working for the promotion of arts of the greater Kangra region which comprises the current district of Kangra and surrounding areas that were once ruled by the Kangra Dynasty. Kangra was a flourishing empire and a renowned center of culture for the last millennium. It went in decline after the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni in 1009. A revival started in late 14th century and the arts of Kangra reached their peak of glory with Kangra Miniature Paintings in the 18th century.

The purpose of KAPS is to ensure that the tradition of Kangra Paintings and other arts passes on to the future generations. Currently very few genuine "disciples" of old Kangra Schools (Gharana) survive. Many of them work in obscurity and live on meager earnings through associations with temples or sales to tourists of cheap reproductions. The genuine Kangra (like Mughal and Rajasthani) paintings are made with natural colors from stones and plants on acid-free paper prepared in a special way. Even the brushes are made in a very unique way from the hair of squirrels and bird feathers. A genuine Miniature painting usually has tremendous amount of detail (such as distinct leaves on trees and individual grass fronds) and can take weeks and even months to complete. The commercial versions are knocked out with common paints and papers in a matter of hours.

# ARTISANS INFORMATION





**NAME- Mukesh Dhiman**

**AGE- 50**

**EDUCATION- 12 pass**

**EXPERIENCE- 33 years**

One of the most renowned artists of Kangra Painting, Mr. Muskesh is an important figure in promoting the art.

He is an experienced artisan and has proved himself many times in the field of Kangra paintings. He is also very famous for the reestablishment of new themes. He has received many awards in the field of Kangra paintings.

With hopes for Kangra painting, he also states how the art is as important as modern art, it's just hidden.

Mr. Mukesh Dhiman is also one of the few artists responsible for bringing Kangra Painting to different audiences.



**NAME- Poonam Katoch**

**AGE- 34**

**EDUCATION- Bachelors degree**

**EXPERIENCE- 4 years**

Poonam Katoch, resident of Chamunda temple is an artist who has been working with kangra miniature paintings for the past 4 years.

She starts working at 11 in the morning till 5 in the evening and then brings her work home too and continues to work on it.

She gave us interesting insights on how the art is performed as mentioned before, like the type of brushes and time taken.

Ms. Poonam is 34 years young and comes from a family of 4. She holds a bachelor's degree and she speaks pahadhi language.



**NAME- Deepak Bhandari**  
**AGE- 37**  
**EDUCATION- 12th pass**  
**EXPERIENCE- 15 years**

Talking about his journey as an artist, he stated that he started painting when he was in school itself.

He joined a school that taught Kangra painting and came first, that's how his journey officially began.

He is the only member in his family to work with Kangra paintings and has also worked with Basoli, Chamba and Kullu styles of painting

When we asked him about why Kangra painting as a craft is not growing he stated that the new generation of kids who are coming in are not being guided properly



**NAME- Rajeev Kumar**

**AGE- 40**

**EDUCATION- 12th Class**

**EXPERIENCE- 14 years**

Mr Kumar learnt the art of Kangra paintings from his time as a worker at the Kangra art museum.

He shed some light on the harshness of the lockdown and The repercussions of the same. No tourists visiting and being locked in Kangra, it is easier to sell at places with higher number of tourists.

A keen learner, Mr Kumar loves exploring and experimenting with new materials like Bamboo, wood, and most recently metal

An ex member of the Kangra art promotion society, Rajeev Kumar also sells His work online along with his gallery.



**NAME- Monu Kumar**  
**AGE- 40**  
**EDUCATION- 12th Class**  
**EXPERIENCE- 15 years**

He is working individually in field of art from his family .He is a full time Kangra miniature artist

His most amazong art was on saress which he painted in Kangra art promotional society

Poetically, he states how nature is always a blessing, and helps whenever required.

He has 15 years of experience in Kangra painting.



**NAME- Susheel Kumar**

**AGE- 40**

**EDUCATION- 12th Class**

**EXPERIENCE- 18 years**

Now almost 40 years young, with a family of 7, Mr Kumar has completely dedicated his life to this craft.

He reflects on the squirrel tail brush ban, with that happening it's hard to make the switch to artificial brushes as the details necessary can only be perfected using squirrel tail brushes.

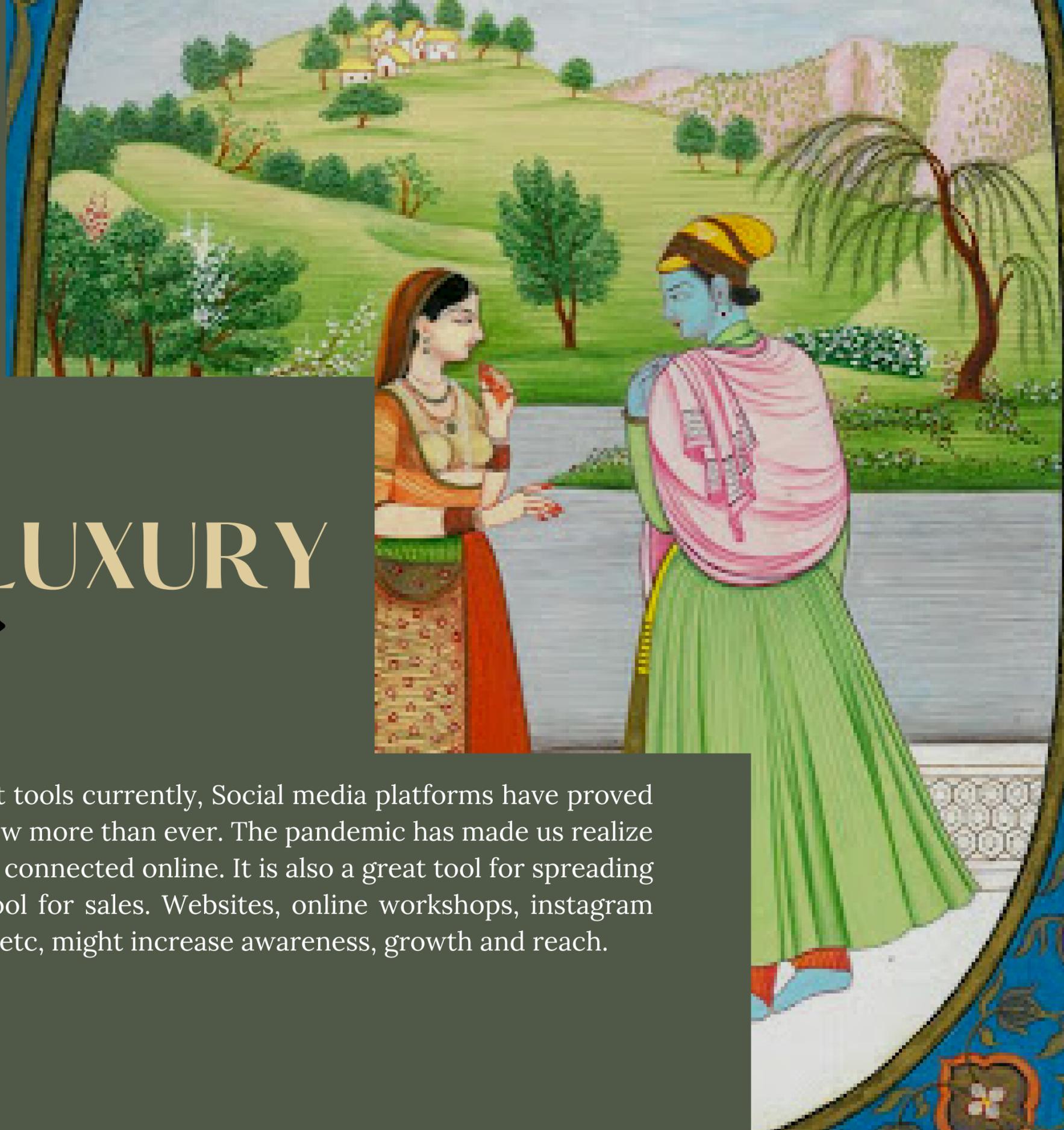
Adding his years working for himself, He now has approximately 18 years of experience, along with working in the Kangra art museum and as a promoter of this craft.

His work is completely individual, not funded or connected to the government in any way. He mentions that he has minimal job security, and no health insurance

# Main Market

The main market for Kangra paintings are either **tourists**, or wealthy art enthusiasts. The district is a hub for explorists, Many people come over for treks and vacations and are the main audience that currently gets intrigued by Kangra painting. No denying the Weakness that the survival of the Kangra painting depends itself on tourists which obviously paused due to the pandemic. Since the main market is that of outsiders, and covid resulted in hindrances along this channel. The only ways left to connect the art form to it's audience is via Social media.





TOURISTS

LUXURY



One of the most important tools currently, Social media platforms have proved to be extremely crucial, now more than ever. The pandemic has made us realize how important it is to stay connected online. It is also a great tool for spreading awareness along with a tool for sales. Websites, online workshops, instagram accounts of artisans, reels etc, might increase awareness, growth and reach.

# S

## Strengths

- Historical and cultural significance
- Has retained the same style and even the processes and raw materials used
- Kangra painting artisans are very passionate about this school of painting and have immense respect for it and they are even willing to teach it further to students

# W

## Weaknesses

- It is getting highly commercialised and artisans are also changing their style, in order to earn
- Raw Materials need to be procured from Jaipur which stands as a huge obstacle, especially during the covid times
- Also due to covid, the foot fall of international tourists have reduced
- Material explorations have not been done
- Lack of awareness amongst local people itself

# O

## Opportunities

- KAPS funding for Kangra Sarees
- Kangra painting being sold on Amazon, creating more opportunities for the artisans
- Kangra Painting being added on Postal stamps
- Workshops being held for Kangra painting
- It is also part of the curriculum in CBSE for students who have opted for Fine Arts

# T

## Threats

- Lack of interest in new generation of students
- Even young members of the family are unwilling to take it up
- Threat from other schools as well, especially chamba
- Commercialisation, artisans are changing their style to make something that yields them more

# KEY OBSERVATIONS

Importance of squirrel tail brushes

Shift to commercialization

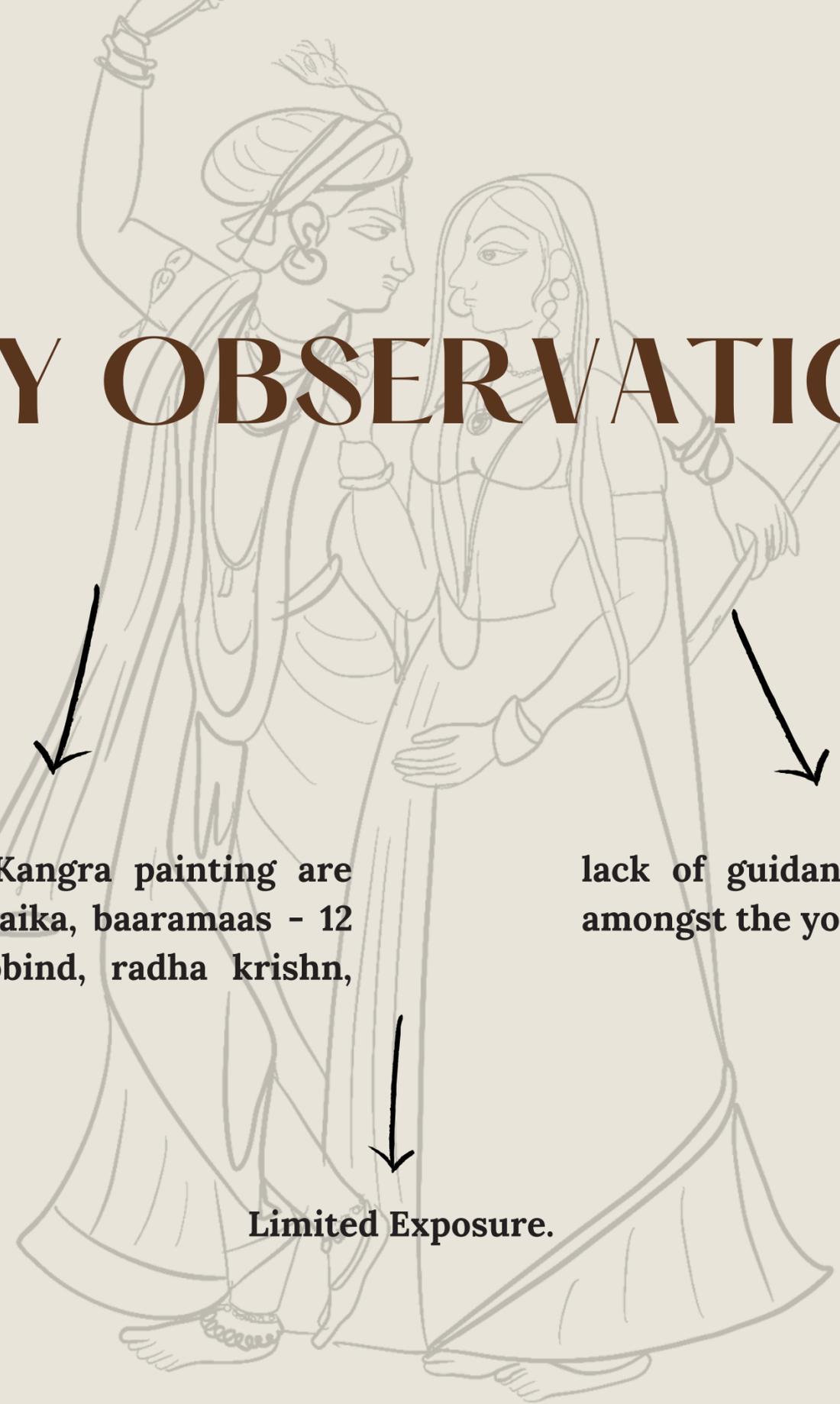
The themes in Kangra painting are ragmaala, hasthnaika, baaramaas - 12 months, geet gobind, radha krishn, bhagwatpuran.

lack of guidance and awareness amongst the young generation

Sourcing Raw materials during the pandemic was an obstacle.

Limited Exposure.

Rajasthan is the hub for all material sourcing and procuring.



# IDEAS AND PROPOSALS

Throughout this research we have uncovered everything that goes behind the art of Kangra Paintings. We have also realized how the craft is in need of new ways and techniques to help it grow, reach a better audience and gain exposure. Here are some proposals we had on how to be able to do the same.





# LUXURY AND DECOR

As décor in Luxury Hotels, and aiming at a better customer- One of the main obstacles in Kangra Painting is that they are **heavily dependent on tourists to make sales**, it's too expensive for locals to buy. Making the **most of that scenario, since Kangra is surrounded by tourists, hotels, and restaurants**, Artisans can be provided with the opportunity of presenting their work in these places along with galleries. Painted walls, interiors , products like vase, mugs, pots etc, can

**a) increase the aesthetic value of the hotel**

**b) Give the tourist a wholesome cultural experience**



# GIFT SHOPS

Gift Shops in Hotels are another medium for Kangra artists to **Sell their work**. By connecting them to these luxurious hotels, for example, TAJ, we are increasing the revenue of the place, adding respect and more value to Kangra artists name, giving them a better source of income, and also spreading awareness.



# FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

One of the best mediums to sell their products, while also making other cities and people aware about the same is through fairs and festivals. Many popular fairs like the biannual Chokhi Dhani fair, DILI HAAT, are great places where all artisans come and sell crafts from their own states. Promoting the culture, and getting a better audience, since people are there with the sole intention of buying. Along with Paintings, Different goods like lampshades, feathered pens, furniture etc can be sold



# ATTRACTING THE YOUTH

The young generation has the **power to make and break trends**. With painted clothes, and accessories in trend currently, Painted bags, and youth based accessories like oxidized jewelry etc is all a great opportunity for artist and the art.

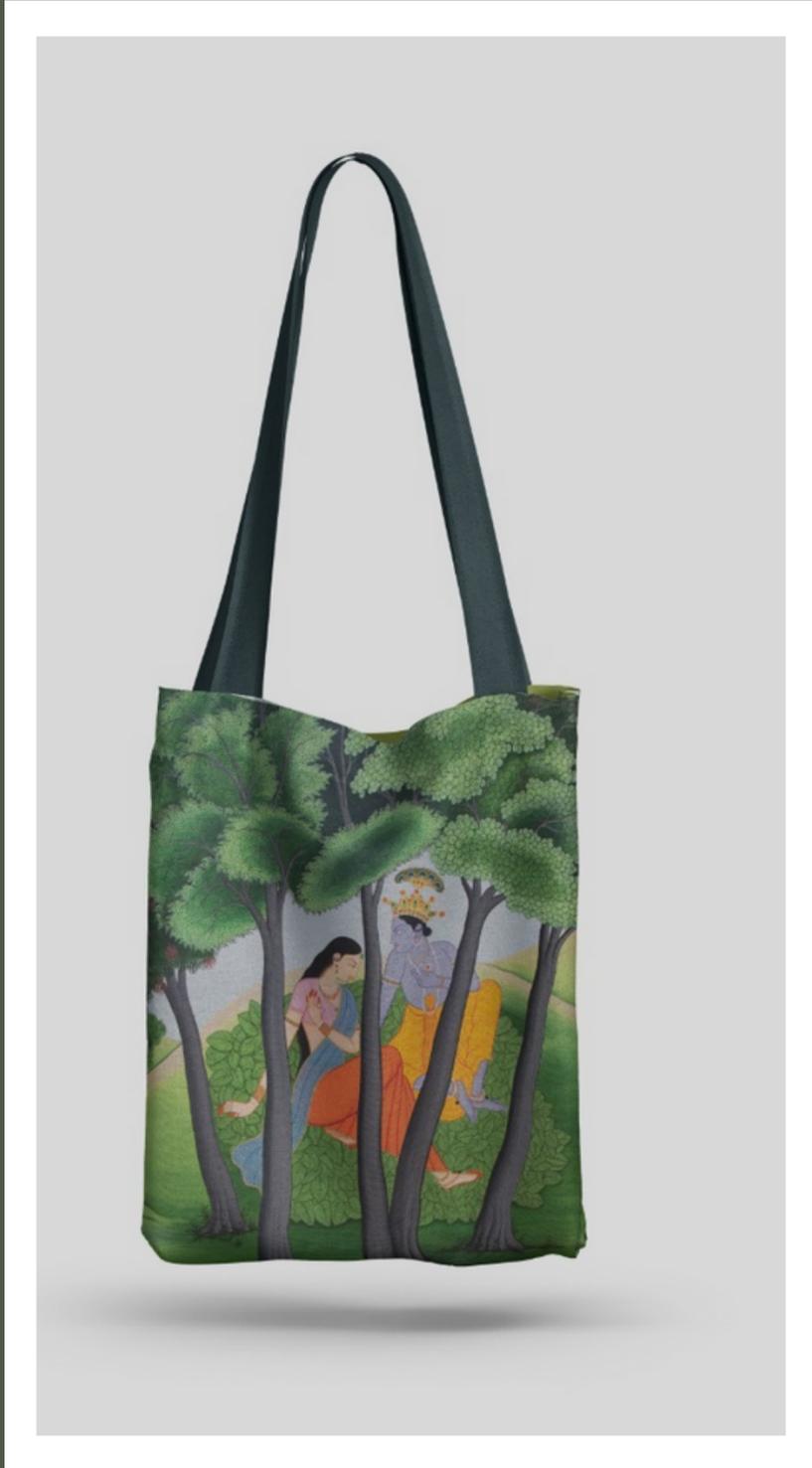


# WORKSHOP EXPERIENCES

Kangra Painting is familiar to all fine art students who opt for the subject in their 12th grade, along with other pahari schools. We can have **practical assignments based off of these schools which again will help the creative thinkers get proper understanding of the craft, and learn technique.** This way increasing practical art education in 12th fine art . Kangra painting does already have some workshops being held by the Kangra Arts Promotional society, Mukesh Dhiman being a guru in most of them. An increase in these workshops, and extending them to college students, other schools around Himachal might improve the issue of Kangra Painting not being stepped to generations ahead



# Handpainted Product Ideas and Explorations



**Handpainted Tote Bag**



**Handpainted Pouch**



Handpainted Pouch



Handpainted Tea Coaster



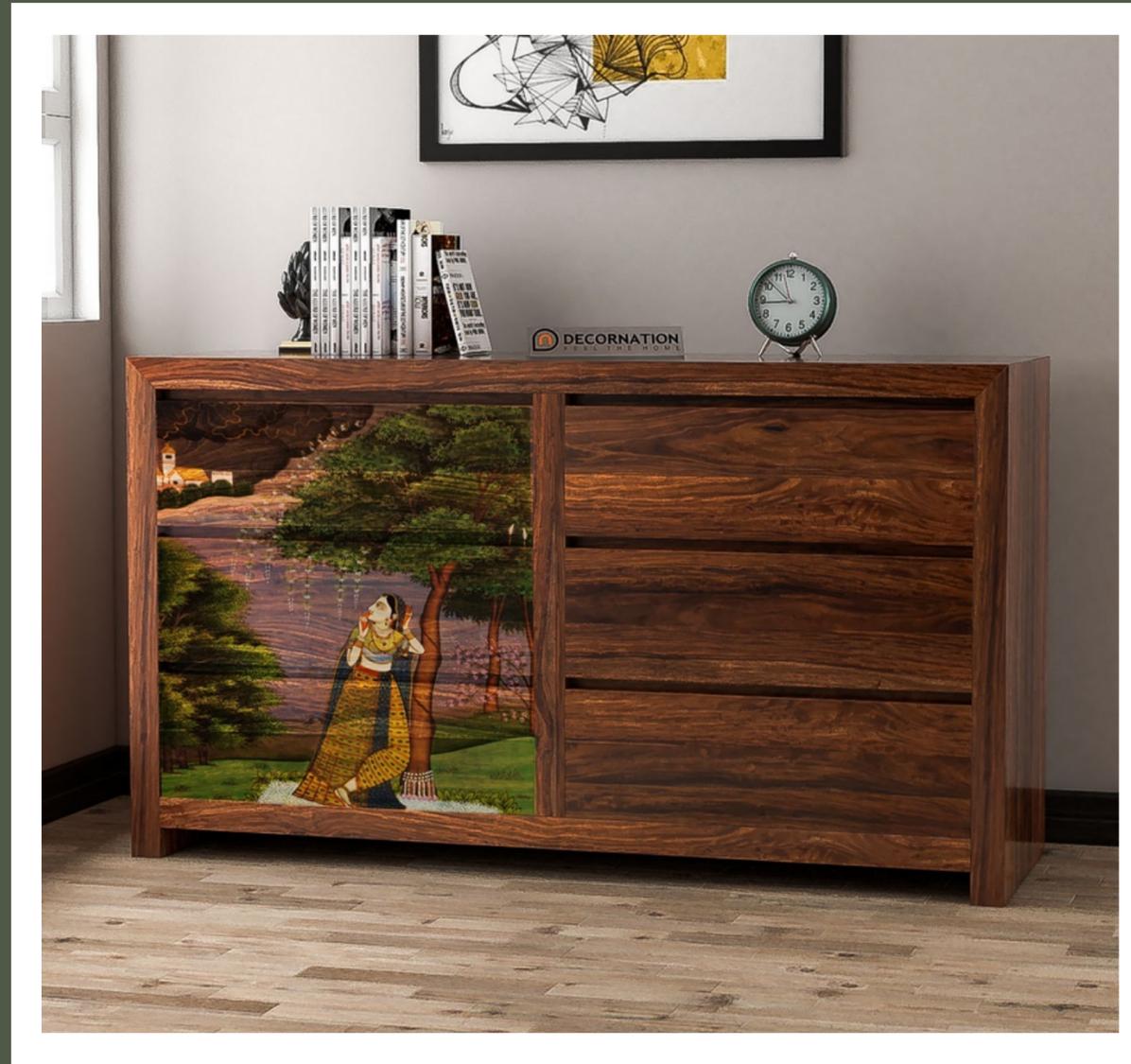
**Kangra Painting Hand fan decor**



**Handpainted Mug Designs**



Handpainted Tissue Paper Boxes



Handpainted Cabinet



**Bowls**



**Decorative Flower Pots**



Handpainted jewellery Boxes



Handpainted Compass



Tea tin box



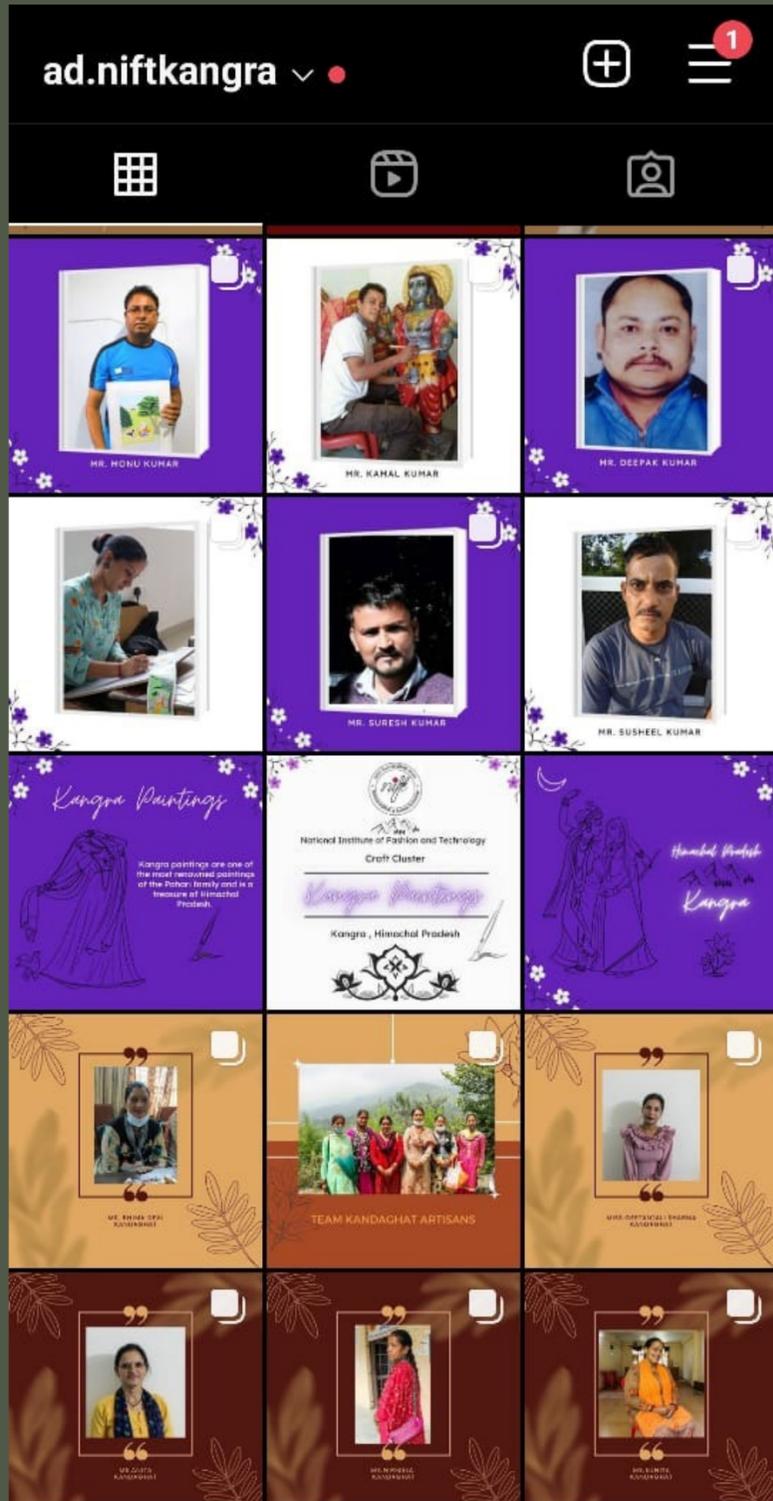
# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MORE

One of the most important tools currently, Social media platforms have proved to be extremely crucial, now more than ever. The pandemic has made us realize how important it is to **stay connected online**. It is also a great tool for **spreading awareness along with a tool for sales**. **Websites, online workshops, instagram accounts of artisans, reels etc, might increase awareness, growth and reach.**

We have decided to connect different artisans on social media , some experienced artisans have their social media account but but they are not so much active on these accounts as they feel they are not getting more orders from Social media .So we have uploaded artisan profile and their work on social media like Instagram. As a young generation we all use social media alot so we can assure them that if we receive orders from social media we will provide them information on call . Joint account will have lots of benefit -

1 New artisans can check work of other artisans and can learn more techniques of paintings from experienced artisans style

2 One account will be official engaging public will be easy , customers will find everything at one place they will find ease to order . We have promoted artisans work on social media , uploaded stories , done online promotion that helps artisans getting more reach . This time is of reels ,we have made reels . Our tourism department will get boost and automatically India will get boost in crafts.



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National Institute of Fashion and Technology  
Craft Cluster

*Kangra Paintings*

Kangra , Himachal Pradesh

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*Kangra Paintings*

Kangra paintings are one of the most renowned paintings of the Pahari family and is a treasure of Himachal Pradesh.

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Lets have a look at some of his amazing paintings →

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MR. SUSHEEL KUMAR

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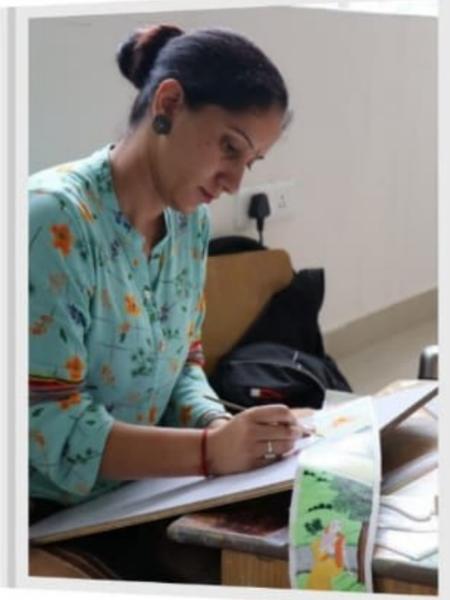
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Till now he have made many paintings Lets have a glimpse of some of them

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Swipe → to see more paintings .

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MR. KAMAL KUMAR

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Lets have a glimpse of some of his amazing artworks [→](#)

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#kangra #kangrapainting #art #artisan #explore #nift



MR. MONU KUMAR

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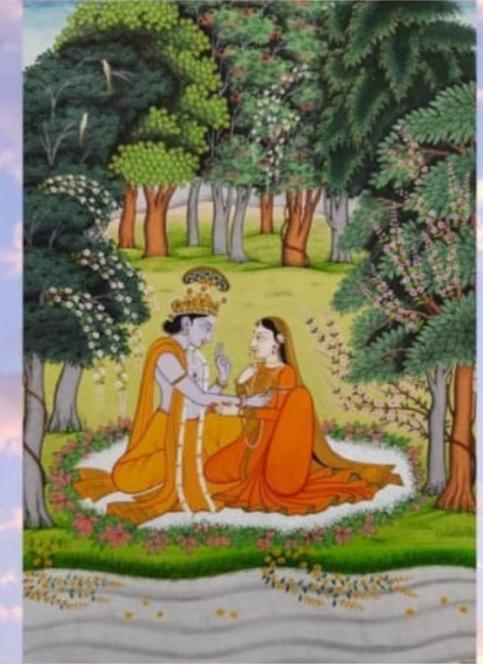


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**ad.niftkangra** MR. Monu Kumar is a renowned artisan of Kangra paintings .He is a experienced and hardworking person and proved himself many times in field of Kangra paintings .He have done a great contribution towards the betterment of Kangra paintings .

Lets have a glimpse of some of his amazing artworks [→](#)

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3/10

PRICE - Rs 7,000

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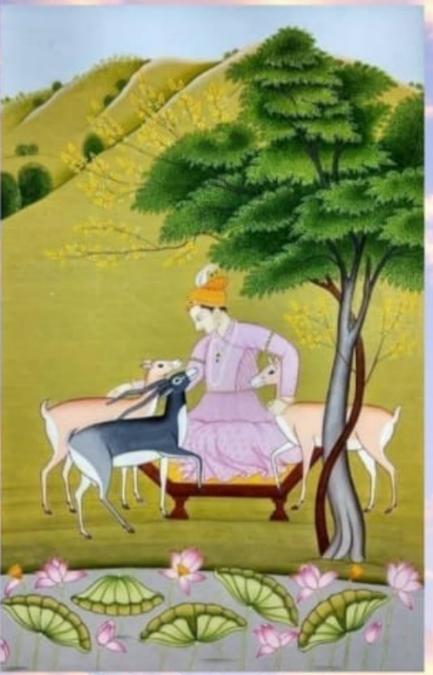


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2/5

PRICE - Rs 5,000

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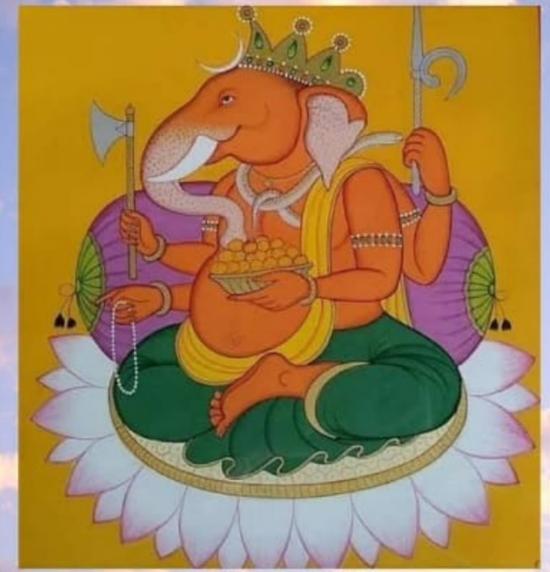
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2/6

PRICE - Rs 5000

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3/7

Spiti valley. Pori fair. Watercolour on handmade paper, RS 62.000

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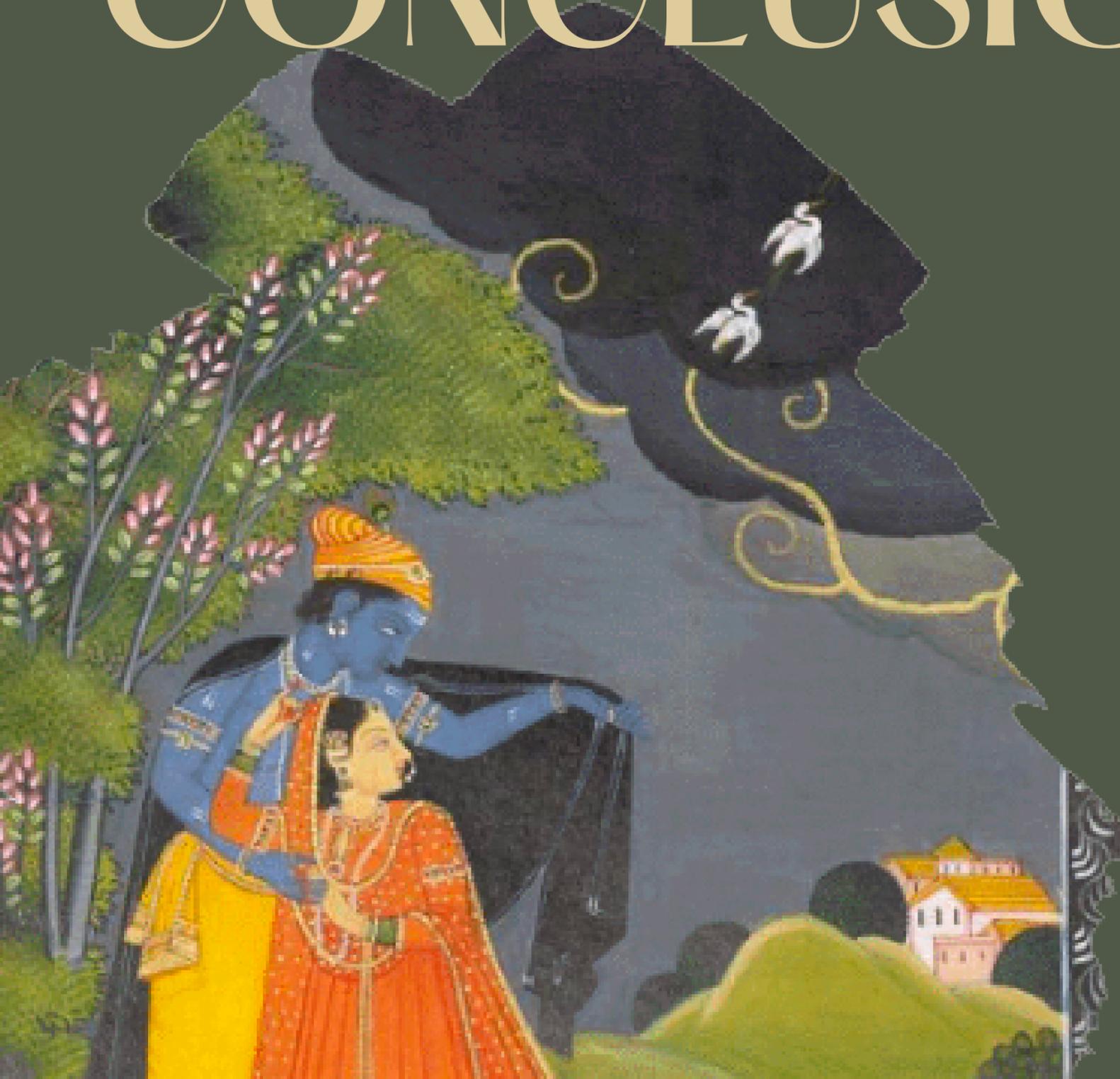
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He is known for his creativity and exploration in style of Kangra Paintings

His most attractive artwork are Contemporary Miniature Paintings

Lets have a look at some of his amazing paintings [→](#)

# CONCLUSION



As we saw before in the contemporary miniature series, there is a **major and drastic shift in the way Kangra Painting is now being painted**. The style is experimental, based off of a combination of different schools, the themes are also based on different cultures, Most importantly the whole purpose of Kangra painting revolves around miniatures, which is also seeing change now. What we realize from this is that-

- The Painting is slowly getting **commercialized**, Artisans are recognising what sells in the market and are offering their audience that.
- Artists are painting **bigger canvases, again adding to the commercialization of the craft**, removing the essence of Kangra miniatures altogether.
- There is a **shift in the style** as well, many painters are now slowly developing styles based off of their comfort.
- Most artisans also mentioned how the younger generation isn't willing to learn, putting a major obstacle in between generations as to who will carry the art forward.
- **Lack of awareness and also exposure** is stopping the art from moving forward.
- It is necessary for the government to recognise and uplift the art, as it requires a lot of funding, and promotion to grow.