

Art for a Modern India, 1947-1980 (Objects/Histories)

Rebecca M. Brown

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Rebecca M. Brown : Art for a Modern India, 1947-1980 (Objects/Histories) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Art for a Modern India, 1947-1980 (Objects/Histories):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A must read for anyone interested in modern Indian art!By melia belliThis is an excellent book for a number of diverse audiences, from historians of South Asian art, global modernists, historians, to non-specialists interested in this fascinating period in Indian art. The prose is accessible and avoids the use of unnecessary theory and concepts, which can be isolating to non-specialists. Brown identifies salient aims, issues, challenges artists in post-independent India faced: post-colonialism, modernity, and the creation of national, as well as their individual identities. One of the book's overarching concerns is how artists negotiated modernity and modern art, which were inextricably associated with Europe, and "Indianness." As Brown explores, "Indianness" was interpreted in diverse, often contradicting ways. To some it was a historic "golden age," while to others, it was the village. Through her succinct examination of arts of various media, including painting, film, architecture, Brown proves that between 1947-1980, Indian artists responded to their times in innovative, provocative, and thoughtful ways, creating art that is at once modern and in conversation with global

trends, and undeniably Indian.¹ 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Useless- the Kindle edition not the book. Brown's Book= 4/5 By Alexandra M. Lucas I used this book in my thesis on Indian modernism. It is a gem of a book- outlining concepts succinctly. However, the Kindle app I needed to use in conjunction with the Google book edition so I could cite pages- which as you can imagine, was quite the chore as a preview. Don't buy it if you want to use it for an assessment, beyond reading for enjoyment there isn't much use for it- buy the hard copy. (no page numbers, only 'Locations' (the book I can assure you does not have 2486 pages) and percentage read.) 5 of 13 people found the following review helpful. BEWARE: NOT a survey of Indian modern art from 1947-1980 By Gary Comoglio I have a small axe to grind,..... "NOT a survey of Indian modern art from 1947-1980," (understatement of the year, However this book would be a lot more interesting if it was....) this is how one of the introductory paragraphs begins..... This book goes on to explore architecture, some fine art, and mostly covers how the Indian population has been 'dissed' by Western culture, ..especially the art culture. One thing that bothers me about most books on Modern Art in India, is that the authors seem to have a problem with the past colonialism, and connecting the visual effects on art. It does not matter much where Picasso got his influence for cubism (because the artwork is powerful on its own), but for some reason... it really matters in Indian culture. The justifications that Indian Art is 'legit' and has its own merits would be better argued if the author bothered to give examples of more artwork and show how Indian artists were committed to their ideas, and their craft. There are about 8 examples of paintings that the author decided to put in, that's it.... 8 paintings for almost 40 years..... This is far far away from any real analytical study of modern art in India. I am still waiting for a complete survey that does not get caught up in old arguments and analyzes the artwork and power of their creativity on its own merits.

Following India's independence in 1947, Indian artists creating modern works of art sought to maintain a local idiom, an "Indianness" representative of their newly independent nation, while connecting to modernism, an aesthetic then understood as both universal and presumptively Western. These artists depicted India's precolonial past while embracing aspects of modernism's pursuit of the new, and they challenged the West's dismissal of non-Western places and cultures as sources of primitivist imagery but not of modernist artworks. In *Art for a Modern India*, Rebecca M. Brown explores the emergence of a self-conscious Indian modernism—in painting, drawing, sculpture, architecture, film, and photography—in the years between independence and 1980, by which time the Indian art scene had changed significantly and postcolonial discourse had begun to complicate mid-century ideas of nationalism. Through close analyses of specific objects of art and design, Brown describes how Indian artists engaged with questions of authenticity, iconicity, narrative, urbanization, and science and technology. She explains how the filmmaker Satyajit Ray presented the rural Indian village as a socially complex space rather than as the idealized site of "authentic India"; in his acclaimed *Apu Trilogy*, how the painter Bhupen Khakhar reworked Indian folk idioms and borrowed iconic images from calendar prints in his paintings of urban dwellers, and how Indian architects developed a revivalist style of bold architectural gestures anchored in India's past as they planned the Ashok Hotel and the Vigyan Bhavan Conference Center, both in New Delhi. Discussing these and other works of art and design, Brown chronicles the mid-twentieth-century trajectory of India's modern visual culture.

[R]commended for libraries with graduate programs in art history and for others looking to expand their modern and non-Western art history collections. — Melissa Aho, ARLIS/NA s