

## **Heritage in contemporary visual Art: the legacy of Raja Ravi Varma**

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Nehru reflecting on the cultural heritage stated that ‘Indian Art is intimately associated with Indian religion and philosophy’. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a strong connection was established between art and nationalism. The Indian national liberation movement was not only confined to the political sphere but also was a cultural struggle to dismantle the hegemonic edifice of the Colonial rule.

The paper would explore the contributions of Raja Ravi Varma of Kerala, known for salon art in India, who made his mark by series of impressive realistic depictions of Indian cultural and religious life by taking up historical and mythological themes in painting. Actually what he depicted was the early vision of civilization of the classical times – the mythic golden age. His paintings created a mental picture for an average Indian about their popular deities. Besides, his art highlighted the rich cultural diversity and its underlying unity, thereby developing the perception of India as one nation at the time when India was in the process of making a nation.

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