

My father, a multifaceted man, was far ahead of the times. His thirst for knowledge ~~led~~ led him to explore avenues of learning beyond scholastic and academic boundaries. He would travel to Mumbai frequently to collect books on various subjects ranging from painting to photography + embroidery to film making. These books were imported from Britain by English men who had big stores in Mumbai.

This in depth knowledge on so many subjects resulted in our home became a hub for intellectual discussions. Moreover, my father believed that this exposure ~~to~~ should be given to women so that they could awaken their inherent talents + capabilities for an all round growth. He took my mother under his wing + tutored her in embroidery, sewing + pastel drawing. In her free time she would develop these skills ~~well~~ and soon her work won her many awards in local competitions.

This energising + creative atmosphere at home naturally impacted on us. We, 6 daughters ~~and~~ ~~especially~~, ~~we~~ thrived in an milieu ~~where~~ where ~~there was always~~ something we were encouraged to keep our eyes + ears open to absorb the happenings in arts + music. In an age when girls were only restricted to household chores, we were fortunate to get such an "education". This was the reason why 5 out of the 6 sisters went on to become career women. From Kirloskar, to Income Tax, to Fashion design, to ACC + finally Architecture, we ventured into various professional streams. ~~For~~ In fact my elder sister who worked in Income Tax went on to win prizes in photography, flower shows + cookery after going through specialized courses in these fields in Mumbai.

- As a result of my winning the gold medal + a fellowship from J.J. School of Arts I was invited to be part of the PAG. Ambadas Gade joined with me (1948). On the 1st day ^{new entrants} ~~the~~ had to do a painting. I did one of a woman sitting on a swing + her friends pushing the swing ^{in the style of} ~~inspired by~~ Anvita Shergil.
- Tyeb Mehta, V. S. Gaitonde were members + frequent visitors were Lalita Jaini + Geeta Dutt (she had not married Gurdutt then).
- Ideas were exchanged at regular get-togethers. At one such discussion Prof. Ahivari commented on my painting of "The Brahmins" where in he noticed the strong use of rust/Maroon in Brahmin pravachan painting - this was the influence of colours worn by widows in Kolhapur whom I used to see in temples near our house.
- Members of PAG used to go on trips like educational tours to various cultural/art centres. One such trip was to Udaipur to experience the Dasseera festival at the Maharajas Palace. For a number of the artists witnessing the "Bali" (Sacrifice) to Goddess Durga was a novel experience but, ~~since~~ I had seen it being done many times ^{ever} ~~during~~ the years during the Dasseera festival in Kolhapur + knew that it was an ^{intrinsic} ritual of the festival.
- (On a different note - Many years later on location ^{in Rajasthan} shooting for Reshma aur Shera, Waheeda Rehman fainted on seeing the Bali being done.)
- One of the memories I took back from our visits to various local sights was the trip to Gangaur Ghat. This was the influence behind my painting of the "Bathing Ghat".
- I used to do a lot of sketches which fascinated the other artists especially V. S. Gaitonde.

I was initially staying at the YWCA where there were too many distractions. So during the last phase at J.J., I moved to a Convent near Dockyard Station. This place provided the much needed peaceful environment + the space to put up my easel + paint. The area around the Convent was dark & lonely so one tried to get home quickly. The Nuns lived & moved around in an area above the

dining hall below which were living quarters. There were girls from Tamil Nadu & even Sri Lanka - I was fascinated by the draped fabric that the Sri Lankan girls wore. All students/working girls and sometimes visitors/guests stayed in the living quarters.

The whole experience at the convent was amazing. Watching their rituals, hearing them chanting & being so closely connected to their daily lives had a huge influence on me since I had never seen or heard of anything like this before. The muted & deep hues during the "normal" days at the convent juxtaposed with the pageantry at Christmas Eve Mass in the Byculla church inspired me to paint the "Nuns" as a tribute to them. Surprisingly, when the painting was exhibited at a French get-together with PAG nobody ^{saw} ~~saw~~ it as something drawn from personal experience but insisted that I had done a copy of some foreign work.

Both the Lying Lady & the Nuns were painted as part of my study at J.J. The play of light through the stained glass windows and glass arches above doors added

Hima Devi & her husband had come to Kollapur while I was still at school. She staged a Rabindranath Tagore play in which I had a 2 line part - to raise funds for the Bengal Famine. I was so enamoured by her that I would spend all my free time with her. When she returned to Mumbai she gave an open invitation to visit her. Later seeing my talent in art blossom, my art teacher asked me to visit her. Hima Devi's mother worked at Fashion & Beauty & took me to meet the Editor who gave me a job from the very next day. Since I was looking for every opportunity to become self sufficient & be a support rather than a burden for my mother, I grabbed the opportunity. In fact, this ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~an~~ financial independence was one of the reasons for my move into cinema besides of course the challenges that working in cinema, which I found exciting. Unfortunately the members of PAG including Ara felt that I should concentrate on painting & thought that I was degrading myself by moving to cinema which was too

From Fashion & Beauty I moved to Eves Weekly. My last painting was of Mahatma Gandhi & Kasturba in Black & White for the Independence Day Issue - 15th Aug 1947.

- In 1966 I received a six month scholarship to Paris to study Fashion design from the French Government. Interestingly they called me in last for the interview because, as they said, my resume was the longest. At that time I had just finished work on Annapali.

Paris opened up the world for me. Every weekend I would make trips ~~to Spain~~ after my classes. I travelled to Spain to absorb the art of Goya & the colours & sights of the gondolas! Another weekend saw me ~~absorb~~ taking in the art & cultural heritage of Rome!! As students we were given a lot of opportunities to visit fashion houses & see the big names in the couture world at work. We were constantly exchanging ideas - I got a lot of requests to teach them how to drape the sari.

Being a student of Art visiting the European museums gave me the biggest "high"