John Xaviers

**Roy, Jamini**  (1887-1972)

Jamini Roy is considered by many scholars as one of the most important modern artists of pre-Independent India. What was so special about him was his proficiency in western academic realism which he completely rejected to adopt folk traditions such as the Kalighat patua. He mass produced his folk-like paintings in a guild/ kharkhana/ workshop in order to reject the uniqueness of the modern art object and to democratise the art collection process. He rejected bourgeois taste and buying habits. Jamini Roy invented his own folk inspired form as an anti-colonial visual idiom and although an unbeliever/agnostic, he purposefully painted Indian religious/ mythological themes as an antidote to the ideas of colonial art education, which he would have considered antithetical in the nationalist fervour. Roy was also adamant about the use of home-grown art materials and he used tempera with tamarind glue as a binder. Jamini Roy also painted Christian themes to test his ideas, to see if the folk schema that he developed in his workshop could be used successfully in non-Indian religious contexts. Roy simplified his curvilinear painting method to such an extent that the indexical mark of the modern master’s brush strokes could be replaced with the reproducibility of a ‘schema’ in an art workshop. Such simplification has resulted in an upsurge of many Jamini Roy fakes, but this is a collector’s problem, the very bourgeois fascination which Jamini Roy rejected through making multiple copies.

References and further reading:

<http://ngmaindia.gov.in/sh-jamini-roy.asp>

Dey, Bishnu, and John Irwin. *Jamini Roy*. Indian Society of Oriental Art, 1944.

Mitter, Partha. *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations*. Cambridge University Press, 1994.

———. *The Triumph of Modernism: India’s Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1922-1947*. Reaktion Books, 2007.

Roy, Jamini, and National Gallery of Modern Art (New Delhi India). *Jamini Roy, 1887-1972, Centenary Exhibition, National Gallery of Modern Art, Jaipur House, India Gate, New Delhi, April 15-May 17, 1987*. The Gallery, 1987.

Tagore, Rabindranath, Amrita Sher-Gil, Jamini Roy, and Vadehra Art Gallery. *Rabindranath Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gil, Jamini Roy: 10 September 2004*