

## 5. Paintings and Illustrations

### Synopsis

This module introduces the painted image and illustrations – two closely related visual media that communicate in similar and yet different ways.

### Lectures

5.1 Introduction to paintings and illustrations

5.2 Paintings

5.3 Illustrations



Fig 5.1.00

### 5.1 Introduction to paintings and illustrations

Paintings and illustrations are similar visual responses that differ in the nature of communication that they set out to address. They are similar because they are both visual images. Drawing often precedes the act of painting or illustrating, though occasionally, if drawing has been internalized well, one may do away with this step and begin with paint directly.



Fig. 5.1.01

A diptych is two separate works that are meant to be viewed together. The works have conceptually and formally affinities and are intended to setup a negotiation with each other. The two paintings above have been conceived as a diptych that dwells upon narrative and non-narrative traditions in painting and philosophical thought. The abstract and the figurative (or illustrative) in works of visual art, find an echo in the Hinayana and Mahayana schools of Buddhist thought. Hinayana, is relatively more abstract (and esoteric). Mahayana had wider appeal and was easier to understand.



Fig. 5.1.02

Detail of a work by V.S. Gaitonde. One may regard such a painting as an abstract work, as there are no objects or figures that the work refers to in some obvious manner. An abstract work, however, can evoke emotive responses through subconscious associations suggested by colours, textures and forms.



Fig. 5.1.03

The figurative and the illustrative lends itself to easier interpretation as decoding such works and finding meaning in them is often simpler (than works that are abstract). Finding meaning appears to be a deep-seated psychological need amongst viewers. Illustrated books, film and animation that have a story are examples where visual aesthetics have found an application. It is important to allow a painting to exist without interpretation. An illustration is meant to be interpreted.



Fig. 5.1.04

A work by the artist Anjali Ela Menon. It is a figurative work, as there is a chair, a garment and a kite that can be identified. But the meaning of the work is not immediately evident. The painting could serve as an illustration for some appropriate story. Hence the boundaries between paintings and illustrations can be blurred.



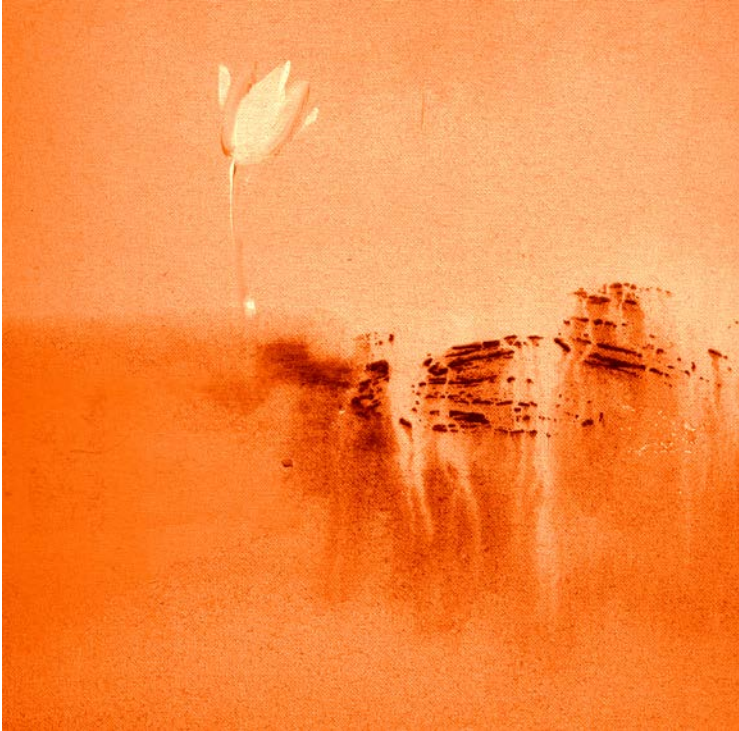


Fig. 5.1.05

Is the work above a painting or an illustration? Is it figurative or abstract?



Fig. 5.1.06

The work above is titled 'Solutions Looking for Problems'. Would you call it a painting or an illustration?



Fig. 5.1.07

The work above is untitled. What would you title it? What is the role played by the title of a painting? Why are some paintings left untitled?



Fig. 5.1.08

The work above could have been titled as 'Being and Nothingness' or it could have been titled as 'A cat watching a sunset.' How do these two suggestions compare with the choice of leaving the work untitled?