From Folk Painting to Book Illustration: A Practice-Based Study On Applying Jamini Roy's Visual Language to Krishna's Serpent Narrative

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ABSTRACT

Indian mythology serves as the bedrock of the nation's cultural consciousness, offering a vast spectrum of narratives that function as ancestral heirlooms across generations. Among modern Indian artists who consciously engaged with folk aesthetics, **Jamini Roy (1887–1972)** occupies a significant position. Rejecting Western academic realism, Roy developed a distinct visual style inspired by Bengal's patachitra, temple terracotta reliefs, Kalighat paintings, and rural craft traditions. His work emphasized simplicity, bold outlines, flattened spatial treatment, symbolic color usage, and rhythmic composition.

Parallelly, **book illustration** functions as a narrative medium that translates textual stories into visual experiences, especially in the context of mythology, where visual interpretation plays a critical role in shaping cultural understanding. This study illustrates the episodes from the life of **Lord Krishna**, particularly the dramatic encounter with the serpent Kaliya in the river Yamuna, offer rich narrative potential for visual reinterpretation due to their emotional intensity, symbolic depth, and dynamic action.

This research adopts a **practice-based approach** to explore how Jamini Roy's folk visual language can be adapted into contemporary **book illustration design** for the Krishna- Serpent episode. Rather than merely imitating Roy's paintings, the study investigates how his stylistic principles can be reinterpreted to suit narrative sequencing, character depiction, and page composition in illustrated books. The research situates itself at the intersection of art history, illustration practice, and visual storytelling.

Keywords: Practice-Based Research, Jamini Roy, Folk Art, Book Illustration, Krishna, Kaliya Serpent, Visual Storytelling

1. INTRODUCTION

For centuries, art formed an integral part of the enormous cultural heritage of India, serving not just as aesthetic expression but as a "physical reminder of time, feelings, memories, creativity" and the capacity to protect what is culturally significant. However, the evolution of Indian modern art has been closely linked to a complex search for identity, a growth trajectory that has been somewhat dissimilar to that of the West. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the accomplishments of European artists influenced the Indian art scenario significantly; yet, during a time when the nation's "identity element was in distress" a

wave of talented artists came forward to foster a sense of trust regarding indigenous traditional values and the enormous cultural legacy of the land.

The trajectory of Indian art in the early 20th century was defined by a tension between colonial academic realism and a rising nationalist consciousness. Jamini Roy (1887–1972), born in the Bankura district of West Bengal, stands as a pivotal figure who navigated this conflict by rejecting the European mode of expression in favour of an indigenous visual language. Although trained in the rigorous Western tradition at the Government School of Art in Calcutta, where he mastered oil painting and portraiture, Roy eventually found this mode inadequate for expressing the Indian reality. He realized that the academic grammar of the 19th century—concerned with "documenting nature... perspective, light and shade, anatomical drawing"—could not capture the soul of India.

Jamini Roy became a "living legend who spoke through his paintings in the language of common people". He revolutionized modern art by consciously drawing inspiration from traditional folk-art forms, specifically the rural crafts of Bengal such as the patachitra scrolls, Kalighat paintings, and ritualistic artifacts. His unique style merged these traditional elements with a robust approach, creating a distinctive visual language characterized by "bold lines, vibrant colours and simplified motifs". Roy's art drew heavily from Bengali folk traditions, using these simplified forms to convey rich cultural narratives deeply rooted in Indian folklore and mythology, often depicting themes like Krishna with Gopis or Mother and Child with an "expressive style".

Fig 1.1 Jamini Roy (1887–1972)

https://www.artzolo.com/blogs/art-logs/master-artist-jamini-roy?srsltid=AfmBOoqPrkIb42hp8neOFkqqkfGRugZ_osHjBsl2CuaTkQ6iubS7lK-K

In a contemporary market often flooded with "thoughtless design diversifications" that erode the sensibility of traditional craft, it is vital to retain the originality of art by integrating it into new media. The objective of this paper is to analyse Roy's transition from academic naturalism to a stylized folk aesthetic

and to demonstrate how his specific techniques can be adapted for the field of book illustration design. By examining his rejection of three-dimensional illusionism and his embrace of the "flat" surface, this study highlights the graphic potential of Roy's work for modern print media. Specifically, this practice-based research aims to re-contextualize Roy's static "ideographs" to narrate the dynamic episode of the Krishna-Kaliya narrative.

Hence, this study situates Jamini Roy's artistic practice within the broader evolution of Indian modern art, highlighting his deliberate rejection of colonial academic realism in favour of an indigenous visual language. By reinterpreting his folk-inspired aesthetic for contemporary book illustration, the research underscores the continued relevance of traditional art forms as dynamic tools for visual storytelling in modern design contexts.

Aim of the Study-

The primary aim of this research is to bridge the gap between traditional folk aesthetics and contemporary visual storytelling. This is achieved through the following objectives:

1. To analyse the key visual characteristics of Jamini Roy's folk painting style, including line quality, form simplification, color palette, spatial treatment, and symbolic representation.

2. To explore the practical adaptation of Jamini Roy's visual language into book illustration design for the Krishna serpent (Kaliya) episode through experimental illustration practice.

3. To evaluate the effectiveness of folk-inspired visual storytelling in enhancing narrative clarity, cultural authenticity, and emotional engagement within mythological book illustrations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarly discourse surrounding Jamini Roy is characterized by a dynamic tension between the celebration of his indigenous "primitivism" and the critique of his stylized formalism (Mitter, 1994, The Triumph of Modernism; Subramanyan, 1987, The Living Tradition). To understand the viability of adopting Roy's style for contemporary book illustration, one must navigate the complex historical and theoretical frameworks that have defined his legacy. This review examines the evolution of Roy's aesthetic philosophy, the polarizing critical reception of his work, and the "workshop" mode of production that aligns his practice with the reproductive nature of illustration (Benjamin, 1936, The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction).

2.1 The Rejection of the Colonial Gaze
The foundation of Roy's artistic identity lies in a conscious rejection of the Western academic realism he mastered at the Government School of Art in Calcutta (Mitter, 1994, Art and Nationalism in Colonial India). Despite his competence in oil painting, Roy grew dissatisfied with the limitations of European naturalism. He famously critiqued the Western reliance on light and shade, arguing that the use of shadows to give volume to sacred figures, such as the Virgin Mary, stripped them of their divinity and reduced them to mere human forms (Roy, cited in Mitter, 1994, The Triumph of Modernism). He sought instead the "power of the bone" and structural rhythm he observed in the works of Rabindranath Tagore, which he felt protested the "sophisticated" and "orientalist" art of the preceding centuries (Tagore, 1922, The Religion of an Artist; Mitter, 1994, Art and Nationalism in Colonial India). This pivotal shift marked

a move away from the "fakely constructed bourgeois space" of Calcutta's art scene toward a visual language rooted in the soil of Bankura (Mitter, 1994, The Triumph of Modernism).

2.2 Critical Modernity and the "Virtual Cosmopolis"

Art historians have rigorously debated the implications of Roy's "return to roots" (Mitter, 1994, The Triumph of Modernism; Suhrawardy, 1930, Jamini Roy). Partha Mitter serves as a primary voice in positioning Roy not as a regressive traditionalist, but as a proponent of "critical modernity" (Mitter, 1994, The Triumph of Modernism). Mitter argues that Roy's engagement with folk art was a political manifesto, an ideological resistance against colonial industrial capitalism and the teleological certainty of Western progress (Mitter, 1994, Art and Nationalism in Colonial India). Mitter situates Roy within a "virtual cosmopolis," suggesting that Roy's primitivism shared structural affinities with Western avant-garde movements like German Expressionism, yet remained distinct by restoring a pre-colonial, communitarian worldview (Mitter, 1994, The Triumph of Modernism). Conversely, critics like Shahid Suhrawardy interpreted Roy's "Indianness" through intrinsic aesthetic forms rather than political ideology (Suhrawardy, 1930, Jamini Roy). This divergence highlights a central theme in the scholarship: whether Roy's art functioned as nationalist resistance or as a formalist aesthetic experiment.

2.3 The Marxist Interpretation and the "Awakening of the Mass"

Among Roy's most vocal admirers were Bengali Marxist intellectuals like Bishnu Dey. Dey championed Roy for emancipating Indian art from urban elitism, enabling the intelligentsia to perceive reality through the visual language of the marginal masses (Dey, 1956, Shilpa O Samaj). For Dey, Roy's art facilitated a "reawakening of our indigenous mass" by elevating folk culture to the status of high art (Dey, 1956, Shilpa O Samaj). However, Dey's admiration also reveals a preference for the "conditioned" form of art over the raw, suggesting that Roy's deliberate selection and refinement of folk motifs rendered them accessible to the urban middle class (Dey, 1956, Shilpa O Samaj). This intersection of Marxist ideology and aesthetic mediation positions Roy as a bridge between the rural artisan and the urban intellectual (Mitter, 1994, The Triumph of Modernism).

2.4 The Polemics of Repetition and "Frozen" Tradition

While Mitter and Dey canonize Roy as a modernist pioneer, a significant body of scholarship critiques the limitations of his "neo-folk" style (Subramanyan, 1987, The Living Tradition). K.G. Subramanyan offers a critical assessment, arguing that Roy's paintings lacked the "sly humour" and "earthiness" intrinsic to their prototypes, particularly the Kalighat patas (Subramanyan, 1987, The Living Tradition). Subramanyan characterizes Roy's linear conventions—such as almond-shaped eyes and phlegmatic contours—as "terribly formulistic" and stripped of the spontaneous vitality that animated the original folk idiom (Subramanyan, 1987, The Living Tradition).

This critique is extended by Robin Mondal and Ratnabali Chatterjee, who interrogate the "reality" represented in Roy's oeuvre (Mondal, 1992, Jamini Roy and the Question of Reality; Chatterjee, 2006, Folk Art and Modernity). Mondal argues that Roy's immersion in a "complacent existence" resulted in an aesthetic that was "restrictively frigid" and disengaged from the socio-political upheavals of the Bengal Famine and the Second World War (Mondal, 1992, Jamini Roy and the Question of Reality). Chatterjee further contends that Roy constructed a de-historicized "village utopia" that erased the satirical and critical social commentary embedded in the Kalighat tradition (Chatterjee, 2006, Folk Art and Modernity). By neutralizing the ironic voice of the patuas—who historically critiqued urban hypocrisy—Roy is seen to have transformed folk art into a "culturally conditioned commodity" for metropolitan consumption,

reducing a living tradition into static decorative formulae (Chatterjee, 2006, Folk Art and Modernity). Chatterjee additionally argues that Roy's myths became "private myths," severed from the economic and political structures that sustained them, thereby failing to articulate the anti-colonial struggle in explicit terms (Chatterjee, 2006, Folk Art and Modernity).

2.5 The Studio as Workshop: A Precedent for Illustration

Central to this study is the scholarship surrounding Roy's mode of production, which challenges the rigid separation between "fine art" and "illustration" (Mitter, 1994, The Triumph of Modernism). Roy deliberately subverted the modernist ideal of the solitary artistic genius by restructuring his studio as a collaborative workshop (Mitter, 1994, Art and Nationalism in Colonial India). Mitter documents that Roy frequently employed assistants—including his son—to execute color application and often left works unsigned, thereby consciously undermining the "aura" of originality articulated by Walter Benjamin (Benjamin, 1936, The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction; Mitter, 1994, The Triumph of Modernism).

Roy's ambition was to create art that was "cheap, accessible, and democratic," echoing the collective production models of the folk artisans he admired (Mitter, 1994, Art and Nationalism in Colonial India). He resisted inflated market prices, insisting on affordability for the middle class (Venkatachalam, 1970, Contemporary Indian Art Criticism). While critics such as G. Venkatachalam condemned this method as "soulless repetition" driven by popularity rather than artistic integrity (Venkatachalam, 1970, Contemporary Indian Art Criticism), this very approach validates Roy's visual language for book illustration. His reliance on flat tempera surfaces, assertive contour lines, and easily reproducible motifs reveals a graphic sensibility that prioritizes clarity, circulation, and accessibility over the cult of the unique original (Benjamin, 1936, The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction).

Hence, the review of literature observes that Jamini Roy's artistic legacy is situated within a complex interplay of nationalist ideology, modernist formalism, and folk reinterpretation. While his work is both celebrated for its democratic accessibility and critiqued for its repetitive stylization, his workshop-based mode of production and graphic visual language present a compelling precedent for adaptation in contemporary book illustration practices.

3. METHODOLOGY: DECONSTRUCTING THE "PATUA" TECHNIQUE

Jamini Roy, a living legend who spoke through his paintings in the language of common people, rejected the 19th-century academic grammar of "perspective, light and shade, anatomical drawing". To honour this legacy, this research follows a practice-based research methodology, where creative practice forms the core mode of inquiry and knowledge generation. This work practically demonstrates how Roy's aesthetic can be revitalized through modern digital tools. The methodology is divided into three interconnected phases: Visual and Contextual Analysis, Practice-Based Illustration Development, and Reflective Evaluation.

Fig 3.1- Tribal Pattachitra Painting

Tribal Life - Patua/Pattachitra painting

3.1 Visual and Contextual Analysis (Research & Reference Study)

The initial phase of this study involved a "qualitative approach" to analysing the values of Roy's painting style. This stage focused on a qualitative analysis of selected Jamini Roy paintings, specifically examining the treatment of human and divine figures, the use of bold contour lines, and flat color application. Special attention was paid to his rejection of perspective depth in favor of frontal poses and iconic imagery.

To ensure the narrative remained culturally resonant, a representative sample of Roy's work was studied, identifying "recurring themes, motifs, and styles". Simultaneously, textual and visual interpretations of the Krishna–Kaliya episode from traditional sources were reviewed to understand narrative requirements. This research focused specifically on two major categories found in Roy's oeuvre: "mythological and folklore themes," which feature intricate patterns, and "tribal figures", known for being vibrant and culturally rich. This stage was crucial to avoid the "thoughtless design diversifications" often seen in the market and to ensure the illustrations honoured the "indigenous traditional values" of the art form.

Fig 3. 2- Untitled (Musician and Dancers)

https://dagworld.com/royj264ny.html

3.2 Practice-Based Illustration Development

Based on the visual analysis, a series of concept sketches, character designs, and final illustrations were created for the Krishna serpent episode. This phase involved translating static folk imagery into sequential narrative visuals and experimenting with folk-inspired compositions suitable for book spreads.

3.2.1. Character & Environment Planning

Character Design Strategy: The character archetypes were finalized by cross-referencing specific motifs found in the research phase with the requirements of the Krishna-Kaliya narrative. The protagonists, Krishna and Balaram, were modelled after the artist's iconic male deities found in his "mythological and folklore themes", adopting the "simplified forms", indigo skin tones, and large almond eyes characteristic of the artist. For the supporting cast, the design for Krishna's parents (Nand and Yashoda) was derived from Roy's extensive depictions of "maternal bonds", capturing the expressive tenderness and rounded contours found in his female figures.

Krishna's friends, Subala and Madhu, were adapted from Roy's studies of "tribal figures", ensuring they appeared "vibrant and culturally rich" to reflect the liveliness of the cowherd community. Finally, the antagonist (the serpent Kaliya) and the various animals including the monkey, two cows, and fish were conceptualized not as realistic biological creatures but as decorative icons. Drawing from Roy's works that utilize "abstract and geometric patterns", these figures were constructed using bold curves and stylized markings to maintain the "robust approach" of the folk aesthetic.

Background and Environment Elements: To create the setting for the "Attack of the Serpent King", the environment was treated as a flat surface design rather than a window into reality, adhering to Roy's rejection of the academic grammar of "perspective, light and shade". The "rural scenes" of Vrindavan were constructed using flat planes of color and "intricate patterns" similar to those found in traditional scrolls. The river Yamuna was depicted not with realistic fluid transparency, but with stylized wave motifs and floral borders, ensuring the background supported the "bold lines" of the characters without creating visual clutter. This study approach ensures the distinct visual language celebrates "indigenous creativity" while functioning effectively as a backdrop for the sequential narrative.

3.2.2. Visual Development (Hand Sketching)

Just as the "tracing of design" was historically a difficult but necessary step in traditional crafts, this study prioritized the manual tracing of Roy's forms. Initial concepts were hand-sketched to translate the "rural scenes" into the specific poses required for the story. This phase focused on reducing anatomical complexity to the "simplified motifs" that constitute the grammar of Roy's art.
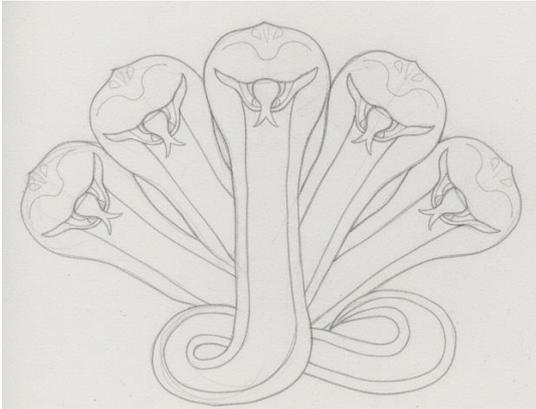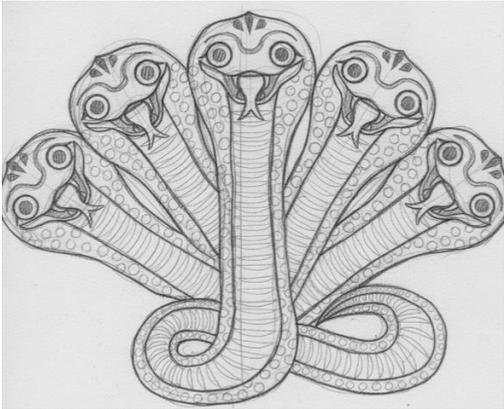
Character Subject	Stage 1- Structural Construction	Stage 2- Stylistic Refinement
The Divine Protagonist (Krishna)	**Figure 3.2.2(a): Initial geometric layout**. Note- The use of circles and ovals to establish the "rounded geometry" typical of Roy's figures. The anatomy is simplified into basic shapes to ensure the iconic frontal stance.	**Figure 3.2.2(b): Detailed pencil study**. The sketch now incorporates Roy's signature "almond-shaped eyes," elongated eyebrows, and the traditional *dhoti* folds. The form is finalized to resemble the "doll-like" quality of Bengal clay toys.
The Antagonist (Kaliya Serpent)	**Figure 3.2.2(c): Symmetrical framework**. The five heads are arranged in a rhythmic fan shape. This stage focuses on the balance of the curves and the "repetitive lines" of the coils without surface detail.	**Figure 3.2.2(d): Ornamental detailing**. The "robust approach" is applied here through the addition of decorative scales, hood patterns, and anthropomorphic facial expressions on the snake heads, mirroring Roy's decorative animal motifs.

Table 3.2.2: **Visual Development – Progression from Structural Geometry to Folk Motif**.

This table illustrates the manual sketching phase, demonstrating how Jamini Roy's "simplified motifs" were constructed using basic geometric forms before adding stylized details.

3.2.3. Storyboarding

Roy's art drew heavily from Bengali folk traditions, including "scrolls" which are inherently narrative. Honouring this tradition, the storyboarding phase arranged the visual sequence to function like a modern scroll. The layout was planned to reject the Western academic focus on "perspective", instead favouring a flat, rhythmic composition that emphasizes the "bold lines" of the figures against the environment.

3.2.4. Digital Asset Creation

To replicate the "robust approach" of folk art within a digital vector environment (Adobe Illustrator 2026), specific technical steps were taken:

- **Brush Stroke Creation:** Roy's work is characterized by "bold lines". To avoid the mechanical uniformity of standard digital vectors, a custom calligraphic brush was created. This brush was technically configured to taper from both ends while remaining thick in the middle, simulating the pressure sensitivity of the traditional folk brush used in the Kalighat paintings that inspired Roy.
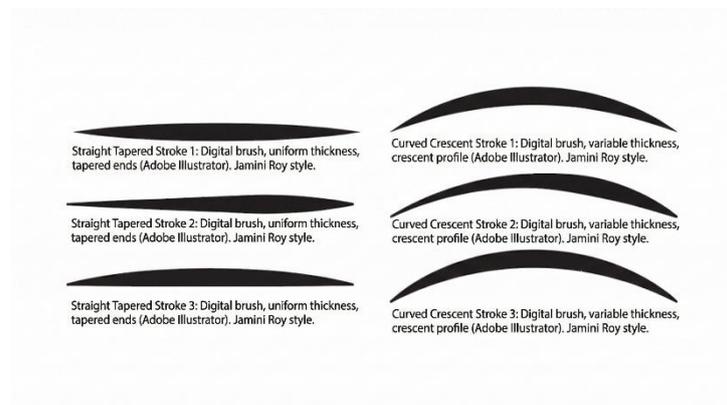

Figure 3.2.4(a): Custom Calligraphic Brush Configuration.

Custom "Patua" brushes created to simulate the variable thickness and tapered ends of traditional goat-hair brushes.

- **Colour Sampling:** The aesthetic appeal of Jamini Roy's paintings lies in their "vibrant colours". To maintain authenticity, the color palette was not chosen arbitrarily. Using the eyedropper tool, specific hex codes were sampled directly from high-resolution digital scans of original mythological and rural artworks. These sampled colours—deep reds, ochres, and indigos—were saved as a swatch library, ensuring the illustrations adhered to the "indigenous creative output" of the artist.
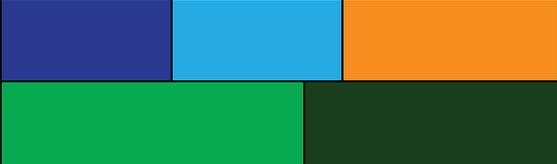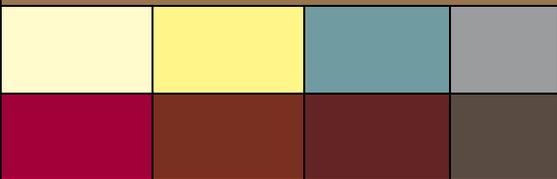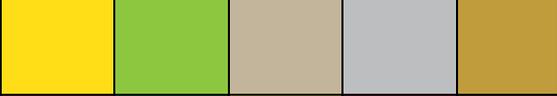
Character Asset	Target Attribute	Sampled Palette Swatch
1. Krishna	Skin	
	Dress	
	Feather	
2. Balram	Skin	
	Dress	
3. Yashoda (Mother)	Skin	
	Dress	
4. Nand (Father)	Skin	
	Dress	
5. Friend- Madhu, Subala	Skin	
	Dress	
6. Kaliya	Skin	
7. Monkey	Skin	
8. Cow	Skin	

Table 3.2.4: Indigenous Color Palette Sampling Strategy.

Note: Hex codes were sampled directly from high-resolution scans of Jamini Roy's original mythological works to ensure cultural authenticity.

3.2.5. Layout & Scene Setup

In this study, the final composition focused on integrating the characters into "rural scenes" typical of Roy's work. The river Yamuna and the riverbanks were constructed using "intricate patterns" and stylized motifs. The background elements were treated as flat surface designs, ensuring the "bold lines and vibrant colours" of the characters remained the focal point. This fusion ensures the illustrations are "visually compelling and culturally resonant", preserving the physical reminder of community memory.

3.3. Reflective Evaluation

The study's final phase of the methodology involves a critical reflection on the completed illustrations. This evaluation is measured against three key criteria:

- **Fidelity to Jamini Roy's visual philosophy:** Assessing how accurately the digital practice honours the rejection of perspective and the use of the "robust approach".

- **Narrative readability:** Ensuring the "simplified motifs" and flat compositions remain effective for book illustration and sequential storytelling.

- **Balance of Aesthetics:** Finding the equilibrium between traditional folk aesthetics and the technical needs of contemporary illustration.

This study demonstrates that Jamini Roy's "Patua" technique can be systematically deconstructed and reinterpreted through a practice-based methodology that integrates visual analysis, manual sketching, and digital illustration tools. By balancing fidelity to indigenous aesthetics with contemporary narrative requirements, the methodology establishes a replicable framework for adapting traditional folk-art principles into modern book illustration practices. For a modern illustrator, adopting this methodology involves a digital or physical emulation of these constraints: limiting the color palette to earthy, flat tones and prioritizing line weight over tonal rendering.

4. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF ROY'S PAINTING INTO BOOK ILLUSTRATION

The culmination of this practice-based study is the design of a prototype illustrated book, which serves as the tangible application of Roy's visual grammar. By translating the "freshness, directness, and robustness" of Roy's folk-derived idiom into digital print formats, the project demonstrates the versatility of his "flat" dimensionality for modern storytelling. The illustrations utilize Roy's characteristic "bold, sweeping brush strokes" and "opaque, non-textured" earth tones to ensure the visual clarity essential for accompanying narrative text. Furthermore, the page layouts incorporate the "ornamental borders" and "decorative motifs" typical of Roy's panel paintings, effectively framing the typography. This application confirms that Roy's "workshop" philosophy—which prioritized accessibility and the democratization of

art over the exclusivity of the masterpiece—aligns seamlessly with the reproductive nature of contemporary book publishing.

4.1 Visual Language and Form Simplification

Jamini Roy's figures are characterized by **simplified anatomy**, rounded forms, and exaggerated eyes, which convey spirituality and emotional clarity. In the Krishna serpent episode, this approach was adopted to portray Krishna not as a realistic child but as an **iconic divine presence**. Krishna's body is stylized with minimal musculature, frontal orientation, and rhythmic curves, aligning with Roy's emphasis on symbolic representation rather than physical realism.

4.2 Line, Composition, and Spatial Treatment

Roy's bold, continuous outlines serve both decorative and structural purposes. In the book illustrations, thick contour lines define characters and serpentine forms, ensuring visual clarity even in complex action scenes. Spatial depth is deliberately flattened, with the river Yamuna, serpent coils, and figures arranged in layered planes rather than perspectival space. This flattening supports the folk aesthetic while enhancing readability on a printed page.

4.3 Color Symbolism and Palette

Roy's restrained color palette, often using earthy tones, white, ochre, indigo, and black, was selectively adapted. Krishna's blue form contrasts against warm background tones, while the serpent is rendered using rhythmic patterns and repetitive curves. Color is used symbolically rather than naturalistically, reinforcing the mythic tone of the narrative.

4.4 Narrative Sequencing in Book Illustration

One of the key challenges in adapting Roy's style lies in translating **static iconic images into sequential storytelling**. This study addresses the challenge by maintaining stylistic consistency while varying composition across spreads. Repetition of motifs, such as Krishna's posture and the serpent's coils, creates visual continuity while guiding the reader through the dramatic progression of the episode.

To validate the adaptation of Jamini Roy's aesthetic, a direct visual comparison was conducted between the original source material and the digitally illustrated characters. This analysis demonstrates how the "distinctive visual language" of the artist was preserved while evolving into a sequential narrative format.

4.4.1 Adaptation of the Divine Protagonist (Krishna & Balaram) As observed in **Figure 1.2**, the character design of Krishna retains the iconic grammar of Roy's mythological figures. **Figure 1.1** displays Roy's traditional depiction of male deities, characterized by "simplified forms" indigo-blue skin tones, and large, elongated almond eyes.
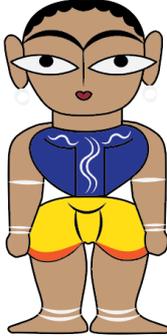
Category	Krishna Reference	Balaram Reference
Paintings made by Jamini Roy	 **Fig 4.1.1(a)- Krishna and Balaram by Jamini Roy.** https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/krishna-and-balarama-124044 This painting serves as the primary reference for the "indigo-blue" skin tone, the tribhanga (standing with three bends) posture, and the rhythmic, bold contour lines.	 **Fig 4.1.1(b)- Two Figures (Mosaic Series) by Jamini Roy** https://www.tallengestore.com/products/krishna-with-balaram-jamini-roy-painting-large-art-prints This artwork demonstrates Roy's "architectural" phase, where he used geometric segmentation and pointillism. It serves as the structural reference for the frontal, wide-eyed look of the secondary characters.
Characters re-designed from Jamini Roy's Paintings	 **Fig 4.1.1(c)- Krishna (Final Digital Vector)**	 **Fig 4.1.1(d)- Balaram (Final Digital Vector)**

Table 4.4.1: Comparative Analysis: Traditional Source vs. Digital Adaptation.

This table juxtaposes Jamini Roy's original mythological panels with the re-designed digital characters, highlighting the preservation of key "folk" traits.

The illustration on the right confirms that these specific traits were successfully translated into the digital protagonist. The vector illustration replicates the posture and the "expressive style" of the original, ensuring that Krishna is instantly recognizable not just as a character, but as a cultural icon rooted in the folk tradition.

4.4.2 Transformation of Maternal Figures (Yashoda) Roy's oeuvre is famous for portraying "maternal bonds" with a sense of tenderness and rounded geometry. **Figure 2.2** highlights the translation of this archetype into the character of Yashoda.

Category	Yashoda Reference	Father Reference
Paintings made by Jamini Roy	**Fig 4.2.2(a)- Five Women (Gopinis) by Jamini Roy** https://artsfuse.org/170401/visual-arts-interview-new-publics-art-for-a-modern-india-1960s-to-90s/ This painting illustrates the "rounded geometry," heavy contouring, and tender expressions characteristic of Roy's maternal figures.	**Fig 4.2.2(b)- Seated Priest by Jamini Roy** https://www.artsy.net/artwork/jamini-roy-babu This figure serves as the primary reference for the father's posture, utilizing a "warm ochre" palette and simple white attire to depict domestic humility.
Characters re-designed from Jamini Roy's Paintings	**Fig 4.2.2(c)- Yashoda- Mother (Final Digital Vector)**	**Fig 4.2.2(d)- Nand- Father (Final Digital Vector)**

Table 4.4.2: Transformation of Parental Figures – Archetypal Reference vs. Digital Adaptation.
This comparative study demonstrates how Roy's "maternal bonds" and "seated figures" were

The comparative analysis reveals that the digital character preserves the heavy contouring and the specific draping of the sari found in the original source. By adopting the "vibrant colours" and solid fills typical of Roy's female figures, the illustration of Yashoda maintains the "originality and anaphase" of the traditional Bengal style while serving the narrative role of a concerned mother.

4.4.3 Stylization of Animals and Antagonists (Kaliya & Cows) Roy often depicted animals not as biological studies but as decorative elements composed of "abstract and geometric patterns". **Figure 3.2** illustrates the adaptation of this "robust approach" for the serpent King Kaliya and the grazing cows.

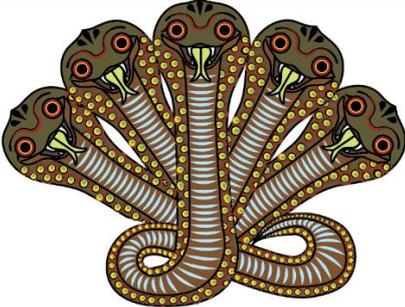| Category	Serpent Reference	Bovine Reference	Primate Reference
Paintings made by Jamini Roy	**Fig 4.3.3(a)- Manasa Devi (Snake Goddess) by Jamini Roy** https://dagworld.com/royj079.html Note how the serpents are depicted not as biological creatures but as "geometric abstractions" with repetitive scale patterns and bold rhythmic curves.	**Fig 4.3.3(b)- Mother and Calf by Jamini Roy** https://www.etsy.com/ca/listing/1307304150/jamini-roy-cow-and-calf-indian-art A classic example of Roy's "toy-like" animal figures, characterized by wide eyes, decorative body markings, and a rejection of anatomical realism.	**Fig 4.3.3(c)- Hanuman Panel (Ramayana Scroll) by Jamini Roy** https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Ram-and-Monkeys/B94D2DD58FBE1BA7 This scroll detail highlights the anthropomorphic treatment of monkeys, using "vibrant flat colours" and dynamic, kneeling postures.
Characters re-designed from			

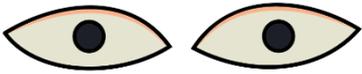| Jamini Roy's Paintings			
	Fig 4.3.3(d)- Kaliya (The Serpent King)	**Fig 4.3.3(e)-The Grazing Cows.**	**Fig 4.3.3(f)- The Monkey**

Table 4.4.3: Stylization of Fauna and Antagonists – From Decorative Motif to Narrative Character.

This comparison illustrates how Roy's "abstract and geometric patterns" for animals were adapted into dynamic characters (Kaliya, the Cows, and the Monkey) without losing their decorative identity.

As seen in the comparison, the digital serpent rejects realistic scales in favor of the bold, repetitive geometric curves found in Roy's artwork. Similarly, the cows in **Figure 3.4** mirror the decorative markings and "bold lines" of the folk motifs **Figure 3.3**, transforming the menacing scene into a composition that is "visually compelling and culturally resonant".

4.4.4 Technical Replication: Palette and Brushwork The final visual evaluation focuses on the technical "grammar of this art".

The following table summarizes the key aesthetic features integrated into the digital characters and the corresponding technicalities in **Adobe Illustrator**:

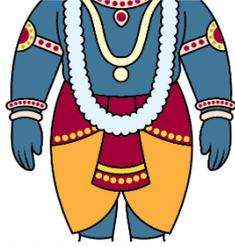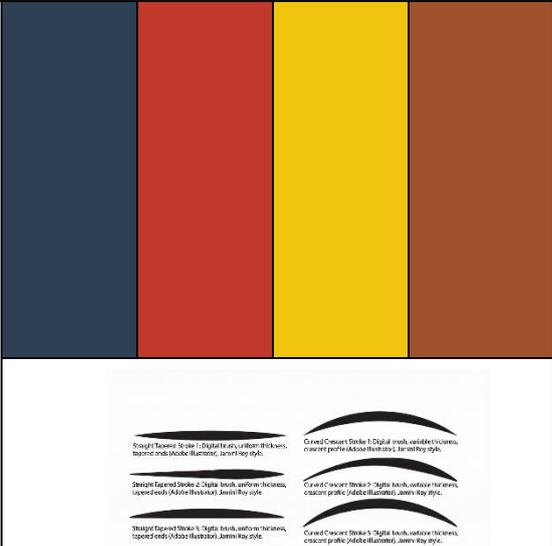| Aesthetic Feature	Technical Implementation in Adobe Illustrator	Final Result
Almond-Shaped Eyes	Executed using the **Pen Tool** to create symmetrical, elongated paths. The **Reflect Tool** ensured precision in the "expressive style" required for divine protagonists.	**Figure 4.4.4(a)**: Vector construction of the "Almond Eye" using the Reflect Tool for symmetry.

Round Body Shape	Utilized the **Curvature Tool** and **Shape Builder** to achieve the "rounded geometry" and heavy contouring characteristic of Roy's maternal and child figures.	 **Figure 4.4.4(b)**: Utilization of the Shape Builder tool to create organic, rounded anatomical forms.
Skin & Dress Motifs	Developed custom **Pattern Brushes** to apply "decorative motifs" and "intricate patterns" directly to the character's skin (marks) and attire, mirroring traditional folk-art textures.	 **Figure 4.4.4(c)**: Application of custom Pattern Brushes to replicate traditional textile motifs on the saree.
Line & Palette	Application of a **Custom Tapered Brush** for "bold lines" and a **Global Swatch Library** for earth tones (Vermilion, Yellow Ochre, Indigo).	 **Figure 4.4.4(d)**: Indigenous Color Palette & Custom Brush Profile.

Table 4.4.4: Technical Replication: Palette and Brushwork.

This table summarizes the key aesthetic features integrated into the digital characters and the corresponding technicalities in Adobe Illustrator.

The comparison shows that the digital line work mimics the pressure sensitivity of the traditional brush—thick in the middle and tapering at the ends—avoiding the mechanical look of standard vectors. Furthermore, the color comparison confirms that the digital fills match the "indigenous traditional values" of Roy's earth tones (Vermilion, Yellow Ochre, Indigo), ensuring the book illustrations serve as a "physical reminder" of the heritage art form.

This visual evidence confirms that the "unique style" of Jamini Roy has been successfully "animated" for the Krishna-Kaliya narrative. By rigorously adhering to the artist's vocabulary of "bold lines, vibrant colors, and simplified motifs", the illustrations bridge the gap between static gallery art and dynamic storytelling, offering a product that is "contemporary" yet deeply rooted in tradition.

This practice-based research formulated a set of guiding questions to evaluate the effectiveness of translating Jamini Roy's static art into a dynamic book format. These questions served as the framework for the design process, ensuring the "originality and anaphase" of the art form was preserved while meeting the needs of visual storytelling.

Questions to Consider for Narrative Adaptation:

1. Which of the traditional folk archetypes are most effective for character differentiation in a children's book?

2. What elements of the original art style (e.g., restricted color palette, bold lines, simplified motifs) contribute most to visual clarity?

3. How effective is the integration of static "ideographs" into a sequential narrative flow?

4. How does the flat "pictorial space" compare to standard 3D illustration in terms of engaging a modern audience?

The application of Jamini Roy's style to book illustration is supported not only by his visual aesthetic but by his mode of production. Roy challenged the elitist concept of the "original" artwork. He often left his paintings unsigned or allowed his studio assistants (including his son) to collaborate on them, effectively turning his studio into a workshop. He deliberately kept his paintings simple so they could be easily copied and sold cheaply to the masses.

This philosophy parallels the nature of book illustration, which is inherently reproductive and democratic. Roy's simplified forms, such as his Mother and Child series or the Cat and Lobster, are iconic and graphic, functioning similarly to logos or pictograms. His interest in narrative subjects—ranging from Hindu epics to the life of Christ—demonstrates a "syncretic" capacity to tell diverse stories through a unified visual language.

Furthermore, Roy's composition style, where figures are symmetrically disposed or framed by ornamental borders (reminiscent of wood carvings or alpanas), lends itself naturally to the structural layout of book pages and cover designs. The decorative borders he employed can be directly translated into the margins and chapter headings of book design.

5. CONCLUSION

Jamini Roy's revolution in Indian art was characterized by a return to the "freshness, directness, and robustness" of folk tradition. By rejecting the illusionism of Western oil painting in favor of the flat, linear, and rhythmic vitality of the Patua, Roy created a visual language that was both indigenous and strikingly modern. This practice-based study demonstrates that **Jamini Roy's folk visual language can be effectively reinterpreted for contemporary book illustration**, particularly in mythological narratives like Krishna's serpent episode. Rather than replicating Roy's paintings, the research emphasizes adaptation through understanding his artistic philosophy rooted in simplicity, symbolism, and cultural authenticity.

The findings suggest that folk-inspired illustration not only preserves indigenous visual traditions but also enhances narrative impact and emotional resonance in illustrated books. By integrating art historical analysis with creative practice, the study contributes to broader discussions on **practice-led research, cultural adaptation, and visual storytelling in illustration design**.

The progression of this study from initial observation to final application reveals a multifaceted learning process rooted in the "originality and anaphase" of the craft. By glancing at Roy's particular artworks, one recognizes the "vibrant colours and simplified motifs" that define his distinctive visual language. This initial recognition necessitated an in-depth research phase, investigating the "folk style traditions" and "indigenous creative output" that Roy championed. Through practicing the technical "grammar of this art", including his bold, sweeping brush strokes and restricted earth-tone palette, the researcher achieves a "physical reminder" of the heritage art form. Finally, adapting these elements into a digital narrative ensures that the "artistic innovation and cultural significance" of the original style are preserved while meeting the functional needs of modern book design.

Looking toward the future, this practice-based inquiry serves as a foundational component of a broader dissertation exploring the intersection of traditional Indian folk arts and contemporary digital media. A primary focus of this ongoing work is the adaptation of Jamini Roy's visual vocabulary to the "Attack of the Serpent King" narrative, where his "robust approach" to animal and mythological motifs is used to create "visually compelling and culturally resonant" sequences. Beyond this specific project, I aim to conduct a deeper study into the "rich tapestry" of other Indian folk arts and the works of various indigenous artists. By adopting these new styles and exploring "innovative combinations" that have not yet been realized in digital storytelling, I look forward to creating "unique niches" in the market that honour traditional craftsmanship while appealing to the sensibilities of a modern audience.

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