

## “Kolam” Hindu Earth Graffiti as Land Art in the Field of New Art<sup>1</sup>

Zahra Rahbarnia\*  
Pinky Chadha\*\*

### Abstract

Land art, as a style of "New art", has been creating artworks with a modern, and then postmodern approach, since the 60's. This environmental art works were, at first, located in desserts, jungles, mountains and other remote sites. Therefore they could attract only art lovers. With the help of the methods and tricks of the environmental art, and also the philosophy of Postmodernism, land art also, was able to be transferred from the remote locations of its birth, to the places which were more interesting to a wide range of common audience. They have been able to gather more and more observers since then, because the new locations were inside the towns and cities, on the streets, road and pavements, where people pass through every day. In this way the artist could interact with his audience in a very deeper and more influential way. It is obvious that, it is the postmodern philosophy of art that has helped common people to know and understand art. With the help of this new ideology, art has come closer to people and is no more particular to a specific art educated audience. Land art, therefore has been lucky enough to be born in Modernism and raise and develop through postmodern era of art. This has helped it gain more interaction of the observers. Thus the scope of land art widened, and today as we can notice, many arts related to land, could be placed in this zone. Painting the earth has been taken into a huge consideration in contemporary times, as could be seen in the work of ground graffiti artists. But the truth is that, it's a kind of art that has long been popular among many old nations including the Hindus and their traditional customs, such as Kolam. This traditional art which is also known as Rangoli, is very common among Hindu people in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bengal, Malaysia, and where ever Indian culture is current. The tradition of creating kolams is held in everyday life of Indian people, and also on national and religious festivals such as, Deepawali, Pongal and also during occasions such as marriage events, auspicious customs and other similar milestones and gatherings. They are meant to be sacred welcoming locations for the Hindu deities, which keep both the tradition and the art form alive. Similar practices are followed in different states of India: Kolam in Tamil Nadu; Muggu in Andhra Pradesh; Mandana in Rajasthan; Chaookpurna in Chhattisgarh; Alpana in West Bengal; Golan kolam in Kerala; Chowk puja in Uttar Pradesh and others. Kolam is a drawing with colored powders on the ground of the front doors of Hindu houses. They were done with rice flour at ancient times, on a dark ground which was colored with cow's dung. Their purpose is to decorate and also to bring good luck. They are believed to give boons to the people who create them and also to the pedestrians who walk over them. Therefore people who are to visit the members of a house, or are walking on the sidewalk, deliberately walk through the Kolam designs, which are renewed time by time during the day. Design depictions may also vary as they reflect traditions, folklore and practices that are unique to each area. It is traditionally done by women. As these traditional designs look like the new versions of arts done by contemporary artists on the ground, the hypothesis of this paper is established on this subject. This fundamental research is to create a new vision towards the traditional arts as a whole, and also a new vision towards the traditional Kolam as a new land art specifically. To gain this purpose, this descriptive analytical article, has documented data through library resources. By analyzing the clearest, the most popular and the newest features of new art (according to the daily development of media), and matching them with the characteristics of Kolam, it can be stated that, Kolam designs could be considered as land art, and therefore sometime, some of the traditional arts could be considered parallel to new arts; as they match the characteristics of art of contemporary era. Kolams are made on ground; are displayed out of the walls of museums; are renewed every so often; and as the audience deliberately cross them to gain boon, it can be said that, the audience interact with these designs. Due to these similarities (and more) which are discussed in the body, the hypothesis of the paper could be proved out.

### Keywords

New art, Land art, Kolam, Postmodernism.

\*. Ph.D. in Art research, Associate professor, Faculty of Art, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran.  
z.rahbarnia@gmail.com

\*\* Ph.D. Candidate of Art research, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran.  
Corresponding Author, Pinky.chadha.1981@gmail.com

## Introduction

"Lyotard"<sup>2</sup> is a postmodernist philosopher and author. No one else has developed such an early, precise and lasting philosophical concept of the Postmodernism. On the basis of this concept not only in philosophy, but also in other disciplines—the international actuality and multidisciplinary productivity of postmodern thought could establish itself. Postmodern is now an expression which is no longer applied merely to literature, architecture and other forms of art, but it is sociological as well as philosophical, and economical as well as theological. It has been merged with the fields of Psychology, History, Anthropology, Culture and Media. And the reason, every month new users are added to it, is not only because of fashion and propagation of an idea. It has a very reasonable cause: the very moment which is called Postmodernism, allows them to explore in all fields" (Welsch & Sandbothe, 1997: 76). According to Lyotard and other philosophers, the postmodern art is trying to create an understandable art for the public-out of the traditional frames. To reach this purpose, the contemporary artist benefits any method and new media, in order to increase the number of their audience. "In postmodern art, the message of the final product is made of the creators' feelings. Communication in postmodern designs has emotional function, and its encouraging action is towards the audience's feelings and emotions" (Amraei, 2011: 76). Although, the arts are not nowadays precisely dividable by style, the historians and philosophers have been able to define their limits and ranges more or less, according to the media they use. "New art or New Media Art is actually an art that is made of the 20th century media. As these arts are often created on the basis of the observers' interaction, they may cause extended social and cultural reactions"<sup>3</sup> (Shanken, 2005: 415-418). By the way, the art of this period includes installation, video art, conceptual art, performance, land art, body art, web art, photo art, multimedia, video installation and etc. Since the new content and form in new art is in accordance with postmodern philosophy, the artists gradually withdrew the "isms" and even the recent modern art, and made their own personal styles instead. Every artist today tries their own way of communicating with the audience, and does not care to declare a manifesto. "New art is so wide that one can hardly set a framework for artistic styles and methods" (Ibid: 415). Although this issue is unusual and unjustifiable in countries which are still engaged in traditional theories of art. The concept of New art in this paper, coincides with the theories of those similar to Edward Shanken and the more liberal philosophy of Postmodernism.

In the last decades, land art, may often have recalled pieces of art in mind, created out of the cities, remote sites, and urban areas, but in the recent decade, along with the flourishing of land paintings and graffiti, the realm of artistic creativity has expanded widely. Therefore many art pieces produced on earth could be counted as land art and put in the field of New art. It is worth mentioning; painting on the ground has been existed in many religions and tribes, considered as a worshipping method with specific meanings in many of them. There exists such painting in Hinduism too. These ancient paintings which are referred to as "kolam" in Tamil<sup>4</sup> language, are designed (traditionally) by women on the front ground of their houses in the dawn, with rice flour. According to the authors, this art has formal and conceptual similarities with land art and new art, which are going to be discussed further in "discussion". Other than their form of appearance; mortality and perishing personality, repetition, interaction and effectiveness on the audience, being purposeful, environmentally dependent, magnification and enlargement etc could be considered as the similar characteristic of these two fields of art. Since the purpose of this study is creating a new view point towards traditional arts, in general (due to postmodern philosophy and New art), and building a new viewpoint towards the traditional kolam as a new environmental art, specifically; the authors have chosen the most obvious and general, and the newest characteristics of New art to study on, in accordance with the properties of kolam. And since the audience plays the most important role in new art (in the process of completion and also destruction), the authors have tried to concentrate on the characteristics of New art which are specifically related to the audience. This article describes and introduces the kolam designs and New art, in order to identify the objective; then attends to the obvious properties of land art as a branch of New art. In the body, article compares kolam designs and land art in the scope of traditional and New art.

## Literature review

The authors<sup>5</sup> of "South Asian Folklore: an Encyclopedia", Margaret Mills and Peter Clause have described this art and its various expressions and also its importance in Hinduism, in a section. But they have confined the explanation to the description, and left apart the comparison between this art and other similar styles of art. Description of these traditional designs, their history and religious roots in different regions are mentioned in many Indian books, but the authors of this article have not yet found any resources regarding the analysis of these designs specifically on the basis of New art. Among newer resources, articles

and academic dissertations, only a few articles have explained the geometric methods and algorithmic patterns of these designs. “Fundamental Study on Design Systems of Kolam Patterns” in *Forma* journal written by Kimawa Yanagisawa and Shijiro Nagata from the Japanese university of Kobe, which has studied kolams on the basis of mathematics and algorithms, and has not, paid attention to their artistic approach. Among other authentic essays, “Extended Pasting Scheme for Kolam Pattern Generation” written in the department of mathematics in university of Chennai<sup>6</sup> by Th. Robinson has introduced a new method of modeling kolam designs. Timothy Waring has used kolams in computer encoding and creation of digital images, in “Sequential Encoding of Tamil Kolam Patterns” done in the Maine<sup>7</sup> university in 2012. Although digital images belong to field of new art, the article, has not mentioned anything in this regard. It seems that most of the resources have analyzed kolams regarding their fractal complexity or have used them producing digital art. None of the resources have noticed the similarity between these designs and land art. While, the present research, is to make a comparative study between traditional kolam and New land art’s artistic style, which has never been mentioned in other resources so far.

### Hindu earth painting: Kolam

Kolam is ornamental earth graffiti, painted by Hindu women of Tamil Nadu<sup>8</sup> in front of the gates of the houses, yards, temples, and the sanctuaries. Although today stone powder and chalk is used in painting them, rice flour was applied on the ground traditionally (Fig.1). The age of these paintings go back to 2500 B.C and Indus civilization. They



Fig.1. Indian women making Kollams. Source: Divineneha.com.au.

are various in styles and are taught generation to generation to women and girls. These artists draw the basic pattern with white dots on the ground, and then connect the dots with flour according to the imaginary plot they have in mind (Fig.2). Kolams have got several styles in India and are identified with different names such as Rangoli, Mandana, Chowk purna, Alpana, Aripana, and Muggu etc. in different regions. Today in villages, at first they cover the ground with a thin layer of cow manure, because its antibacterial effect cleans the surface and its dark color makes the white designs look sharper. “But according to the ancient texts, the soil was covered with an herbal paste called Kumkum and sandalwood first, and then the pattern was drawn on it” (Siromoney, 1978: 9). These paintings may be predetermined or offhand and imaginary. Predetermined patterns have special and different names and are rooted in secular, magical, abstract forms, religious or philosophical notions. Kolam is considered as holy in Hinduism and “invites Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity and wealth, and moves away the evil forces” (Kilambi, 1985: 72). They are painted deliberately in front of the houses (Fig.3), so that the people who intend to get inside the house, walk on them. Hinduism believes that they give blessings to the household, so people try to put their feet on them. Sometimes rich households paint them on the sidewalk, to attract more steps. On the other hand they are painted with edible flours so that animals and birds can eat them. Thus all kolams are faded before sunset; and are renewed the next morning. None of these artists get tired of this repetition, as these paintings are symbols of prosperity, peace and friendship between the family members. Art has been defined by theoreticians and philosophers



Fig.2. Geometric Designs of Kollam. Source: Onasiaproject.org



since Plato<sup>9</sup>. But the very basic and simple definition of this word according to Oxford dictionary is “to express and apply human creative skills in a frame of visual forms, such as painting, sculpture etc. Pieces which are noticed because of their beauty and motivating human emotions at first sight” (Oxford dictionary, 2014). According to this simple and authentic definition, kolam paintings could also be considered as art, like all kinds of paintings in the world, from cave paintings to contemporary ones.

### New art

We live in an era in which no mere treatment of time and location is useful. It means that, although this new world has been established and developed in a specific time and space, owns a number of peculiarities which can label any world they appear in, as “New world”. Art, in this new era, has got a newer and broader definition, and has lost the old boundaries. New art has found a fresh view towards the audience and knows his understanding is not apart from the work of art. To the New artist, audience is important to the point where he lets them to manipulate the work by operating on it. Referring to the history of modern art Gharehbaghy (2000) believes that, “the history of modern art demands to know by whom and for whom art is produced. It wants to focus on art which is not isolated and spontaneous; an art which is built on purpose; and is related to politics and society” (Gharehbaghy, 2000: 46). In New art, usually, the surrounding of a work of art (open or close, light or dark, silent or tumult...) is designed by the artist himself. According to him, surrounding of a work of art shapes its meaning. Fresh techniques of performance and many methods and styles of art are integrated in works of New art.



Fig.3.Kollams atthe entries. Source:sikkukollam.com

Works presented in the tight and narrow framework of classical and modern art are easier to understand. But New art, as a postmodern movement, breaks these firm templates. The boundaries between the mediums fade in this art and a collection of them are used. Thus, the art will be able to affect our daily lives as the audience. Being interactive is another feature of new art pieces. A work of art becomes meaningful in the presence of audience and with his interaction, most of the time. Unlike the modern art, new art is unsalable. It reacts against issues such as environment, human right, ethnic, religious and cultural minorities’ rights, women and children’s right etc that have threatened human life over decades. Land art could be referred to as new art.

### New earth art (land art)

About the extension of subject matter, medium and materials, Robert Smithson (1967) believes, “in 1967, after the work of art “the Hole” was created by Claus Oldenburg, the pavement of the sidewalks, the holes, fractures, cracks, stacks of soil, terraces, roads, streamlets etc got aesthetic potentials to land art artists. Remote lands such as Pine Barrens in New Jersey, and ice extents of north and south poles, found the capacity of becoming mediums of art. The land artists were interested in bulldozers instead of paint brushes” (Smithson, 1967:37). This was perhaps the first references to the phrase “earth work” in the field of art. Man has always had a particular interest in nature and specifically the land, since the age of modern art. This view point has continued in Postmodernism which is more flexible about natural environment of human life (compared to the Modernism). Nature and its different aspects in postmodern life got fresh meanings. The capacities available in the environment considered as more important in terms of visual stimulation, creation of new prospective and also applying a new identity. The change in the scale of art pieces in environmental art, and producing larger than usual works, makes the audience connected in a new way; and this is the characteristic of New art. The attempts of New art, especially in this field, is an attempt to deepen man’s relationship with his living environment. Land art is actually a kind of environmental art which closely related to sculpture, performance and conceptual art. Boetzkes (2010) believes that, “land art is based on the environmental science, which is the relationship of each organism with its surrounding. In this field of science, each creature is associated with the components of the environment. Even if it denies it! Thus, each being is affective on the harmony of nature’s cycle of life and death” (Boetzkes, 2010: 2). Artists who started working ahead of others in natural

landscapes: Michael Heizer, Robert Morris, Denis Oppenheim, Walter Joseph De Maria, were extremely influenced by the socio-cultural movements of the era (60's) such as Political liberty, renewal of spiritual life, sexual liberty, manufacturing environmental friendly products, anti-authority organizations. They believed a sculpture could exist apart from any organization, in the outdoors and under the influence of an organic environment. Land art, generally, as an environmental art, includes creation of an art work applying natural materials of the site, or the materials carried from other distant places, and making art by hand or machine. A Land artist usually abandons his work of art, and leaves it under the influence of natural or human manipulation, accidentally or deliberately.

### **Kolam earth paintings as land art in new art**

Environmental arts which are considered as New art, may feature one of these characteristics: "mortal and transient, avoiding being in museums, active interaction of the audience, deeply dependent on the environment, utilizing new media, being unconventional, using ready-made objects, combined arts, illegality, deconstructing, new, surprising to the audience, without limitation and boundaries, anti-aesthetics, pluralism and repetition, magnification, high effectiveness on the audience, influential personality of the artist himself, depicting sexual issues excessively (as a consequence of modernism), neglecting stylistic considerations etc" (Mousavinia, 2010: 32). Since the aim of this study is to create a new approach to traditional arts, in general, and a new approach to traditional Kolam as a new environmental art, in particular, the authors have chosen the most significant, common and recent characteristics of New art (according to the daily progress and invention of art mediums) in order to compare with the characteristics of Kolams.

#### **• Interaction of the audience**

The main feature of New art is not mere aesthetic expression, but expression of the artist's mind and sharing it interactively with the audience, by applying new media and tools" (Rahbar Nia & Kheiry, 2013, 92). What seems important is that, "in interactive art, the process of art making is not controlled by the artist; he also changes his status into a participant" (Ibid: 95). Interactive artists produce art with their different attitudes, but the ultimate goal of New art is to engage the audience with the art work; make them dive into it and change it. The questions that arise in the viewer's mind during the interaction, forces him to think about the work and perhaps provides new prospects to him. In these kinds of arts, the artist attempts to force the

audience to interact personally with the environment (environmental art work). Making art public for the general audience is an important feature of New art. Viewer is allowed, in this kind of art, to interfere with the work, change, manipulate or complete it. This way of interacting in the field of land art includes causing deliberate or accidental damage, by body or a tool, in order to disrupt or continue the process of creation. Julian Beever, 3D paintings artist says "My art is for everybody, for those who do not visit the museums; my art is a public art" (Kelbie, 2011:1). As said before, kolams are manipulated by the audiences due to religious backgrounds. The residents and the guests, or pedestrians, who pass front sidewalk of the house, intentionally cross the kolams for the blessing they are enriched with. These designs are, actually, painted deliberately on such grounds by the women artists. Moreover, they are made of rice flour to feed the birds and insects around the house and bless the household. Thus, it is clear that kolam artists, consider the interaction of the audience (intentionally or accidentally) and nature, as the most significant feature of their work (Fig.4).

#### **• Mortality and being transient**

Mortality is an important feature of New art. Land art works are left to be destroyed by nature or human power, after being photographed. Julian Beever is a 3D earth graffiti painter, among land artists. He shoots photos of his paintings, which are created in crowded public places, and leaves them for the pedestrians to walk on them. Andy Galsworthy and Robert Morris are other examples. This expiring personality has made land art a division of New art. Since kolams are painted on the ground, have basic similarities with land art. They also get destroyed few hours after they are created, because of the impermanent materials and people's steps (Fig.5).

#### **• Repetition**

New art is based on ideas. Ideas can be performed in any number. A work of art could be thrown away after the exhibition and performed again in another time and place. Avoiding the museums and mortality, results in repetition of the art work in New art. Contemporary works, especially those which expose themselves to interaction of the audience, may repeatedly be reproduced in several places to attract wider audience in different cultural domains. Land art works are impermanent due to the material and sites of execution, therefore the artist feels himself free to repeat it in other locations. Among them are Andy Galsworthy's "Cairns", which were repeated in several locations since 1980. Kolams too, are repeated



Fig.4. People walking through the Kolam represents their interaction with it. Source: Fotonbra.com

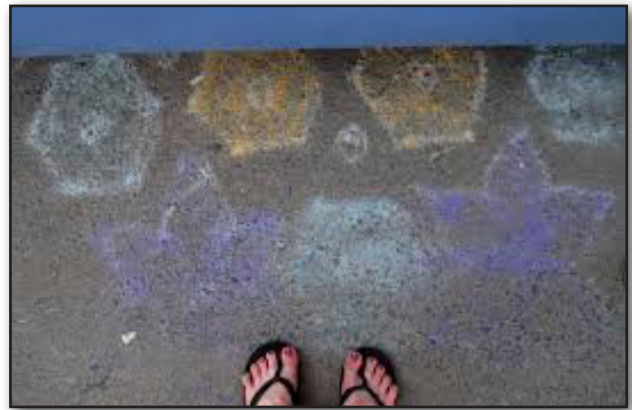


Fig.5. Kolam ruined daily because of the nondurable materials source: groundbeneathmyfeet.wordpress.com

with the same customs every morning, after they are faded. Kolam artists, who are more religious, renew their design in mid day too; so the house and the guests are never without the kolam's blessing. Such an approach is not far from ritual ceremonies; and according to the characteristics of Postmodernism, the New art works being rooted in religion is not unlikely.

#### • High effectiveness on the audience

Studying a work of art in terms of the impact on the society and the audience, has long been important in the field of criticism; and as we know different schools and styles of art have never been able to escape that. New art is also not an exception, and has always discussed the connection between the audience and works of art. Gharehbaghy (2000) does not believe in art being a mysterious phenomenon or artistic genius nowadays. According to him it is tightly connected to the society which has produced it and consumes it (Gharehbaghy, 2000: 47). With the help of mass media, ease of communication and unlimited space (as the art works are created in wide locations) new art is able to attract more connected audience than former forms of art. New art involves the common viewer into the artistic events and impacts on them different from other approaches of art history. The audience who has found art more accessible to the public and thus establishes deeper emotional contact, receives a deeper and more accurate message from the work of art. "Peace in One Thousand Hands<sup>10</sup>" project by Stuart Robertson, and "the Gates<sup>11</sup>" by Christo and Jeanne Claude are among the artistic events with high effectiveness on the audience. New conceptual art includes space and elements which are able to confront the viewer with the content. Physical and mental presence of the audience completes the work of art.

The viewer tries to discover and analyze the signs of the work which have surrounded him, and understand the general idea. Understanding the artists' thought and processing it by the viewer is of a high importance in this kind art. Although kolam paintings are created traditionally, and the women artists do not attract their audience through public notice, hence they draw many viewers accidentally during the day. Their high effectiveness on the viewer which is aroused by their spiritual and psychological history, forces the viewers to interfere and manipulate them. "The viewers of these paintings, like in interactive art, encounter a layout and installation which invites him inside, not as a static but as an active viewer" (Rahbar Nia & Kheiry, 2013: 92). "The nature of the work of art is built on this basis: being experienced revolutionizes the one who is going through the experience. The work of art itself affects. The issue of experience in art is not the subjectivity of the one who is experiencing it, but is the work itself" (Etehad, 2007: 286). Perhaps in this case, the effectiveness of kolam is more than most of the land arts, because it is painted in public and crowded locations, while most of the land art projects are large and therefore performed in remote locations. To visit them, one often has to stand on heights; and furthermore only the true interested people are ready to go on a trip outskirts to view them closely. Thus most of the public is far from interacting with them.

#### • Avoiding the museum

"uncertainty and the separation of the truth and beauty (Descartes' theory) in 18th century, the sensory strength, Pragmatism, domination of Capitalism in 20th century, and establishment of a criteria in terms of evaluation and trading in the society, devoured art as well, and changed it to a tradable commodity (the



museums and collectors' ware)" (Emamifar, 2008: 96). But rebellion and revolt against the strict policies of Modernism, from one hand, and diversity and pluralism of the contemporary industrial life of the modern man from the other hand, created the conditioned world of signs and marks. Meanwhile the artists became able to ride on this strong foundation breaker wave, and express some of the lost subjects with new methods" (Ibid: 96). The art of the idea-based artist do not fit into the old tight formats-because of the large volumes of the works or events and multiplicity of the media-which were structured for the elite visitors of the museums. On the other hand, according to what was said earlier, it seems the New artist seeks the attention of the public, rather than a particular group of museum visitors. Therefore the artists naturally began to take their art into the common outdoor locations, out of the museums. The women artists of kolams are free to paint their art inside their houses and limit the blessing to their own household, but alike the New artists, they prefer to attract the public's attendance and involvement, and let the pedestrians, the insects and birds determine their fate; therefore they create their art out of their houses on the sidewalks (Fig.6).

It seems these traditional and new art works, despite their distance of thousands of years, are similar in terms of form and content. Perhaps if we look at these similarities, and dos and don'ts of the bygone era, unbiased open-minded-such as that given to the new artist by postmodernism-we can accept that they are associated in terms of form and philosophy. Accordingly we can regard kolam as land art, its root



Fig.6.Kolam at the entries.Source: www.quara.com

and basis, and consider it aligned with new art. In order to come to a better understanding of the similarities and differences of the two fields, in terms of the properties of New art, the following comparative table between land art and Kolam (Table1) has been arranged.

### Discussion

In this section which belongs to the comparison between the achievements of this paper and the references mentioned in the research literature; it has to be said that, all the earlier described documents have focused on the fractal complexity and the intertwining feature of the kolams; and none has studied them artistically, especially from the new arts' approach. One of the fewest books which has had a non mathematical view point "South Asian Folklore" (2003), unfortunately has limited its study to their historical and visual features; while the present article was to draw a comparison between the characteristics of New art and the traditional Kolam paintings; and introduce the kolams as land art of New art, as a result of this comparative study between their common features. By the analysis of the properties of the new art and matching them with Kolams', one can conclude that the Kolam paintings could be considered as land art; and hence sometimes, some of the traditional arts-due to the large number of their commonalities-could be considered as new art. Meanwhile it should be noted that, even in the case of them (works of new art) being "art" there are disputes and disagreements. Given that, in the above-mentioned articles, dissertations and other researches done by the authors of the present paper, no mutual objectives-on the basis of making new approaches towards the traditional art, in general, and towards the traditional Kolam as a new land art, specifically-has been found, the present article could be regarded as new and innovative.

Table.1. the common features of Kolam and Land art. Source: authors.

Characteristics of new art	Characteristics of Kolam	Characteristics of new land art
Carrying a message	*	*
repeatable	**	*
Creativity oriented	*	**
Against the aesthetic rules	-	-
High effectiveness on the viewer	***	*
Dependence on the surrounding	**	**
Aversion to museum	*	**
Mortal and expiring	**	*
Purposeful	*	*
Audience oriented	**	*
Using new media	-	*
Magnifying the volume	*	**
Extreme sex issues as subject	-	-

## Conclusion

In its philosophy, Postmodernism, claims freedom of art and artists in using and mixing a variety of mediums regardless of any framework, combining style and different branches of art, and integrating diverse old and new opinions and ideas. The major contrast of postmodern art with the previous art periods is in the field of the viewer, which is seen in the form of producing art for the common viewer and forcing them deliberately in creation, continuance or destruction of the art work. The authors believe that the freedom of thought Postmodernism has given to the contemporary man, removes the bias in terms of styles and periods of art. It moreover encourages the professionals to discover the similarities between the art of current era and the old familiar arts. Thus the present paper was to make a comparative study between the role of traditional kolam as the basis of land art in the field of New art; and to call, a thousand years old kolam, New art according to its characteristics. According to what went before, it seems that traditional kolam is common with land art and New art in terms of their properties, especially those related to the viewer. Among these properties, the viewer's interaction, mortality and being transient, repetition, high effectiveness on the audience, avoiding the museums, carrying a message, being creative, dependence on the environment, magnification etc. could be mentioned. The authors have analyzed 5 more significant characteristics, and found out that the kolam paintings too, include the properties mentioned. According to the similarity of form and idea, it seems that kolams could be considered as land art and New art. Thus, with an unbiased study and analyzing the common features of the two fields, traditional arts could be seen with fresh eyes. Thus the contemporary and New art approach could largely be capable of preserving and protecting traditional art, especially those exposed to extinction.

## Endnote

1. The concept of New art will be discussed in the introduction.
2. Lyotard, Jean- Francois (1924-1998).
3. "Although according to some experts and theorists, social results, participation of the audience, transformation of the art work after the creation is not a sufficient reason for naming it a new procedure, therefore this art should be called contemporary art" (Shanken, 2005 :417-420).
4. The popular language of the southern states of India
5. Margaret A. Mills, Peter j. Claus, Sara Diamond and
6. Department of Mathematics, Madras Christian College, Chennai 600059, India.
7. Maine Orono and Bangor, ME.
8. A southern state of India with Chennai as its capital.
9. Addressing the issue of kolam being art, from the point of view of different philosophers, distracts the paper and its hypothesis, and demand a separate article itself, therefore the definition of art is limited here to the basic and general expression of oxford vocabulary.
10. The artistic project of "peace in one thousand hands" is in process by New Zealand art photographer Stuart Robertson accessible in the following address: [www.peacein1000hands.com](http://www.peacein1000hands.com)
11. During this project, there were made gate with length of 37 kilometers on the sidewalks of Central Park in New York and saffron colored curtains were hung on them. This saffron colored sidewalk was on the show 12th to 27th February 2005.

## Reference list

- Amraei, B. (2011). Semiotics of postmodern designing, *Journal of Bagh-e-Nazar*, 8 (16): 65-78.
- Boetzkes, A. (2010). *The Ethics of Earth Art*, Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Emamifard, N. Al-din. (2008). Barresi-ye barkhi az ghalebha-ye-ejraei dar honar-e jadid [A study on some of the formats of performance in New art, with a description on the works displayed in the third exhibition of New art, Tehran 1383], *Ketabmah-e honar*, (117) 84-96.
- Etehad, A. (2007). Honarha-ye chand resane: Internet art [Multi Media arts: Internet art], *Journal of fasnamehoner*, (72): 270-296.
- Gharebaghi, A. (2000). Tabarshenasi-ye postmodernism (13) [Anthology of Postmodernism], *Journal of Golestaneh*, 8 (21): 46-54.
- Kelbie, P. (22 September 2011). Pavement Picasso' dazzles pedestrians with 3D masterpieces. The Independent newspaper.
- Kilambi, J.K. (1985). Toward an Understanding of the Maggu: Threshold Drawing of the Hyderabad, *Journal of Anthropology and Aesthetics*, (10): 71-102.
- Mills, M. et al. (2003). *South Asian Folklore: An Encyclopedia*. New York: Rutledge Publishers.
- Musavinia, Z. (2010). Osoul va mabani-ye fekri-ye honar-e jaded [Intellectual Foundations of New art], *Journal of Golestaneh*, (105): 32-36.
- Oxford dictionary. (2014). *in oxford dictionary* [online] <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/art>, [accessed 12 march 2014].
- Rahbar Nia, Z. & Kheiry, M. (2013). Interactive Art as a Text; Focusing on Analysis of Norma Jeane's Work Played at Venice Biannual, *Journal of Global Media*, 8(1): 92-113.
- Robinson, T. (2007). Extended Pasting Scheme for Kolam Pattern Generation, *Journal of Forma*, (22): 55-64.
- Shanken, E. A. (2005). Artists in Industry and the Academy: Collaborative Research, Interdisciplinary Scholarship, and the Creation and Interpretation of Hybrid Forms, Leonardo: *Journal of art, MIT Press Journals*, 38(5): 415-418.
- Siromoney, G. (1978). South Indian Kolam patterns, *Journal of Kalakshetra*, 1(1): 9-14.
- Smithson, R. (1967). Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site, *Journal of Artforum*, 6 (10): 36-40.
- Waring, T.M., (2012). Sequential Encoding of Tamil Kolam Patterns, *Journal of Forma*, (27): 83-92.
- Welsch, W., Sandbothe, M. (1997). *Postmodernity as a philosophical concept*, in: *International postmodernism: Theory and literary practice*, ed. Hans Bertens and Douwe Fokkema, Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Yanagisava, K. & Nagata, Sh. (2007). Fundamental Study on Design System of Kolam Pattern, *Journal of Forma*, (22): 31-46.