

# Abanindranath Tagore

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National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi will organise the virtual tour titled "The Great Maestro-Abanindranath Tagore" to **commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Abanindranath Tagore**. The NGMA takes pride in 99 works of art created by the iconic artist which are a part of a prestigious collection. This virtual tour presents the 77 works of art from the prominent artworks of Abanindranath Tagore from the reserve collection of NGMA, **grouped in a series of four different themes: Portraits and Characters; Tradition with Sensibility; Individual Style; Landscape of Interiority**.

## Abanindranath Tagore

Abanindranath Tagore is a singular figure in modern Indian art. Abanindranath painted a range of subjects. He had a leaning towards painting images with historic or literary allusions. He **liked to paint sets of images dealing with a theme or a text such as the 'Arabian Nights' or the 'Krishna Leela'**. He also enjoyed painting theatrical subjects. Literature and drama held great respect for him and he was an **elegant and accomplished writer**. As a **modernist at heart** who was guided more by his sensibility than his training, he **transformed the post-Renaissance academic realism into which he was trained with his series of contacts with oriental art** into something more supple and responsive to the imaginative flights of his mind.

Abanindranath, the nephew of Rabindranath Tagore was the first **major supporter of swadeshi values in Indian art**. Abanindranath first created the **'Indian Society of Oriental Art'** and later went on to **establish Bengal school of art**. His sole aim for establishing the school was to **counter the English influence on Indian artists**. He did that by incorporating Indian elements in his works and achieved

success when British art institutions gave in and accepted to teach and propagate his style of works in their organizations.

Abanindranath is also regarded as a proficient and accomplished writer. Most of his literary works were meant for children. Some of his **books like 'Budo Angla', 'Khirer Putul' and 'Rajkahini' are best examples of Bengali children's literature.** His idea of modernizing Mughal and Rajput paintings eventually gave rise to modern Indian painting, which took birth at his Bengal school of art. In his later works, Abanindranath started **integrating Chinese and Japanese calligraphic traditions into his style.** The intention behind this move was to **construct an amalgamation of the modern pan-Asian artistic tradition** and the common elements of eastern artistic and spiritual culture. His works reflected his ideologies and since they were simple in nature, his paintings were a hit among Indian art lovers.

### **Notable Works**

- **Ganesh Janani** – Painted in the year 1908, 'Ganesh Janani' depicts an image of Lord Ganesh in his child form.
- **Bharat Mata** – This beautiful painting was completed in the year 1905. She is portrayed as having four hands, carrying important elements in each of her hands.
- **The Victory of Buddha** – 'The Victory of Buddha' depicts a portrait of Buddha after achieving enlightenment.
- **The Passing of Shah Jahan** – This is a scene straight out of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan's final day.
- **Journey's End** – Painted in the year 1913, 'Journey's End' depicts a tired looking camel, which looks more relieved than happy after coming to an end of its journey.
- **Departure of Siddhartha** – This painting narrates the story behind Buddha's Departure, when he decides to leave behind his wife and son for the greater good.