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Reviving Traditions: A Visual Arts Centre as a Gateway to Preserve Rajasthan's Indigenous Arts in Jaipur

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***Abstract*—Rajasthan is globally recognized for its rich artistic heritage, including block printing, blue pottery, miniature painting, and Pichwai art. However, these indigenous traditions face endangerment due to evolving cultural dynamics, economic constraints, and a lack of structured exposure. This research advocates for an Indigenous Visual Arts Centre in Jaipur, a prime heritage destination, to ensure the revitalization, preservation, and promotion of Rajasthan's artistic legacy. The centre will serve as a cultural hub, providing artists with long-term platforms for showcasing and commercializing their work, conducting workshops, and engaging diverse audiences. Programmatic elements will include exhibition galleries, artisan marketplaces, open-air theatres, and water-inspired art spaces. Architecturally, the centre will integrate vernacular Rajasthani elements such as courtyards, jaali screens, and jharokhas with climate-responsive contemporary design. To ensure cultural authenticity and economic sustainability, the study process includes analysis of existing art centres, cultural hubs, and craft villages within India in a comparative lens. The use of these approaches and architectural solutions is critical not only for maintaining history, but also for developing a self-sustaining ecosystem in which art, architecture, and cultural exchange coexist in a dynamic and economically sustainable framework.**

Keywords— Rajasthan heritage, Indigenous Visual Arts, Revitalizaiton, Artisan Empowerment, Climate Responsive.

I. INTRODUCTION

Rajasthan, often revered as the "Land of Colors, has a rich creative heritage influenced by centuries of royal patronage, local handicraft, and cross-cultural relationships. Intricate fabrics, embellished paintings, sumptuous architecture, and fine artistic crafts are all examples of this rich tapestry of artistic expression, and they all profoundly reflect the region's folklore, cultural identity, and historical continuity. Beyond their aesthetic allure, the visual indigenous art forms encapsulate narratives of mythological epics, royal sagas, and quotidian life, rendering them deeply symbolic and spiritually evocative. Rajasthani arts, which have its roots in Rajput, Mughal, Persian, and tribal artistic traditions, represent a seamless fusion of luxury and tradition[15]. While technological advancement threatens their existence, many indigenous visual art forms are passed down through generations of expert artisans who strike a balance between authenticity with contemporary adaptations. However, despite Rajasthan's extensive culture in traditional arts, the current situation poses a complicated interplay of difficulties and opportunities. While globalization and changing consumer preferences have opened up new opportunities for artistic adaptation and outreach, they have additionally triggered an existential crisis for many indigenous crafts. One of the most significant problems is the decline of traditional arts practice as younger generations shift their focus to financially secure, technology-driven careers. The diminution of intergenerational knowledge transmission, combined with urbanization and altering socioeconomic expectations, has drastically reduced the longevity of these indigenous visual arts of Rajasthan. Furthermore, economic challenges faced by artisans, such as competition from mass-produced goods, low pay, and limited market access, worsen the precarious situation of Rajasthan's indigenous arts. Hence to overcome these issues, the study aims to provide a comprehensive framework for a visual arts center that not only acts as a dynamic platform for artists, but also promotes cultural interchange, community participation, and sustainable artistic ecosystems. The objectives for this study includes safeguarding and promoting the traditional visual art techniques through curated exhibitions and artisan-led workshops and to create a sustainable economic platform for craftsmen while promoting experiential engagement with indigenous art forms among locals and tourists. This study undertakes a comparative analysis through case studies across art centers in India to discover best practices and design techniques that can be implemented in the proposed indigenous visual arts centre at Jaipur. This will help in preserving and revitalizing indigenous Rajasthani art forms through organized workshops and exhibitions, ensuring their long-term preservation and widespread public participation. Ultimately, this initiative intends to serve as an example for sustainable artistic ecosystems, enforcing Rajasthan's prominence as a indigenous art hub while preserving the legacy of its indigenous arts for future generations.

II. LITERATURE STUDY

In [1],The study emphasizes essential architectural elements, such as thick walls, interior courtyards, and finely carved jharokhas, that improve thermal comfort and energy efficiency. The paper criticizes the shift to automated construction, highlighting its environmental inefficiencies and proposing for the incorporation of vernacular features into contemporary design. By reinterpreting Haveli architectural ideas, modern urban development can accomplish sustainability while preserving regional character.

In [2], the research analyzes the impact of traditional Rajput architectural components on modern hospitality settings. The study emphasizes how features like vast courtyards, ornate

jharokhas, intricate jaali screens, and elaborate water features are seamlessly blended into modern resort designs to create a sense of regal grandeur and cultural authenticity. Beyond visual enhancement, the study emphasizes the functional benefits of these features, notably in terms of climate responsiveness—jaali screens enable passive cooling and diffused illumination, resulting in thermally pleasant settings appropriate for Rajasthan's desert conditions. Furthermore, the inclusion of lush gardens and water bodies, which are reminiscent of Rajput landscape traditions, contributes to peaceful and immersive spatial environments.

In [3], the study examines passive design strategy in Rajputana architecture, highlighting elements like courtyards, jaalis, and spatial planning for climate adaptation. Analyzing modern applications, it advocates for incorporating traditional strategies into contemporary architecture. This integration enhances energy efficiency, ensures thermal comfort, and preserves cultural identity, emphasizing the relevance of climate-responsive design in urban development.

In [4], the study explores Rajputana architecture as a prime example of climate-responsive design, focusing on palaces and havelis of Rajasthan. The paper highlights how traditional techniques such as courtyards, jaalis, thick walls, and chhatris effectively address the region's harsh hot and dry climate. It critiques the modern shift towards non-contextual architecture that often neglects environmental and cultural needs. Emphasizing sustainability, the authors advocate for integrating traditional passive strategies into contemporary architecture to balance ecological responsibility with cultural revival and aesthetic richness.

In [5], jaalis' multiple roles as aesthetic and climate-responsive architecture features are studied. Jaalis, which are traditionally made of stone, wood, or metal, allow for passive cooling, ventilation, and controlled daylighting in Mughal and Rajput architecture. Computational studies have demonstrated their efficiency in lowering interior temperatures and improving air circulation. Contemporary adaptations combine innovative materials and parametric designs to strike a balance between tradition and current sustainability. The study emphasizes jaalis' potential in energy-efficient design and advocates their reintegration into current built environments.

III. CASE STUDIES

A. Case Study 1: Jawahar Kala Kendra,Jaipur

Fig. 1 Entrance of Jawahar Kala Kendra [7]

Fig. 1 Jawahar Kala Kendra (JKK) in Jaipur, designed by renowned Indian architect Charles Correa in 1986, is a cultural icon that embodies a strong connection to Rajasthan's past while incorporating modern architectural concepts. JKK's design is primarily inspired by Jaipur's original city plan, developed by Maharaja Jai Singh II in the 18th century and based on the old Vedic Vastu Purusha Mandala—a cosmic geometric mandala used in traditional Indian architecture[7].

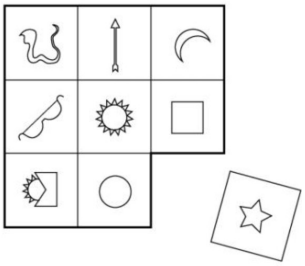

Fig. 2 Image depicting the concept of JKK [7]

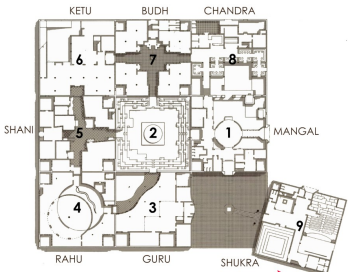

Fig. 3 Plan of JKK [9]

Jawahar Kala Kendra's design is based on a nine-square Mandala, which represents the Navagraha, with each square providing various functions such as galleries, theaters, and courtyards[6]. One square has been deliberately kept vacant, echoing Jaipur's missing ninth square due to a hill. Fig. 2. The open-air amphitheater serves as a cultural hub, fostering public participation. Its design integrates indoor and outdoor environments, boosting the user experience. Movement is enabled by narrow alleys and open plazas, reminiscent of traditional Indian town layout, which promote connectedness and spatial fluidity.

Fig. 4 Master Plan of Jawahar Kala Kendra [9]

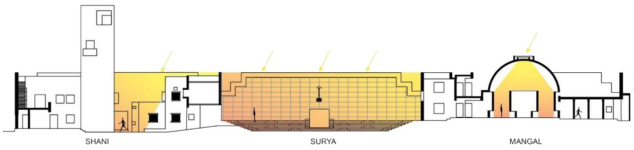

Fig. 5 Section showing light and ventilation [9]

It is constructed of red sandstone, complements Jaipur's ancient architectural fabric while incorporating Rajasthani characteristics such as jharokhas, chhatris, and courtyards into a modern framework. The design promotes a fluid indoor-outdoor spatial experience, promoting user engagement with small alleys and open plazas reminiscent of traditional Indian townscapes. Passive cooling measures, such as shaded walkways, courtyards, and water bodies, help to minimize Jaipur's extreme heat, while clerestory windows and skylights maximize natural illumination, reducing the need for artificial lighting[18]. This architectural method smoothly integrates

vernacular traditions and a contemporary perspective, assuring both cultural continuity and contemporary relevance.

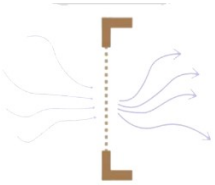

Fig. 7 Venturi effect through Jaali [9]

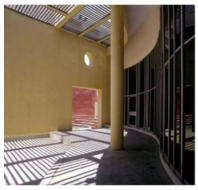

Fig. 8 Play of light and shadow [9]

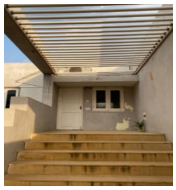

Fig. 6 Covered outdoor area with pergola [9]

Jawahar Kala Kendra exemplifies architectural splendor, with functional zoning, spatial interconnection, and climate adaptability combining to create a dynamic cultural environment. Correa's deliberate use of passive cooling technologies and optimal natural illumination emphasizes the structure's environmental adaptability. JKK is a paragon of contextual modernism, with its seamless integration of symbolic geometry, spatial fluidity, and sustainable design principles ensuring its long-term value as a cultural and architectural landmark.

B. Case Study 2: Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal

Fig. 9 View of upper lake upon entering [10]

Bharat Bhavan is a renowned multi-arts center in Bhopal, designed by Indian architect Charles Correa to foster interaction between verbal, visual, and performing arts. Situated on a gently sloping hill overlooking a lake, the center seamlessly integrates with the natural landscape through terraced gardens and sunken courtyards. It houses diverse cultural facilities, including a tribal art museum, contemporary art galleries, an artist's studio, and workshops for lithography and sculpture[20]. The architectural design respects the site's contours, creating an immersive and interactive space for artists and visitors. Bharat Bhavan serves as a vital hub for preserving and promoting India's artistic and cultural heritage.

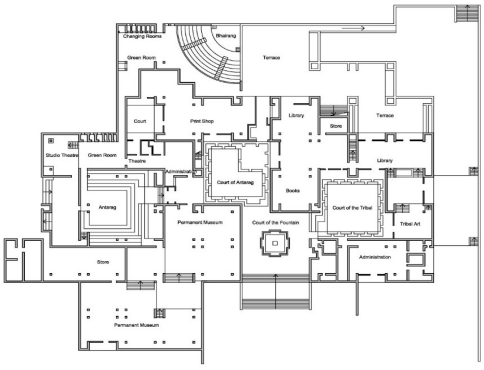

Fig. 10 Plan of Bharat Bhavan [11]

It is built on a sloping slope overlooking Upper Lake in Bhopal, blends in with the natural contours with stepped terraces and open courtyards. The design combines passive cooling measures such as jaali screens, covered verandas, and water elements, which improve climatic response. The red brick provides an earthy appearance, supporting the local identity. The complex includes art galleries, museums, a library, workshops, an artist studio, and an amphitheater to promote multidisciplinary cultural engagement. The outdoor amphitheater serves as a cultural hub, promoting community engagement and performing arts.

Fig. 11 View of court of fountain [11]

Fig. 12 View of court of Antarag [11]

Fig. 13 Section showing light and ventilation [11]

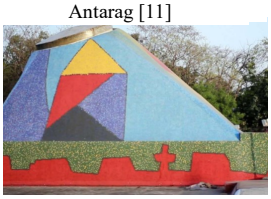

Fig. 14 The R.C.C Shell Structure

Drawing influence from traditional stepwells and ghats, the construction accentuates the interplay of light and shadow, resulting in a dynamic spatial environment. It has a reinforced concrete shell structure that allows for large-span, column-free rooms while remaining in harmony with the site's natural contours. Fig. 13. Bharat Bhavan exemplifies a profound architectural response that transcends conventional built form by engaging deeply with the natural terrain, cultural context, and sensory experience. Its design—anchored in the philosophy of organic integration—merges landscape and architecture to create a spatial continuum that is both experiential and democratic. Fig. 15. The terraced configuration, fluid circulation, and open-to-sky platforms dissolve rigid boundaries between interior and exterior, inviting users into a participatory relationship with art, nature, and space. Architect Charles Correa's sensitive approach results in a built environment that is not imposed upon the landscape but emerges from it—affirming the notion that architecture can be a living, breathing extension of its site. Bharat Bhavan stands as a seminal example of site-responsive, human-centric architecture, wherein form follows terrain, and meaning arises from place.

Fig. 15 Terraced landscape at Bharat Bhavan [11]

C. Case Study 3:Rabindra Bhavan,New Delhi

Rabindra Bhavan, built in 1961, is a major institution in India's post-independence cultural setting, comprising the Lalit Kala Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi, and Sahitya Akademi. Designed by renowned modernist architect Habib Rahman, the structure exemplifies the confluence of functionality, climate adaptability, and aesthetic minimalism.

Fig. 16 Entrance of Rabindra Bhavan [13]

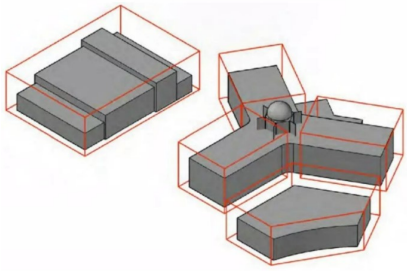

Fig. 17 Concept model of Rabindra Bhavan [12]

Rabindra Bhavan exemplifies Tagore's ideal of simplicity by combining Indian architectural aspects with contemporary utility. It departs from Bauhaus rigidity and embraces a beautiful yet modest style that reflects national character. Its spatial composition and materiality strike an appropriate balance between tradition and contemporary architectural expression.

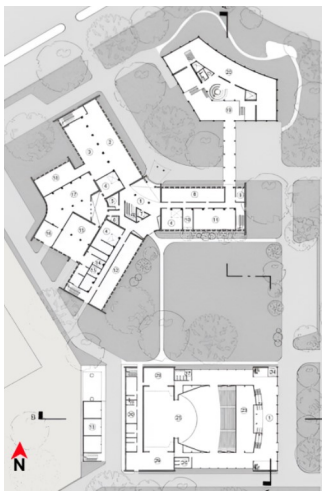

Fig. 18 Ground Floor plan [12]

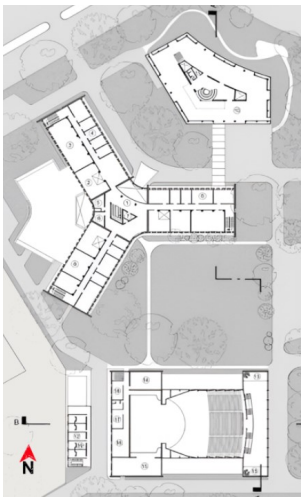

Fig. 19 First Floor plan [12]

The architectural composition of Rabindra Bhavan reflects the principles of tropical modernism, incorporating double chajjas, deep overhangs, and fenestration strategies that mitigate solar heat gain while ensuring ample natural illumination. Fig. 25 The interplay of brutalist concrete forms with traditional Indian shading devices demonstrates an adaptive approach to modernist design within the Indian climatic and cultural context [17]. The peripheral corridors serve as thermal buffer zones, minimizing direct heat transmission to the building's center and promoting natural ventilation, lowering reliance on mechanical cooling.

Fig. 20 Double chajjas in facade [13]

Fig. 21 Brick and stone masonry

The double chajjas serve as shading devices, avoiding excessive solar heat gain while allowing diffused natural light into interior spaces, lowering glare and improving visual comfort.

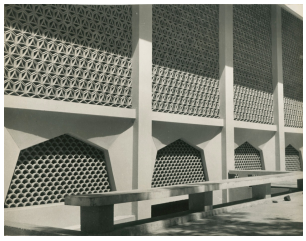

Fig. 23 Jaali walls for play of light and shadow [12]

Fig. 22 Columns as an asthetic element at exterior [13]

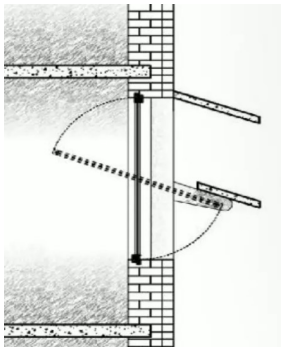

Fig. 25 The jaali detail for ventilation [12]

Fig. 24 Use of jaali in façade [13]

Deeply recessed windows maximize daylight penetration while decreasing heat ingress, hence improving energy efficiency. The structure uses high thermal mass materials like brick and stone, Fig. 21 which collect heat during the day and release it at night, thereby maintaining inside temperatures. Load-bearing walls increase thermal inertia, making the structure more adaptable to weather conditions. The stone masonry treatments applied to the façade provide texture and local relevance, reinforcing the feeling of location. The combination of passive cooling technologies with climate-responsive materials minimizes energy usage while increasing occupant comfort. The integration of passive cooling strategies with climate-responsive materials minimizes energy consumption and enhances user comfort Rabindra Bhavan's spaces reflect functional simplicity rooted in cultural identity.

IV. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

TABLE I. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS [SOURCE: AUTHOR]

Sr. No	Parameters	Comparative Analysis of Art Centres in India		
		Jawahar Kala Kendra,Jaipur	**Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal**	**Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi**
1.	Site & Contextual Response	Based on the Vastu Purusha Mandala, this design is deeply connected to Jaipur's cosmology, heritage, and climate.	Organically embedded into the contours of Bhopal's Upper Lake, the structure reflects the natural landscape and tribal cultural ethos.	Urban setting with minimal contextual integration; prioritizes national over regional identity.
2.	Spatial Planning & Functional Organization	Grid-based zoning with integrated courtyards; clearly defined functional blocks.	Terraced and fluid layout; promotes exploration and programmatic overlap.	Functionally efficient, with linear zoning that emphasizes formal circulation and segregated programming.
3.	Architectural Form & Expression	Geometric abstraction steeped in metaphysical symbolism; form operates as both narrative and spatial device.	Expressive of tribal and natural metaphors; architectural forms resonate with indigenous landforms and intuitive expression.	Adheres to modernist idioms—abstract, rational, and formal—lacking in narrative depth.
4.	Materiality & Construction	Employs regionally sourced materials such as sandstone and exposed brick; crafted using traditional Rajasthani techniques.	Utilizes exposed concrete, rough-cut stone, and brick to maintain a raw, tactile aesthetic in sync with nature.	Constructed using reinforced concrete; emphasizes functionality over material expressiveness.
5.	Climatic Responsiveness	Implements passive cooling through shaded courtyards, narrow passages, thick walls, and controlled fenestration.	Design leverages terracing, shading devices, and open-air circulation to enhance microclimatic comfort.	Largely dependent on mechanical systems for thermal regulation; lacks integrated passive strategies.
6.	Landscape & Outdoor Integration	Courtyards and symbolic gardens act as thermal buffers, social nodes, and cultural expressions.	Built form and landscape are inseparable; terraces, water bodies, and vegetation extend architectural experience.	Limited landscape articulation; external spaces are primarily transitional.
7.	Aesthetic and Symbolism	Rich with metaphysical, cosmological, and cultural symbolism embedded within architectural elements.	Expresses rootedness through organic, tactile, and intuitive form-making tied to indigenous traditions.	Formalistic and abstract; symbolism is minimal and implicit.
8.	Artist Support & Cultural Programming	Active promotion of folk and classical art through workshops, performances, and residencies.	Empowers tribal and regional artists; integrates creation, display, and pedagogy.	Prioritizes curated exhibitions at a national scale; less focus on grassroots practices.
9.	Sustainability & Environmental Strategy	Low-carbon footprint through passive design, vernacular materials, and climatic alignment.	High synergy between built form, landform, and natural systems; inherently energy-efficient.	Lacks embedded environmental strategies; operates on mechanical systems.
10.	Socio-Cultural Impact	Acts as a major cultural landmark in Jaipur; supports artistic revival and tourism.	Pioneering institution for community and tribal engagement in art-making and dissemination.	National prestige and symbolic presence; limited grassroots influence.

V. FINDINGS

As per my findings it is suggested that the masterplan should be context-responsive, rooted in symbolic geometry while thoughtfully adapting to the natural gradient and topographical nuances of the site. A hybrid planning system may be adopted, merging formal zoning clarity with an organic spatial flow to enhance both the functional efficiency and the experiential quality of the center. Developing a formal design language that is simultaneously abstract and rooted is recommended.

This would combine symbolic references with indigenous craft traditions and terrain-sensitive interventions, ensuring the project remains connected to its cultural and environmental context. The use of vernacular materials and traditional construction methods is strongly advised to maintain cultural authenticity, enhance thermal efficiency, and reduce embodied energy. This approach would align the center with sustainable practices while reinforcing its connection to local

craftsmanship. It is also suggested to reinterpret the traditional haveli courtyard and baori (stepwell) typologies to support social interaction and climatic responsiveness[14]. These elements can create shaded communal spaces and passive cooling systems intrinsic to the regional architectural language. The Art Centre should aim to establish a multi-scalar platform that nurtures local craft incubation while facilitating national art discourse.

VI. Conclusion

The comparative lens of Jawahar Kala Kendra (Jaipur), Bharat Bhavan (Bhopal), and Rabindra Bhavan (New Delhi) reveals a spectrum of spatial, formal, and ideological responses to the typology of art centres in the Indian context. Each of these centres articulates a unique synthesis of architectural language, contextual engagement, and socio-cultural ambition. While Jawahar Kala Kendra emphasizes metaphysical narrative and Bharat Bhavan emphasizes organic integration, Rabindra Bhavan prioritizes programmatic efficiency. Together, they offer diverse models of cultural architecture—ranging from symbolic to site-embedded to functionalist—inspiring hybrid strategies for future designs. The synthesis of architectural precedents underscores the need for an art centre in Jaipur that is contextually embedded, symbolically expressive, environmentally responsive, and socially inclusive. By integrating the topographical sensitivity of Bharat Bhavan, the cosmological spatiality of Jawahar Kala Kendra, and the programmatic efficiency of Rabindra Bhavan, the proposed centre can transcend mere functionality to become a culturally generative institution. Employing regional materials like sandstone and lime plaster; incorporate local craftsmanship to celebrate and sustain traditional practices will help in reduction of material costs. Encourage layered public engagement through courtyards, open studios, and informal gathering spaces that foster interaction and creativity. Adopt mandalic or axial planning systems to embed cultural narratives within spatial organization, inspired by JKK's metaphysical geometry. Introduce selective digital infrastructure to enable hybrid exhibitions and evolving curatorial practices. Design the centre as a community-driven institution that supports artistic exchange across diverse disciplines, generations, and audiences. The architectural proposal for the art centre in Jaipur must therefore move beyond static representation and become a living institution—one that is architecturally resonant, environmentally attuned, and culturally transformative. The spatial strategies distilled from these case studies form a robust foundation upon which such a vision can be meaningfully realized.

Acknowledgment

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