

# Discover India

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## What, Who, How

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# Discover India

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It came and landed on the page. The focus of my attention immediately shifted from the printed words to the iridescent colours of its tiny body. And just as if in slow motion, it proceeded to give me a demonstration of its powerful avionics by undertaking a series of breathtaking manoeuvres. And then suddenly, just as abruptly as it arrived, it disappeared — without a trace. It was a brief encounter but a completely enthralling one that left me speechless.

We look at Nature with a great sense of awe and wonder. From a tiny insect to the sweeping vistas of the mountains, from the colours of a

rainbow in the sky to the movements of a strutting peacock, Nature presents stunning examples for Man to gasp in sheer amazement. The Natural world with its plant and animal life, the elements and all the natural phenomena inspires astonishment. Just consider how an acorn grows into a mighty oak or see how Nature converts grass into milk through its four-legged creature called cow! Or how lightning flashes across the skies. So wherever Man looks he finds an extraordinary natural world constructed with finesse and beauty. A marvelous design, interconnecting the universe. Far from being random, this natural world is

woven together in intricate thought beyond grasp of our intellect. This is the world of Art.

However, the arrogance of man does not allow him to recognize this universal art in Nature. Instead, he draws inspiration from Nature into his own work and calls it art. Man tries to recreate shapes and textures, colours and lines, sounds and movements he perceives in Nature in the form of

*What is Art ?*

# *The Indian*

language, music, dance, drama, painting, sculpture, pottery to name just a few. From the classic position of seeing Art in the creations of Nature we move to admitting Art in the "recreations" of an individual. This is the fundamental difference between Indian conception of Art as compared to a Western definition that broadly defines Art as conscious use of skill and creative imagination especially in

the production of aesthetic expressions or objects.

Herein lies yet another distinction between the Indian and Western understanding of art. While the West sees art as a "conscious use of skill and imagination", the realm of art in India is seen to lie beyond the boundaries of self. It is only when an individual loses his conscious sense of "I" that some other "power" seems to take over and what is then created is touched by the Divine. How often we hear of large audiences held spellbound by the performance of a musician or a dancer who is said to have completely abandoned his or

her own conscious self.

Then again, there is this deep understanding in the Indian people that reminds that artistic inspiration comes not from the clever intellect of the individual but from the "grace" of God. In ancient times artists never left their mark or signature on their works of art. In fact, in the true India tradition, an artist gives credit to his "guru" who has taught the particular skill for which there is public acclaim or applause. This abnegation by the artist is central to Indian thought that recognizes that there is only one artist and that is the Creator Himself. This manifest world is His work of Art.

# Conception

Text: Nihal Mathur  
Photograph: Ashok Nath