Rajput Art Resurges
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Rajasthan's naturalism school of Rajput painting was headed toward sure extinction, a rare art form that only museum exhibits and fancy art books would offer frozen memories of. But today, a small band of super talents are reviving the classic style, mastering the steady stroke of the squirrel hair brush/pen and making pigments out of gold and lapis lazuli.

The Rajput painting school emerged in the 16th century, parented by invading Muslim sultans who imprinted it with their love of delicate Persian motif, sinuous line and intricate floral design. But gradually the style Indianized as Hindu rajas set up their own court painting studios with Hindu artists trained by Mughal masters.

The themes were both religious and secular-Krishna bathing with the gopis by moonlight, rajas in their opulent courts and pastoral village scenes. But today's breed of Rajput painters enjoy a freer and more cosmopolitan variety of subjects. A recent exhibition of six young Rajput painters at the Hunt Institute of Botanical Documentation, Pittsburgh, USA, included works depicting Japanese bonzais, Euro-styled fruit/vase still life's and botanical and bird studies. Some, like the bonzai above, are almost almost photographic in detail.

To commission these artists for Hindu works, write for their names and addresses at: Department of Art, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213, USA. Att: James J. White