

# ART IN TRANSIT: INTEGRATING PUBLIC ART INTO INDIA'S EMERGING METRO SYSTEMS

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## ABSTRACT

*As India continues to expand its urban transit networks, emerging metro systems in cities such as Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru offer a distinctive opportunity to integrate public art into the daily commuting experience. This paper investigates how the inclusion of site-specific artwork, ranging from murals and sculptures to interactive installations, can transform otherwise utilitarian transit spaces into dynamic cultural corridors that express and strengthen local identity. Emphasizing the storytelling power of design, the study argues that public art in metro systems functions not merely as aesthetic enhancement, but as a vital medium for place-making and the preservation of collective memory. The study employs a case study approach, including comparative analysis of both domestic and international metro art initiatives as case studies. Drawing on examples like the Mumbai Metro Line 1 and the Hyderabad Metro's established art initiatives, the research underscores the impact of curated art in enriching commuter experiences, cultivating civic pride, and advancing inclusivity within public spaces. Ultimately, the paper calls for a multidisciplinary framework that unites urban planners, artists, and local communities to craft meaningful, context-sensitive transit environments.*

**KEYWORDS:** Urban Transit, Inclusive Public Spaces, Art and Infrastructure, Community Engagement, Design Narratives

## INTRODUCTION

The metro rail systems in India have increased at an unprecedented rate and have redefined the daily transportation in cities like Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru. With these new transit systems, it has a massive potential of incorporating public art within the stations and corridors and transforming the destinations of daily commute into a more enjoyable experience based on culture. The metro space can serve as the arenas of local creativity and group identity instead of being functional infrastructure.

The examples of foreign precedents, such as art-filled metro stations of Stockholm, Seoul and Los Angeles, demonstrate that the artworks chosen carefully can make the mass transit process more significant, cultural and humanize the mass transit environment. Because India is a highly diverse nation and in terms of its artistic practices, the integration of site-specific murals, sculptures, and interactive installations have an enormous potential to disseminate the past and experienced lives of the area. The essay explains that the use of public art in the metro systems has helped in place-making, constructing an image of commuters, and preservation of cultural memory. The study shows through comparative case studies, the potential that art has, to transform the transit spaces into inclusive and contextually meaningful spaces.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The art created in the streets is always characterized by scholars as the way to promote the city image and the civic patriotism. Besides the aesthetic enhancement, civic art can also assist as a means of forming emotional connections between individuals and their environment, which tend to establish a sense of self-identification. and pride. The literature that is available on the metro systems in the world has led to the application of art in the transformation of the travelling experience. A good example of how colour, sculpture and design can help to make the commuting experience less dull and more Xfulfilling in general is the Tunnelbana in Stockholm which

is commonly referred to as the longest art gallery in the world. Similarly, the Los Angeles transit art projects may be perceived to be more interactive to users and have a higher perception of safety and comfort.

Public art has also increasingly been employed in designing metros in India. The Delhi Metro is full of installations that emphasize the Indian cultural diversity. Hyderabad Metro art program is a great show of Telangana native crafts, and Mumbai Metro Line 1 is doing this by engaging artists to create a work which is representative of the layers of the city and its multi-ethnicity.

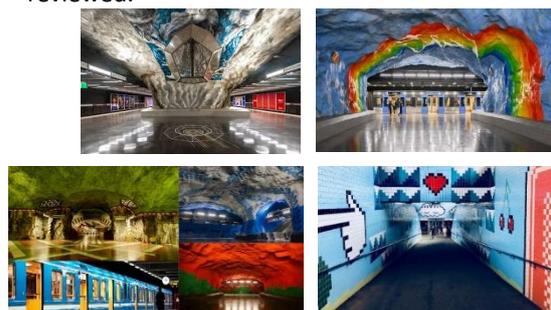
## RESEARCH GAP

Nevertheless, research on Indian commuter attitudes toward has not been done. Metro art is limited. It is also insufficient to have detailed studies that analyze collaborative processes among governmental bodies, designers and artists. This study will focus on filling these gaps.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was done using a comparative case study method design to determine the contributions of public art in Indian metro systems.

- **Compared Case Study Method:** Examples of Indian (Hyderabad Metro and Mumbai Metro Line 1) and three international metro systems with effective art programs (Stockholm, Seoul, and Los Angeles) were reviewed.



Stockholm Metro Murals



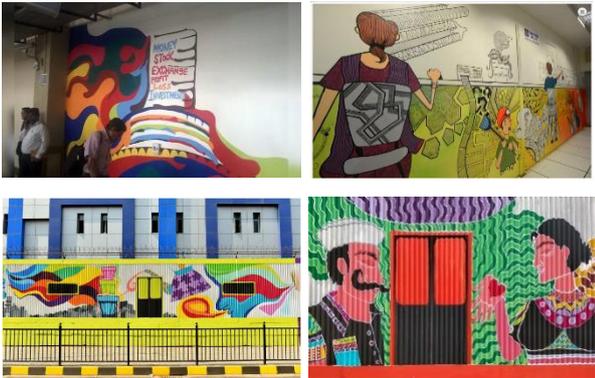
Los Angeles Metro Murals



Hyderabad Metro Murals



Seoul Metro Mural



Mumbai Metro Murals

Bengaluru Metro Murals

• **Results**

The results substantiate the fact that the presence of public art in metro systems has a positive effect on the experience of commuters, their engagement in space, and perception of culture. International case studies prove that art incorporated in initial stages of design creates greater spatial integrity and user experience. Conversely, Indian metro systems primarily embrace art interventions that follow the construction or events. Although Hyderabad Metro demonstrates the rising success due to the staged programs, Mumbai Metro Line 1 is still infrastructure-centric and restricts the influence of art. The participatory models experienced in Seoul, contribute to the feeling of ownership, and the Indian metros experience little organized community engagement, especially in the conceptual design, stage. Specialized art funds in transit projects allow uniform quality and maintenance of international metros. Indian systems are based on mixed or ad-hoc funding, which funds the short-term initiatives but the long-term sustainability is questioned. Metro art is also a place-making aspect as it turns the stations into recognizable spaces within the city. Hyderabad Metro is a show of the beginning of the visual identity, and Mumbai Metro Line 1 does not have a clear aesthetic style at the moment.

Dimension	Stockholm Metro	Seoul Metro	Los Angeles Metro	Hyderabad Metro	Mumbai Metro
Aesthetic Impact	High and iconic	High across urban fabric	High in transit zones	Growing and emerging	Low (so far)

**Discussion:**

The findings are a strong indication that the presence of public art is a major way of enriching metro environments in India. Commuters react well to culturally based artworks that are visually stimulating, which is in line with the findings of international studies. These paintings encourage the emotional attachment to place, which upholds urban identity theories and spatial narratives.

Although these are the advantages, organization barriers can reduce the effectiveness of the metro art programs. Artists highlighted the need for better coordination and clearer institutional frameworks. Furthermore, the lack of standard maintenance plans is a cause of concern regarding the long-term conservation of works of art.

integrating indoor and outdoor spaces for performances and social gatherings. Reflecting Correa's philosophy of open, climate-sensitive architecture, it fosters creativity and community engagement. While still vital, there are discussions about renovations that preserve Correa's original vision. Kala Academy continues to serve as a global model for vibrant cultural spaces.

In order to overcome these challenges, the research suggests a collaborative design model of:

- Transit authorities
- Artists and cultural experts
- Local communities
- Urban designers and planners.

This model would help in making sure that the art in transit systems is culturally relevant, in good condition and is actually representative of the community identity.

**Conclusion:**

This paper has shown that the inclusion of art in the growing metro systems in India has improved the commuting experience and also served as a significant addition to the culture of the urban systems. Transit spaces are animated with murals, sculptures, and installations and cease to be purely functional spaces into culturally resonant public space associated with local identity and collective memory. The results of commuter comments and artists opinion point to the fact that the

Dimension	Stockholm Metro	Seoul Metro	Los Angeles Metro	Hyderabad Metro	Mumbai Metro
Integration Strategy	Deep, systematic art-architecture within transit	Citywide and mural-driven public art	Station-embedded artist commissions	Event-based and evolving	Minimal transit art focus
Community Participation	Indirect (commuters as audience)	Active (festivals, murals)	Moderate (workshops, youth art)	Emerging (festivals)	Limited
Funding Models	Public transit budgets & art mandates	Municipal and cultural programs	Transit authority capital art allocations	Mixed public-private	Infrastructure-led funding without art allocation

culturally reflective, context-based artworks are more effective to enhance emotional appeal, spatial sense, and feelings of safety and comfort in the metro.

In order to reinforce the future efforts, the paper proposes long-term planning models that focus on early design integration, cross-sector cooperation, local community, and specific funding mechanisms. With the ever-expanding and increasingly dense urban transportation systems in Indian cities, the integration of art into the infrastructure of public transport is an effective approach to develop civic pride, solidify place-making, and develop more welcoming and purposeful civic spaces.

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