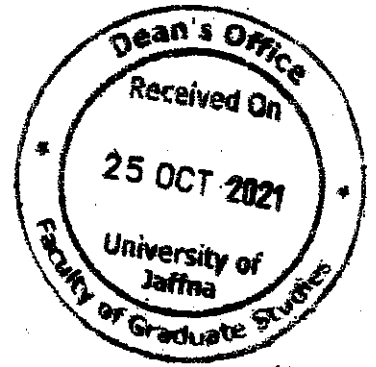




**The Representation of Male Body in Sri Lankan Art:
An Analytical Study based on the Works by David Paynter**



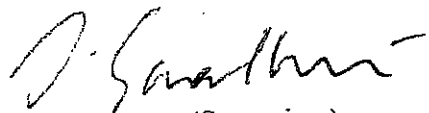
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ABSTRACT

Representational politics of the male and female body in Sri Lankan art has attracted very limited scholarly attention in the field of art history. In particular, art history informed by the approaches of Marxism, Feminism, Post Structuralism, Psychoanalysis and the theories of Post Colonialism and Queer studies has not been fully explored, where the existing studies are either formalist or biographical in nature. In this context, the current research study attempts to read representations of the male body in the works of David Paynter through cultural theory. David Paynter was a Burgher artist active in the latter part of British colonial rule in Sri Lanka. He was an artist, art educator and social worker. His style varies between academic realism and post-impressionism and his paintings were exhibited widely, both locally and in Europe. Paynter painted local village scenes, biblical scenes and portraits filled with nude or half-nude male figures by using his servants, students and orphans in the Paynter Home as models. The structures and the postures of these male bodies are strongly marked by the voyeuristic and homoerotic gaze of the artist. The unequal power relationship between the artist and the model has been further complicated, in Paynter's artworks, by the relationships between master and servant, teacher and student, city and village and local and foreign. Through a close reading of his paintings, a comparative analysis and theoretical interpretations, this project attempts to argue that the artist's preoccupation with the subject of the male body and its mode of figuration was driven by the male homoeroticism of the artist and linked to his privileged social position.

Keywords : Homoeroticism, Local Male Models, Male Body, Representation, Sri Lankan Art


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