

## **IDEOLOGY OF POWER: REFLECTIONS THROUGH MOSAIC ART IN SRI LANKA**

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Art is a powerful medium for reflecting and expressing various aspects of society, culture, and the past. Art does not only serve an aesthetic purpose but also holds significant religious and cultural meanings, embodying the power and devotion of the community that created them. Mosaic art is an art form of decorating a surface by closely placing pieces of hard materials. The main objective of this research is to identify how the ideology of power reflects through the mosaic art form in Sri Lanka. This qualitative research was conducted on the data collected through field research and library survey methods. In Sri Lanka, mosaic art can be seen at the Buddhist temples (*Karagampitiya Subodharama Viharaya*, *Rankoth Viharaya* at *Panadura*, *Vijayananda Viharaya* at *Galle*, *Narendrasighe Viharaya* at *Kundasale*, *Diwurumwela Viharaya*), and elite houses (*Richmond Castle*, *Maduwanwela Walawwa*). Figures of animals, flora, household objects, English letters, numeric emblems, geometric designs, and decorative motifs were depicted in mosaic art in Sri Lanka. This research focuses on the significance of material evidence used for mosaic art and its iconography through archaeological and art historical aspects. Mosaic art in Sri Lanka can be seen as a reflection of the country's diverse cultural heritage and influences. Creating mosaic art reflects a powerful expression of human creativity and resistance. Many of the ceramic and porcelain products used to create mosaic art were imported from Britain and Holland, and these products were popular among Sri Lanka's elite class during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This research reveals that mosaic art functioned as a tool for resistance, reflecting social hierarchies and religious perspectives shaped by this art form in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Sri Lanka. Elite homes used this art form as a flooring method to emphasize social prestige, while Buddhist temples used mosaic flooring to symbolize resistance to colonial power, aligning with the Buddhist renaissance that occurred during the colonial period. Buddhists visually expressed their resistance by incorporating ceramic and porcelain products. Through its designs and symbolic imagery, mosaic art embodies tangible and intangible values, connecting the power of artistic expression to convey complex memories and visualize the ideology of power.

**Keywords:** Ideology, mosaic art, power, resistance, visualization