

Contemporary Art

from

Vernacular India



A selection from the Anders' hus Gallery



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Introduction

Anne Chevalier and Anders Laustsen from Anders' hus Gallery are happy to bring to you 85 works from our collection "Vernacular India".

If you want to know our prices, take a look at www.andershus.fr.

We have achieved this collection from our travels to Bhopal in the years 2011 to 2016. We thank Padmaja Srivastava, architect and vernacular art consultant, and Akhilesh Verma, painter and former Artistic Director of the Bharat Bhavan Museum, for their precious help.

We have met all the Gond and Bhil artists at their homes in Bhopal. We have met the Bhil artist late Pema Fatya at his home in Jabhua and we have met the Warli artists, late Jyvia Soma Mashe and Shantaram Tumbada at their homes in Dahanu. We thank them all for their hospitality.

Have a nice reading.



Anne Chevalier & Anders Laustsen

Contemporary Art or Tribal Art?

Extract from the book “Udyan Vajpeyi: « Jangarh Kalam - Narrative of a tradition - Gond Painting »”:

[...] Jagdish Swaminathan, the great painter and thinker of the twentieth century, was of the opinion that it wasn't only the urban art that qualified as art, as the British would have liked us to believe. The tradition of folk and adivasi paintings all over the Indian countryside is just as important. This too is contemporary art. The adivasis are neither the denizens of a backward world, nor are their works the creations of some bygone age. These works belong to the present age. It is a mistake to look at mankind and art with a European historical perspective. Neither man nor his varied artistic creations can be understood in this way. It was in this quest to understand that he sent several teams of young painters to various regions in Madhya Pradesh urging them to collect paintings, sculptures, or visual art of any kind for the newly established multi-art set up of Bharat Bhavan in Bhopal. This was a unique enterprise to rid ourselves of the mental shackles the British had left behind for us[...]

Extract from a Hindustan Times article (Jul 16, 2016) with the curator Nancy Adajania:

“Why is folk art not treated on a par with contemporary art?”:

[...] The terms folk and tribal are a legacy of the British colonial administration. The folk was an exotic, primordial Other, invented by the colonial scholar-administrator to justify the “white man's burden”. Tribal emerged from the colonial regime's preoccupation with classifying the population into revenue-paying and non-revenue paying groups.

The use of these terms continued in post-Independence India because these suited our caste-ridden society. To this day, the folk and tribal artist is treated as a poor relation to the contemporary artist.

In 2012, as joint artistic director of the 9th Gwangju Biennale (South Korea), I chose to show, among other artists, Jangarh Singh Shyam, who belonged to the Pardhan Gond community. While installing his painting Barasingha (1989), I became mesmerized by the antlers spreading like a forest from the stag's head.

While the prejudiced might stereotype his paintings as tribal art, his was an individuated vocabulary, which had broken free from a preordained tribal identity, as well as the styles of modern or contemporary art.

Jangarh was nurtured by the artist J Swaminathan, who invited him to Bharat Bhavan (Madhya Pradesh) — the transdisciplinary center where art, music, theatre and poetry cross-fertilized one other. After installing his silken drawings and prints, I placed the last letter he wrote, before his death in 2001, in a vitrine (glass cabinet). He was barely 40 when he committed suicide at the Mithila Museum in Japan, where he had been forced to batch produce works for a paltry sum of money.

Although Jangarh achieved international success — he had shown in Magiciens de la Terre, a path-breaking exhibition of global art in Paris (1989) — the system exploited him because he had not been able to declare his artistic autonomy (freedom from external control) [...]

Concluding remarks from Anders' hus Gallery

So, what should we call this art?

Tribal Art? No, this could be considered as pejorative!

Contemporary Rural Art? It is true that most tribal art is rural art, but not all. For example, the best known Gond and Bhil artists live in Bhopal. And why oppose Contemporary Rural Art to Contemporary Metropolitan Art?

Why don't we just call it Contemporary Art?

GOND

Gond art is a form of painting from folk and tribal art that is practiced by the second largest tribes in India (11 millions) – the Gond – who are predominantly from Madhya Pradesh, but also can be found in pockets of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha. The work of Gond artists is rooted in their folk tales and culture, and thus story-telling is a strong element of every painting.

The Gond's are Dravidian and their origin can be traced to the pre-Aryan era. They refer to themselves as Koi or Koiture. Their language is related to Telugu and other Dravidian languages.

The history of the Gond people dates nearly 1400 years. Paintings as well as other art forms have always been quite popular with tribal people in India, especially the Gond tribe. The Gond people have a belief that viewing a good image begets good luck and they decorate their house with traditional geometric patterns. Among the Gond, it is the most prominent among the Pardhan Gonds who are renowned for their artistic skills, be it painting or music. Gond paintings have also been used by the Gond people as a way to record their history.

According to the Gond belief system, all things are inhabited by a spirit and, consequently, are sacred. Gond paintings are a reflection of man's close connection with his natural surroundings. While a majority of Gond paintings do take inspiration from nature, it isn't the only source of ideas. They also depict the myths and legends of India or showcase images from the daily lives and dreams in their art.

Jangarh Singh Shyam (1962–2001) was the pioneer of a new school of Indian art called *Jangarh Kalam*, the school of contemporary Gond painting.

Gond art is created out of carefully drawn lines. Lines are used in such a way to convey a sense of movement to still images. Dots and dashes are added to impart a greater sense of movement and increase the amount of detail. Another very striking facet of Gond paintings is the use of bright vivid colors such as white, red, blue and yellow.

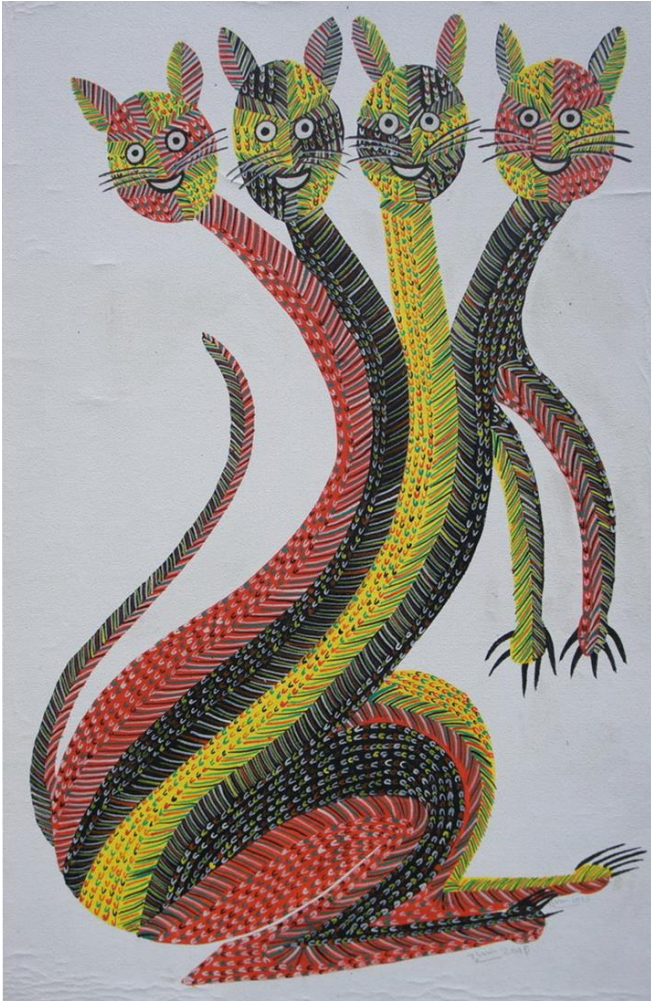
Anand Shyam



Anand Shyam was born in 1963. He became independent after assisting the work of Jangarh Singh Shyam, and is one of the Gond artists with the longest career. The borders drawn by building-block like segments, and half-circle patterns inspired by the moon are his characteristic style. Anand employs many primary colors such as yellow, red and green, and paints energetic and lively paintings. Anand artworks were exhibited in Paris in 2010 in Musée de Quai Branly, *Autres Maitres de l'Inde*, curated by Jyotindra Jain.



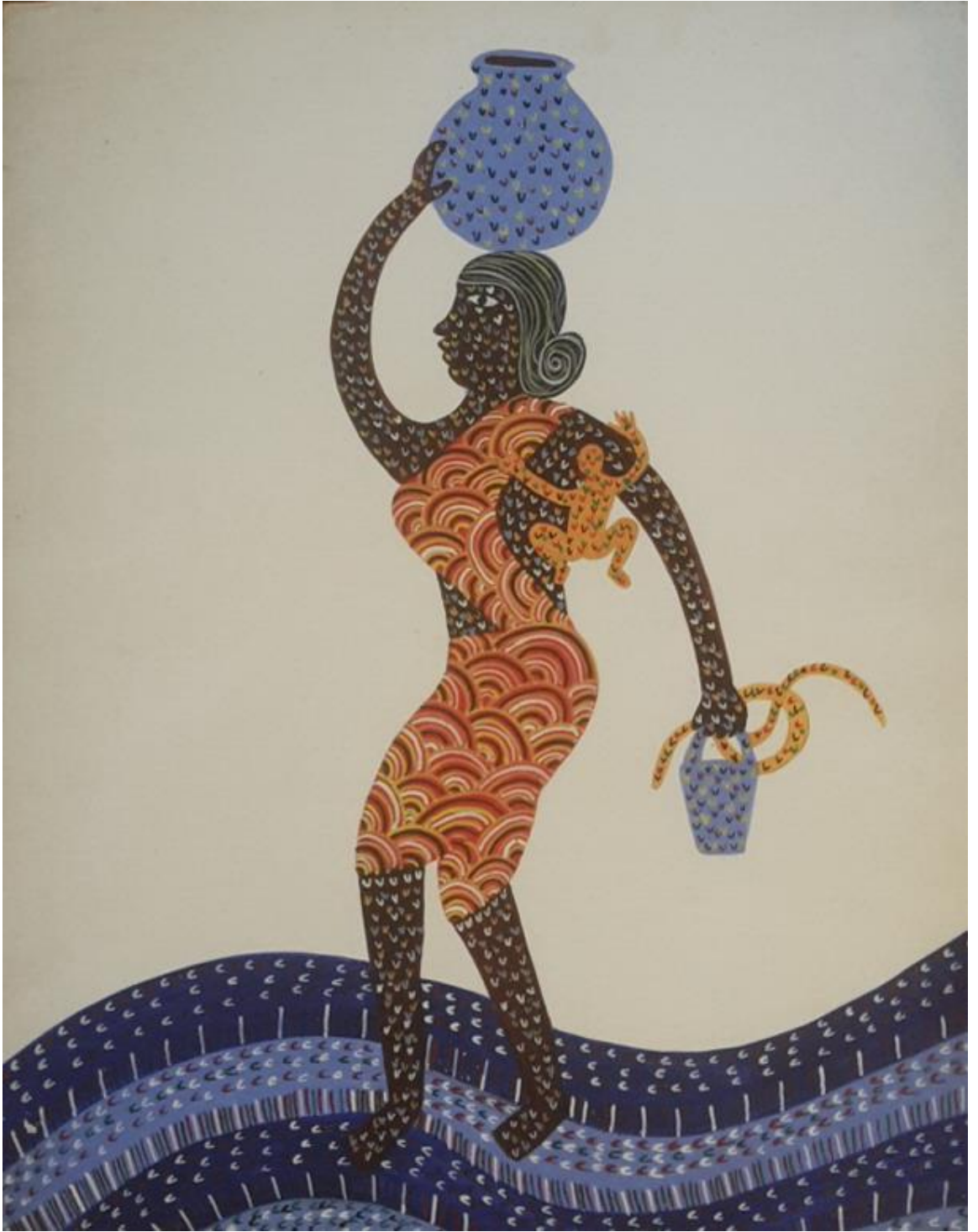
Acrylic on canvas, 819x89 cm, 2011



Acrylic on canvas, 86x52 cm, 2011



Acrylic on paper, 55x35 cm, 200x



Acrylic on paper, 70x54 cm, 2000



Acrylic on canvas, 90x81 cm, 2011

Bhajju Shyam



Bhajju was born in 1971 in Patangarh village. It was Jangarh Singh Shyam who suggested Bhajju to start painting. His works have been exhibited in India and abroad, starting from the Paris group exhibition in 1998. His publications include “The London Jungle Book”, “Creation” , and the co-authored “The Night Life of Trees” , all published from Tara Books and translated into Japanese as well. His unique ideas and refined painting style have received a global reputation. Bhajju received Padma Shri award for the first time as a Gond artist.



Tribute to Jangarh. Acrylic on canvas, 120x163 cm, 2014

The golden bird spread its huge wings protecting his family. They come towards him with their beaks open to find food and life. Jangarh and his wife Nankusia, when arriving in Bhopal, welcomed their family, large and very poor. All were lodged, fed and learned painting from the master. « Jangarh was a man with a heart immense. Jangarh never did anything just for himself. » greets Bhajju.

Durga Bai Vyam and Subhash Vyam

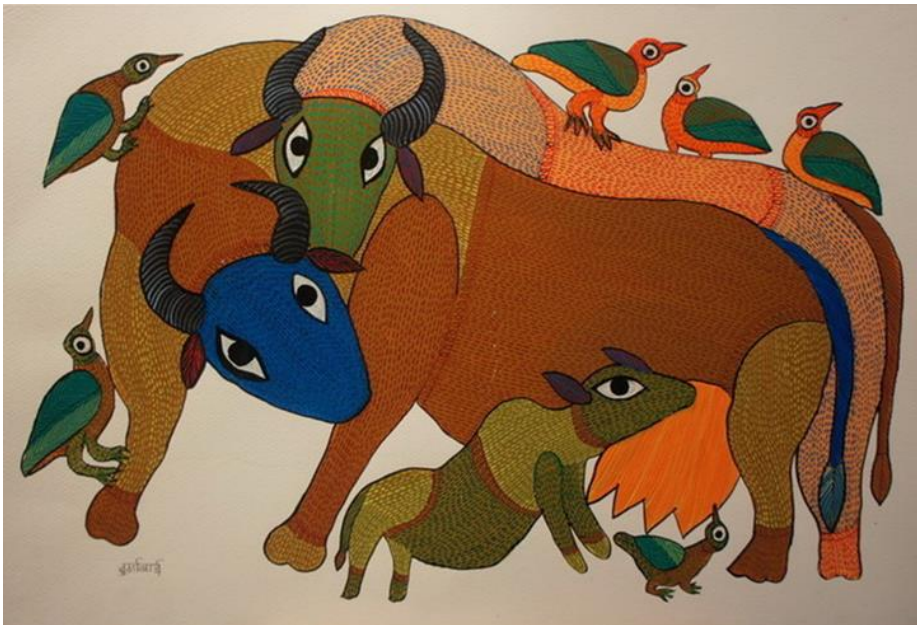


Durga Bai Vyam was born in Burbaspur in 1972. When she was six years old, she learned Digna, the geometrical pattern painted on the ground on ritualistic occasions, from her mother. Durga's skill in Digna soon became known in the village and was requested to draw for others. Jangarh Singh Shyam also thought highly of her. Her publications include the co-authored "The Night Life of Trees" from Tara Books. Many of her naive and warm paintings are themed around the daily life in the village and traditional folklore stories she heard from her grandmother.



Subhash Vyam was born in the Sonpuri village in 1970. He used to make wooden sculptures and pottery in his teens, and started painting after he got married to Durga Bai. In 2017, Subhash published a picture book of Gond stories "Water", which conveys the importance of paying respect to nature, from Tara Books. He is fond of black and white and uses splatter of colors with only partial coloring.

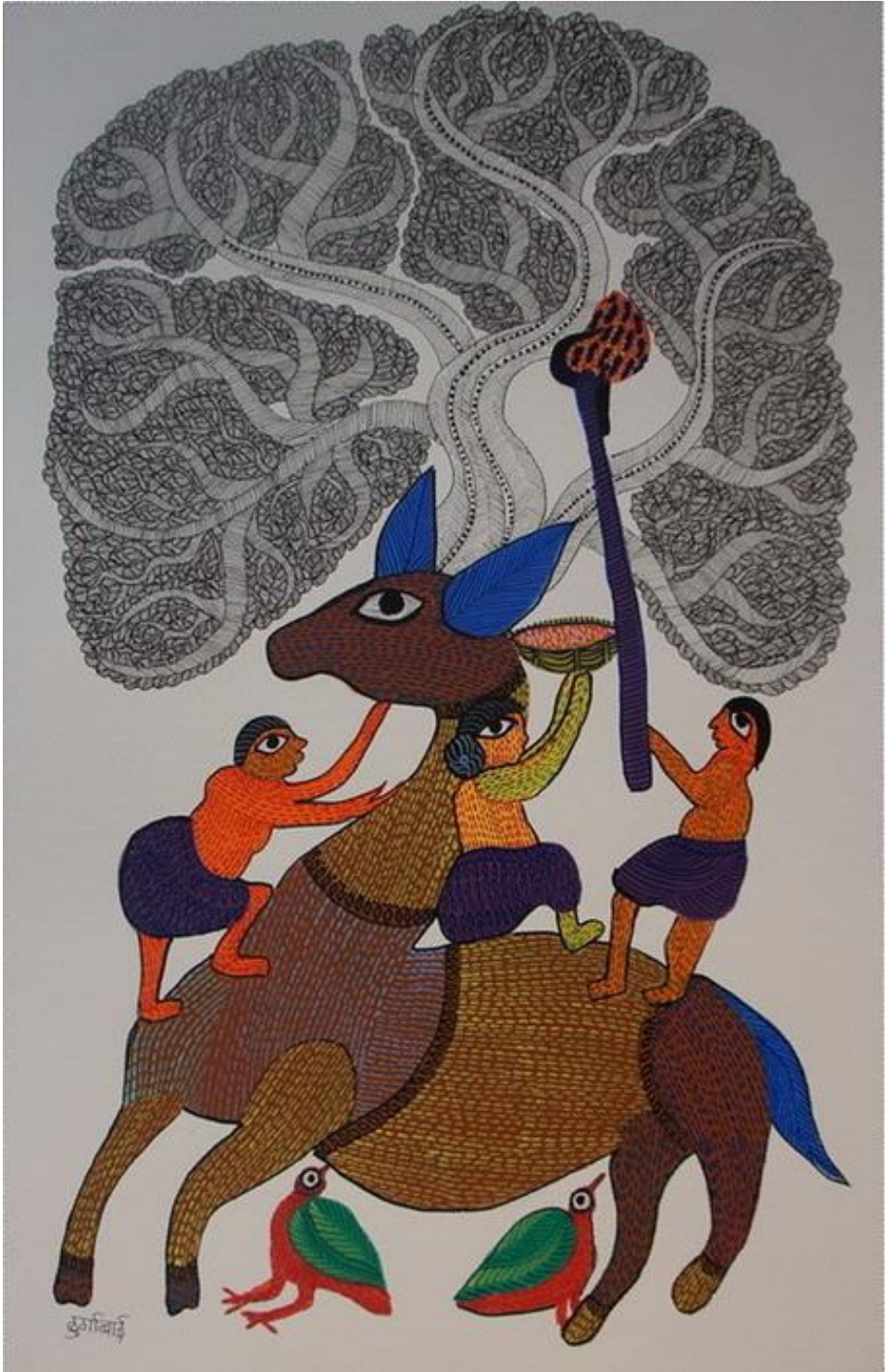
Together they have illustrated *Bhimayana*, the comic about the life of Bhimrao Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Constitution of India.



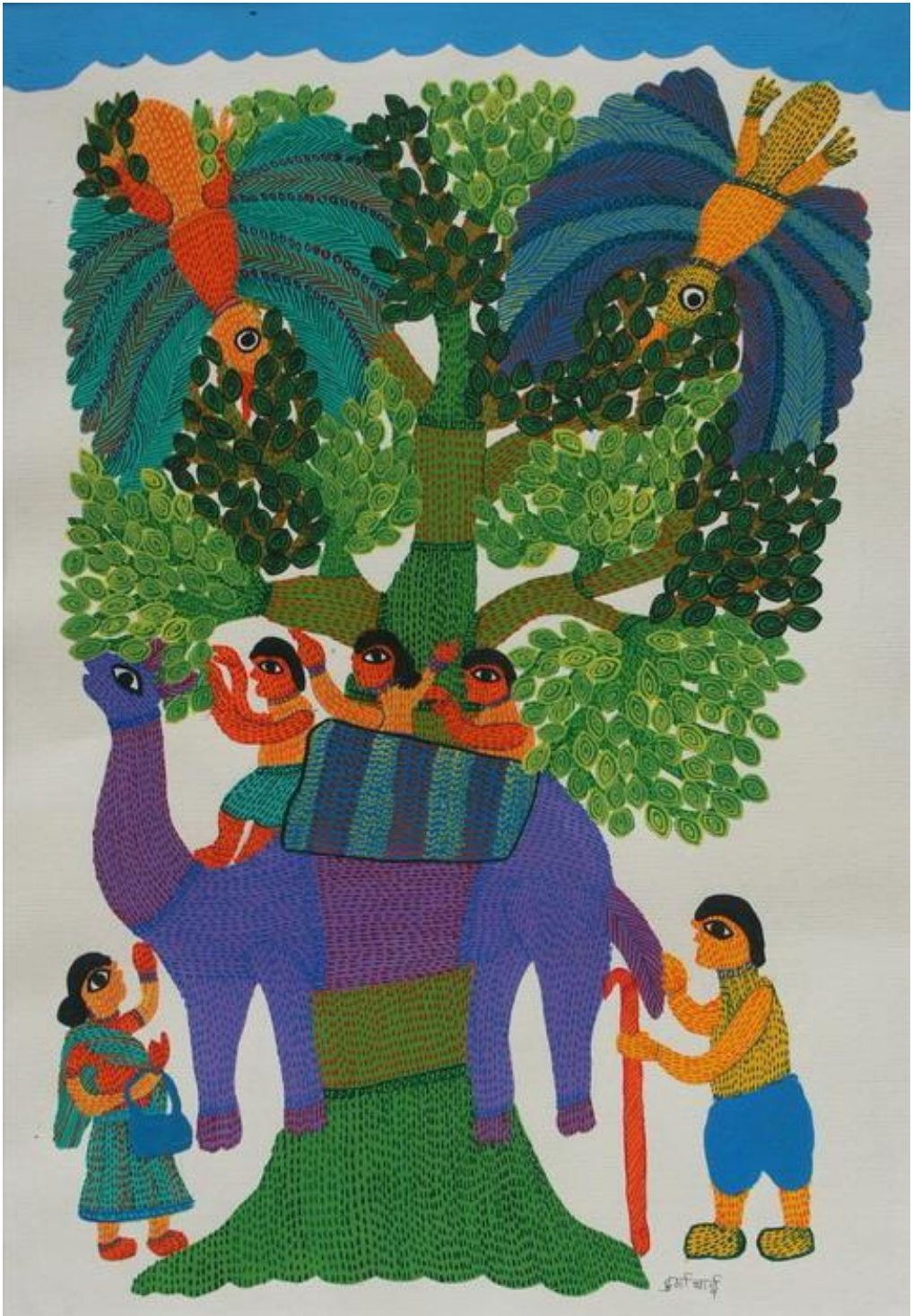
Durga Bai Vyam, acrylic on paper, 38x55 cm, 2013



Nourishing Earth, Subhash Vyam, acrylic on paper, 71x51 cm, 2014



Durga Bai and Subhash Vyam, acrylic on paper, 55x38 cm, 2014



Durga Bai Vyam, acrylic on paper, 50x35 cm, 2011



The flying Elephant. Durga Bai Vyam, acrylic on paper, 28x38 cm, 2013

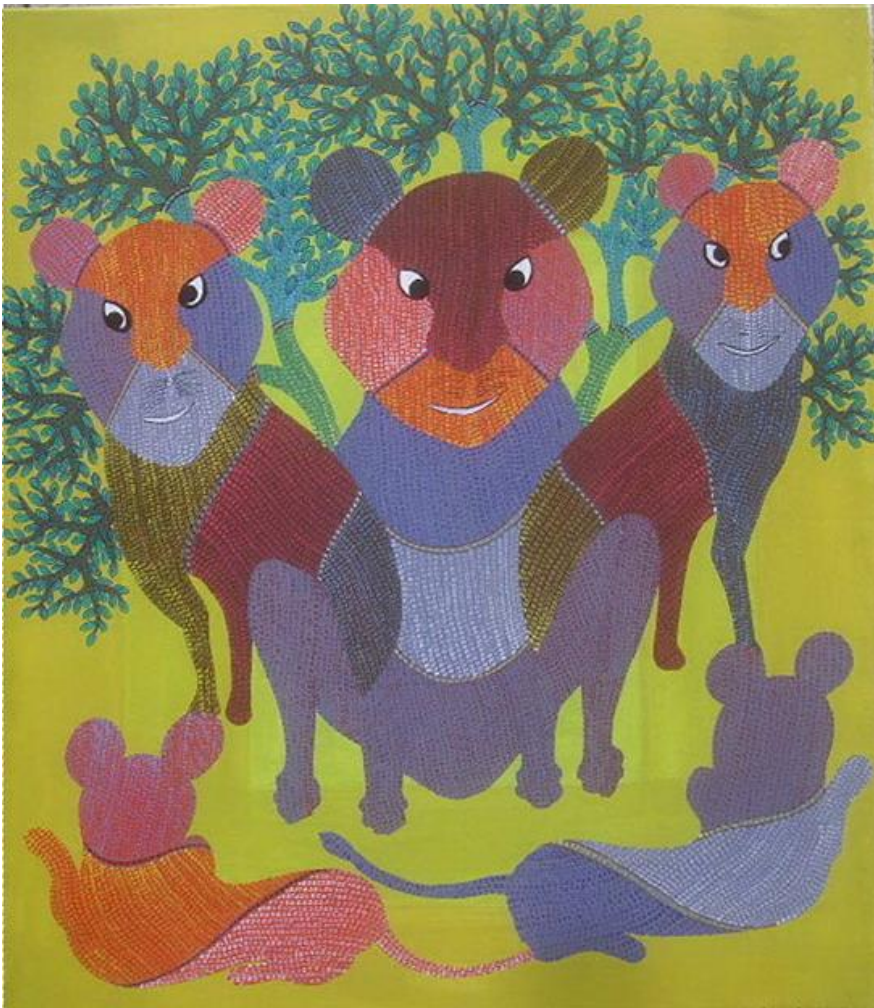
According to Gondi folklore, the flying elephant (Udata Hathi) was used by Gods and Goddesses in heaven, to transport them from place to place. One day, when the Lord was resting he told the elephant to take a break. The elephant decided to fly to the earth. Upon reaching the earth, he was delighted to find fields of sugarcane and banana trees. As soon as he started eating the sugarcane the villagers came and tried to scare him off. But the elephant would not move. The villagers then called the Lord and asked him to intervene. The Lord was displeased with the Elephant and asked him never to go to earth again.

A few days later, the Elephant went back to Earth to eat the sugarcane, he had loved the lush forests and the bananas. The villagers were upset, and once again asked the Lord to help. The Lord was furious and told the villagers to organize a feast and the Elephant was invited to join the revelry too. After enjoying a hearty meal and the Mahua wine the elephant fell asleep. Whilst he was asleep, the Lord cut off his wings. He gave one to the Banana tree and one to the Peacock. From that day the Peacock has a beautiful Plumage and the Banana tree has large leaves. (Text by Padmaja Srivastava)

Gariba Tekam



Gariba Singh Tekam, the youngest brother of Narmada Singh Tekam and Kala Bai, was inspired by Jangarh Singh Shyam to take up painting as a profession. Jangarh encouraged him to continue painting, marveling at his forms and colors. Gariba and his wife Prem Bai work in the Museum of Mankind. They look after the gallery where Gariba's painting of the seven Gond brothers, the youngest of whom became a Pardhan, is displayed.



Acrylic on canvas, 87x75 cm, 2011



Acrylic on canvas, 91x40 cm, 2012

Japani Shyam



Japani started painting at a very early age and she says her father would always encourage her to paint the way she wanted and never criticized her work. She feels that is the reason why she began to paint with confidence and in 1999, at the age of eleven, she was given the Kamala Devi Award.

Japani's main theme is the world of animals and birds, their struggle for food, their sense of camaraderie, their different mood. Another subject is the world of rituals, beliefs among the Gonds which she was exposed to when she went to the villages of Pantangarh and Sonpur, where her parents Jangarh and Nankusia came from. Like her brother Mayank, she has also painted on the world of Baigas, who are still very much an integral part of nature.



Acrylic on canvas, 60x90 cm, 2014



Acrylic on canvas, 83x55, 2011



Acrylic on paper, 55x38 cm, 2013

Kala Bai Shyam



Late Kala Bai, the first Gond Pardhan woman to use canvas, brushes and acrylic paint for her artistic expressions, enjoys painting tigers and reindeer, trees and birds. The tigers, in her paintings are especially dear to her, as they remind her of her childhood in Amarkantak, when tigers roamed the nearby forests. As a young girl, she saw tigers in many moods, which she now tries to portray in her paintings. It was in Bharat Bhawan that Kala was first given paints and paper to work with. By that time, she was married to Anand Singh Shyam who worked there in the department of Graphics. When the state of Chattisgarh was carved out of Madhya Pradesh, Kala Bai and Anand Singh Shyam drew the new map of Madhya Pradesh.



Acrylic on canvas, 95x87 cm, 2011

Mayank Shyam

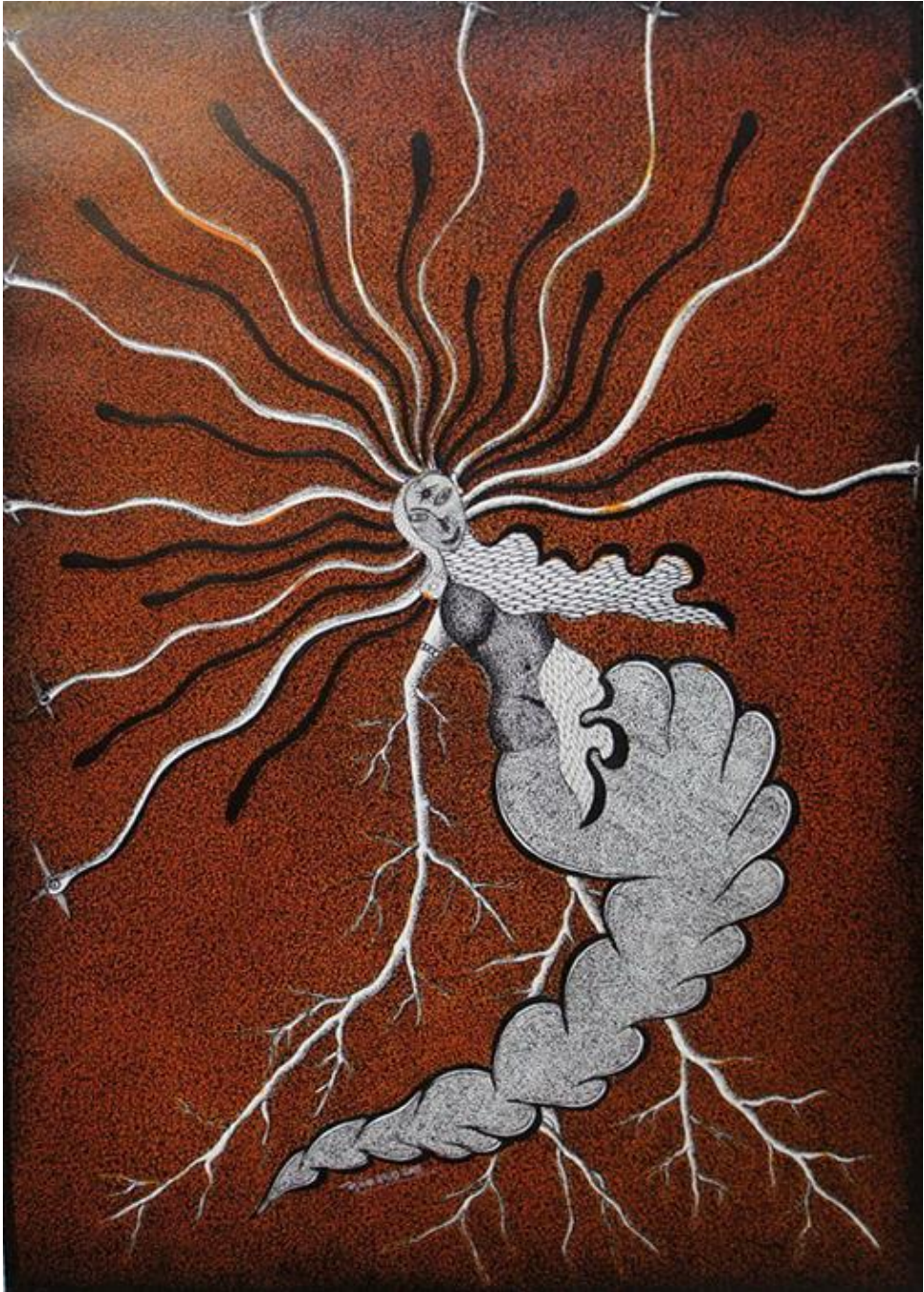


Mayank Kumar Shyam (born in 1987), the son of Jangarh Singh Shyam has already created a space for himself in the world of art. Twenty one year old Mayankh was featured in the book 'Freedom' sixty years after Indian Independence (published by Art and Heritage Foundation. 2007), alongwith Rabindranath Tagore, Paramjit and Arpita Singh, Jamini Roy and other contemporary artists. He had got the state award (2005-2006) for master crafts, persons and weavers.

He has been using black most often, because he feels it is easy to draw the viewer's attention with a lot of colors but more challenging to do it with black alone.

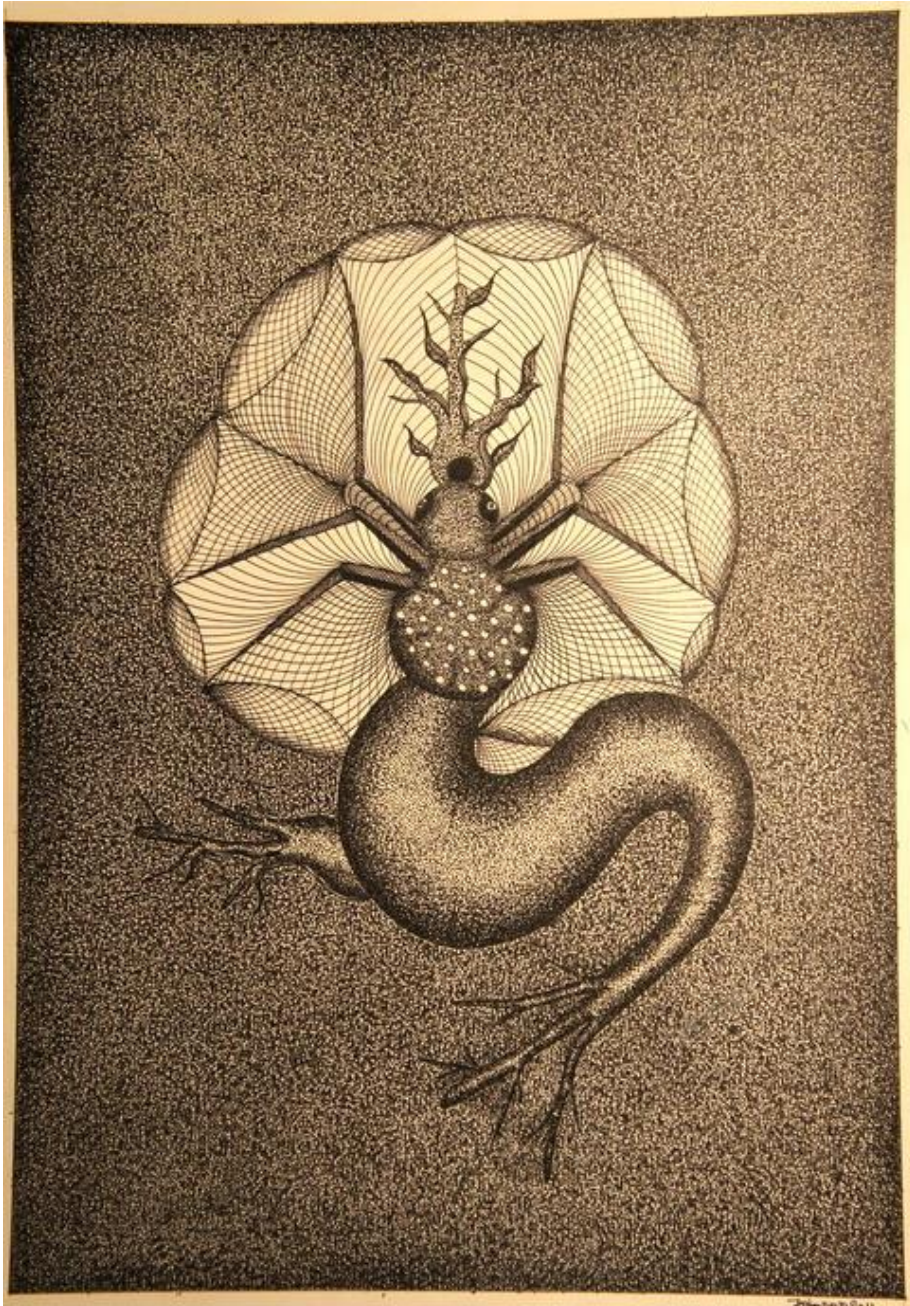


The warrior Bada Dev. Acrylic on canvas, 91x120 cm, 2014



Shakti. Acrylic on paper, 75x55 cm, 2010

The power (Shakti in Hindi) of the woman and the tree is depicted in this painting. As the mother protects her child, so the earth takes care of all forms of life on earth.



The Formation of the Earth. Ink on paper, 55x38 cm, 2010

According to Gond tradition the God Bada Dev created the Earth by scattering the mud on the spider's web. The earth settled on the canvas.

Nankusia Shyam



Nankusia was born in 1972 in Sonpuri village. Her husband Jangarh Singh Shyam encouraged her to paint, and Nankusia is one of the artists who maintain her style strongly. She received a state-level award of Madhya Pradesh, Hasta Shilpa Vikas Nigam, in 2002. Nankusia's works are exhibited not only in India but also overseas such as Dubai and Sri Lanka. Wave patterns drawn in dots and light color usage characterize her paintings. Nankusia's artworks were showcased in Paris in 2010 in Musée de Quai Branly, *Autres Maîtres de l'Inde*, curated by Jyotindra Jain.

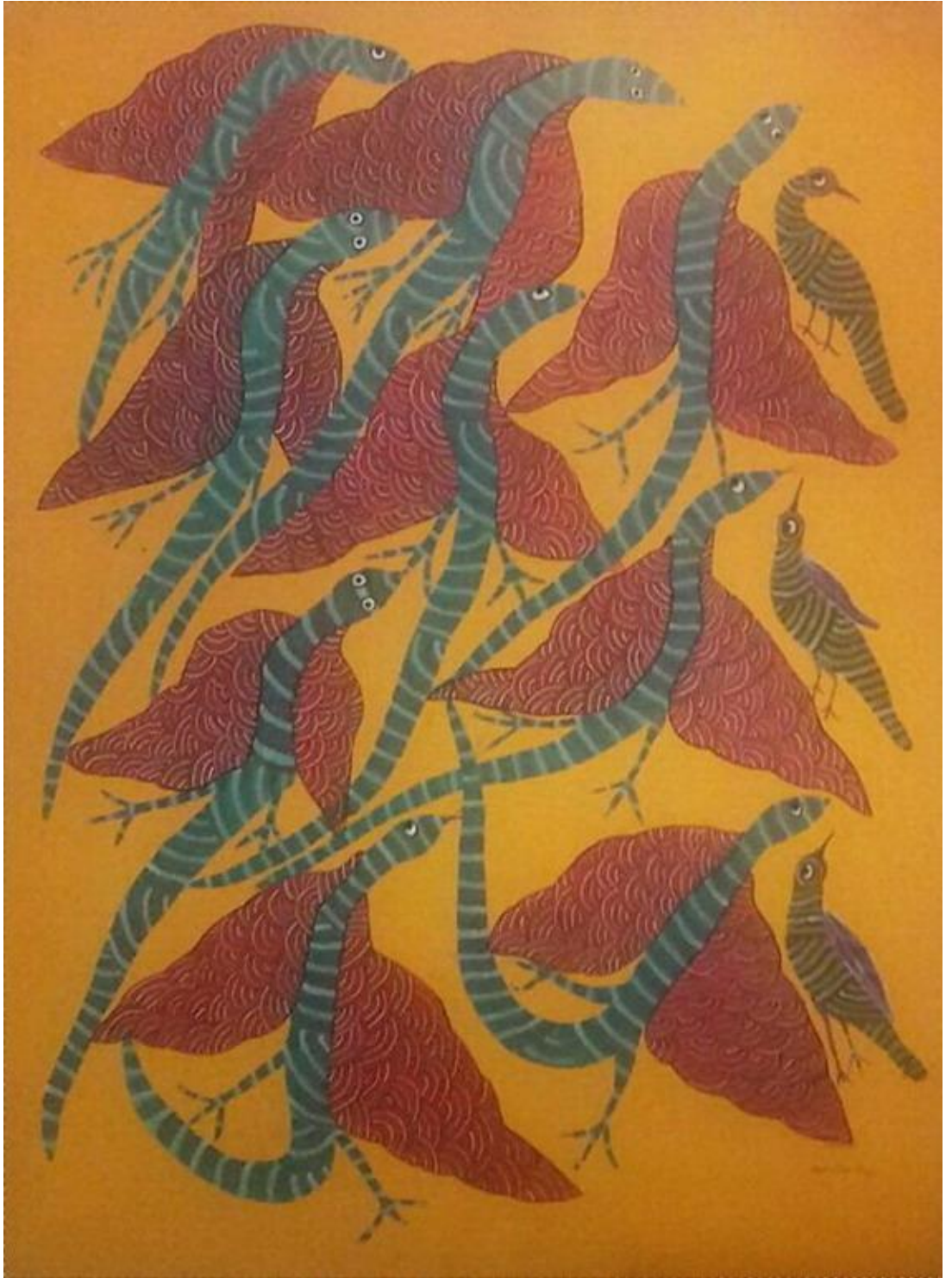


Bada Dev. Acrylic on paper, 55x40 cm, 2013



The reunion of the disappeared Earth, Acrylic on canvas, 124x95, 2017

[...]Bhagavan (Thakur Dev) makes a crow and sends it to find earth. It falls on the back of Kakramal Kshattri the great crab, who takes it to the bottom of the ocean to force earth from Gichna Raja who has swallowed it. They force it to vomit and it brings up twenty-one little balls of different kinds of earth. The crow takes these back to Bhagavan. Then Bhagavan undoes the earth from the crow's neck and puts it in his lap. Then he calls a young virgin. She makes a pot out of leaves, and puts the earth in it, and she churns it. For eight days and nine nights she churns till all is ready. Then Bhagavan rolls the earth out like a great thin chapati, and spreads it on the face of the waters. There it begins to grow till it has covered all the waters [...] From *Myths of Middle India* by Verrier Elwin



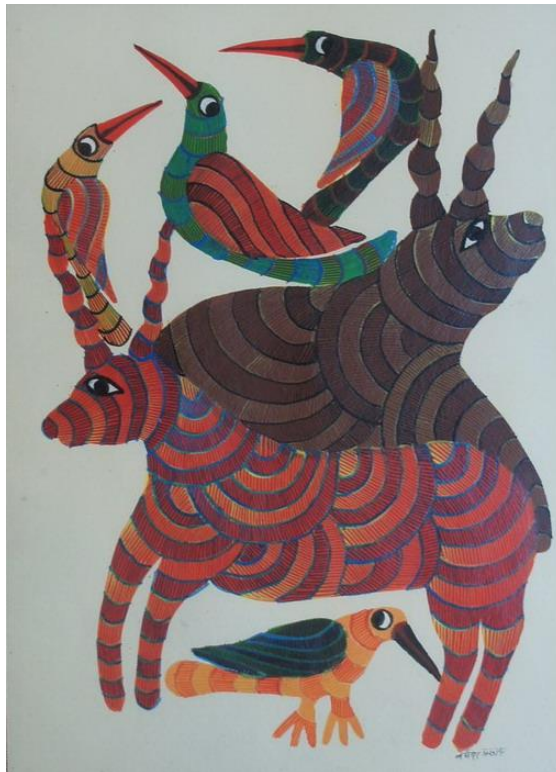
Acrylic on canvas, 124x95 cm, 2017

Narmada Tekam

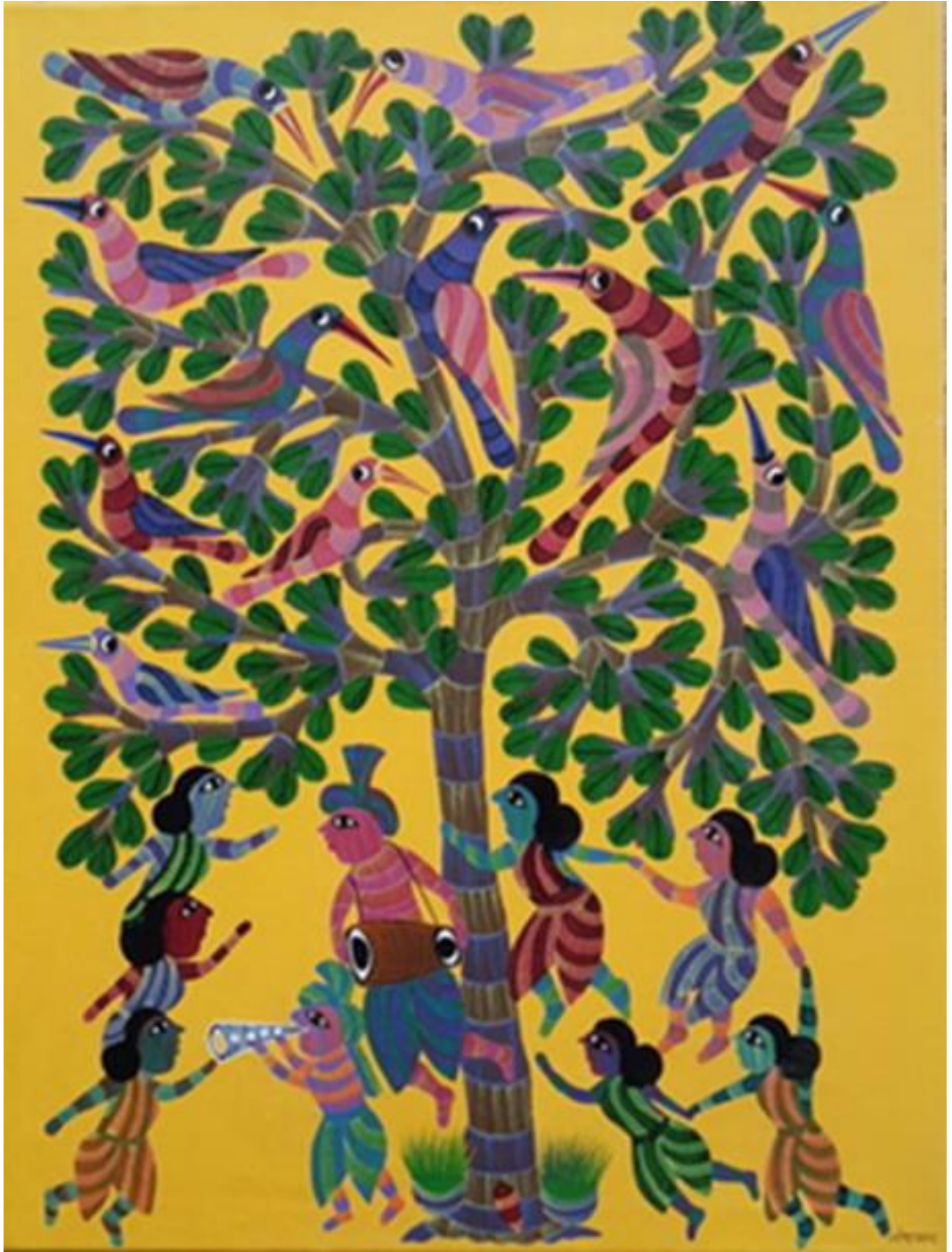


Narmada Prasad Tekam came to Bhopal in 1983, a few months after Jangarh Singh Shyam. His talent was discovered by a student of the contemporary artist, J Swaminathan in Patangarh.

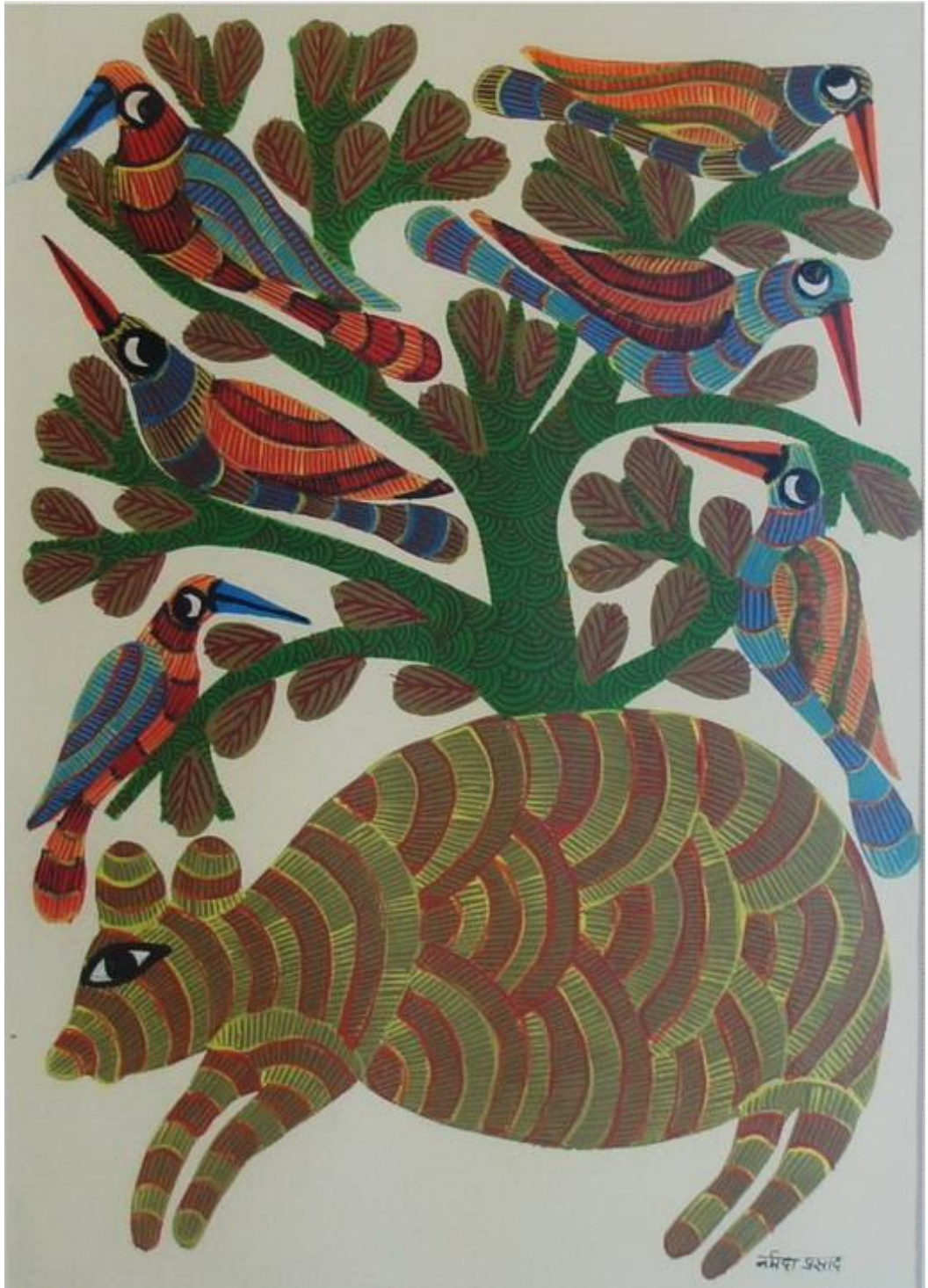
As a child, when Narmada took the cattle out to graze by the banks of the River Singni, he taught himself to draw by making an imprint of himself in the sand and then tracing the outline with a stick. Later, he started painting on the walls of his house with black and yellow clay. His themes were varied from figures of humans, animals and birds to gods, like Hanuman. For colour, he used pigments extracted from leaves and flowers. His motifs have changed over the years, and now he draws mainly tigers, deer, birds and porcupine. Narmada Prasad has travelled extensively showcasing his paintings and currently works as an artist in the *Adivasi Lok Kala Parishad*. In 2006, Narmada was awarded the *Shikhar Sanman* by the Government of Madhya Pradesh.



Acrylic on paper, 38x28 cm, 2013



Acrylic on canvas, 130x90 cm, 2013



Acrylic on paper, 38x28 cm, 2013

Venkat Shyam



Venkat Shyam, has been sketching and painting since he was seven years old. Every scrap of paper, even the blank spaces on the walls of his home were covered with his charcoal drawings. When Venkat's uncle, Jangarh Singh Shyam, visited in 1983, his eye caught the image of Shridi Saibaba on the wall and the sketches of houses and insects in the margins of the newspaper. He asked Venkat to come to Bhopal to paint after he had completed his studies in the Sinjhona village school.

From culture specific painting to highly abstract themes, Venkat has done it all. He feels an artist must bring freshness to the time honored themes. "When one looks at my paintings, one must feel they are traditional but at the same time, there have to be new elements in them," he says. Through his artistic journey of three decades, Venkat has integrated both modern and traditional stylistic influences in his work.

Venkat has travelled extensively in India and to many European Countries, where his works have been exhibited. He was awarded the *Rajya Hasta Shilpa Puraskar* by the Madhya Pradesh Government in 2002. He was also the coordinator for an animated film of a Gond folktale, made by Tara Douglas, which won an award in the Tallest Story Competition in Scotland.



Sea Sirens. Acrylic on canvas, 75x140 cm, 2002



The volcanic clouds from Iceland. Acrylic on paper, 76x56 cm, 2010

Au premier regard cette œuvre exposée dans la Galerie Anders Hus me parut énigmatique mais le titre m'en donna aussitôt explication évidente, comme toujours en art populaire : Les circonstances en sont bien connues : en avril 2010, l'artiste, probablement invité à quelque célébration de son art, s'en retournait en Inde lorsque son avion se retrouva bloqué à l'aéroport de Francfort par le fameux nuage de cendres volcaniques islandais. Une composition limpide.

Le nuage - puisque lui seul prend toute l'importance – occupe la position centrale, et lui seul mérite des couleurs ; les activités humaines en périphérie en deviennent grises. En haut, l'avion dans sa bulle mécanique de poisson volant, peint de jolis points et colliers comme une truite, avance dans sa solitude immobile d'avion dans le ciel.

Par les hublots on aperçoit le pilote, les passagers. Ils semblent tranquilles et confiants parce qu'encore inconscients du drame : le nuage de cendre vient de toucher, à la base, cet univers fermé où avance l'avion. En bas, toujours constitués de hachures grises, ces mêmes passagers sont représentés.

Ils ont été forcés d'atterrir ; ils patientent dans un aéroport de fortune : manger à de tristes buffets, dormir sur des banquettes, bailler, attendre assis dans l'inemploi, le faux loisir, faute de mieux se mettre à photographier. Une exécution raffinée.

A remarquer que le volcan, en gris lui aussi, reprend sur ses flancs, comme des rimes, les mêmes colliers qui ornent l'avion.

Mais le nuage monte en déclinant toutes les couleurs, les plus chaudes à l'échappée du volcan, qui se refroidissent dans les bleus et les gris de cendre à mesure qu'ils atteignent le ciel.

Nœuds de cordes aériennes, liens décisifs !

Le nuage monte aussi par le traitement tout en écailles, toutes ascendantes, dont sont constituées chaque volute. Comparez avec la même utilisation d'écailles chez une autre artiste Gond, Narmada Tekam.

Cette rondeur d'exécution pour exprimer le phénomène naturel d'une explosion volcanique, s'oppose manifestement aux hachures parallèles des activités humaines, représentées ici comme en ombres aléatoires, en rayures. Presque rayées donc ? Autant dire : abolies...

Si bien qu'au-delà de la description anecdotique d'une attente forcée en aéroport, composition et exécution proposent de lire un message plus vaste (même s'il nous paraît convenu depuis Rousseau) de l'artiste Gond : son animisme.

C'est cet animisme qui, ici, traduit l'évidente opposition entre nature et civilisation - ou plutôt la victoire des éternelles forces de la nature sur les transitoires événements humains qui gravitent aux alentours.

Robert Vigneau



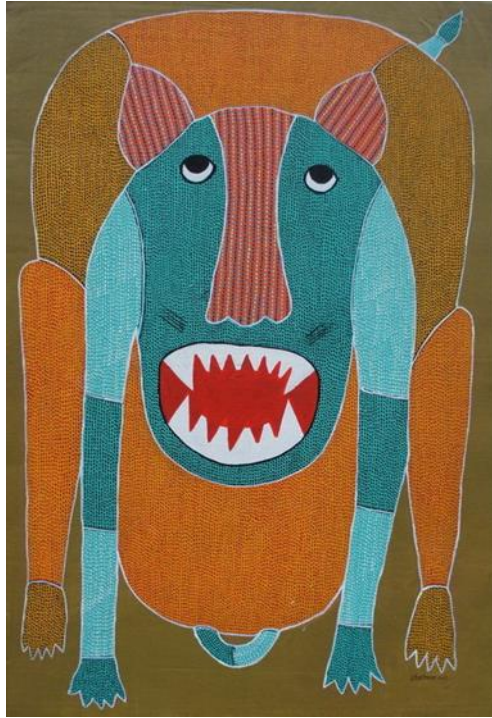
Acrylic on paper, 55x75 cm, 2013.



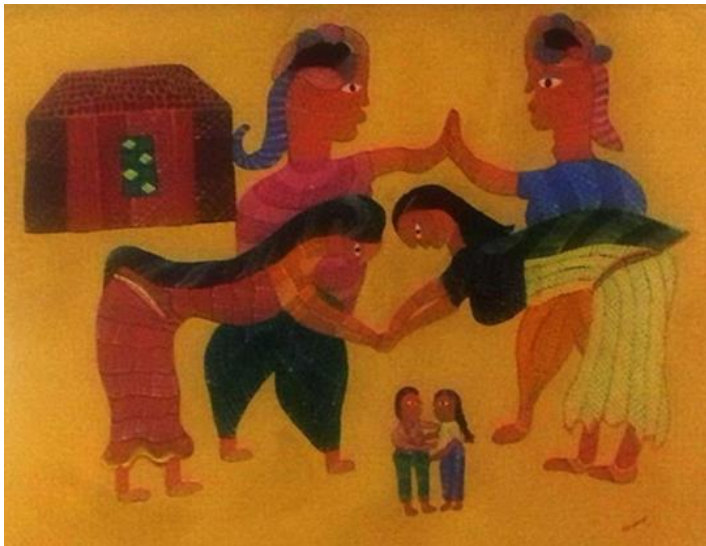
The Woodcutter and the Demon. Acrylic on paper, 28x38 cm, 2013

Once there lived a woodcutter and his two daughters. The older daughter got nearly killed in a brutal accident. A very kind man put his life in danger and saved the girl. The woodcutter was in deep gratitude and wondered how he could repay the man. He decided to get the older daughter married to the man. The couple was very happy and both tied the knot shortly. The man seemed to be very kind and loving, little did anyone know the truth. He was a demon in the guise of human. The younger daughter of the woodcutter was always suspicious of her sisters' husband. She had intuitive a feeling that something was amiss. She tried to keep a watchful eye on him and followed them everywhere. A few months later, an altercation ensued between the couple. The man was visibly angry and started snarling sounding like a tiger. The sister was horrified to see the man transform himself into a tiger. He pounced on his wife and tried to kill her. But the younger sister was alert and ready with a spear. She killed the Demon. (Text by Padmaja Srivastava)

And some others



Ramesh Tekam, Acrylic on canvas, 83x57 cm, 2012



Santosh Kumar Vyam, *Wedding Blessings*. Acrylic on canvas, 90x120 cm, 2016



Santoshi Tekam, acrylic on canvas, 84x115 cm, 2011



Veerandra Kumar Dhurve, acrylic on canvas, 84x67 cm, 2012



Veerandra Kumar Dhurve, acrylic on canvas, 91x64 cm, 2012

BHIL

The Bhils are the largest tribal community in India (13 millions), residing in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. Some Bhils trace their ancestry to Eklavya, the archer from Mahabharata, while some scholars even believe that Valmiki, who authored Ramayana, was a Bhil.

Bhil art is considered by some to be the oldest of India's tribal art forms. It bears similarity to the aboriginal art of Australia, especially in its use of multi-colored dots as in-filling.

Bhil Art is instinctive and primordial, born out of an ancient connection with nature. The Bhils are largely an agricultural community whose lives are centered on the land they work with. What makes the art extra special is that it has travelled down generations, with most artists learning it from their mothers.

Bhil art is also often ritualistic. Every painting is a story of the land told through the depictions of people, the animals, the insects, the deities, the festivals. Even the Sun and Moon are frequent characters in the stories. Legends and lore are told through Bhil paintings. Births and deaths are recorded. Religious occasions remembered. These paintings are even offered as gifts to gods and goddesses at the time of festivals.

Today, we're getting to see much more of Bhil art in the mainstream. Clay has been replaced by canvas, natural dyes with acrylic paints. The artists, who would earlier paint on walls and floors of their village homes, are now recognized over the country and even internationally, their works sold for hundreds of dollars. But there's something about this form of art that is so rooted, that a change in medium or even recognition, does not rid it of the honesty of its depictions.

One look at a Bhil painting, and you'll immediately begin to recognize it anywhere you see the art form. Bhil paintings usually consist of large, un-lifelike shapes of everyday characters filled in with earthy, yet bright colors, and then covered with an overlay of uniform dots in several patterns and colors that stand out strikingly against the background.

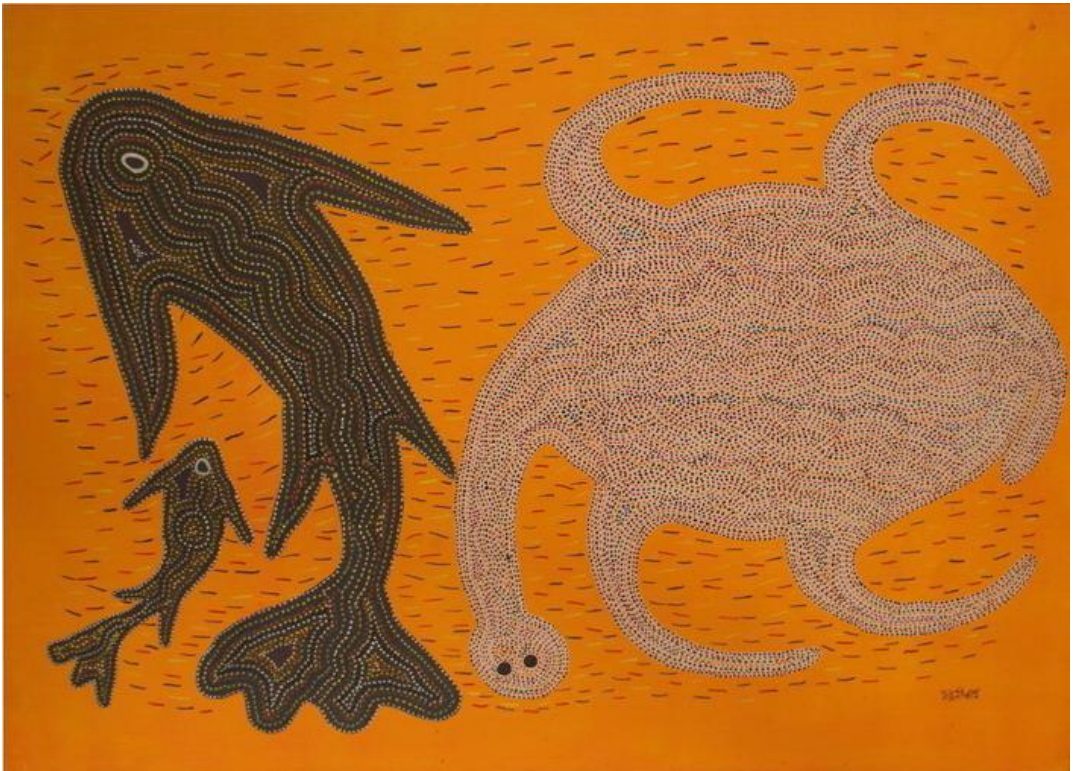
The dots on a Bhil painting, like the aboriginal paintings of Australia, are not random. They are patterns that could be made to represent anything that the artists wish to, from ancestors to deities. Because these patterns are solely in the hands of the artists who create them, the work of every Bhil artist is unique, and the dot patterns can be counted as the artist's signature style.

Bhuri Bai



Bhuri Bai of Pitol was the first Bhil artist to use paper and canvas for her painting. J Swaminathan, the then Director of Bharat Bhavan asked her to paint on a paper, Bhuri Bai began her journey as a contemporary Bhil artist. That day, Bhuri Bai painted her family's ancestral horse and was thrilled to see the effect of the poster color as it touched the white paper. "In the village, we had to work so hard to extract color from plants and clay. And here I was given so many shades of color and a readymade brush!" Initially Bhuri Bai

had found it a little strange to paint in a sitting position. But the magic of painting soon drew her in. Bhuri Bai now works as an artist in the *Adivasi Lok Kala Academy* in Bhopal. She is a recipient of the highest award *Shikhar Sanman* (1986-1987) from the Government of Madhya Pradesh. In 1998, the Madhya Pradesh Government honored her with the *Ahalya Sanman*.



Acrylic on canvas, 56x82 cm, 2011



Acrylic on canvas, 86x84 cm, 2011

If you take a look on Bhuri Bai and compare her works with the works of Ladoo Bai and Teru Tahad (next pages), you will see the refinement in the patterns of Bhuri Bai's works, while the works of Ladoo Bai and Teru Tahad from the eighties are much more spontaneously and naive.

Ladoo Bai and Teru Tahad



Ladoo Bai was born in the Badi Bawadi village of Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh in the Bhil tribal community. At a very early age, she moved to Bhopal with her family to be engaged as manual laborers in the building of the iconic Bharat Bhavan. She got married and continued to work in the building complex and also painted to de-stress after a day's work.

Ladoo Bai started painting on canvases at the same time as Bhuri Bai of Pitol. She has returned to painting after a long time, as financial constraints prevented her from pursuing her art. Her art reflects the spirituality and animism of her community. Through the years, she has received support and encouragement from the noted artist, and director of Bharat Bhavan Museum, Jagdish Swaminathan. Her job as an artist at the Adivasi Lok Kala Academy now allows Ladoo Bai to paint all the images she has been wanting to for so many years. Ladoo Bai's main motifs are the animal kingdom and Bhil rituals and festivals.

Teru Tahad, the husband of Ladoo Bai, died in 2002.



A ceremony for driving out evil spirits. Ladoo Bai, Gouache on paper, 50x66 cm, 198x



The Mother Cow is feeding everybody. Ladoo Bai, Gouache on paper, 56x71 cm, beginning of 198x



Ladoo Bai, Gouache on paper, 56x71 cm, 198x



Ladoo Bai, Gouache on paper, 56x71 cm, 198x



Ladoo Bai, Gouache on paper, 27x34 cm, beginning of 198x



Ladoo Bai, Gouache on paper, 55x69 cm, 198x



Village life. Ladoo Bai, Gouache on paper, 51x66 cm, 198x



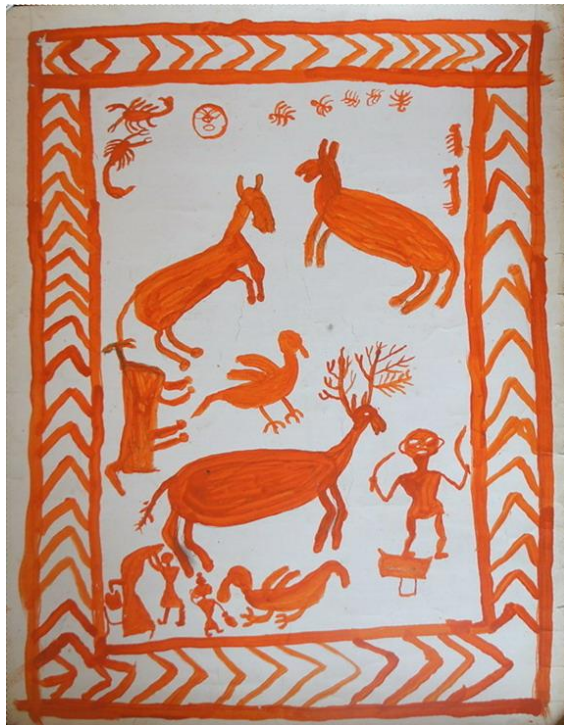
Ladoo Bai, Gouache on paper, 50x40 cm, 200x



Ladoo Bai, Gouache on paper, 56x71 cm, 198x



Ladoo Bai, Gouache on paper, 56x71 cm, 198x



Ladoo Bai, Gouache on paper, 71x56 cm, 198x



Ladoo Bai, Gouache on paper, 56x71 cm, 198x



Ladoo Bai, Gouache on paper, 29x35 cm, 198x



Teru Tahad, Gouache on paper, 56x71 cm, 198x



Teru Tahad, Gouache on paper, 56x71 cm, 198x



Teru Tahad, Gouache on paper, 56x71 cm, 198x



Teru Tahad, Gouache on paper, 56x77 cm, 198x



Teru Tahad, Gouache on paper, 55x75 cm, 198x



Driving out the evil spirits. Teru Tahad, Gouache on paper, 56x68 cm, 198x

Pema Fatya



Pema Fatya (1948-2020), a senior painter of Bhil Pithora style painting, was born in Bhabhara in Alirajpur district of Madhya Pradesh and passed away on 5 April 2020 in his hometown of Jhabua, where he spent his whole life. He was the last living Master Bhil artist to practice the ancestral pictorial tradition of Pithora painting, distinctive art of Bhil tribe. This style has existed for thousands of years and is passed on from generation to generation. His work in Pithora paintings adorn the walls of Madhya Pradesh Tribal Folk Art Academy,

Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum - Bhopal, Bharat Bhawan - Bhopal, Indira Gandhi National Human Museum - Bhopal, Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts-Delhi and Cultural Regional/ Zonal Centers of Government of India.

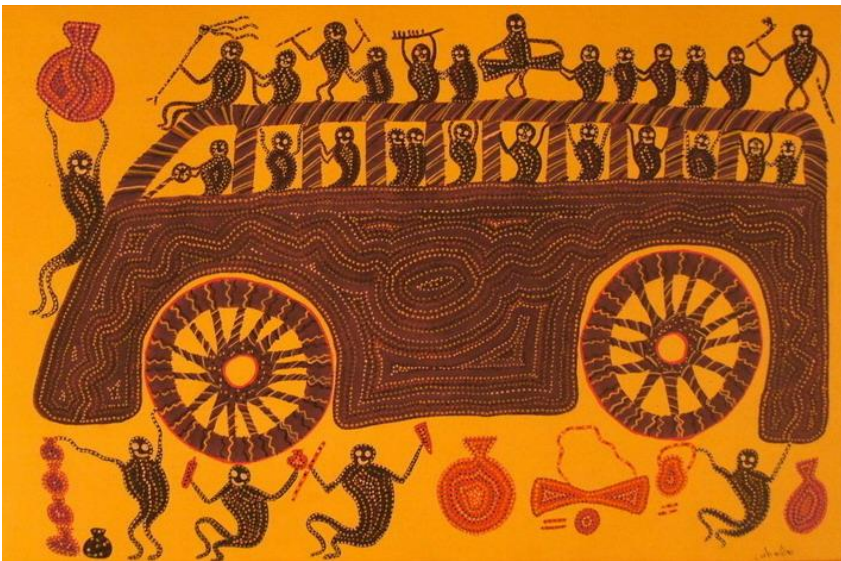


Gouache on paper, 71x56 cm, 2013

Ramesh Barya



Ramesh Barya is an Bhil artist. He was born in 1979 in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. He is son of Bhuri Bai and has participated in many exhibitions: in Indira Gandhi Museum, Bharat Bhawan (Bhopal), Tribal Museum, Trifed India, etc.



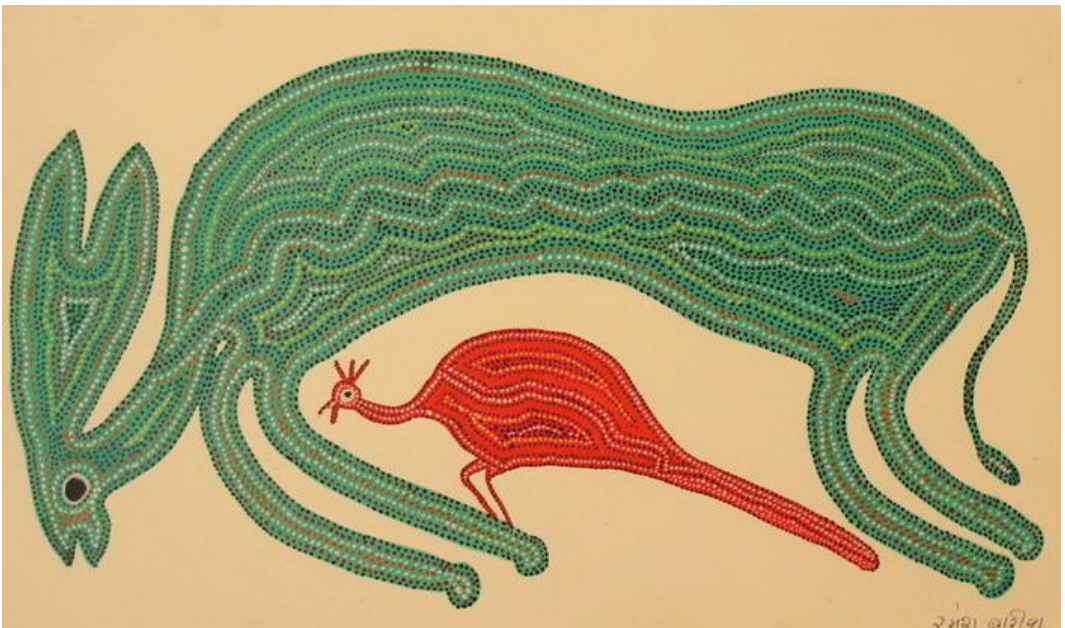
Acrylic on canvas, 56x85 cm, 2011



Acrylic on paper, 28x38, 2014



Acrylic on paper, 28x45, 2014

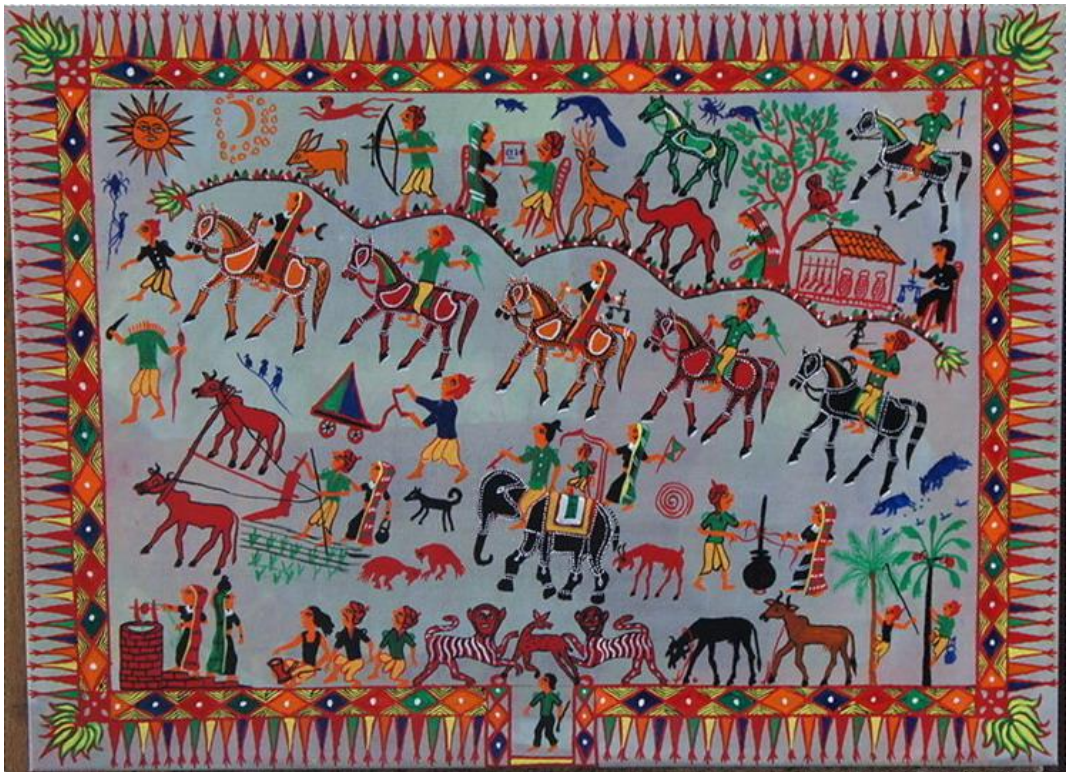


Acrylic on paper, 27x45, 2014

RATHWA Pithora

Pithora is a ritual painting and Pithoro a deity among the Rathwa community of Chhota Udaipur and neighboring districts in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Pithora is painted on the internal walls of houses in the context of large ritual ceremonies.

The paintings, traditionally done on walls, are characterized by seven horses representing the seven hills that surround the area bordering Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, which is home to the Rathwa and Bhilala communities that make these paintings. The paintings are rich with imagery from their everyday life – elephants, men, women, arms and musical instruments, besides weddings, festivals and celebrations.



Paresh Ratwa, mixed media on canvas, 77x104 cm, 2013



Mixed media on canvas, 70x138 cm



Mixed media on canvas, 90x130 cm

WARLI

Warli painting is created by the tribal people North of Maharashtra.

There is a stylistic similarity with the paintings found in the pre-historic caves of Bhimbetka, Madhya Pradesh to the paintings done by the tribes of Warli. Hence, these are considered as successors and descendants of the original inhabitants of the Bhimbetka caves.

Unlike other folk painting traditions, the Warli paintings do not use any primary color. Nor do they narrate any mythological or regional folk story. There is no religious iconography, and it represents nature as the ultimate reality, and depicts the interdependence between humans and nature.

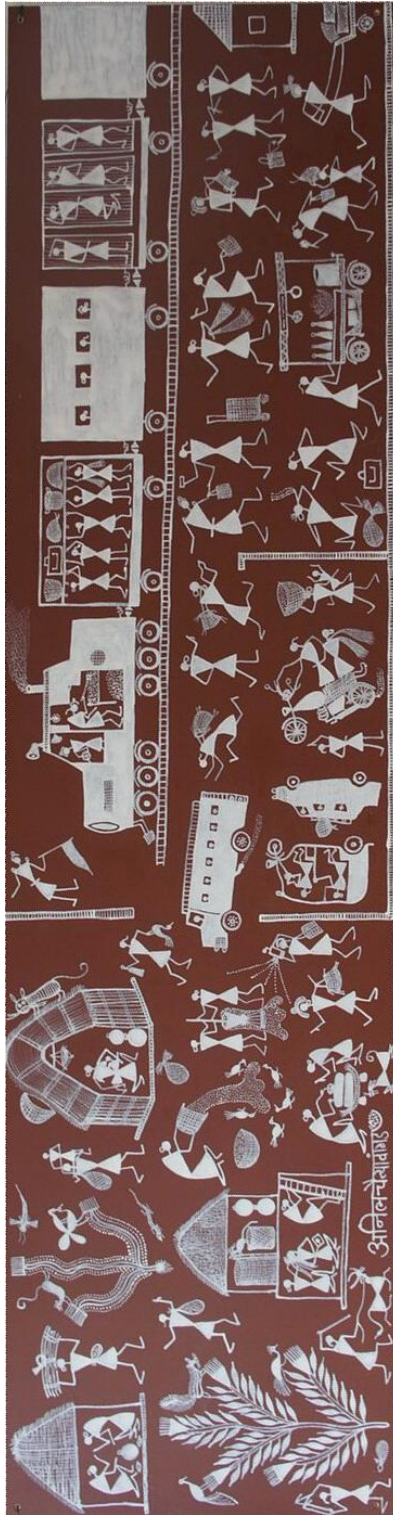
These rudimentary wall paintings use a set of basic geometric shapes: a circle, a triangle, and a square. These shapes are symbolic of different elements of nature.

The simple pictorial language of Warli painting is matched by a rudimentary technique. The ritual paintings are usually created on the inside walls of village huts. The walls are made of a mixture of branches, earth and cow dung that make a red ochre background for the paintings. The Warli only paint with a white pigment made from a mixture of rice flour and water, with gum as a binder.

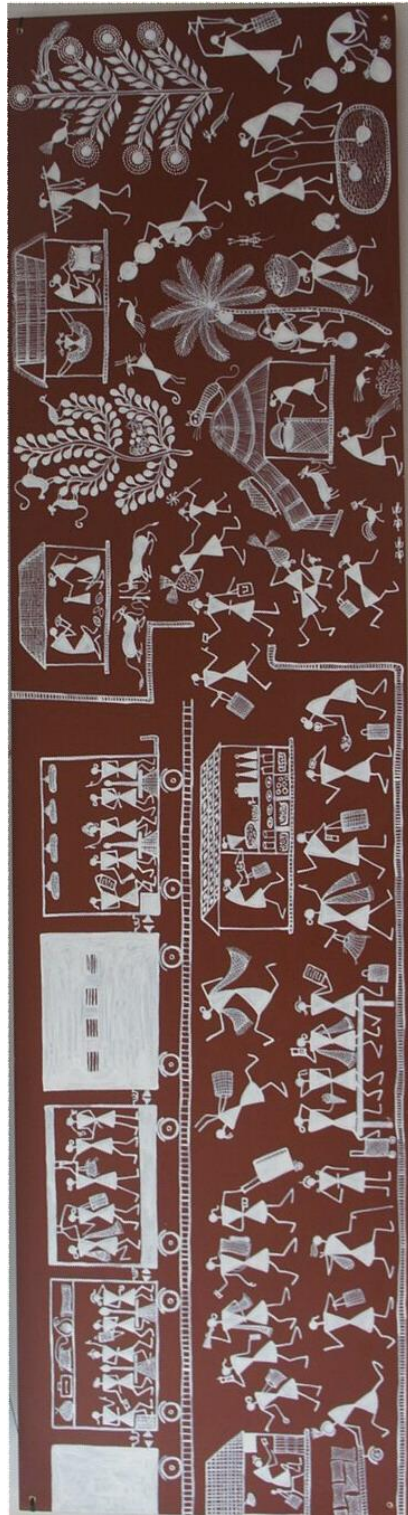
In the 1970s, this ritual art took a radical turn when Jivya Soma Mashe and his son Balu Mashe started to paint. They painted not for ritual purposes, but because of their artistic pursuits. Jivya is known as the modern father of Warli painting. Since the 1970s, Warli painting has moved onto paper and canvas.



Dilip Bahotha, mixed media on canvas, 39x50 cm



Train passing the village, first part. Anil Vangad, mixed media on wood, 38x145 cm, 2018



Train passing the village, second part. Anil Vangad, mixed media on wood, 38x145 cm, 2018



Shantaram Tumbada, "The Agriculture life", mixed media on canvas, 80x131 cm, 2014



Shantaram Tumbada, "Noah's ark", mixed media on canvas, 90x146 cm, 2014

All the animals that have not entered a gourd die, drowned in the flood. The gourd is Noah's Ark. Who initiated the legend, the Christians or the Warlis?

HILL KORWA

The Magical Script

Hill Korwa is the name of a tribe that lives in Chhattisgarh in the Jashpur district. The population of Hill Korwa has declined significantly over the past few decades. They are only a few thousand people left. The Hill Korwas are nomads and hunters. They bury their dead. They speak an Austro-Asiatic language. They are illiterate. They also went unnoticed with their tribal art.

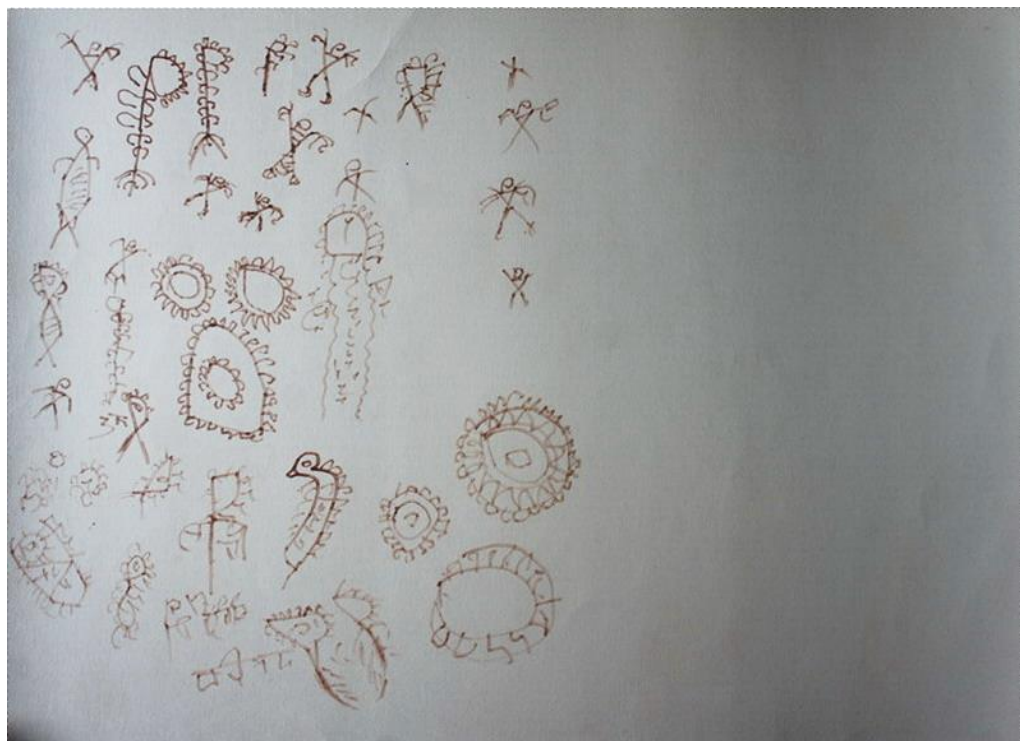
Jagdish Swaminathan, co-founder of the "Bharat Bhavan" contemporary art museum in Bhopal - Madhya Pradesh, sends emissaries, ethnologist, painters and poets in 1983 to find tribal and contemporary artists for the new Bharat contemporary art museum Bhavan in Bhopal. Arrived at the Hill Korwa, after several hours of roads and tracks, they begin to take notes, to make sketches. To their great surprise, the villagers grab their sheets of paper, their pens, pencils and markers and spontaneously begin to draw.

Here is what Jagdish Swaminathan says about it in his catalog for the exhibition "The Magical Script" of Bharat Bhavan in 1985: "the first thing you see in these drawings is their calligraphic character, as if was not a drawing but a writing. But the Hill Korwa have no written records; they are illiterate [...] When we look at these drawings we immediately think of the works of Paul Klee: we go on a walk". Where members of other tribes most often trace half-human, half-animal figurative forms, the Hill Korwa lay calligraphic rhythms on paper, an unknown alphabet, sometimes highlighted with lines or accompanied by bows and arrows.

The Hill Korwa speaks a dialect without writing. It must be believed that the encounter, during their travels in the neighboring towns, with the written thing was most dazzling. "When they write, I believe they take their pencil for a bow. They don't actually write: they shoot. They draw signs which are arrows, reports Archana in the book "Korwa" by Frank André Jamme.

"They write fast, very fast," notes Swaminathan in his catalog. As they walk. The Hill Korwa easily walks 40 km a day, at breakneck speed. Another theory in Swaminathan's catalog: The Hill Korwa learned in the villages that respect and power are linked to the ability to write. For the Hill Korwa, writing is not a tool to communicate, but pure magic that gives power.

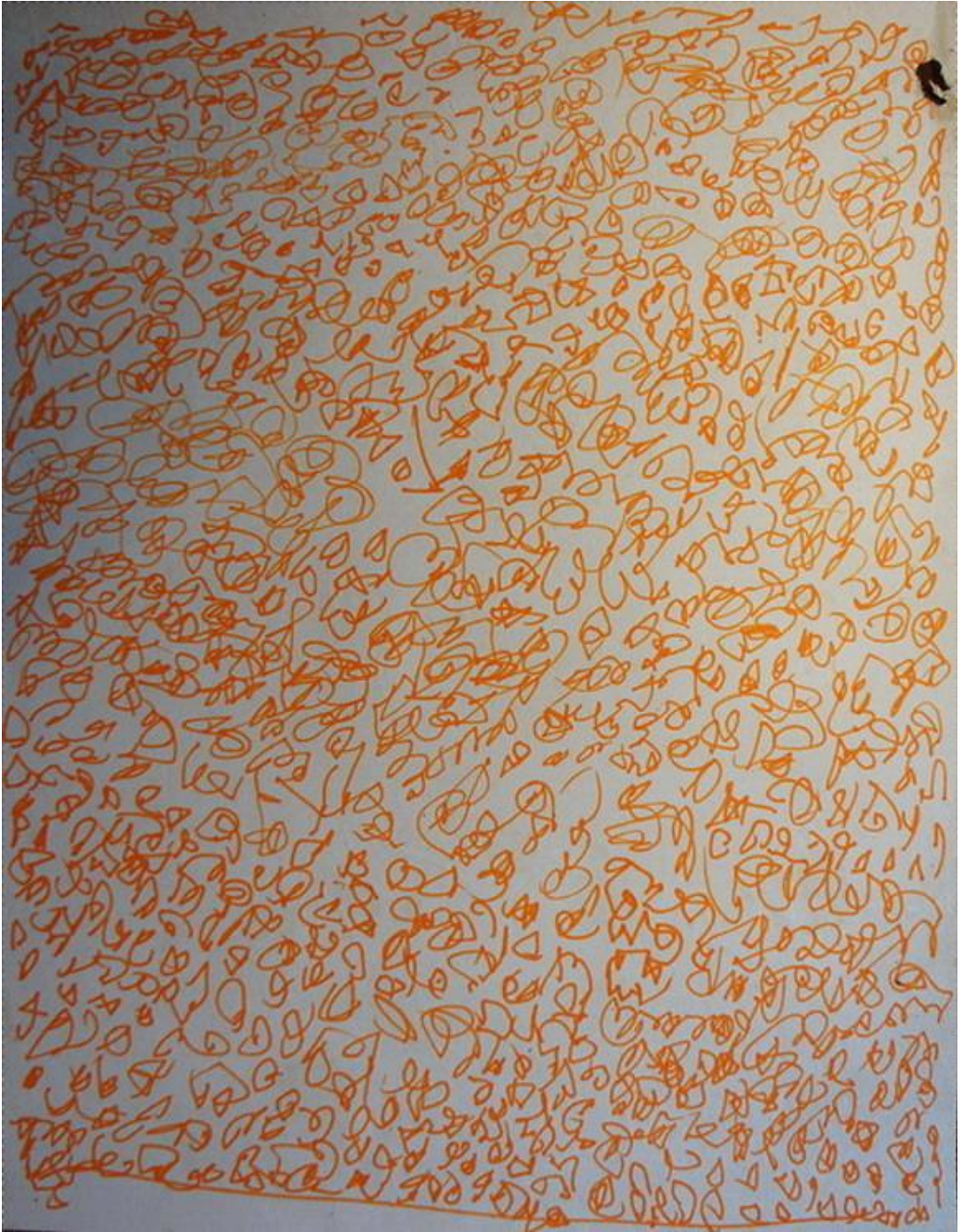
In addition to the exhibition at Bharat Bhavan in 1985, Korwa drawings were shown by Frank André Jamme at the Galerie du Jour, Paris 1996, and at the Drawing Center, New York 2001.



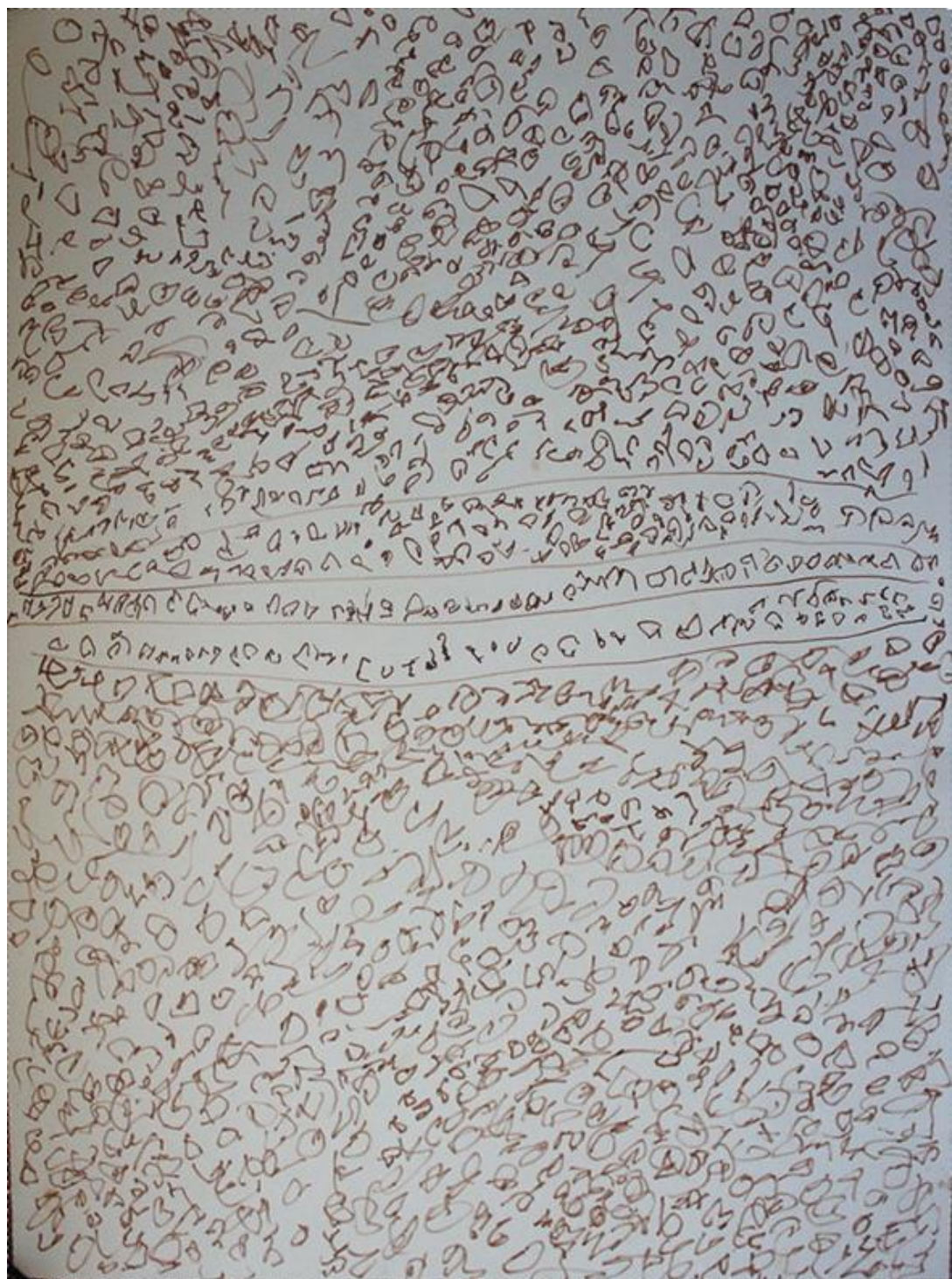
Pencil on paper, 55x75 cm, 199x



Marker on paper, 55x75 cm, 199x



Pencil on paper, 58x45 cm, 199x



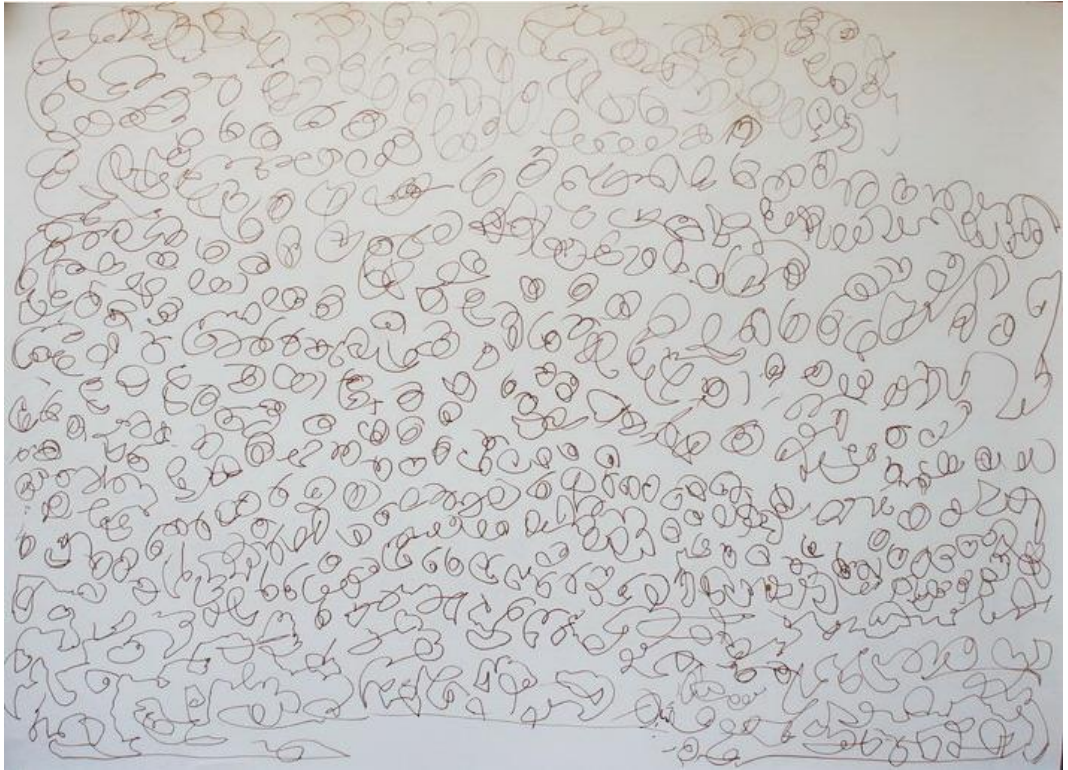
Pencil on paper, 75x55 cm, 199x



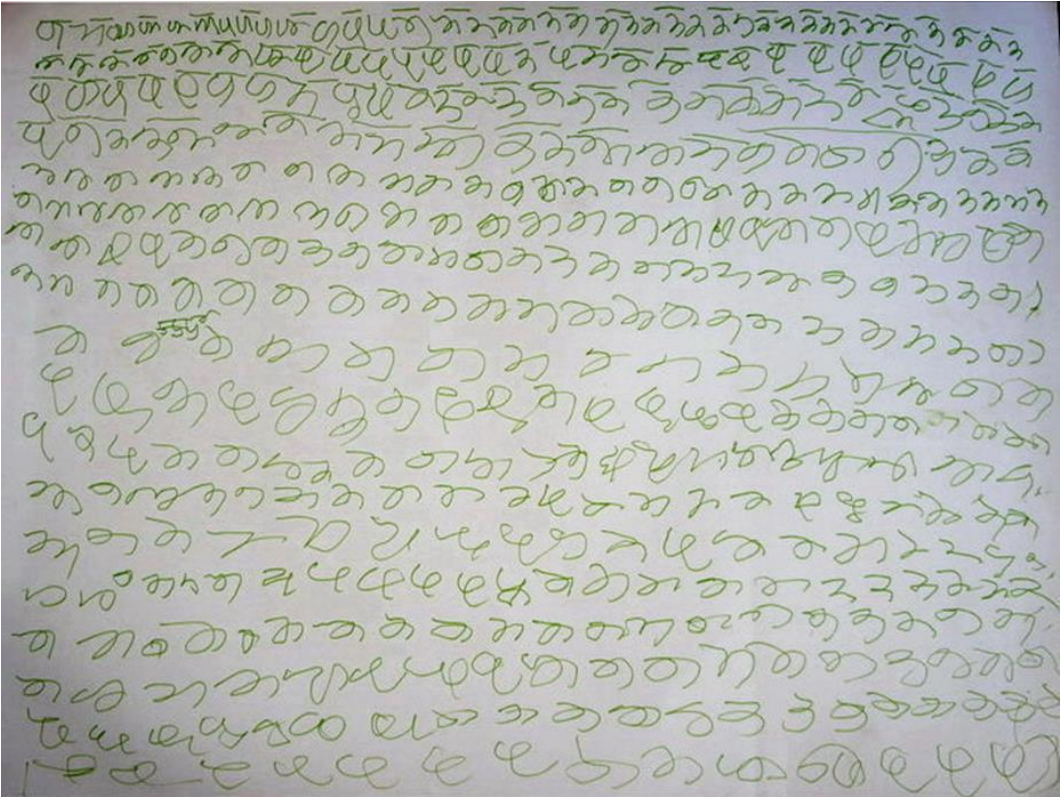
Pencil on paper, 75x55 cm, 199x



Pencil on paper, 75x55 cm, 199x



Pencil on paper, 55x75 cm, 199x



Sanna Korwa, pencil on paper, 55x75 cm, 199x

BAIGA

The Baiga are an ethnic group (390.000) found in central India primarily in the state of Madhya Pradesh, and in smaller numbers in the surrounding states of Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. The largest number of Baigas is found in Baiga-chuk in [[Mandla district]] and [[Balaghat district]] of Madhya Pradesh. The name Baiga means "sorcerer - medicine man". Most Baigas speak Hindi, and some of them also know a few local languages such as Gondi and Marathi depending on the region where they live. *Godna*, or the tattoo art, is unique to the culture of women belonging to the Baiga tribe. It is a tradition of Gond Badhis to tattoo the bodies of the Baigas, the medicine people, of the Gond community. For three to four months, after the rains, they go to the Baiga villages to tattoo the women's arms, legs and torsos.



Mixed media, 85x115 cm, 2014



Mixed media, 85x115 cm, 2014



Mixed media, 85x115 cm, 2014

MEENA

According to 2001 census, there are 3.8 million Meenas and most of them are in Rajasthan. They are known by the language they speak - Meena. Meena tribe is believed to be a mixture of more than one tribe. It seems the fisher men community called Meenavar eventually became Meena. They do not intermarry with other tribes. The Meenas paint the walls and floors of their houses with geometric (Mandana painting) and animal images (Thapa painting) for their ritual festivals and above all for decorative reasons.

Thapa painted on the outside walls are free compositions, staging the animal and floral kingdom as well as village life world. Among birds, the peacock is one of the national symbols of India and by far the most represented.

The bestiary includes elephants, tigers, leopards, monkeys, horses, cows, antelopes, cats and snakes. Because of extensive hunting in the past, some animals like the tiger or the leopard have disappeared locally. They remind us of a time where they abounded in the luxuriant forests of this region and were found on the royal coats of arms.



Om Prakash Meena, gouache on canvas, 110x170 cm, 2012



Peacocks. Om Prakash Meena, gouache on canvas, 110x168 cm, 2012



Om Prakash Meena, gouache on canvas, 65x90 cm, 2012

HAZARIBAGH

The Sohrai and Khovar painting is a traditional and ritualistic mural art being practised by local tribal women during local harvest and marriage seasons use local, naturally available soils of different colors in the area of Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand.

Khovar refers to the decoration of the marriage chambers and Sohrai is the harvest painting on the mud houses, repairing it after the rains and offering a thanksgiving to the forces of Nature.

The Hazaribagh region has about 11 communities including, Oraon, Munda, Santhal, Prajapati and Khurmi.

There are two major stylistic divisions based on the marriage and harvest seasons, while the four major painting techniques include scraping with four fingers, scraping with broken pieces of combs, twig-brush and cloth swab.



Mixed media on paper, 55x75 cm, 2008



Putli Ganju Sehda, Mixed media on paper, 39x56 cm, 2016



Mixed media on paper, 39x56 cm, 2016

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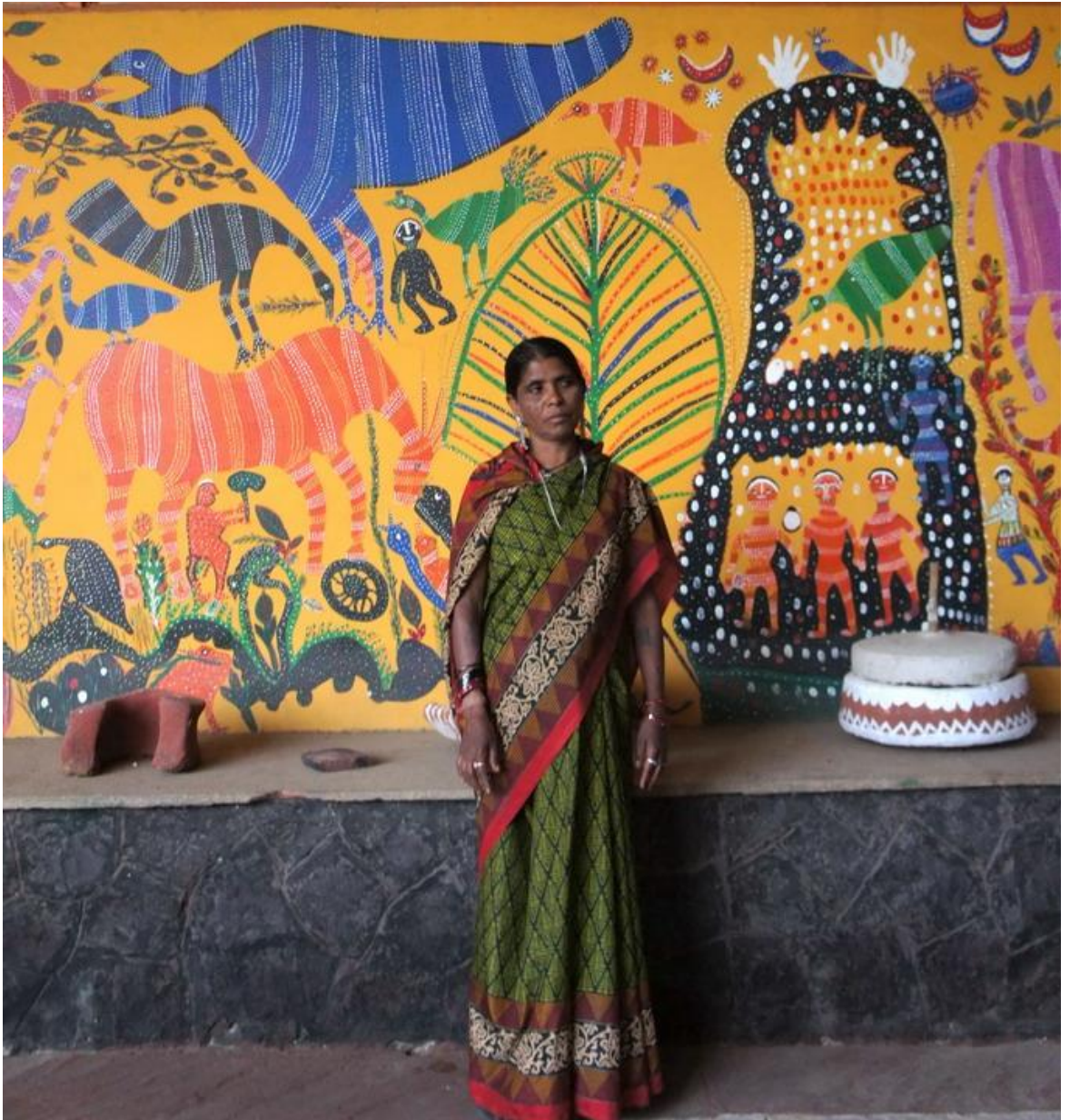
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Ladoo Bai in front of her fresco in the Museum of Tribal Art in Bhopal