



Received: 20 March 2023 | Accepted: 16 April 2023 | Published: 01 June 2023

EXPLORING TRIBAL ARTS FROM MADHYA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Mandana paintings are a traditional tribal art form of Madhya Pradesh that is practiced by the Sahariya tribe. The paintings are typically made on the walls and floors of homes and are used to mark significant events and celebrations, such as weddings, births, and religious ceremonies.

They are often decorated with symbols and motifs that hold cultural significance. Creating a Mandana painting is intricate and time-consuming, with each detail carefully crafted to convey specific meaning and symbolism. The art form is a testament to the rich cultural heritage of Madhya Pradesh and is a valuable part of the state's artistic legacy.

Keywords: Tribal art, Sahariya tribal, Mandana Painting

INTRODUCTION

Pithora Painting is a traditional tribal art form that is practiced by the Rathwa community in Madhya Pradesh, India. The paintings also serve as an important form of social and cultural expression, conveying the beliefs and values of the Rathwa community. The creation of a Pithora painting is a communal and

celebratory process, with multiple artists working together to create intricate and detailed designs. Today, Pithora Painting continues to be a valuable part of Madhya Pradesh's artistic heritage and is recognized for its unique and striking aesthetic.



INTRODUCTION TO GOND ARTS OF MADHYA PRADESH:

With its origin in the Heart of India, mainly Madhya Pradesh, Gond Art is the folk art of painting practiced by the Gond tribe of the state. While it may have originated in Madhya Pradesh, it can also be traced in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra, and Chhattisgarh.

The Gonds are the largest tribal/Adivasi community in India today, and their art is rare and possess a great heritage value and the intricacy of this art demands respect. Gond paintings depict images of the lifestyle of the tribe and their environment, the wildlife of the place, and the surroundings. The paintings also depict the belief and faith of the tribe, various mythological creatures, and characters from the tribal folklore; all of the above are an innate part of this artwork. The tribe believes that seeing good images around and having them in the spaces can bring good luck and positivity. Animals are one of the prominent motifs used in the paintings. And the tribe believes that all creatures are inhabited by spirits, and everything is thus holy and sacred.

The paintings use vibrant colors like orange, yellow, blue, and red, and are created with articulately drawn lines and dots as the method to bring it to life. Natural colors obtained from various sources like flowers, stones, etc. are used to create these beautiful paintings.



FAMOUS TRIBAL ARTS AND PAINTINGS OF MADHYA PRADESH:

Chitravan is one of the major Folk paintings of Madhya Pradesh. It is a beautiful wall painting depicting celestial beings, animals & birds, gods- goddesses, and plants. The painting requires extreme dexterity as no outline is drawn initially and each stroke shapes the final design. The artist of Chitravan paintings is called Chiteras. It is drawn on festivals and other religious and ritual ceremonies. It is figurative and illustrative in its composition and based on religious narratives. This style is called Khyalmandana. Material used- clay, mineral and vegetable colors, Gum, and resin Chitravan is a commercial art form & painters are paid both with cash and in kind. When Chitravan is painted on paper it is called Pana.

We also investigated the world of Chitera painters of Madhya Pradesh. Chitravan is a form of wall painting done by professional painters mostly men, though women also draw. The artists are called chiteras and make these paintings during festivals and other religions and ritual ceremonies. Chitravans are figurative and illustrative in its composition and draw its inspiration from religious narratives. This style is also called khyalmandana, in chitravan there is a profusion of figures of gods, goddesses, animals, birds, flowers, creepers, celestial nymphs, and musical instruments. Locally available clay, minerals, and vegetable colours are used. Gum and resin are used to impart shine and stability to these colours. The intricate balance between figures, flowers, creepers, and other decorative motifs is one of the highlights of this form. Another unique feature of this art form is the absence of any outline or an initial sketch, simple strokes of the brush gradually evolve into intricate and beautiful designs of figures.



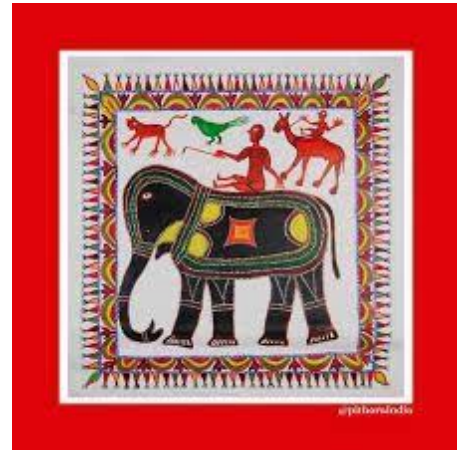
Mandanas are drawn both in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. In Rajasthan, they are drawn both on the floor and on the wall, whereas in Madhya Pradesh they are mostly drawn on the floor. Mandana both refers to a specific form of drawing and also to the act of drawing as in chitramandana, to draw or paint. Mandana derives from the word mandan which means ornamentation or decoration. Mandanas are drawn by women using kharia (chalk solution) and geru (red ochre). They are drawn on the walls and floors of the houses, which are first plastered with clay and cow-dung mixture. Mandanas are festival decorations in line drawing and are iconic representations of various gods and goddesses. They are at once the seat on which a specific

deity is invoked and also a symbolic representation of the deity. They are also indicative of the presence of the deity. Mandanas are drawn on the occasions of religious Ancient History festivals and fasts and also during any auspicious ceremony at home concerning birth and marriage or a specially organized religious worship.



Pithora strictly belongs to the realm of the ritual; each line or dot that finds place here is pregnant with ritual and symbolic meanings. The process of painting is accompanied by music and singing, which form an integral part of the ritual and the painting process. Pithora painting is made during the ritual worship of the Bhil deity Pithora. This worship is held to obtain a good harvest, the birth of a male progeny or as a thanksgiving ceremony upon wish fulfillment. This ritual lasts for about 3 to 5 days and the whole clan and village community participate in the ritual. Being an expensive affair only rich members of the community undertake its organization. Though a collective affair, Pithora painting is mostly the work of professional painters known as lakhindra. Horses find a special place in Pithora paintings. They are representative of various deities and are drawn in rows. The horses of Pithora and Pithori are painted in the center. Motifs and characters associated with the narrative of Pithora find their place in these paintings. Raja Indi, Pithora, Pithori, DharniDharti (earth), MalwiGori, Raja Bhoj, Kajal Rani, and Kali Koyal are some of the main characters appearing in the paintings. It is of utmost ritual importance to paint the characters correctly and in their proper place. At night the painting is worshipped, and gods are invoked through song, music, and trance. The ritual specialist called Ojha introduces each character in the painting and invokes his presence. Wine and goats are sacrificed during the ritual. The painting is sometimes plastered over with clay and cow-dung mixture after the ritual. Red, yellow, black, blue, green, purple, and white are the main colors used. Earlier colors prepared traditionally with locally available clay, minerals, vegetables, and stones were used. Today poster colors, acrylic, and oil

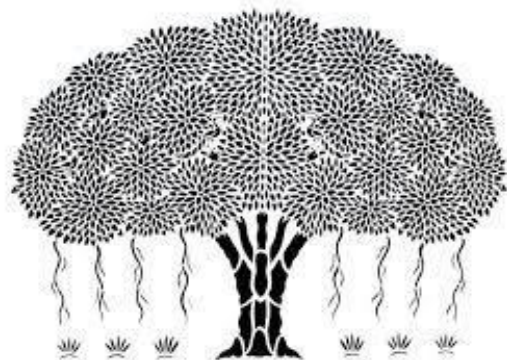
paints are also being used. New motifs like cycles, airplanes, motorcycles, jeeps, buses, and guns all find a place in Pithora paintings, indicating the contemporaneity and dynamic character of folk paintings.



SPECIFIC TRIBAL ART FORMS:

SANJHI

Sanjhi is associated with a specific festival by the same name, which is celebrated by unmarried girls both in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. This festival lasts for sixteen days beginning with the full moon day in the month of Bhadrapada (August-September) till the new moon day in the month of Ashwin (September- October). This period is marked in the Hindu calendar as Petri-paksha, i.e. a fortnight dedicated to ancestors. During this period the ancestral spirits are believed to visit their families. It is important to note here that only unmarried women are allowed to make Sanjhi and after marriage, they give up this practice as prescribed by the ritual. Sanjhi is drawn on walls that are first plastered with fresh cow dung. On this surface, various motifs are made in bas-relief with cow-dung. These motifs are then decorated with flowers, colourful and bright strips of paper, and kharia (chalk solution). A new motif is drawn each day only to be scraped off the next day. From the thirteenth day onwards, the process begins to draw up a full-blown Sanjhi with all the motifs put together in a parallelogram with four gateways. This full-blown image of Sanjhi is called kilakot, literally meaning ‘fortified dwelling’.



THAPA

In its more basic form of handprints, Thapa can be witnessed anywhere in the country both across time and across regions. In Rajasthan, this art has acquired diverse forms and multilevel symbolism. Along with the usual handprints, we witness here iconic representations of various gods and goddesses that are drawn during festivals, and religious ceremonies to appease specific deities and avert disease and evil influences. Many of these drawings are associated with specific seasons. MahendarBhanavat, our research associate puts various Mandanas and even Sanjhi traditions as sub-categories of Thapa art form. Thapas are drawn mainly by women with the help of kumkum, sindoor, henna, ghee and cow dung. The main colors used for making Thapas of different kinds are red, yellow, green, blue, black and yellow. However, Thapas are usually drawn using single colour and kumkum is the main ingredient used in this form of drawing.

BHIL PAINTINGS

Tribal Painting includes Bhil Paintings of Rajasthan, Gond, and Bhil paintings of Madhya Pradesh including Pithora paintings. In Rajasthan, the Bhil tribal painting is known as Mandana, though it is different in style. It is mostly done on the walls of the houses. These paintings begin from the base of the wall and reach up to the height of eight to ten feet. The surface is prepared for painting by plastering the wall with black or white coloured clay and cow-dung mixture.



GUDNA (GODNA) MOTIFS

Gudna refers to that style of painting, which is made by piercing the body with the help of a needle and injecting it with black colour obtained from lamp soot. The use of kumkum, milk of aak, leaves of bilva plant, and juice of harsingar flower are also used at times. Both men and women get their bodies painted in this manner. Both tribals and non-tribals are fond of Gudna. Gudnas are not only ornamental in value but also serve as identification marks of different tribal groups. Images of birds, animals, gods and goddesses, vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines, dots, flowers, swastika, sun, and moon are some of the popular motifs used in Gudna. Married and unmarried women have specific designs of Gudna for different parts of the body. These designs have ritual and symbolic meanings. Gudnas are also drawn to ward off the evil eye and gain good harvest, health, and fertility.



MORE ABOUT TRIBAL ART FORMS OF MADHYA PRADESH:

Apart from green woods, rich wildlife, forts, and monuments, Madhya Pradesh also specializes in different arts and crafts. The intricate art of Madhya Pradesh reveals its rich culture and heritage. The works of art include bamboo and cane coverings, carpet weaving, durries, folk paintings, iron crafts, jute works, metal crafts, ornaments, Papier Mache, stone carving, stuffed toys, terracotta, textile weaving, woodcraft, and Zari embroidery. During their free time the locals of Gond, Baiga, Korku, and Basar, keep themselves busy in crafting bamboo products like fishing traps, hunting tools, and baskets. The folk paintings depict the cultural life of regions like Chhattisgarh, Bundelkhand, Malwa, Gondwa, and Nimar. Also, the intricate works of Stone carvings are revealed through the temples and the monuments in Madhya Pradesh. Moreover, Gwalior specializes in Jalli works (patterns), and Jabalpur and Tikamgarh are famous for statues of human structures and animals. These arts and crafts are well-maintained by the locals. Tourists specially visit this place to collect antiques and artifacts.





CONCLUSION:

In the heartland of India lies the State of Madhya Pradesh. Filled with lush forests, magnificent monuments, exuberant festivity, and blissful solitude. In this land of wonderful and contrasting variety, handicrafts lend a touch of mystique.

– a charm unique to Madhya Pradesh. They radiate an aura, exhibit hereditary skills, whisper painstaking craftsmanship, and evoke an urgent desire to learn more about the land and its colorful people.

A deftly woven silk or a cotton blended saree. Block printed fabrics, stuffed leather toys or floor coverings. Folk paintings, bamboo, cane or jute. Woodcraft, stonecraft, ironcraft. Metalcraft, terracotta, papiermache. Zari work (gold thread embroidery), ornaments, dolls., each handcrafted product of Madhya Pradesh is charming enough to sweep you off your feet.

