

**Artistic Exploration in Scientific Research And Technology**  
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**Lecture - 09**  
**Indian Folk Paintings 1**

Hello friends, in the last class we have seen that India has many school of painting , but besides that India also has many regional style of painting, which talks about a regional specificity. India has 29 states and 7 union territories; each of this has its own cultural identity and traditional traditions of its own.

And by looking at the art forms you can see what are the traditions of this region. Each painting of this region has its own motif own style own patterns. So, you get a distinct flavour of each region by looking at this folk paintings. So, let us see what are the folk paintings of India.

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So, I have listed 20 folk painting, but this is not an exhaustive list there are many more than this, but let us see let us discuss some of them. Madhubani is one style of painting that is prevalent in the Madhubani district of Bihar and in some part of Nepal. Warli is a form of painting that is found in Maharashtra, Gond is found in central India, Bhil is also found in central India, Pattachitra is found in West Bengal and Odisha, Patua is found in West Bengal, Pichwai is also one form of painting that is found in Rajasthan, Chittara is

from Karnataka, Ganjifa is also from Karnataka, Phad painting is from Rajasthan, Sohrai is from the tribal belt of central India, Kalamkari is from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Kalighat painting is from West Bengal, Cheriya is from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana again Pithora is from Gujarat, Ganjifa is from again Ganjifa is repeated Ganjifa is also from art from Karnataka, Saura is from the tribal belt in central India, Kurumba is from south India, Meena art is from Rajasthan and Kolam is found in various form in different locations in India. So, let us discuss some of this art form in details first let us discuss Madhubani.

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So, Madhubani as I told you is an art form that is prevalent in the Madhubani district of Bihar and in some part of Nepal. So, Madhubani is actually an art form that is prevalent among the people who speak the Maithili language and this people are these people are found in the Madhubani district of Bihar and in some part of Nepal. So, this art is found in both the countries India and Nepal.

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### Characteristics of Madhubani Art

- They are either floor paintings (*aripana*) or wall murals (*kobbar*) done during festivals and important occasions
- Primarily a women's art and a spiritual practice
- Passed on from generation after generation by observation and learning
- Mythological events, creation and fertility, social activities, festivities, geometric patterns and natural elements are the central themes
- Natural colours (from rice powder, flowers, soil, stone etc) are used to draw with twigs, fingers or matchsticks

Characteristics of Madhubani art; they are either floor painting that is Aripana or wall murals that is Khobar done during festival and important occasion. Primarily a women's art and a spiritual practice passed on from generations after generations by observation and learning. So, this is not formally taught it is observed and learned. Mythological events creations and fertility, social activity, festivities geometrical patterns and natural elements are the central themes. Natural color from rice powder flowers stone soil etcetera are used to draw with twigs fingers or matchsticks.

The painting was; however, only a domestic ritual and was unknown to the outside world until the massive earthquake of Bihar that happened in 1934.

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## Discovery of Madhubani Art

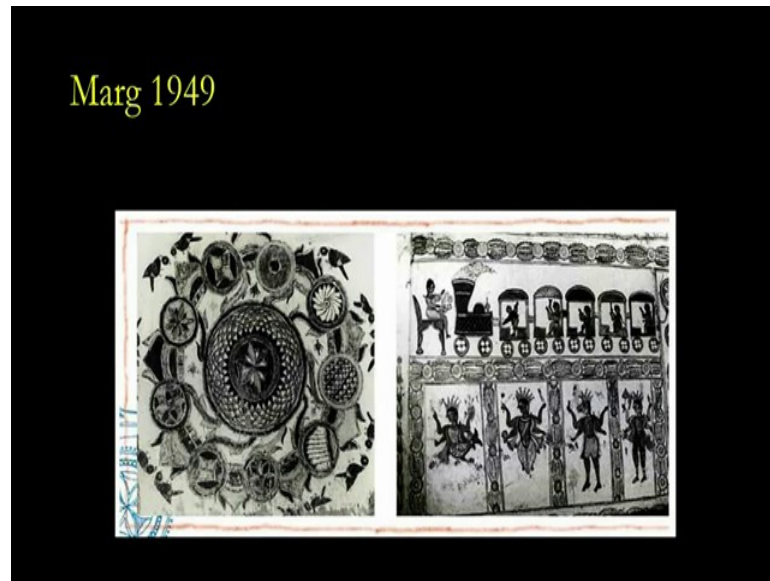
The two disasters:

- 1934: Massive Earthquake
- 1962: Great Famine

So, Madhubani is related to the history or Madhubani is closely related two natural disasters; one is the 1934 massive earthquake and one is the 1962 great famine. So, what happened was that until this time the art form was only done by the women folks within the four walls of the house. And when the earthquake happened the colonial ruler of that area William Archer William G Archer he was going around the places and he saw this beautiful artwork in the walls broken walls of the households. This gave him an idea that this art is should be introduced to the world outside.

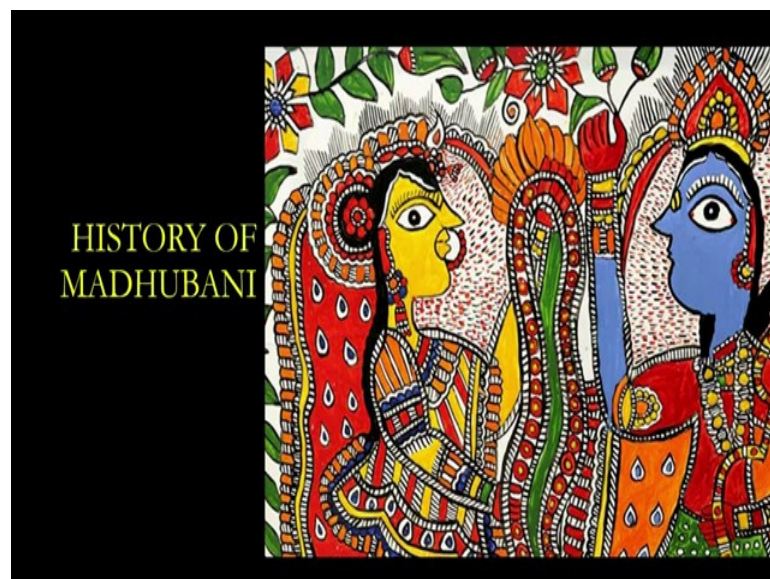
So, he was one of the William G Archer was one of the pioneer person who had taken effort to make this art known to the world. Then came to 1962 great famine at this time the cultural activist, Pupul Jayakar he asked the women of these village to draw the paintings in clothes and in paper. So, that they can be sold commercially and some sustenance can be generated for the women. So, disaster to a natural disaster that helped Madhubani art come out from the four walls of house and introduce them to the outside world.

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So, as I told you William G Archer he took great interest in the Madhubani art that he found in a broken walls of the house after the earth earthquake and after that in 1949 he published an article talking about beautiful the aesthetic qualities of Madhubani art and he published an article in mark which is an Indian journal in 1949 and this was the first time and this art form came out to the world and it was known to the world.

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So, to talk about the history of Madhubani it is said that that king Janaka had asked the women folk of his kingdom to draw the scenes of Sitas marriage to Ram on the walls and

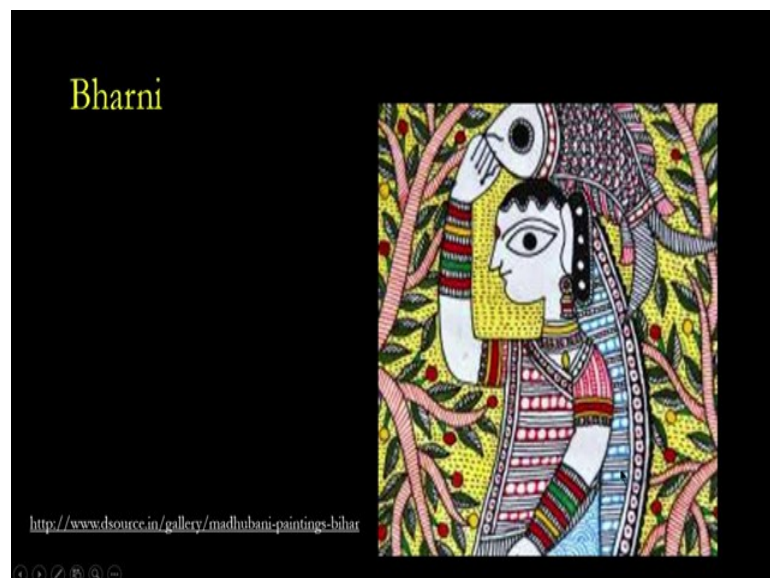
from that day onwards from that incident onwards Madhubani art isn't practice. So, people think that it's very old around 2500 old art form then king Janaka had asked the women to draw the scenes of Sita's marriage on the wall. So, this was when it started.

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So, there are different styles of Madhubani one is bharni, kachni, geru and godhna.

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Bharni is this style where the colors are filled in the painting. So, there is very little empty space and the colors are like totally filled in the entire painting this is taught this is practiced by the upper caste women of Madhubani.

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Then come kachni this is also practiced by the upper caste women here the colors are subdued only one or two colors are used and mostly it is known for its line the patterns the lines they used. Also the lines they had used diagonal and vertical lines.

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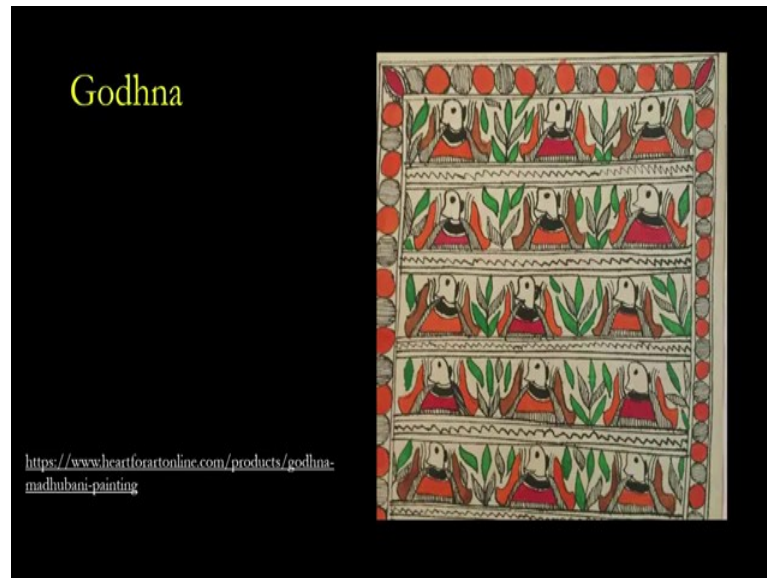


Then is the geru this is thought to be practiced by the women from the lower athletes of the society. So, then the uniqueness of this painting is that it is first it is minimalistic and how the women first do is this that they cover the surface of the the material that is to be



painted with cow dung first, then over that they do the painting. So, this is geru painting geru Madhubani painting.

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This is godhna this is style that has a lot of similarity with the tattoo art or body art, motive have been adapted into painting religious symbols especially those with talismanic powers, geometric designs, natural motifs and or symbols like the swastika are popular in this form of painting. So, you we will see very repeated kind of patterns in this form of Madhubani painting, the motives are repeated again and again. So, repetitiveness is the characteristics of the painting.

Then let us go to the second art form that we would discuss today that is Warli. Warli is an art form that is practiced by the Warli tribe of Maharashtra they reside in the Gujarat Maharashtra border. So, here so, they would research somewhere in this area.



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So, this is the very beautiful Warli art which is done on the walls of a houses.

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- Warli art use basic geometric shapes for depicting symbols of life and the world around. Three basic shapes commonly used are—the circle, the triangle and the square.
- In rare cases the paintings are composed of straight lines, mostly occurs in the form of dots and dashes.
- There is absence of mythological or religious figures.
- The theme of Warli art encompasses social life, nature, death, birth and fertility.
- A common depiction involves circular patterns without any beginning or an end; possibly hinting at eternal life after death.
- Originally these paintings were made on the walls of the huts of the tribal people.
- It was the women who made the paintings.
- They used white paint prepared from rice powder. The paints were made sticky by adding a natural binder. Bamboo sticks were used as brushes. The paint was applied on walls that were made of red, brown or ochre mud.

So, these are the characteristics of a Warli art that Warli art use basic geometrical shapes for depicting symbols of life and the world around three basic shapes commonly used are the circle the triangle and the square it said that the circles and the square are adapted in this painting by looking at the the environment the world around the circle and circle comes from the sun and the moon, the triangle comes from the pointed trees and

mountains whereas, the squares it is taken from its a human addition its like it gives a feeling of space enclosed spaced.

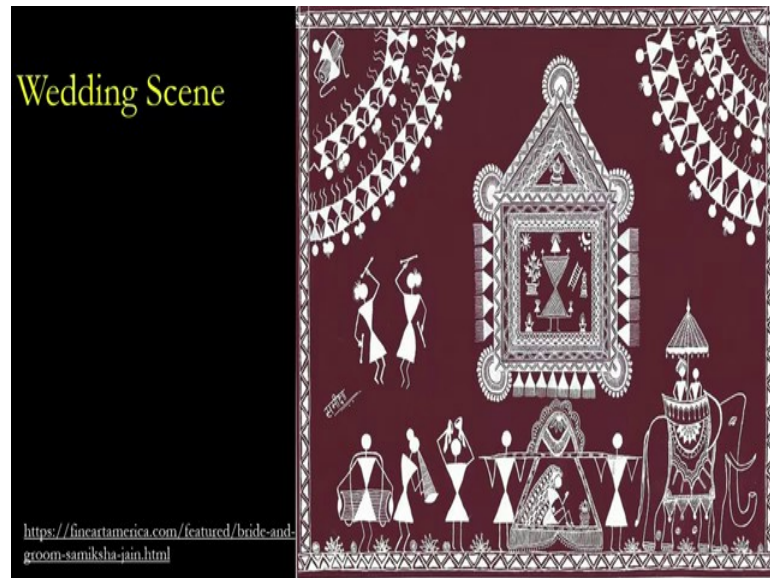
In rare cases the paintings are composed of straight lines mostly occurs in form of dots and dashes. So, straight lines are rare, its mostly geometrical patterns the triangle circle or the square. There is absence of mythological or religious figures this is important because in most of the art forms you find we talk about mythological characters or religious characters, but here it is there is absence of any of them they generally talk about a day to day life.

The theme of Warli art encompasses social life nature death birth and fertility a common depiction involves circular pattern without any beginning or an end possibly hinting at eternal life after death. So, this could be one reason why so, much of circular patterns are there because the Warli tribe believes that there is life after death and it is continuous.

Originally these paintings were made on walls of the huts of the tribal people. So, it was originally supposed to be made in the walls, but now you find them in various articles from paper to canvas to cloths. It was the women who made the paintings like the Madhubani art, it was actually the women who have taken this who used to make this painting, but now both in Madhubani and Warli it is the men folks who also contribute who also participate.

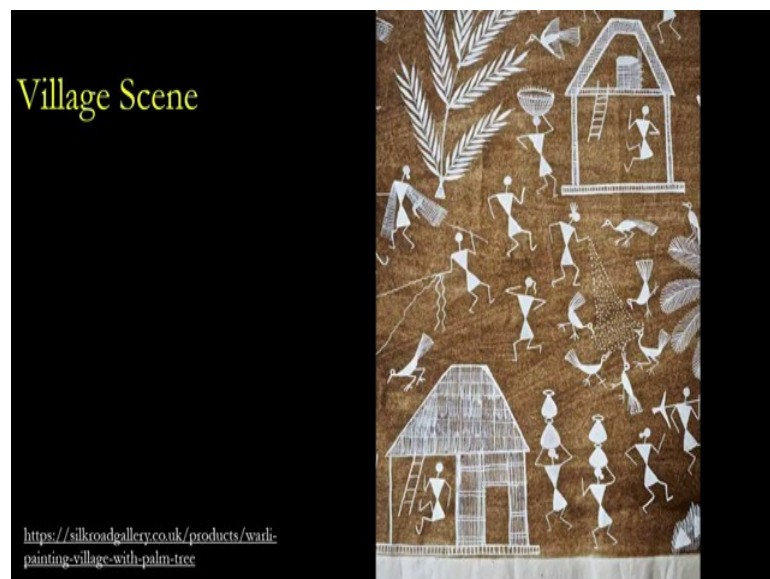
They used white paints prepared from rice powder this paints were made with sticky these paints were made sticky by adding a natural binder bamboo sticks were used as brushes, the paint was applied on walls that were made of red brown and ochre mud. The Warlis are indigenous type of or adivasi living in mountainous as well as coastal areas of Maharashtra and Gujarat border and surrounding areas as I told you they have their own animalistic belief. So, this beliefs are demonstrated in the paintings customs and tradition as a result of a culturist they have also adapted some of the Hindu beliefs. So, let us see some of the Warli paintings.

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So, this is one wedding scene; wedding scene is very popular among the Warli paintings because this is supposed to be an auspicious this painting is supposed to be done in auspicious occasion like wedding. So, youth see most of the paintings depict happy occasions like the wedding scene. Please note the bride and the bridegroom and people dancing and merrymaking and here in the center is the goddess.

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So, this is a village scene, where a day to day activity of a village is shown now people are doing the day to day activity the there is a lot of flora and fauna around.

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This is a harvest scene again harvest is a happy occasion where there is people have lot of food in their home. So, harvest is also a popular scene in Warli paintings. Now, let us go to the third art form that is the Gond. So, Gond art form is practiced by the Gond community who reside in Madhya Pradesh in central India mostly in Madhya Pradesh in Jharkhand, then in some parts of Andhra Pradesh Telangana, Maharashtra, Chattisghar and Odisha.

The Gonds are traditionally agriculturist and some practice shifting cultivation even today are the major activities of Gond into collecting forests products, fishing hunting, forging metal goods in cottage industry and other primary sector occupation. So, this is that you will find the Gond community residing Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha Maharashtra also. So, this is the central area central India you will find the Gond community and so, the Gond art form is also practice in this area.

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- The history of the Gond community dates back to nearly 1400 years ago. It is believed that the Gond people could just be imitating their ancestors as there are cave paintings in the region that go all the way back to the Mesolithic Period.
- The Gond believe that viewing a good image begets good luck. This belief led them to decorate the walls as well as the floor of their houses with traditional tattoos and motifs.
- According to the Gond belief system, each and everything whether it is a hill, river, rock or a tree is inhabited by a spirit and, consequently, is sacred. So they paint them as a form of respect and reverence. Gond paintings are a reflection of human's close connection with his natural surroundings.
- Gond paintings are described as 'on line work'. The artists draw the inner as well as outer lines with as much care as possible. Lines are used in such a way that it conveys a sense of movement to the still images. Dots and dashes are added to impart a greater sense of movement and increase the amount of detail.
- Gond paintings use bright vivid colours such as white, red, blue and yellow. The paints are usually derived naturally from objects such as charcoal, coloured soil, plant sap, leaves and even cow dung. More specifically, yellow from Chui mitti which is a type of local sand, brown from Gheru mitti which is another type of sand, green is readily procured from leaves while the colour red is obtained from the Hibiscus flower.
- Gond paintings bear a remarkable likeness aboriginal art from Australia as both styles use dots to create the painting.

The history of the Gond community dates back to nearly 1400 years ago, it is believed that the Gond people could just be imitating their ancestors as there are cave paintings in the region that go all the way back to the Mesolithic period. So, they people believe that the Gond community is just imitating the art form of the e ancestors. So, the ancestors could probably be living during the Mesolithic period. So, and the practice of doing art is quite old among this community.

The Gond believe that viewing a good image begets good luck, this belief led them to decorate the walls as well as the floor of the houses with traditional tattoos and motives. So, this is a belief that if you look at a good image it will bring you good luck. So, that was that is a primary belief that Gond community has. So, that is one inspiration for them to do this art. According to Gond belief system each and everything whether it is hill river rock or a tree is inhabited by a spirit and consequently is sacred. So, they paint them as a form of respect and reverence, Gond paintings are a reflection of humans close connection with the natural surrounding.

So, they believe that the Gond community believe that that everything has a spirit and everything is sacred. So, when you draw this form they are actually paying respect to the rivers, water mountains etcetera.

Gond paintings are described as online work. So, it has lot of line works that is why its called its also called online work. The artist draw the inner as well as outer lines with as



much care as possible. Lines are used in such a way that it conveys a sense of movement to the still image dots and dashes are added to impart a greater sense of movement and increase the amount of details. So, we will see in some time some of the images which the dots and dashes are used so, that the still image looks like its moving. So, this is a technique of Gond art.

Gond paintings; Gond paintings use bright vivid colors such as white red blue and yellow, the paintings are usually derived naturally from the objects such as charcoal, colored soil, plant sap, leaves and even cow dung. So, as you most as most of the folk paintings even in Gond painting the the material is derived from everything around them everything is natural most specifically yellow from chui mitti with this is a kind of local sand which is yellow brown from Geru mitti which is another type of sand green is readily procured from leaves while the color red is obtained from the hibiscus flower.

Gond paintings bear a remarkable likeness to aboriginal art from Australia as both styles use dots and to create the painting. So, there is there have been a lot of similarity that has been noted in Gond painting as an aboriginal art of from Australia.

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So, these are some of the Gond painting with as we see saw that at the Gond painting use lot of lines and sometimes dots and dashes. So, you see how lines are used in various forms in this painting.

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Now, this is another one this is a tree of life in Gond painting a tree of life is very important symbol in Gond art and they believe that everything is derived from the tree is the source of life of everything.

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This is a fauna depicted in Gond art, you see the use of lines here as they said that the lines and dashes are used in such a fashion that it looks like that object is moving, that gives you a sense of movement and its not static.



Now, let us go to Pattachitra. Pattachitra is practiced in West Bengal and Odisha though in different they are different in forms, but today we will discuss about Odisha Pattachitra.

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- Pattachitra is based on Hindu mythology and specially inspired by Jagannath and Vaishnava sect.
- They resemble the old murals of Odisha, especially religious centres of Puri, Konark and Bhubaneshwar region, dating back to the 5th century BC.
- The paintings of Odisha can be divided into three categories based on the medium—paintings on cloth or 'Patta Chitra', paintings on walls or 'Bhitti Chitra' and palm leaf engravings or 'Tala Patra Chitra' or 'Pothi, Chitra'.
- Some popular themes are Thia Badhia - depiction of the temple of Jagannath, Krishna Lila - enactment of Jagannath as Lord Krishna displaying his powers as a child, Dasabatar Patti - the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, Panchamukhi - depiction of Lord Ganesh as a five-headed deity.

Pattachitra is based on Hindu mythology especially inspired by Jagannath and by Vaishnava sect. They resemble the old murals of Odisha especially religious centers of Puri Konark and Bhubaneshwar region dating back to the 5th century BC. So, as some of you might be knowing the Puri Konark Bhubaneshwar where has a lot of old paintings that are supposed to be from very centuries old from 5th century BC and Pattachitra supposed to be have lot of similarities with this kind of mural art.

The paintings of Odisha can be divided into three categories based on the medium paintings on cloth or Patta Chitra, paintings on wall or Bhitti Chitra and palm leaf engravings on the Tala Chitra or Pothi. So, they based on a medium that the paintings is done the Pattachitra is divided into three that is on cloth is called Pattachitra its fits on wall its called Bhitti Chitra if it is on palm leaf it is called Tala Patra Chitra or Pothi Chitra.

Some popular themes are the thia badhia depiction of the temple of Jagannath these are some popular theme that you will see in most of the Pattachitra painting. Krishna Leela enchantment of Jagannath as lord Krishna displaying his power as a child Dasabatar

Patti the 10 incarnation of lord Vishnu, Punchamukhi depiction of lord Ganesha as a 5 headed deity.

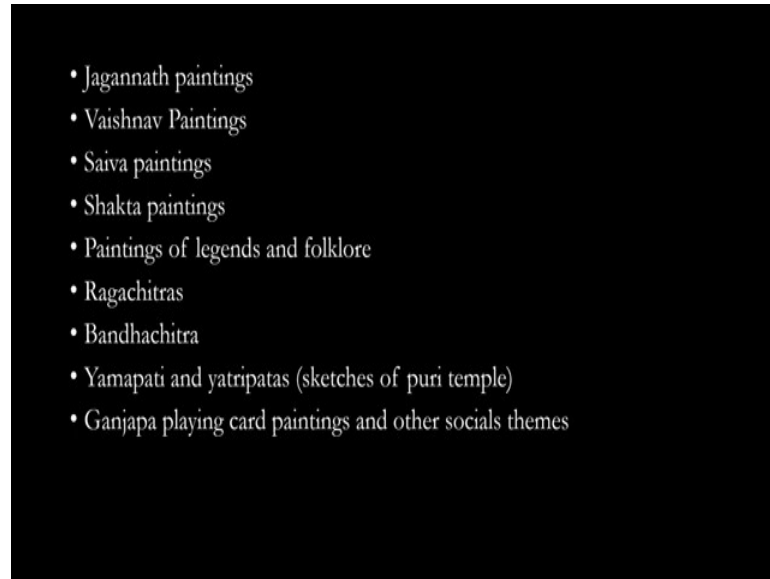
Making the Pattachitra is the first thing that comes in agenda and a painter also called chitrakar the people who make this paintings are called chitrakar go about a work in preparing a tamarind paste. So, this is how it is done the first make a tamarind paste which is made by soaking tamarind seeded water for 3 days the seeds are rather pounded with the crusher mixed with water and heated in earthen pot to turn it to a paste which is called niryas kalpa.

The paste is then used to hold two pieces of cloth together in it with it with coated with the powder of soft clay stone a couple of times till it become firm. Soon as the cloth becomes dry the final touch of polishing it with a rough stone and then a smooth stone or wood is given. Until the surface becomes smooth and leathery and is already to as a canvas to be painted on.

Preparing the paints is perhaps the most important part of creation of Pattachitra engaging the craftsmanship of the chitrakars is using natural available raw material. So, the naturally found raw materials are used as paints like in most of the paintings folk paintings the gum of the Kaitha tree is the chief ingredient and is used as a base for making different pigments, on which diverse raw material are mixed for diverse colors powdered conch shells for instance are used for making a white pigment while lamp suit is used for a black pigment the root of the Keya plant is used for making the common brush while mouse hair is used for the requirements of final brush to be attached to a wooden handle.

So, it you see that the making of this paintings are very complicated and very tedious and the creating the surface itself takes many many days. So, these are very intricate designs and which takes a lot of effort from the part of the chitrakars who are doing the painting.

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So, you can see different variations different themes in this painting some of the Jagannath paintings, Vaishnava paintings, Saiva paintings, Shakta paintings, paintings of legends and folklore, Ragachitras, Bandhachitras, Yamapati and Yama yatripatas Ganjapa playing card paintings and other social themes. So, these are a different theme that you will see while you are looking at Pattachitra of Odisha.

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So, now let us look at some of the Pattachitra from Odisha this is image where you see a the chitrakas making the the Pattachitra; usually its a huge surface. So, usually to one or

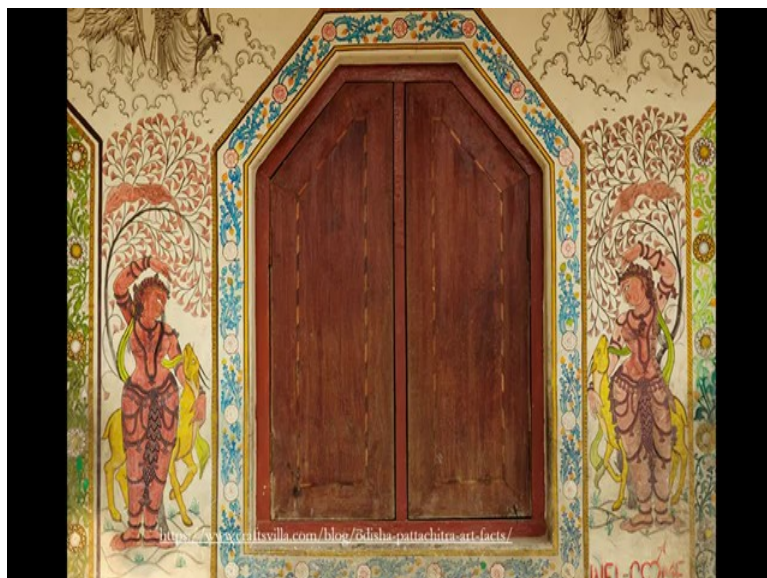
two people would do the painting and one of the specificity of Pattachitra is its a beautiful borders the borders are very intricate and very elaborately done.

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This is Pattachitra on cloth as we saw that there are different kinds of material that are used, so, this is on cloth.

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This is on the walls, this is on palm palm leaf.



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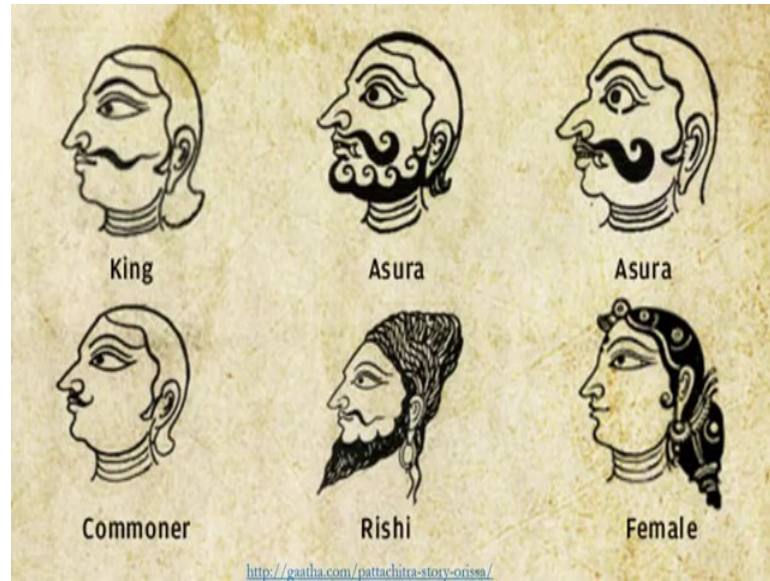
This is depiction of Jagannath in the Pattachitra painting, Jagannath as is a very important deity of Odisha.

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So, these are some of the depiction of characters in Pattachitra painting.

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In the typical style of Pattachitra the faces of characters have long beak like noses as you see in this paintings prominent chins and elongated eyes they are distinguished from each other by facial features hairstyle clothing etcetera. Central focus of the painting is the expression of the fingers and emotions they poetry the strong color only reinforces them. So, its like; so, colors are use for reinforcing them, but mostly the emotions depict the characters.

One of the most distinct feature of Patta is the variety of ornate borders, that are used to give a frame like appearance. So, as I told you in the beginning in one of this. So, this borders are very important, they give they make the frame of the painting. The traditional borders are derived from the temple sculptures, motives of Odisha one of the most popular border design is that of two entwine snakes which can also be seen in the doorways of Konark temple. So, it has some similarities with the Konark temple artworks. Now, let us go to another art form of Odisha that is Saura. So, again this is another art from Odisha.

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- The Saura wall paintings are called italons or ikons (or ekons) and are dedicated to Idital (also edital) the main deity of the Sauras.
- Saura paintings draw upon tribal folklore and have ritualistic importance.
- Recurring motifs in these paintings are the Tree of Life, animals like horses, elephants, elements of nature like the sun and moon and the people of the tribe.
- The paintings are steeped in symbolism and meaning.
- It is with these images and their interpretation that the Saura community hold on to their culture and tradition. The Saura language has no script, the paintings enable them to depict and record their worldview, their history, philosophy and religious practice.
- Given the religious significance of these paintings for the tribe, these are worshipped during religious and special cultural occasions such as harvest, child-birth, marriage or even the construction of a new house.
- Within a new dwelling, these paintings are created in a dark corner inside the home, and the process of creating them is accompanied by the recital of prayers.
- Saura paintings employ a fish-net approach, where the border is created first, and then the motifs close inwards.

Sauras among the most ancient of tribes in India and find mentioned in the Hindu epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata. They said that Shabari who was a devotee of lord Rama in Ramayana was from these Saura tribe and Dhara the hunter who had killed the Krishna was also from this tribe, it is said that the body of Dhara was flowed into the sea near Corey as a wooden lock and idol of Jagannath that food is believed to have been sculpted from this piece of wood the body of Dhara. So, a paintings are an integral part of religious ceremonies of the Saura tribals. So, the these paintings have lot of religious importance.

The Saura wall paintings are called italons or ikons or ekons and are dedicated to the idital also called edital the main deity of the Saura. So, this as I told you the Saura paintings are lot of religious value and it is dedicated to their deity. Saura paintings draw upon tribal folklore and have ritualistic importance recurring motives in this paintings are the tree of life animals like horses, elephants, elements of nature like the sun and the moon and people of the tribe.

The paintings are steeped in symbolism and meaning. It is with this image and their interpretation that the Saura community hold on to the culture and tradition, the Saura language has no script the painting enable them to depict and record their worldview the history philosophy and religious practice. So, in the absence of a written script this is the images help them to record their history and to have a connection with the past.



Given the religious significance of this painting for the tribe, these are worshiped during religious and special cultural occasions such as harvests, childbirth marriage or even the construction of a new house. So, like most of the paintings folk paintings of India the Saura painting is also done in auspicious occasion and has lot of values for the community. Within a new dwelling these paintings are created in a dark corner inside the home and the process of creating them is accompanied by the recital of prayers. So, it is a very elaborate procedure of doing this painting, there is recital of prayers along with the painting. And it is usually done in corner of the house so, as that corner is energized with positive energy.

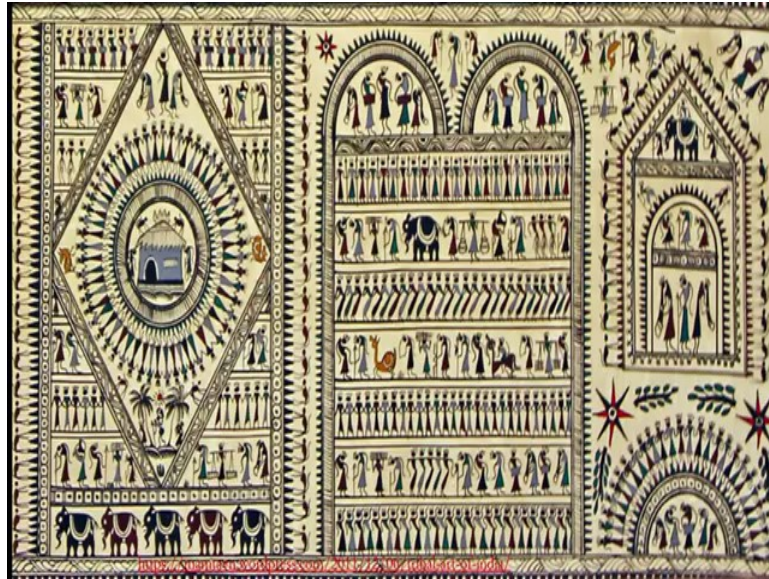
Saura painting employ a fishnet approach that is where the border is created first, first the border is created and then the motifs close inwards. So, this technique is called fishnet approach where the border is first created and inside things are filled later.

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So, this is one Saura painting it is a in the house, this is typically how Saura community would do decorate their house in their doorframe in the walls.

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This is another depiction pay attention to the antique races and in a small details of the painting.

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This is another one this depicts the tree of life which is a very important motif in Saura painting and it also depicts the village life around it. So, friends, today we have seen five folk paintings in a next class let us discuss five more and see what is the similarity and difference between them. After this we will learn to do the some of the techniques of this folk paintings and after that we will explore our own thoughts.

Thank you for today.