

1. Pithora

A Pithora painting is a wall painting traditionally practiced by the **Rathwa** tribe. Pithora *dev*, ancestors, ghosts and other minor deities are generally made on the walls of tribal houses on auspicious occasions followed by ritual performances and sometimes by a sacrifice performed by *bhuvras*-the priests. These *lakhara*-painters traditionally trained and developed the form and painting style after adequate practice. Chhota Udepur district in Gujarat, has several villages such as Tejgadh, Kawat, Baroj, Chorvana, Malaja etc where the tribes continue to live and perform rituals, alongwith Pithora *baba's* wall paintings to fulfil their wishes.



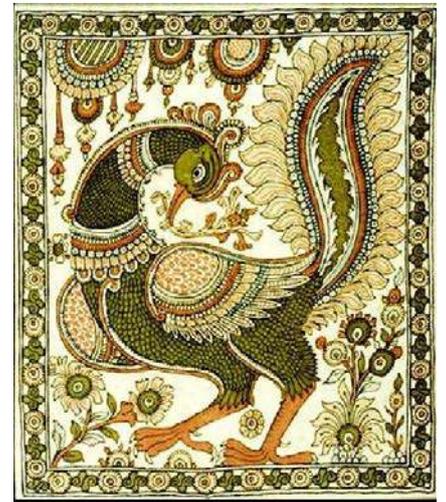
The walls of the *verandah* are dedicated to Pithora painting. Usually, the girl-child or unmarried girls apply the mixture of mud and cow-dung on the walls. Afterwards whitening powder or white clay is applied with the help of a piece of rag dipped into the mixture of white clay and water for the final coat. Generally orange, green, blue, red, yellow colours are used for painting. While looking at the painting, we can find not only rituals but also narratives of myths and legends associated with their culture – this is important to understand the intricacy and detailing.

(learn more - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3TLIKM-YJo>)

2. Kalamkari of Andhra

The term **kalamkari** literally means ‘work done with a pen.’ The term is now inseparably attached to the painted and block-printed cotton and silk textiles, produced in the Coromandel Coast of India (parts of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu). Developed under the Golconda Sultanate, the theme of these paintings are believed to be prevalent since 3000BC, when folk singers and painters used to wander from one village to other, narrating stories of Hindu mythology to the village people!

Today, two of the most prominent centres of **kalamkari** production are Srikalahasti (Chittoor District) and Machilipatnam (Krishna District) in Andhra Pradesh. While in Srikalahasti, the textiles are literally painted with pens made out of bamboo/tamarind and cotton (produced by small family units where the family members work together), in Machilipatnam, the line drawing done with a pen is transferred onto wooden blocks which are carved and then used to print fabric (carried out in *karkhanas*, where the block makers, washers and printers work under the same roof).



The process of making Kalamkari involves **23 steps**. From the natural process of bleaching the fabric, softening it, sun drying, preparing natural dyes, hand painting, to the processes of air drying and washing, the entire procedure is a process which requires precision and an eye for detailing.

Learn More : (<http://www.utsavpedia.com/motifs-embroideries/kalamkari-art/>)

3. *Mata ni Pachhedi* (Kalamkari of Gujarat)

Mata ni pachedi literally means “**behind the mother goddess**”, and is a cloth that constitutes a temple of the goddess. When people of the nomadic **Vaghari community of Gujarat** were barred from entering temples, the *chitaras* (painters) of their community made their own shrines with depictions of the Mother Goddess on cloth. This ingenious solution is believed to be the origin of this sacred art form, which is now revered by all.

Mata ni Pachhedi is also known as the “**Kalamkari of Gujarat**”, owing to its similarity of the Kalamkari practiced in Southern India and the use of **pens**(kalam) fashioned out of bamboo sticks, for painting. The Gujarat *Kalamkari* work as ***Mata ni Pachhedi*** (backdrop of mother goddess) or ***Mata no Chandarvo*** (canopy of mother goddess) evolved as unique textile painting and block printing traditions of Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Pachhedi, the backdrop, usually has a set pattern, with the mother **Goddess dominating the central area** in her mighty form, surrounded by **deities and commoners worshipping her** with equal reverence. Traditionally, **red is the main colour of the paintings**, the sacred red that punctuates every auspicious occasion in the life of a Hindu. White and black form the backdrop for the brilliant red. Using just these three colours (and now even indigo and gold), the imaginative artists



depict **entire stories laden with numerous characters and motifs** surrounded by block printed decorative borders called *lassa patti*. After application of each colour, the fabric is boiled in **alizarin solution**, to bring out the colour, and then washed. For washing, **the craftsmen go to Sabarmati River as the cloth must be washed in running water only**, so that any excess colour flows away, instead of staining the cloth.

The Vaghari also call themselves as *Devipujak* and the goddesses they paint keep family members of the devotee healthy. The goddesses control the rains and weather, cure animal diseases and guard the region against natural as well as super-natural calamities. Creating Pachedis as well as new illustrations that are relevant in today’s context, but in the same folk style, these craftsmen have remained true to the cause of **spreading the glory of the Mother Goddess and her wonderful art**.

(learn more – <https://ghummakkad.wordpress.com/2013/06/20/the-sacred-textile-called-the-mata-ni-pachhedi/>)

4. Rangoli

Rangoli is an art form native to Nepal, India and Bangladesh (known as Alpana) in which patterns are created on the floor in living rooms or courtyards using materials such as colored rice, dry flour, colored sand or flower petals. It is usually made during Diwali or Tihar (collectively known as Deepawali), Onam, Pongal and other Indian, Bangladeshi and Nepalese festivals related to Hinduism. Even the Parsi community home entrances are adorned with rangolis, perhaps due to the socio-cultural influence of their having settled in Gujarat. Irrespective of the location, designs are passed from one

generation to the next, keeping both the art form and the tradition alive. The purpose of rangoli is decoration and it is thought to bring good luck. It was the custom of the *gruhini* (women) to draw decorated feet of *Lakshmi*- The goddess of wealth, and other sacred symbols such as *swastika*, *shankh*, *chakra*, *gada*, *padma*, *gyan kamal*, *nabhi kamal* etc. at the entrance to bring good fortune for their family.

The various names for this art form and similar practices include **Kolam** in Tamil Nadu, **Mandana** in Rajasthan, **Chowkpurana** in Chhattisgarh, **Alpana** in West Bengal, **Murja** in Odisha, **Aripana** in Bihar, **Chowk pujan** in Uttar Pradesh, **Muggu** in Andhra Pradesh, **Golam kolam** or **kalam** in Kerala and others.

Rangoli designs can be simple geometric shapes, deity impressions, or flower and petal shapes (appropriate for the given celebrations), but they can also be very elaborate designs crafted by numerous people, reflecting traditions, folklore, gods and divine forms and practices that are unique to each area. The base material is usually dry or wet powdered rice or dry flour, to which *sindoor* (vermilion), *haldi* (turmeric) and other natural colours can be added. Chemical colors are a modern variation. Other materials include colored sand, red brick powder and even flowers and petals, as in the case of flower rangolis.

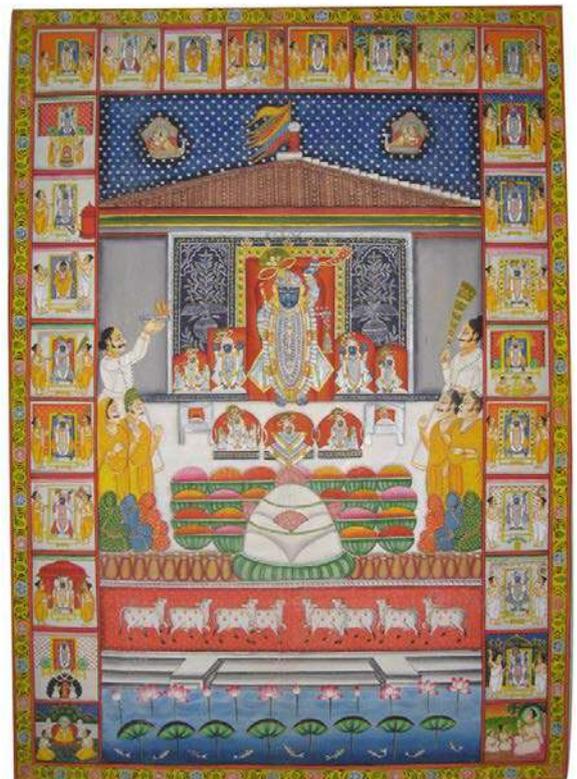
Learn more – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XP-4lpOHIM0>



5. Nathdwara *Pichhwais* (Backdrops of Shreenathji)

Nathdwara Painting refers to a painting tradition and school of artists that emerged in **Nathdwara**, a town in Rajsamand district, in the Western state of Rajasthan in India. The Nathdwara school is a subset of the Mewar school of painting and is seen as an important school in the 17th and 18th century miniature paintings. The sub-styles of Mewar painting include Udaigarh, Devgarh and Nathdwara as important centers of miniature production. Nathdwara paintings are of different sub-styles of which **Pichhwai** paintings are the most popular.

The word **Pichhwai** derives from the Sanskrit words **pich** meaning back and **wais** meaning hanging. These paintings are cloth paintings hung behind the image of the Hindu god **Shrinathji** (the principle deity of Nathdwara considered a living deity for the devotees residing in his **haveli**).



Painted ***pichhvais*** usually show whisks on either side of a *kadamba* tree; in such cases the tree symbolises Krishna when he disappeared from Vrundavana, leaving the *gopis* alone. But among all, the **image of Shreenathji** is popular among devotees and usually depicts daily *darshanas*, festival *shringaras*, *chhappanbhog* etc. The devotees also commission a painting which usually depicts the devotee and other family members on both sides of Shreenathji. **Krishna Leela** paintings depicts Krishna's childhood and early life in Gokul such as playing in Yashoda's lap, stealing butter, Ras Leela with Radha and other gopis, lifting Govardhana mount etc.

Learn more - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtywskZHF30>

6. Warli Art

Warli painting is a style of tribal art mostly created by Adivasi from the North Sahyadri Range in Maharashtra India, where it is still practiced today. This range encompasses cities such as Dahanu, Talasari, Jawhar, Palghar, Mokhada and Vikramgad of Palghar district.

Warli paintings represent the tribe members' humble life and intimacy with the nature - depicting their rituals, livelihood, family and daily life activities such as farming, hunting, fishing, dancing etc.



The drawings are made by pen-like bamboo sticks or twigs. They have a very basic visual language like – **line, circle, triangle** and **square**. Where the circle represents the sun and moon, the triangle represents pointed trees or mountain and the square represents a sacred enclosure or a piece of land.

(learn more - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yggDy01xM>)

Generally, the central motif in each ritual painting is known as the "**chalk**" or "**Shaukat**", mostly of two types known as **Devchauk** and **Lagnachauk**. Inside a Devchauk is usually **Palaghata**, the mother goddess, symbolizing fertility. Marriage is one of the most important themes in warli art of the theme - **Lagnachauk**. No marriage can take place in the absence of this painting.

Learn more - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdITE-0XRQ4>

7. Madhubani Painting

Madhubani painting or Mithila painting was traditionally created by the women of the Brahman, Dusadh and Kayastha communities in the Mithila region of Bihar, India. This painting, as a form of wall art, was practiced widely throughout the region; the more recent development of painting on paper and canvas originated among the villages around Madhubani, and it is these latter developments that may correctly be referred to as Madhubani art. The painting was traditionally done on freshly plastered mud walls and floors of huts, but now they are also done on cloth, handmade paper and canvas.

Traditionally, Madhubani paintings were made on the eve of certain rituals and ceremonies, such as *pujas*, *vratas*, or weddings. Ornamentation and a very prominent black line are the identifying features of this style. They are made from the paste of powdered rice. Madhubani painting has remained confined to a compact geographical area and the skills have been passed on through centuries, the content and the style

have largely remained the same. And that is the reason for Madhubani painting being accorded the coveted GI (Geographical Indication) status. Madhubani paintings also use two-dimensional imagery, and the colors used are derived from plants. Ochre and lampblack are also used for reddish brown and black respectively.

Madhubani paintings mostly depict nature and religious motifs, and the themes generally revolve around Hindu deities like *Krishna*, *Ram*, *Shiva*, *Durga*, *Lakshmi*, and *Saraswati*. Natural elements like the sun, the moon, and religious plants like *tulsi* are also widely painted, along with scenes from the royal court and social events like weddings.

(Learn more - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XF4be1xsuE>,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vt6uGFFkrI0>)

8. Phad Painting

Phad painting or *Phad* is a style of religious scroll painting and folk painting, practiced in Rajasthan. These paintings have the mammoth task of representing a complex and a full blown folk epic narrative, which it achieves through a very specific style of representation, filled with figures & pictorial incidents, these paintings form a kind of dramatic backdrop to epic story telling performances.



Since they depict the different episodes, these paintings are customarily opened or unrolled only after sundown, in conjunction with all night performances. This could be one reason for these paintings to be called *Phad*.

This style of painting is traditionally done on a long piece (15-30 feet in length) of cloth or canvas, known as *phad*, and were painted with vegetable colours. The narratives of the folk deities of Rajasthan, mostly of **Pabuji** (about 15 feet in length) and **Devnarayan** (about 30 feet long) are depicted on the *phads*.

All Phads, no matter which hero-god they present, have certainly similarities. Every available inch of the canvas is crowded with figures. Another similarity is flat construction of the pictorial space. While the figures are harmoniously distributed all over the area, the scale of figure depends on the social status of the character they represent and the roles they play in the story. Another Interesting feature is that the figures in the paintings do not face the audience; rather, they face each other.

Traditionally, the **Joshi** families of Bhilwara, Shahpura in Bhilwara district of Rajasthan are widely known as the traditional artists of this folk art-form. The Bhopas, (priest-singers) would carry the painted *phads* along with them and use these as the mobile temples of the folk deities.

Learn more - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ex7LKBtVolk>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_kKEUmiorQ

9. Gond Art

The **Gonds**, are the largest Adivasi Community in India and are Dravidians (whose origin can be traced to the pre-Aryan era). They are mainly found in Madhya Pradesh and its surrounding States. The word **Gond** comes from **Kond**, which means green mountains in the Dravidian idiom. The Gond called themselves **Koi** or **Koiture**.



The **Gonds** traditionally painted on mud walls of their houses depicting their natural and mythological worlds, traditional songs and oral histories.. Starting in the early 1980s, certain talented **Pardhan Gonds** (who traditionally served as professional bardic priests), began transforming their ritual performing arts into a new tradition of figurative and narrative visual art. Using a variety of modern media (including acrylic paintings on canvas, ink drawings on paper, silkscreen prints, and animated film) the Gonds have created unprecedented depictions of bold, vibrantly coloured paintings, depicting mainly flora and fauna.

If you look closely, the Gond artform is made up of **dots and lines**. The colours come from charcoal, cow dung, leaves and coloured soil. Rich in detail, color, mystery and humor, these tribal artworks brilliantly employ modern means to evoke the pre-modern psyche. Today, these styles are imitated, but with acrylic paints. It can be called an evolution in the Gond art form, spearheaded by **Jangarh Singh Shyam**, the most popular Gond artist who revived the art for the world in the 1960's.

Gond paintings bear a remarkable likeness **aboriginal art** from Australia as both styles use dots to create the painting.

.Learn more - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAMa7AZxqdc>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZzIBHfpCQs>

10. Tanjore Painting

Thanjavur painting is a classical South Indian painting style, which was inaugurated from the town of **Thanjavur** (aka Tanjore) and spread across the adjoining Tamil region. The art form draws its immediate resources and inspiration from way back about 1600 AD, a period when the **Nayakas** of Thanjavur under the suzerainty of the Vijayanagara Rayas encouraged art—chiefly, classical dance and music—as well as literature, both in Telugu and Tamil and painting of chiefly Hindu religious subjects in temples.

Thanjavur paintings are distinguished by their famous gold coating. However, it can safely be surmised that Thanjavur painting, as we know it now, originated in the Maratha court of Thanjavur (1676 - 1855). They are characterised by rich, flat and vivid colors, simple iconic composition, glittering gold foils overlaid on delicate but extensive gesso work and inlay of glass beads and pieces or very rarely precious and semi-precious gems. Essentially serving as devotional icons, the subjects of most paintings are Hindu gods, goddesses, and saints. Episodes from Hindu Puranas, Sthala-puranas and other religious texts were visualised, sketched or traced and painted with the main figure or figures placed in the central section of the picture (mostly within an architecturally delineated space such as a **mantapa** or **prabhavali**)



surrounded by several subsidiary figures, themes and subjects. There are also many instances when Jain, Sikh, Muslim, other religious and even secular subjects were depicted in Tanjore paintings.

Thanjavur paintings are panel paintings done on wooden planks, and hence referred to as *palagai padam* (*palagai* = "wooden plank"; *padam* = "picture") in local parlance. In modern times, these paintings have become souvenirs for festive occasions in South India or for foreigners.

Learn more – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yDy4fx0lig>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhbtRFgg13Q&list=PLqhnvANDK02fJn2lfXiMGxonsfAPIG8vB>

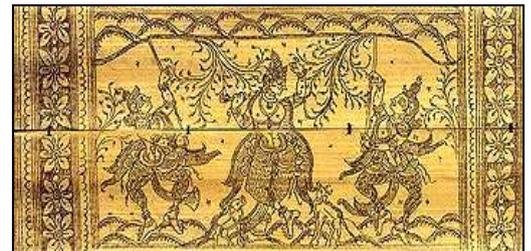
11. Other art forms

Orissan Paintings (*Pattachitra* and Palm Leaf paintings)

Pattachitra is a textile painting tradition of Odisha. In the Sanskrit language, "*Patta*" literally means "cloth" and "*Chitra*" means "picture". This art form traces its roots to the famous Jagannath Temple of Puri. The cloth is prepared using a mixture of chalk and gum from tamarind seeds which gives the cloth a leathery texture. The colours are bright and vibrant while the themes typically are based on the main deity of the Jagannath temple and also scenes from the life of Lord Krishna.



Palm leaf paintings practice of Odisha called *Talapatrachitras* or *Tala-Pattachitras*. These paintings take inspirations from the epic Mahabharata, Ramayana and other mythologies. To prepare the palm leaf, the unripe leaves of the palm tree are first cut and semi dried. They are then buried in swamps for 4-5 days for seasoning and then dried in shade. These are then stitched or stringed together as per need. Vegetables, minerals, charcoal, oils etc are used in this form of art and utensils used for etching and painting are also normally made of metals or bamboos.



Learn more - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imX0hSn9XwQ>

Kalighat Paintings

Originated in the 19th century, in the locale of Kali Temple, Kalighat, Kolkata. Kalighat paintings depict a variety of themes such as Hindu gods, goddesses and other mythological characters. These paintings, on cloth and *pattas*, at first depicted Gods and Goddesses, but then took a turn towards social reform.

It was the time when upheaval against the British was a possible, exciting idea. With cheap paper and paint colours, squirrel hair brushes and colour pigments, the art was characterised by flawless strokes, brushwork, and simple but bold drawings. It sought to raise awareness about social conditions in its viewers.



Learn more - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHNfxlRel-M>