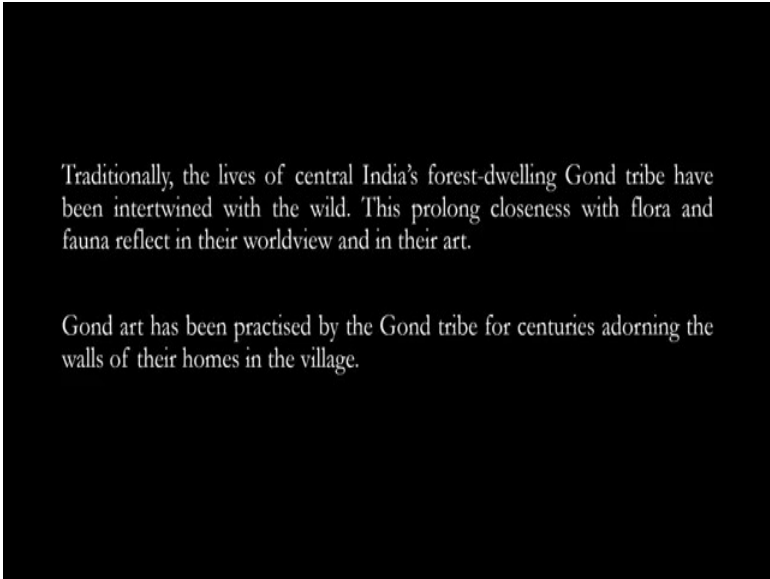


Artistic Exploration in Scientific Research And Technology
Dr. Bitasta Das
Department of UG Humanities
Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru

Lecture – 12
Gond Understanding the Technique

Hello friends, hope you had a good experience last time by understanding the techniques of the Madhubani painting. Today, let us discuss the techniques of Gond painting. The Gond painting as you have seen before belongs to a Gond tribe, who occupies the space in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and mostly in Madhya Pradesh. So, Gond painting is the painting that is done by the Gond tribe and it is one of the most ritualistic art practice of the tribe.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:00)



Traditionally, the lives of central India's forest-dwelling Gond tribe have been intertwined with the wild. This prolonged closeness with flora and fauna reflect in their worldview and in their art.

Gond art has been practised by the Gond tribe for centuries adorning the walls of their homes in the village.

Traditionally, the lives of central India's forest-dwelling Gond tribe have been intertwined with the wild. The prolonged closeness with flora and fauna reflect in the worldview and in art. So, the so the Gond tribe have been living closely with the forest and they have been interacting for a long time with the flora and fauna of the forest.

So, this understanding this closeness is reflected in their entire worldview and whatever they do in their day to day life. So, the art also reflect this closeness the mountains, the water, the rivers, the flora and fauna all are represented in their paintings. Gond art has been practiced by the Gond tribe for centuries adorning walls of the homes in the village.

So, the Gond art are drawn on the walls of their of the houses they live in, in the mud walls of the houses they live in.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:58)

The Gond art is connected with the belief that “viewing a good image begets good luck”. Owing to this belief, the Gond tribals traditionally painted their homes, mud walls and floors during festivities and marriages using colored muds. Initially, they used to do it as a decorative and symbolic art which could fight off evil and invite optimism during festivals called Dighna. Dighna is a festival to celebrate auspicious occasions of Gond tribal life.

Gond paintings can best be described as ‘on-line work’. Lines are used in such away that it conveys a sense of movement to the still images. Dots and dashes are added to impart a greater sense of movement and to increase the amount of detail.

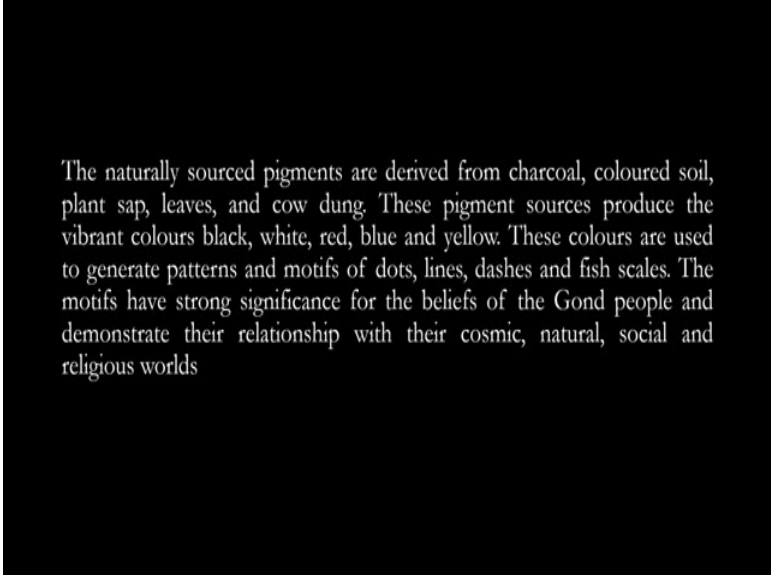
The Gond art is connected with the belief that viewing a good image begets good luck. Owing to this belief the Gond tribals traditionally painted their homes, mud walls and floors during festivals and marriages using colored muds. Initially, they used to do it as a decorative and symbolic art which could fight of evil and invite optimism during festivals called Dighna. Dighna is the festival to celebrate auspicious occasions of Gond tribal life.

So, the practice of painting go Gond art comes from the belief that if you view a good work of art, it will bring you good luck. So, this belief has made the Gond tribal people to paint their walls with nice images of flora and fauna and this they believe will ward off evil eyes and also bring them good luck.

So, this belief in the understanding that looking at a good artwork will bring them good luck has been the source of the Gond paintings. Gond paintings can be best described as on-line work. 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 to increase the amount of details.

So, as you have seen briefly in the previous class, the Gond art has a lot of detailing and it is done through dots and dashes. So, and the body and this dots and dashes are done in such a way that an image looks like as if it is moving. So, the impact is such that it gives a sense of movement to the art.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:41)

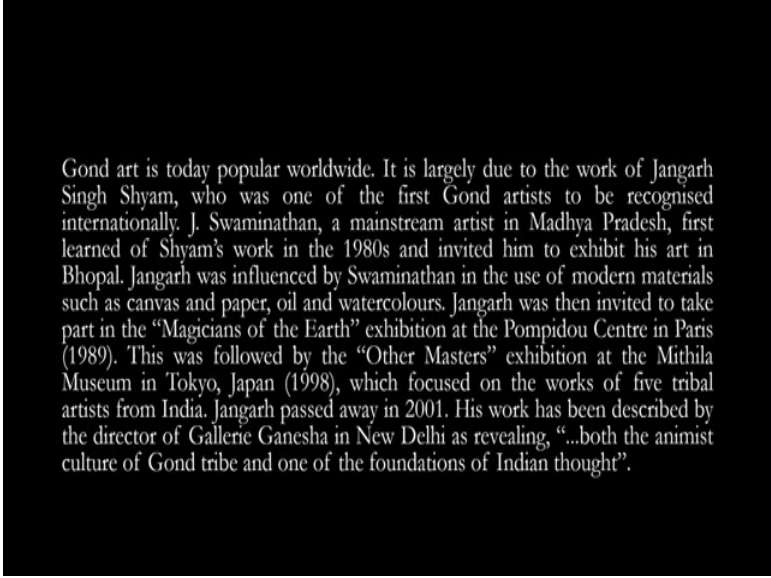


The naturally sourced pigments are derived from charcoal, coloured soil, plant sap, leaves, and cow dung. These pigment sources produce the vibrant colours black, white, red, blue and yellow. These colours are used to generate patterns and motifs of dots, lines, dashes and fish scales. The motifs have strong significance for the beliefs of the Gond people and demonstrate their relationship with their cosmic, natural, social and religious worlds.

The natural sourced pigments are derived from charcoal as you have seen in other folk art of India as well that the colors are derived from whatever naturally or natural elements that is found nearby. So, here too it is done, colors extracted from charcoal, colored soils, plant sap, leaves and cow dung.

This pigments sources produce the vibrant color black, white, red, blue and yellow. These colors are used to generate patterns and motifs of dot, lines, dashes and fish scales. The motifs have strong significance of the belief of the Gond people and demonstrate their relationship with the cosmic, natural, social and religious world.

(Refer Slide Time: 04:24)



Gond art is today popular worldwide. It is largely due to the work of Jangarh Singh Shyam, who was one of the first Gond artists to be recognised internationally. J. Swaminathan, a mainstream artist in Madhya Pradesh, first learned of Shyam's work in the 1980s and invited him to exhibit his art in Bhopal. Jangarh was influenced by Swaminathan in the use of modern materials such as canvas and paper, oil and watercolours. Jangarh was then invited to take part in the "Magicians of the Earth" exhibition at the Pompidou Centre in Paris (1989). This was followed by the "Other Masters" exhibition at the Mithila Museum in Tokyo, Japan (1998), which focused on the works of five tribal artists from India. Jangarh passed away in 2001. His work has been described by the director of Gallerie Ganesha in New Delhi as revealing, "...both the animist culture of Gond tribe and one of the foundations of Indian thought".

Gond art is today popular worldwide. It is largely due to the work of Jangarh Singh Shyam, who was one of the first Gond artists to be recognized internationally.

So, when you talk about Gond art you cannot not mention the works and life of Jangarh Singh Shyam, who was one of the most renowned Gond artist and because of him, the Gond art is now known internationally. So, he was the one who had brought out the Gond art from the walls and he had started painting them in canvas in clothes in papers. So, he is regarded as one of the very important artist in the Gond folk art. J. Swaminathan, a mainstream artist in Madhya Pradesh, first learned of Shyam's work in the 1980s and invited him to exhibit his art in Bhopal.

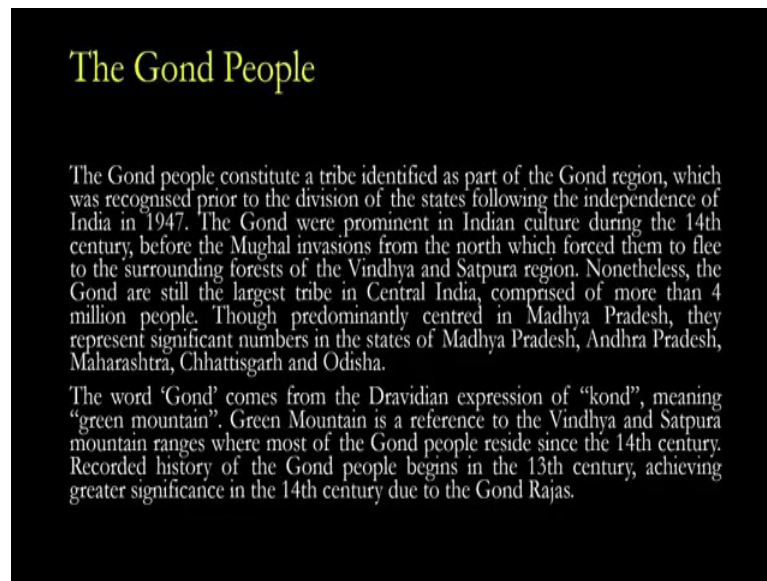
Jangarh was influenced by Swaminathan in the use of modern materials such as canvas and paper, oil and watercolors. Jangarh was then invited to take part in the Magician of the Earth exhibition at the Pompidou Centre in Paris in 1989. This was followed by the Other Masters exhibition at the Mithila museum in Tokyo, Japan in 1998, which focused on the works of five tribal artists from India.

Jangarh passed away in 2001, it was very unfortunate even when he passed away in Japan in 2001. His work has been described by the director of the Gallerie Ganesha in New Delhi as revealing, both the animalistic culture of the Gond of Gond tribe and one of the foundations of Indian thought. So, his work is revered as bringing a connection

the details of the work, the kind of nuances does to his work, the detailing, the small minute dots and dashes and you can also see the uses of color.

He is one of the pioneer artist in the Gond art form who used different colors different vibrant colors.

(Refer Slide Time: 07:09)



The Gond people, the Gond people constitute a tribe identified as part of Gond region, which was recognized prior to the division of the states following the independence of India in 1947. So, there was a region which was also which was called Gond region and the Gond tribe used to inhabit this region this was prior to the state formation that happened after independence.

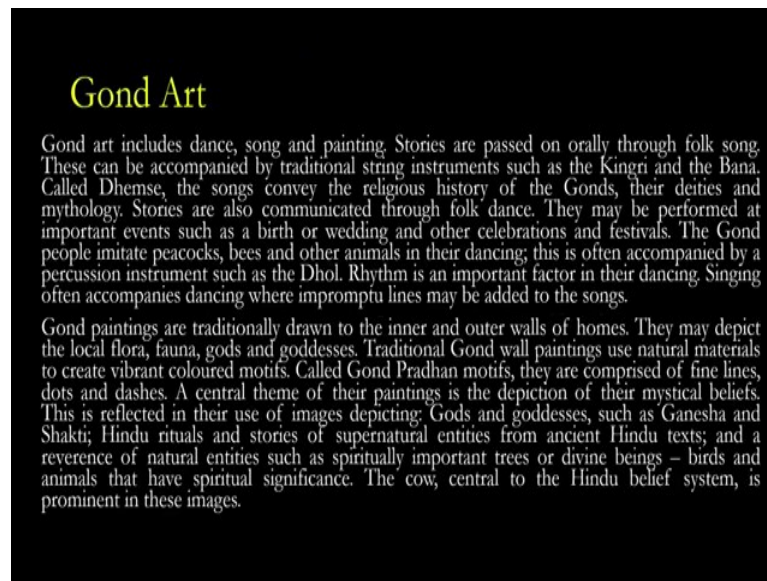
The Gond were prominent in Indian culture during their 14th century before the Mughal invasions from the north which forced him to flee to the surrounding forest of the Vindhya and Satpura region. Nonetheless, the Gond are still the highest largest tribe in Central India comprised of more than 4 million people. So, they are the largest tribal population in India.

Though predominantly centered in Madhya Pradesh, they represent significant numbers in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Orissa. The word Gond comes from the Dravidian expression of kond meaning green mountains. Green

Mountain is a reference to Vindhya and Satpura mountain ranges where most of the Gond people reside since the 14th century.

Recorded history of Gond people begins in the 13th century, achieving greatest significance in the 14th century due to the Gond Rajas. So, their name itself has a lot of reference to the environment they reside in the nature they reside in. So, you can understand from that the Gond tribe is very closely associated with nature.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:48)



Gond art, Gond art includes dance, songs and paintings. So, the Gond tribe not only has Gond painting, but they also includes very nuanced dance and song art also. Stories are passed on orally through folk songs. This can be accompanied by traditional string instrument such as the Kingri and the Bana. Called Dhemse, the song conveyed the religious history of Gonds, their deities and mythology.

Stories are also communicated through folk dance. They may be performed at important events such as a birth or wedding and other celebrations and festival. The Gond people in imitate peacock, bees and other animals in the dancing; this is often accompanied by a percussion instrument such as the Dhol. Rhythms is an important factor in their dancing. Singing often accompanies dancing where impromptu lines may be added to the songs.

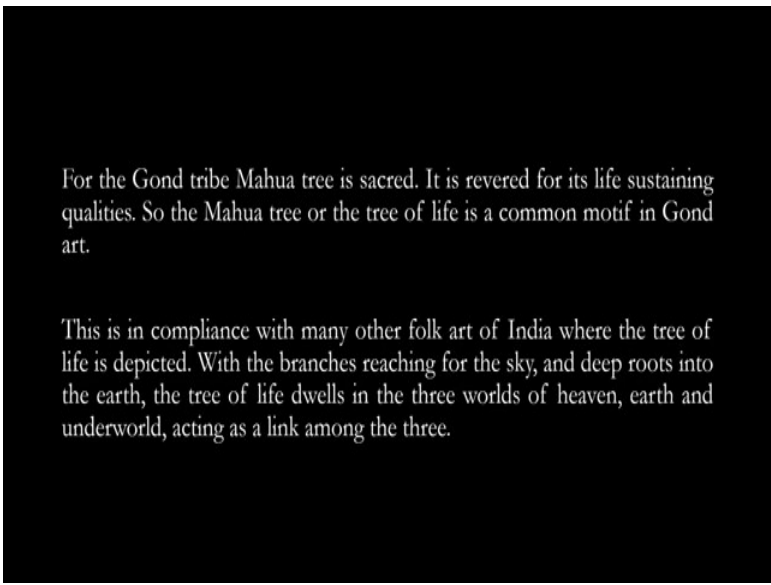
So, you can see that the painting which you have already seen shows a very distinct, a very close relationship with nature. They would often draw the birds, the animals that

they see around them. This is also reflected in the songs and the dancers in the dance as we see as we have mentioned that they would imitate peacock, the bees the gate of the animals in the dance. So, nature has a very deep impact on Gond tribal life.

Gond paintings are traditionally drawn to the inner to the inner and outer walls of the homes. They may depict the local fauna, flora, goddess and goddesses. Traditional Gond wall paintings use natural material to create vibrant colored motifs called Gond Pradhan motifs; they are comprised of fine lines, dots and dashes. A central theme of the painting is the depiction of their mystical belief. This is reflected in the use of image depicting gods and goddesses such as Ganesha and Shakti.

Hindu rituals and stories of supernatural entities from ancient Hindu texts and a reverence of natural entities such as spiritually important trees or divine being birds and animals that have spiritual significance. The cow, central to Hindu belief system is prominent in their these images. So, the Gond tribal though they are originally or traditionally they are animalistic they have a lot of Hindu influence and this is also reflected in art form. When they draw the art form of god in goddesses, they also take draw a few elements from the Hindu pantheon.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:31)



For the Gond tribe Mahua tree is sacred. It is revered for its life sustaining qualities. So the Mahua tree or the tree of life is a common motif in Gond art.

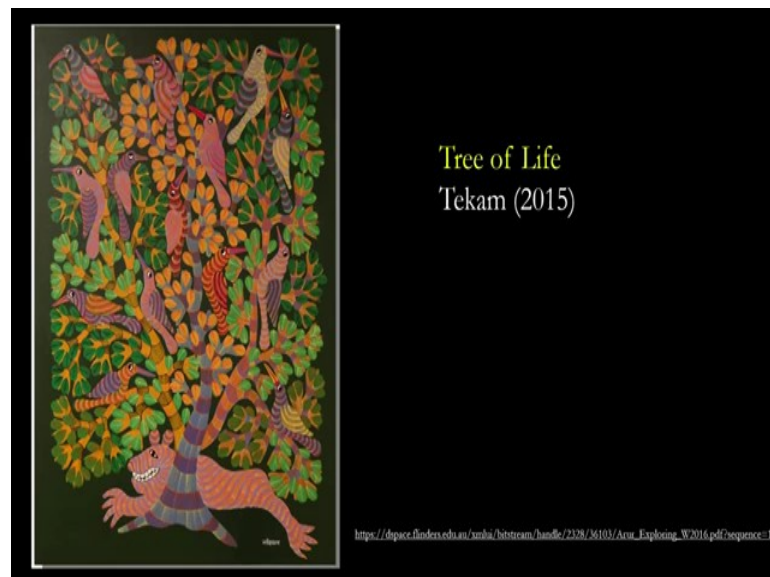
This is in compliance with many other folk art of India where the tree of life is depicted. With the branches reaching for the sky, and deep roots into the earth, the tree of life dwells in the three worlds of heaven, earth and underworld, acting as a link among the three.

For the Gond tribe Mahua tree is sacred. This is revered for it is revered for its life sustaining qualities. So, the Mahua tree or the tree of life is common motif in Gond art. This is in compliance with many other folk art of India where the tree of life is depicted.

With the branches reaching for the sky and deep roots into the earth, the tree of life dwells in the three worlds of heaven, earth and the underworld, acting as a link among the three.

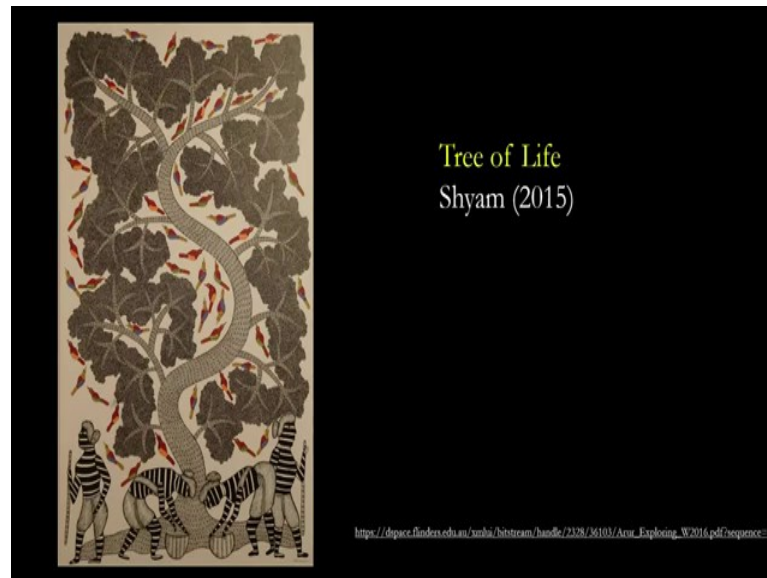
So, there is a deep spiritual meaning when they draw the tree of life that is more often than not as a Mahua tree which is very important for the Gond tribe and this show they show that the roots are into the the root goes far below to the underworld. The trunk of the body is in earth and the branches go to heaven. So, this is this has a very spiritual very deep spiritual connection saying that the tree of life connects all the tree world.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:34)



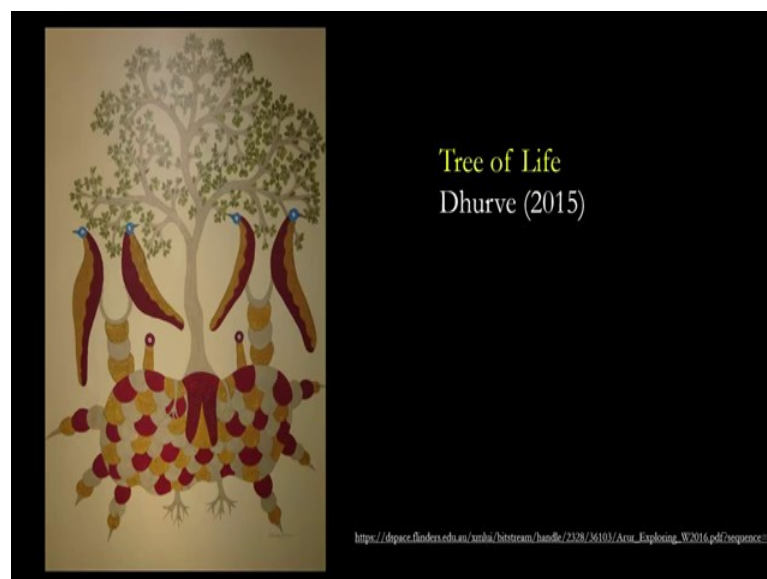
So, here are some example different artists have drawn the tree of life in their own way, please pay attention to how different they are. So, this is drawn by an art Gond artist called Tekam, this is tree of life.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:59)



Then the next one is the tree of life by an artist Jangarh Singh Shyam. This is the tree of life drawn by Jangarh Singh Shyam, please pay attention to the details, the usage of colours the way the dashes and the dots are put in the picture. So, as I was referring in the beginning that the dashes and dots are put in such a way that it gives a sense of movement. So, here you see that as if the tree is growing to the sky as if its growing high above. The way the dots and dashes are used it looks like the trees moving, it has sense of growth.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:36)



This is a tree of life by Dhurve and other artist. Also pay attention to the way he has given his individualistic style to the tree of life.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:49)



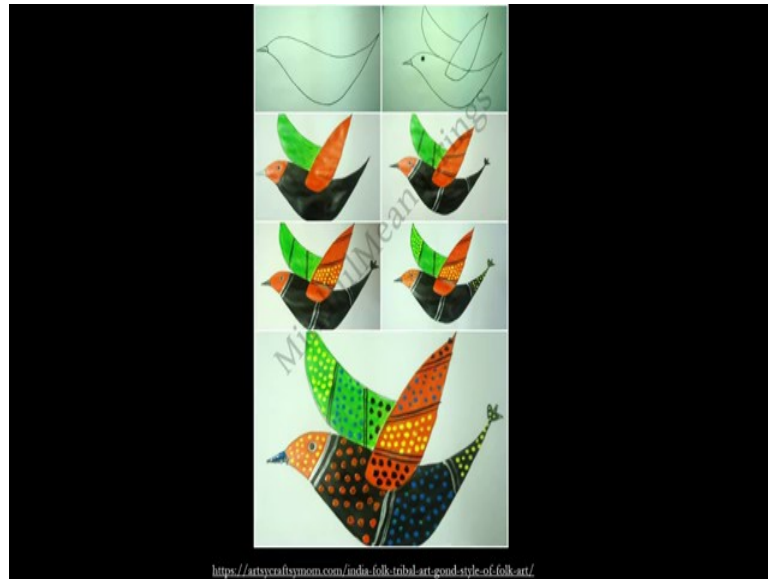
So, though there have the artist paint traditional things like the tree of life, the flora fauna, gods and goddesses, but some artist have been trying to experiment with this art form. This is one modern rendition of Gond art; you can see here tricycle has been painted using the Gond art form.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:13)



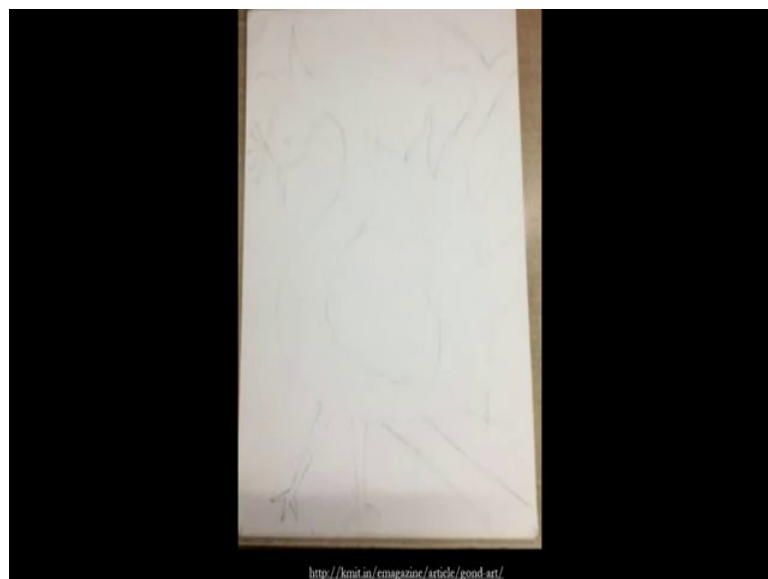
So, let us now try and see if we can make a Gond art. So, this is a very simple bird drawn in the Gond art style you can take a paper and pencil and start drawing. Just pay attention to the way the wings, the body of the bird is drawn the wings, the tail, the beak, the eyes and see how the body is divided into different parts using sections and then they have been filled with different colors and dots and dashes are used to fill the body.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:52)



So, this is where you start, first make the body of the bird then the wings then fill the colors you can try making it if you like.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:08)



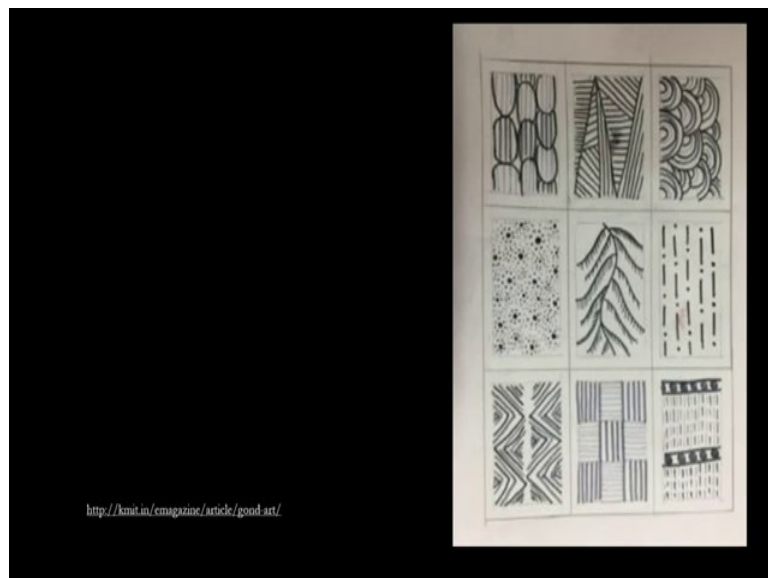
Here is another one a picture of a peacock in Gond art style. First you draw the body of the peacock.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:17)



Then you fill it with colors.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:22)



So, these are the different patterns by which you can fill the body of the bird. Just pay attention to how fish scales the first one is called fish scales patterns then you use the dashes in such a way that it gives us forms different sections different patterns. Again the fish scale is used in a different way with smaller and bigger circles.

So, these are the some of the patterns used in Gond art there are many this is not exhaustive there are many other patterns like this.

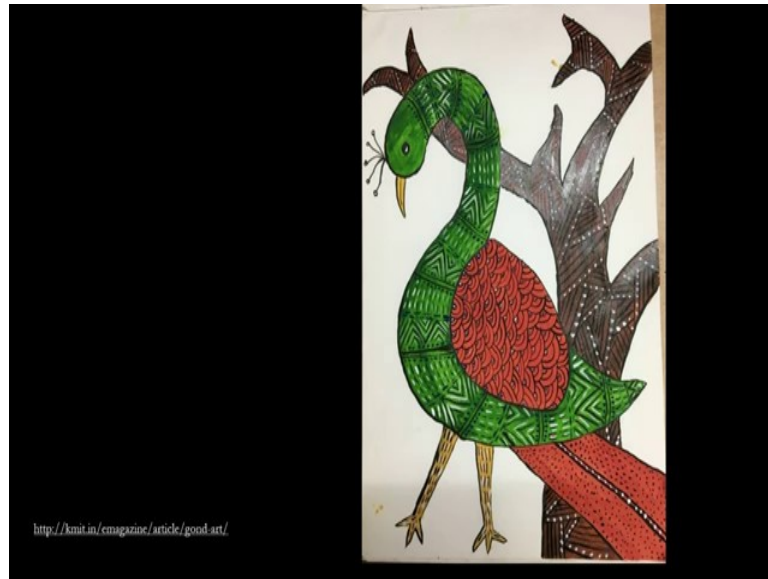
(Refer Slide Time: 16:00)



So, you feel see the from here few of the patterns have been incorporated in the body of the peacock in here. So, you see the wings have been incorporated with this style, this particular pattern. Then dots have been used that the scales have been used. Look at the tree the way they the patterns have been made here with just the dashes with vertical and horizontal dashes you give different texture to the tree trunk. Here look at the dots here in the body of the bird.

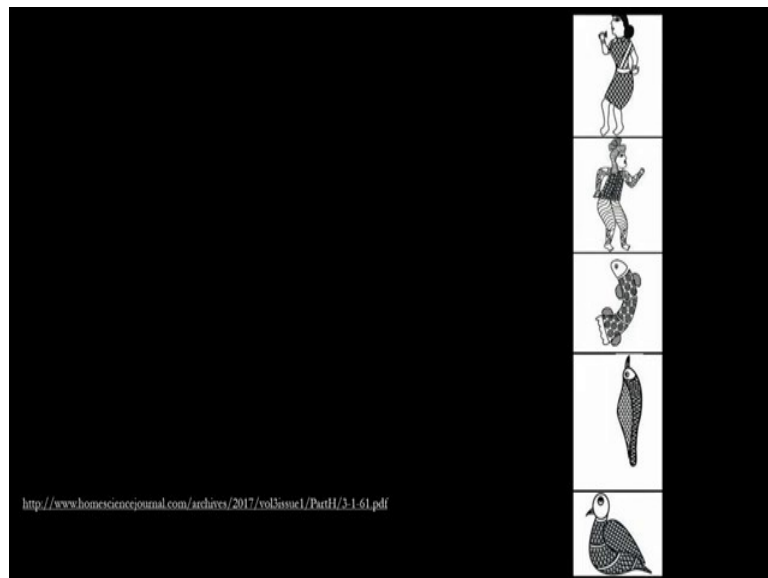
So, some more detailing also observe how this patterns have been used, this has been given out dots and dashes have been used to form the textured body of the peacock.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:57)



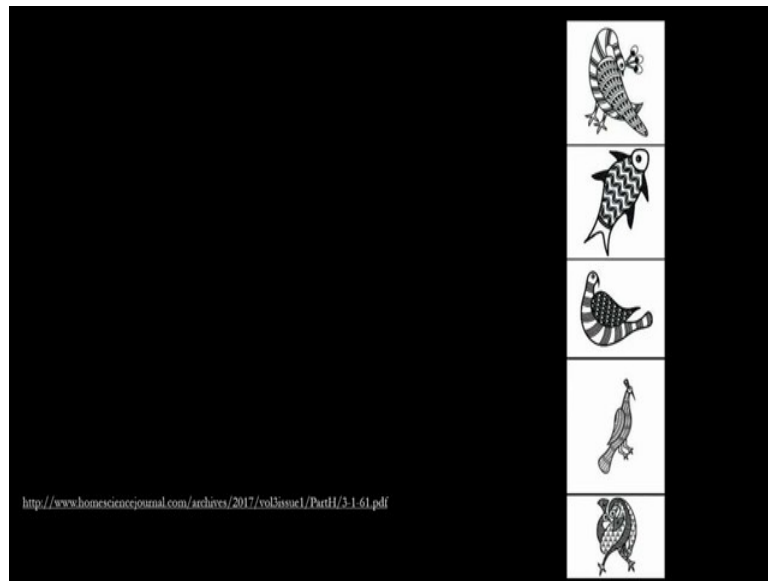
See how the details have been incorporated; how they have been nuanced. Please pay attention to this pattern here. Look at this zigzag pattern here drawn here, look at this pattern, look at a key pattern, look at the dashes in the legs you can try making it.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:25)



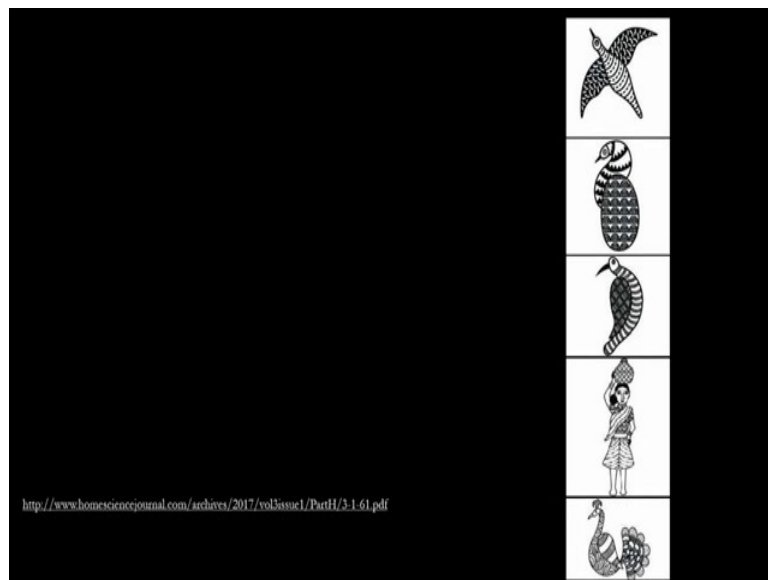
So, in this way there are various figures that are drawn, the first one is the figure of a woman then a figure of a man then a fish, a bird then another bird. Please pay attention to the way the patterns are used this dot dash fish scales and some curved lines are used to make the fill the body.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:53)



These are another example first one is a peacock then a fish then a bird another peacock and another variation of a peacock.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:05)

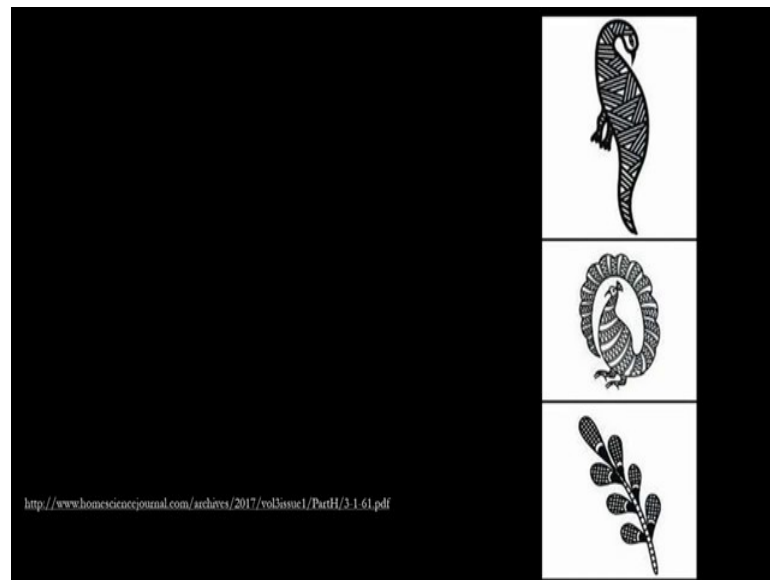


These are few more example a bird, a snake, another bird, a lady with a pot and peacock. Please pay attention to the way the patterns have been used. Every artist has his or her own way of drawing the patterns with just dots and dashes.

So, every individual artist develops his or her own style of drawing. Just look here at this peacock the kinds of scaling that is done in the body the dashes how are they have been

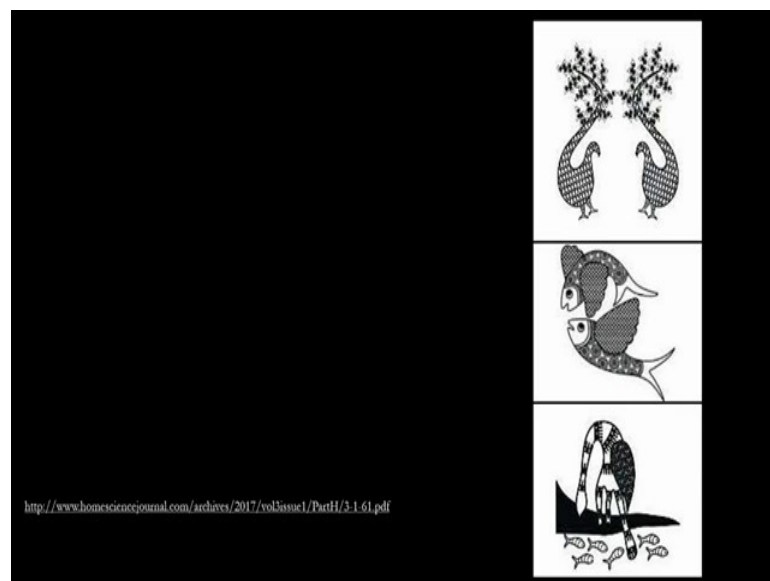
used, here the dots how they have been used. Same way in the bird look here, just pay attention to the detailing. Here the dot dashes are disconnected, here the dash the line is complete. So, this way you can also form various different patterns by just using dots and dashes.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:07)



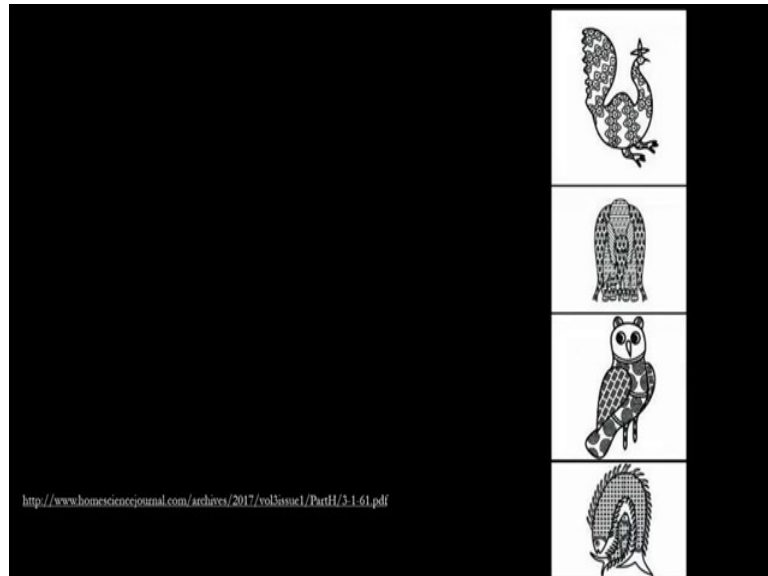
These are few more examples, this pattern of drawing the peacock is very typical of the Gond art here is a leaf.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:16)



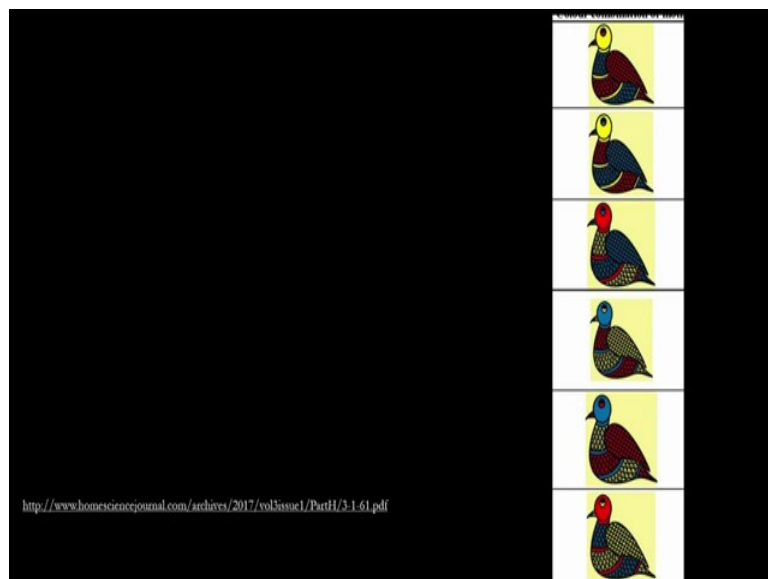
Here are some more examples two peacocks, two fish and a bird eating fishes. Here are few more example.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:27)



Peacock is a very important motif of Gond art. So, you will find different variety of peacock in different paintings. There is an owl, there is a fish and there is an elephant in here.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:48)



So, you can also feel the motif with colors just pay attention to this painting, how a single bird can be made look to meet to look different by using different patterns, different colors along with different patterns.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:11)



Here is another example; these are the painting these are the different variety of peacock that is created by using different colors and so on.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:20)

Bhil and Gond art styles

Sometimes Bhil art can be confused with Gond. Both the forms use near-similar metaphor. But on close observation, we will find marked difference in the two figurative styles.

- The contours of Gond paintings are very well defined.
- In-filling the motifs, Bhils use only dots in all colours and these can be scattered or drawn in neat formation. In contrast, the Gond artists have developed a signature filling pattern — dot, dash, round etc.
- Gond art is usually proportionate, while the Bhils have an unrestrictive style.

So, now we must pay some attention to the difference between the Bhil and the Gond art styles. So, Bhil the tribal group called Bhil and the tribal group called Gond, they reside

in the same region they reside in Central India and both of them have their own form of art and many times it happens that the art forms are mistaken, the Bhil art is mistaken to be Gond art, Gond art is mistaken to be a Bhil art. So, let us see the difference between the two art styles they are two distinct styles which belongs to two distinct people.

Sometimes people of Bhil art can be confused with Gond both the forms are used lean near similar metaphors. So, this is why they are confused, they use similar metaphors similar way of telling a story that is why it is often confused. But on close observation, we will find mark difference in the two figurative styles. So, the what are the differences, the contours of Gond paint is a very well defined. So, you will find and that a Gond in the Gond painting, the contours or the shapes are very well defined it is in comparison to the Bhil art.

In filling the motifs, Bhil use only dots in all colors and this can be scattered or drawn in need formation. In contrast, the Gond artists have developed a signature filling pattern dot, dash, round etcetera.

So, in Bhil art more often than not you will see only dots and colors usage of color is more compared to the go Gond art and we will see some examples of that and as we had discussed in earlier that Gond artists have developed very nuanced very stylized way of drawing dots and dot dashes and round figures this is more they have developed them in their own artistic way. Gond art is usually proportionate while the Bhil art have an unrestricted style.

So, if you see look at a Gond art and Bhil art, you will see that in Gond art the body of the figures are very proportionate a body of a woman or a man will be put proportionate in compared to the real image whereas, a Bhil art is not restricted to this they might have a free flowing kind of pattern.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:49)



So, this is an example on the left you have a Bhil art on the right you have a Gond art. So, see both are both have drawn deer , but in the left side that is the Bhil art they have used only dots and colors whereas, on the right side you see very nuance patterns where they have used curved line.

They have used dots and dashes in addition to colors also. So, look at also pay attention to the way they have drawn the body of the figures. In the Gond art it is quite proportionate it will if you compare a real deer with this you will find it is quite resemble its quite realistic whereas, in the Bhil art it is more stylized is more artistic imaginary. Also pay attention to the birds here.

In the Bhil art the bird here and in the Gond art the bird here. So, there are very clear cut distinction, but sometimes for untrained eyes there might be confusion which is which art.

(Refer Slide Time: 23:57)



Also pay attention to this image, this might be very well be confused to Gond art, but it is not; It is an Australian aboriginal art it is confused with the Gond art sometimes because they also use the same pattern the dots, the dashes some usage of colors in certain way.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:23)

Leading contemporary artist Venkat Raman Singh Shyam argues that there is an ancient, shared history and geography: "Gond is very similar to Aboriginal art because the Aborigines have their own stories like we do about creation, and they too make dashes and dots. Aboriginal art and Gond art have their connection because we are originally from the same continent of Gondwana when there were just two continents, Gondwana and Laurasia. India and Australia came from Gondwana and America came from Laurasia. The performances, dances and rituals, as well as the drink they serve, is like ours".

Leading contemporary artists Venkat Raman Singh Shyam argues that there is an ancient, shared history and geography. Gond is very similar to aboriginal art because the aborigines have their own stories like we do about creation and they to make dashes and

dots. Aboriginal art and Gond art have their connection because we are originally from the same continent of Gondwana when there were two just two continents, Gondwana and Laurasia. India and Australia came from Gondwana and America came from Laurasia. The performance, dance and rituals as well as the drink they serve is like ours.

So, there is a thought process which says that we all came from the same continent when they were not divided. So, our art also represent have some similarities with the with the that of the others because the origin was same. So, with this we come to the end of today's lesson. So, we have for now we have seen two art forms that is Madhubani and Gond. In the next classes we will see some other art forms from India.

Thank you.