

Artistic Exploration in Scientific Research And Technology
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Lecture – 15
Sohrai Understanding the Technique

In today's class, we will discuss the last folk art form that I wanted to discuss for this course. From next class onwards, we will see a folk arts and science and technology can we brought together to have a meaningful dialogue. I give you few examples, then you can explore on your own. So, today in today's class, let us discuss Sohrai art form and its technique.

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The women of farming communities of Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand keeps alive a vibrant tradition of mural painting, practiced as a ritual art form known as Sohrai. Sohrai is the art of harvest festival in autumn, using red, black, yellow and white earth. In Hazaribagh within a small distance there are strikingly different painted village houses. Each village belongs to a different community or tribe. Hence their motifs and style of drawings are different

Large images are painted with twigs on he walls - bulls, horses with riders, wild animals, trees, lotuses, peacocks, and horned deities. Sohrai paintings are considered to be good luck paintings.

The women of farming communities of Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand keeps alive a vibrant tradition of mural painting, practiced as a ritual art form known as Sohrai. So, this is like other folk art form that we have discussed previously, this is also a form of mural painting. The women of the Hazaribagh area district of Jharkhand, they had this tradition of decorating the house walls with colourful murals and this is called Sohrai art form.

And we will see in the later part that Sohrai can be of two part; one when during the marriages it is called Khovar, and the other during the harvest festival and then it is called Sohrai.

Sohrai is the art of harvest festival in autumn, using red, black, yellow and white earth. In Hazaribagh within a small distance there are strikingly different painted village houses. Each village belongs to a different community or tribe. Hence their motif and style of drawings are different. So, we see that every community has its own style of drawing. So, in if you travel across Hazaribagh area, you will see that villages are painted in different way that is to say that each villages inhabited by a particular tribe or a particular community and they have a specific style of painting. By looking at this they painting you can make out, which tribe they belong to.

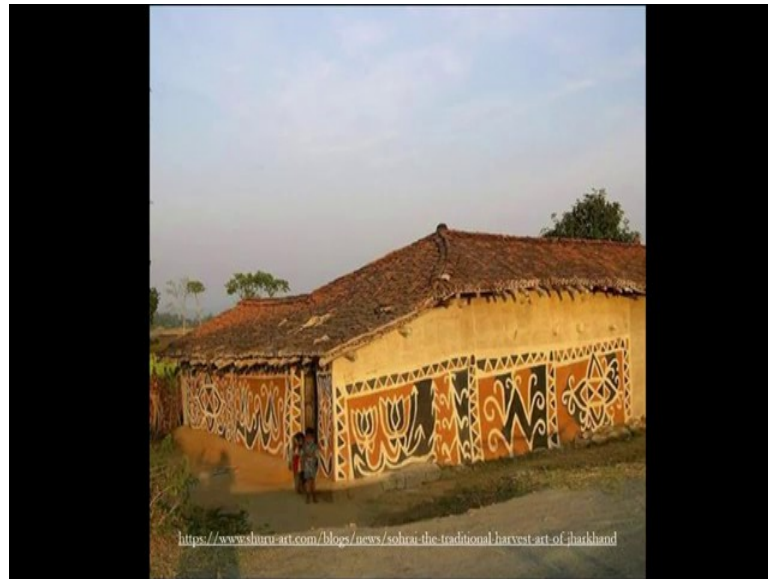
Large images are painted with twigs on the walls –bulls, horses with riders, wild animals, trees, lotuses, peacocks, and horned deities. Sohrai painting are considered to be good luck painting, like we are seen in Gond art also that looking at an image; the belief is that looking at a good image brings you good luck, same is for the Sohrai painting, it is believed that if you look at the painting, it will bring you good luck.

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So, this is an example of a Sohrai painting look at the way the peacock is drawn; just by using three colours, the outline is done by black, the body is yellow and red. Look at the way the body of the peacock is painted the tail, the flowers, the petals, the leaves around them. So, this is the typical Sohrai painting. Peacock is an important motif of Sohrai painting.

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So, this is how the Sohrai painting is done in the villages. large village, large murals are drawn across the entire walls of the houses.

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The Belief

According to ancient mythology, Marang Buru (God of mountain), Jaher ayo (Goddess of forest) and the elder sister of the Santhals descended on earth from heaven to pay a visit to their brothers. To honor this event the harvest festival is celebrated at this time. The women of the house clean their houses and decorate their walls with murals of Sohrai arts. This art form has thus been continuing since ancient times, around 10,000 BC-4,000 BC onwards. This was common mostly in caves but now has been shifted to houses with mud walls.

The belief According to an ancient mythology, Marang Buru – God of mountain, Jaher ayo – Goddess of forest and the elder sister of the Santhal descended on earth from heaven to pay a visit to their brothers. To honor this event the harvest festival is celebrated at this time. The women of the house clean their houses and decorate the walls with murals of Sohrai art. So, it is the believe that the gods when they descended to

earth, to meet their relatives, to welcome them this event was celebrated. They celebrate they observe the harvest festival, and also the women of the house decorate the houses with colourful murals and this is how this Sohrai art originated. This is the believe that they think to be a true.

The women this art form has just been continuing since ancient times, around 10,000 BC to 4,000 BC onwards. So, it is believed that it is as old as 10,000 BC to 4,000 BC; since 10 days practice of painting them house walls with these large murals have been continuing within the communities of Jharkhand area. This was common mostly in caves, but now has been shifted to houses with mud walls. Later on we will see examples that, this kind of painting was also common in the caves of the ancient times. And now as time progress, this has now come to the house walls of a of mud walls.

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The Festival and the Art

Sohrai is a cattle worship festival of the Santhal people of Jharkhand and West Bengal, Kole people, Munda people and Kora people. It is celebrated during Diwali. Badna or Sohrai is one of the biggest festivals among Santhal people. Badna is celebrated when the planting of paddy crops is completed.

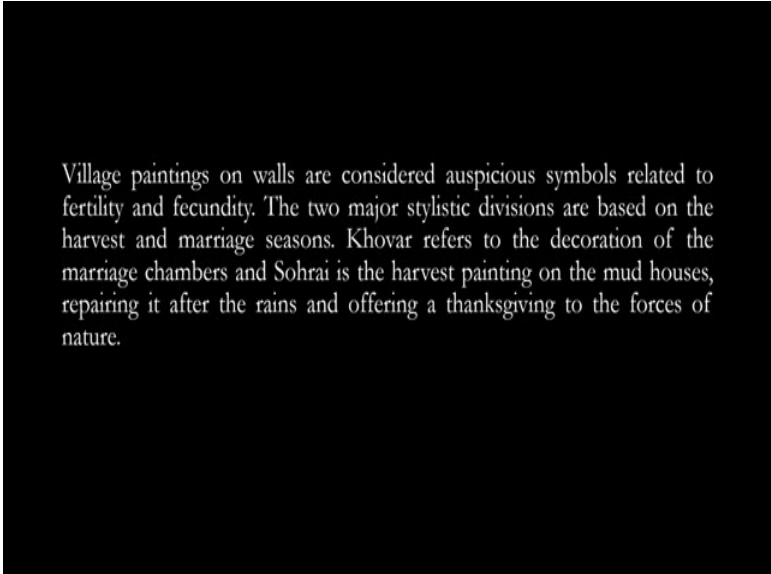
Sohrai art is practised by the Kurmi and the Prajapati tribes of Hazaribagh during the same time when the Hindus celebrate Diwali. In this two-day festival, the cattle and their god- Pashupati- are worshiped to ensure the fertility of the land and the subsequent harvest.

The festival and the art you will not be surprised, because most of the art practices of this country are connected to festival. Here also Sohrai is name of a festival also and also an art form. Sohrai is a cattle worship festival of the Santhal people of Jharkhand and West Bengal, Munda people and Kora people. It is celebrated during Diwali. Badna or Sohrai is one of the biggest festivals among Santhal people. Badna is celebrated when the planting of paddy crop is completed.

This is another festival, where after you have after the people have sold the crops, then this festival is celebrated where as Sohrai is celebrated after the harvest is done and the people's houses of full of grains.

Sohrai art is practiced by the Kurmi and the Prajapati tribes of Hazaribagh during the same time when Hindu celebrate Diwali. In this two-day festival, like cattle and their god – Pashupati – are worshiped to ensure the fertility of the land and the subsequent harvest.

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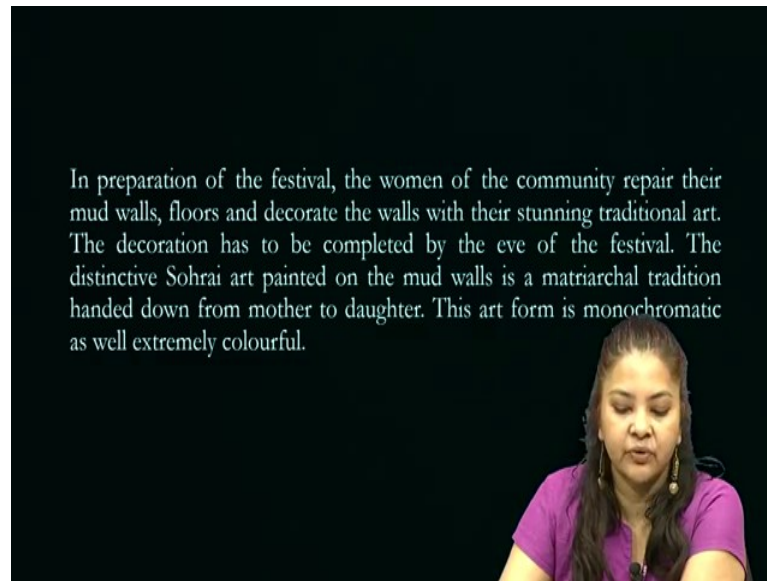


Village paintings on walls are considered auspicious symbols related to fertility and fecundity. The two major stylistic divisions are based on the harvest and marriage seasons. Khovar refers to the decoration of the marriage chambers and Sohrai is the harvest painting on the mud houses, repairing it after the rains and offering a thanksgiving to the forces of nature.

Village paintings on walls are considered auspicious symbols related to fertility and fecundity that is this are symbols of fertility and , science that one would be blessed with lots of off springs. The two major stylistic divisions of based on harvest and marriage seasons. Khovar refers to decoration of the marriage chambers and Sohrai is the harvest painting on the mud houses, repairing it after the rains and offering a thanksgiving to the forces of nature.

So, Khovar as I told you Sohrai art is like has in two variation; one is called the Khovar, which is done during the marriage time and the chambers of the newlywed is decorated with colourful murals, this is called Khovar. And it is supposed to be blessing the couple with lots of off springs and fertility, whereas Sohrai is also the other form is the Sohrai, which is done during the harvest time and praying for good crops. So, these are the two variations you find in Sohrai art.

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In preparation of the festival, the women of the community repair their mud walls, floors and decorate the walls with their stunning traditional art. The decoration has been completed by has to be completed by the eve of the festival. So, before the festival begins the decoration or the entire , cleaning and painting of the with this beautiful mural has to be completed.

The distinctive Sohrai art painted on the mud wall is a matriarchal tradition handed down from mothers to daughters. This art form is monochromatic as well as extremely colourful. So, one should pay attention that this form is matriarchal that is the women of the community only take part and it is handed down from the mothers to the daughters.

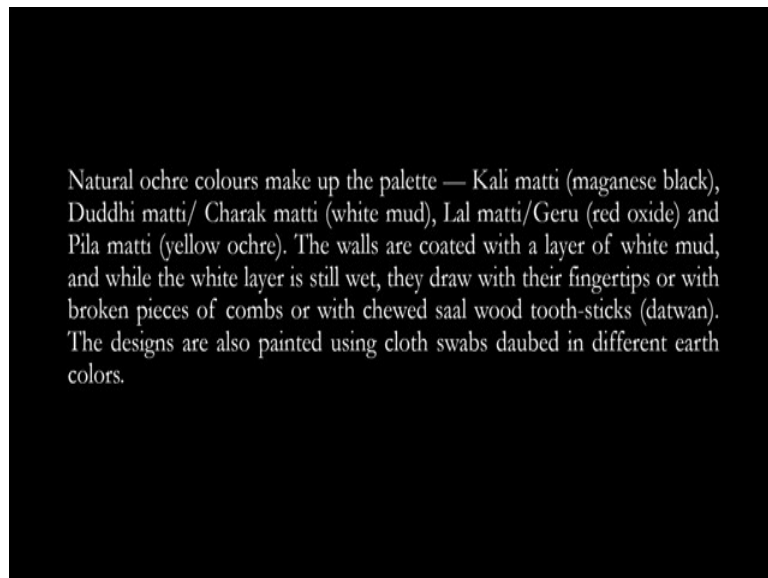
And as the most of the folk art forms, they are not formulae learned, but they are learned by observation; the mothers would doing it, that the daughters would be observing it, and this is how they learn and they carry on the traditions from generations to generations. So, it can be a monochromatic that is it can have only one colour or it can have lots of colour, it can be colourful also.

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So, these are the two forms. So, under left side you see entirely colourful paintings and on the right side you see just a usage of just the red colour red brick colour. So, there are two variations it can be colorful using various colours and or usage an only one colour.

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So, like in other folk art paintings even here the colours are obtained from whatever is obtained, whatever is available in the nature. And here natural ochre colours made up of the makeup the palette.

Kali matti that is maganese black is used for the black colour, Duddhi matti, Charak matti for white or white mud is used for the white colour, Lal matti or Geru red oxide, and Pila matti yellow ochre. So, this are like whatever is naturally available, what is found in abundance around them is used. So, the traditional art form do not do not use exotic material. Do not import any material that is not found around them, they only use the things that are found around them and in are easily available.

The walls are coated with a layer of white mud, and while the white layer is still wet, they draw with their fingertips or with broken pieces of combs or with chewed saal wood tooth-sticks that is the that one this is which is used for brushing the teeth. So, what they do is first they coat the walls with one white player white mud, then when the mud is still wet they start the painting. They draw the first lines with fingertips or this the comb is very important in this form of painting. The comb the comb that the women use ordinarily at their homes this is also employed to make the figures of this painting.

Or they can even use the saal, the saal is the commonly found tree around this area. They chew the tip of the saal wood to make it like a brush. And they use this kind of brushed for painting or they can also use the the naturally obtained herbs that is used for brushing the teeth that is also used for as a brush to paint this painting. The designs are also painted using cloth swabs daubed in different earth colors. So, they may also used clothes swabs to draw the paintings.

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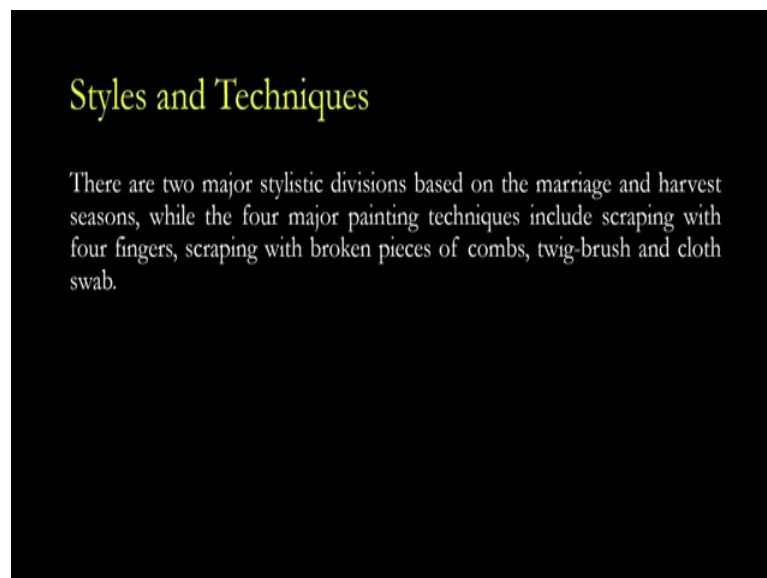
So, this is how it looks the entire walls are fill with the paintings.

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This is another example even the inner walls are painted. The inner walls are mostly painted during the marriage season marriage time that that is the Khovar is mostly painted inside the walls of the hall of the house.

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Styles and technique, there are two major stylistic division based on the marriage and harvest season, as we already said that they can be two types. One is the Khovar. This

specifically known as Khovar, which is done during the marriage time and one is the Sohrai which is done during the harvest time.

While the four major painting techniques include this scraping with four fingers, they use four fingers and describe the walls to make the figures. Scraping with broken pieces of combs that I told you that women, which they are generally used comb for brushing their hair they even employ that comb for making this figures. Twig- brush and cloth swab. So, there are four types four in four ways we can do by using your fingers or using the comb or using twigs or even with cloth swabs four ways that the paintings can be done.

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So, this is an example of the Khovar style that is as I told you, the marriage halls the inside of inside walls of the houses are painted during the wedding. Entire room is filled with this kind of painting this is a example of a Khovar style.

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And this is an example of the Sohrai painting, where mostly flora and fauna are drawn. Just observe the cattle that is drawn, the peacock, the flora. So, these are the two types of Sohrai painting.

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These wall paintings are considered auspicious and closely related to fertility and offspring. The Sohrai art celebrates fertility in the harvest where the walls are painted with animal motifs. Popular Sohrai motifs are animals, birds, lizards, elephants and Pashupati (the creator of all animals), who is usually riding on the back of an animal. The elephant is also a symbol of paddy land and an auspicious symbol connected with the harvest.

These wall paintings are considered auspicious and closely related to the fertility and offspring. The Sohrai art celebrates fertility in the harvest where the walls are painted with animal motifs. Even if you see that though there are two forms as I said; one is a Khovar and one is a Sohrai, but it is actually celebrating fertility that is during the

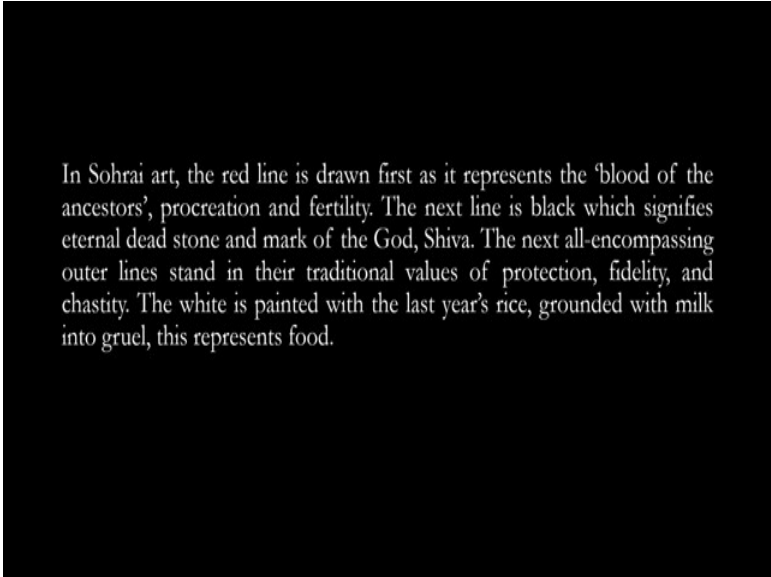
marriage time to bless the couple this paintings are done, so that they are blessed with lots of off springs that is a sign of fertility.

And also after harvest, when you see that there is lots of crop that is also sign of fertility of the land. So, Sohrai art is done to celebrate both the fertility of the women and also the mother earth.

Popular Sohrai motifs are animals birds, lizards, elephants and Pashupati the creator of all animals. For Pashupati, is a deity of this community and they river him as the creator of all animals who is usually riding on the back of an animal. So, they usually draw Pashupati ridding an animal, so this is also an important motif. The elephant is also a symbol of paddy clan and an auspicious symbol connected with the harvest. So, before some slides, we have seen that the elephants is also drawn.

Elephant is also connected to the belief of that it is related to the people who work who so paddy or who cultivate paddy. So, an elephant is also an important motif in the Sohrai painting.

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In Sohrai art, the red line is drawn first as it represents the 'blood of the ancestors', procreation and fertility. The next line is black which signifies eternal dead stone and mark of the God, Shiva. The next all-encompassing outer lines stand in their traditional values of protection, fidelity, and chastity. The white is painted with the last year's rice, grounded with milk into gruel, this represents food.

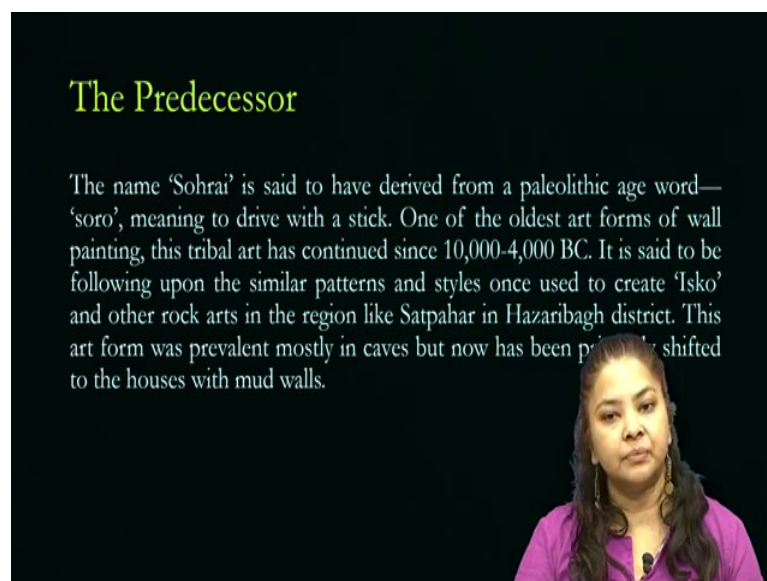
In Sohrai art, the red line is first drawn as it is represent the blood of ancestors, procreation and fertility. So, it so there are certain rituals that are followed the red line is first drawn, this symbolizes the blood of the ancestors, procreation and fertility, so there are various meanings. So, today red line one is that it is thought to be the blood of their

ancestors, so have passed away or it may also symbolize the procreation, because it is related to blood and fertility.

The next line is black, which signifies eternal dead stone and mark of God, Shiva. So, God Shiva is also one of the deities and the second line is for God Shiva and it is the colour black. The next all-encompassing outer lines stand in their traditional values of protection, fidelity, and chastity. So, there is outer lines that is drawn after that and they symbolize protection and they fidelity and chastity, these are very important values in within the community.

The white is printed with the last year's rice, grounded with milk into gruel, this represents food. The white line represents food, so it is sometimes done with the last years food which is mixed with milk. It is so as you see that this is a ritualistic painting also it the lines carry a lot of meaning for the community and is also done in certain fashion, it is done in certain order.

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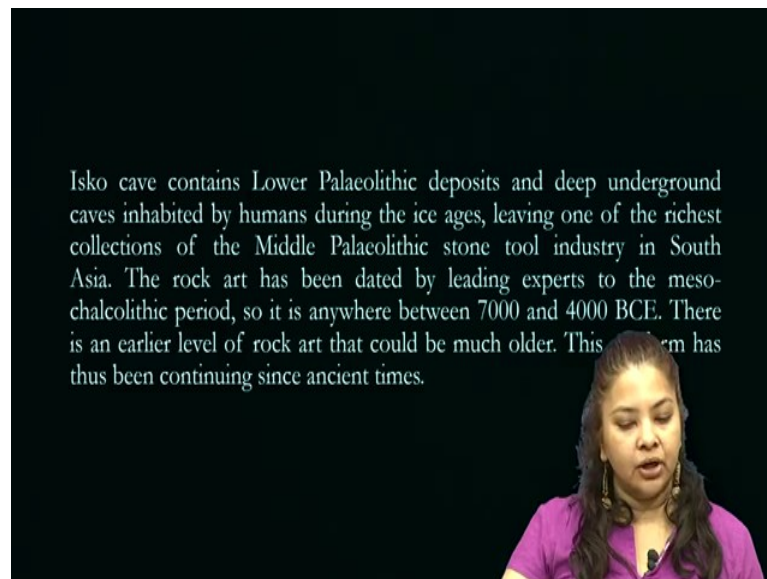


So, we briefly, it is said that the predecessors of the Sohrai painting can be found in the caves. And it is it is said that the Sohrai paintings are derived from the cave paintings. The name Sohrai said to have derived from a paleolithic age word soro, meaning to drive with a stick.

One of the oldest art form of wall painting, this tribal art has been continued since 10,000 to 4,000 BC. It is said that to be following up the similar patterns and styles once used to create Isko and other rock art in the region like Satpahar in Hazaribagh district. So, it is said to be the the next version of the Isko, which is the a rock art rock art which is found commonly found in the Hazaribagh area. This art form was prevalent mostly in caves, but now has been primarily shifted to the houses with mud walls.

So, earlier it was done on the caves on the rock, but now because people live in mud houses the painting has shifted to the mud houses, the walls of the mud houses.

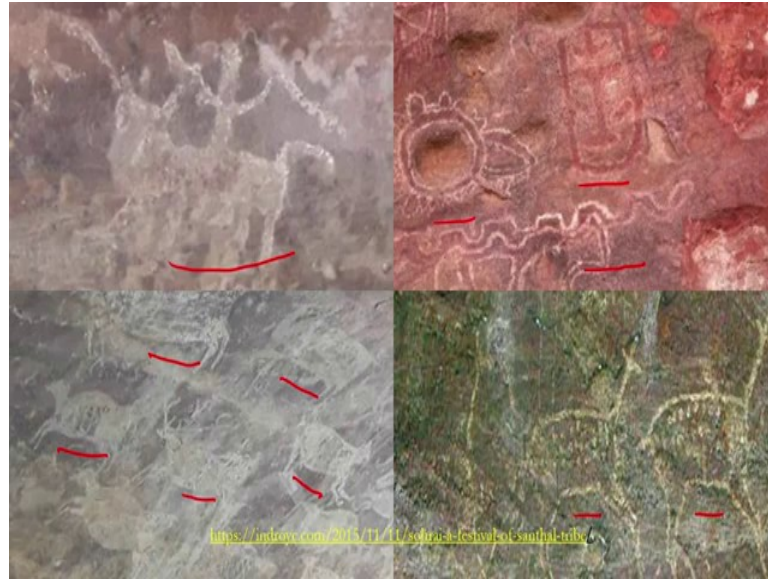
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Isko cave contain lower palaeolithic deposits and deep underground cave inhabited by humans during the ice age. So, we can see that it predecessor are supposed to be as old as the ice age, leaving one of the richest collection of the middle palaeolithic stone tool industry in South Asia. The rock art has been dated by leading experts to be meso-chalcolithic period, so it is anywhere between 7,000 and 4,000 BCE.

There is an earlier level of rock art that could be much older. This art form has been does been continuing since ancient time. So, it just commonly believed that Sohrai art is the the continuation of a very older art, which was found during the palaeolithic times.

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So, these are some of the examples that are found in the caves. So, the Sohrai art is a derivative or gradual translation of this kind of art from just pay attention. In the first painting you will see a figure, who is riding an animal here. So, this is as we mentioned that even Pashupati shown as riding an animal.

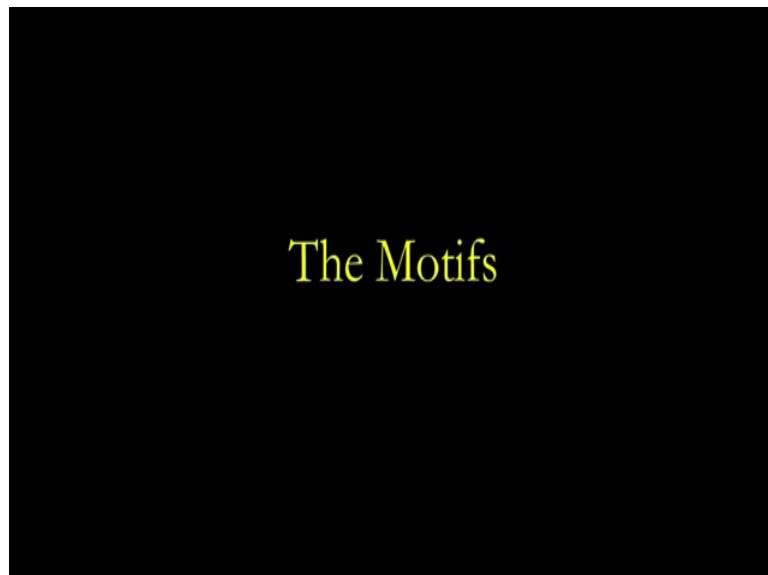
So, there are some predecessors to this form of figures. So, here are some geometric patterns, which are drawn here also. Even here are some animals we can see that some deer are shown to be running, which is also common in Sohrai art; deer and , goats are quite commonly drawn between the Sohrai art, here are also some animal figures. So, these are the cave paintings which are found on the rock walls and Sohrai painting now has done on the mud walls.

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So, these are the Sohrai painting. You will see a lot of commonality between this kind of art and this kind of art, this is present form of Sohrai painting. You will see , goat kind of animals or you can see deer, you can see flora fauna, you can see snakes, you can see leaves, you can see birds here in the bottom, peacock is very common.

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So, now the motifs; what are the common motifs in Sohrai painting.

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So, see this as I as we have already discussed that flora and fauna are commonly drawn. Here you see a peacock, a snake, cow, flowers, you can see the scheme of colours; only three colours have been used, the black outline, the red, and the yellow. Pay attention to how the flower is drawn, how the body of the peacock was drawn.

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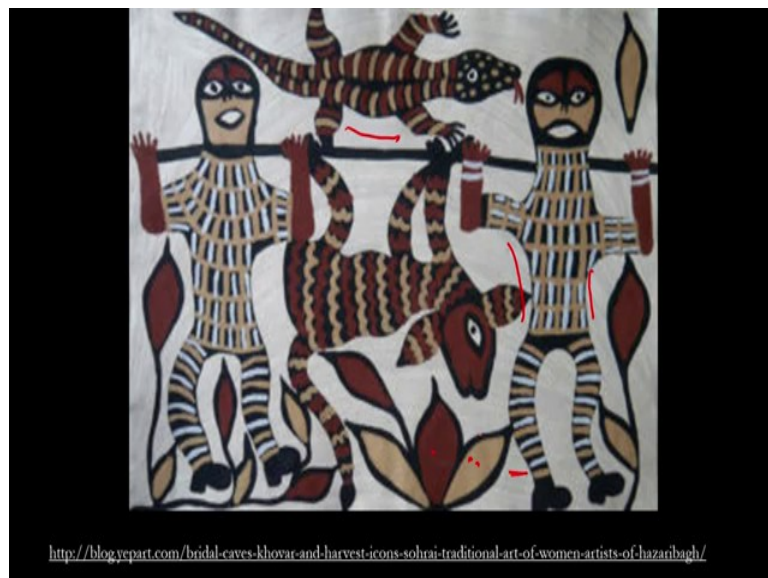
This is another common motif, it is showing deer and peacock. Here also three colours are use black, red and yellow. Observe the boundary the border of the painting.

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This is an elephant as we have already discussed that Sohrai painting can be colourful or you can have only one colour. So, this is one form of monochromatic painting. Just observed the peacock here, it is drawn in just the charcoal colour, black colour whereas, here it was drawn in a colourful fashion. So, this is only done by charcoal or black mud and elephant as we have seen that is an important motif, because it is connected to the belief that elephant is related to the community that grows paddy.

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So, this is another Sohrai art form again observed the scheme of colours, it has they have only use three colours red, yellow, black. And you have to human figures are shown, human figures are shown and caring an an animal. These observe the way the body of the human figure has been filled with the straight lines and sometimes diagonal lines, look at here the how the lines are been made, look at the body of the lizard how it is made, the shading that is used.

And also you can see that this parts are totally filled, they and some parts are made lines are made to fill the figures, but sometimes the entire colour is used to fill the figures.

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So, this is again another monochromatic painting. Observe how the birds are made, how the leaves are made, the flower to boarder and how they are filled how they are shaded look at the body of the bird.

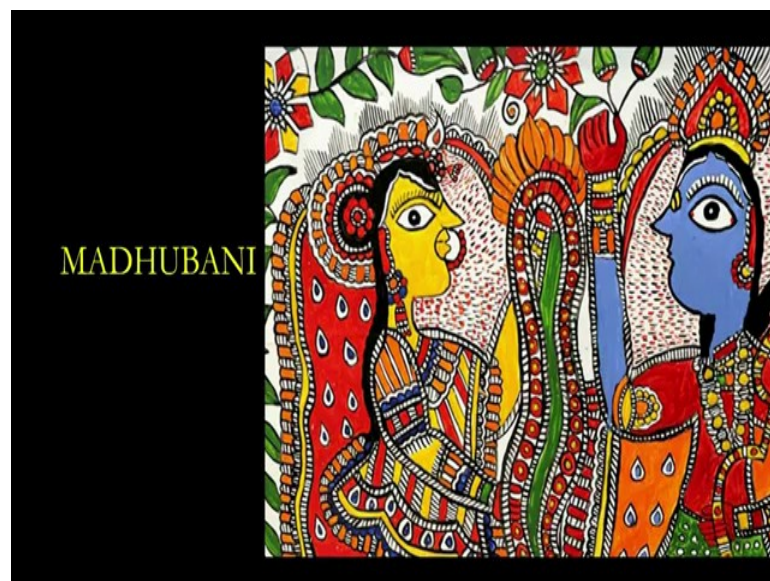
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So, friends for this course, I wanted to discuss five folk art the techniques of five folk art in details, so that you have an idea that how the variations in the folk art paintings of this country. There are variation, but as well as there are some certain kind of continuity, we will send some common features in all the folk art forms of the country.

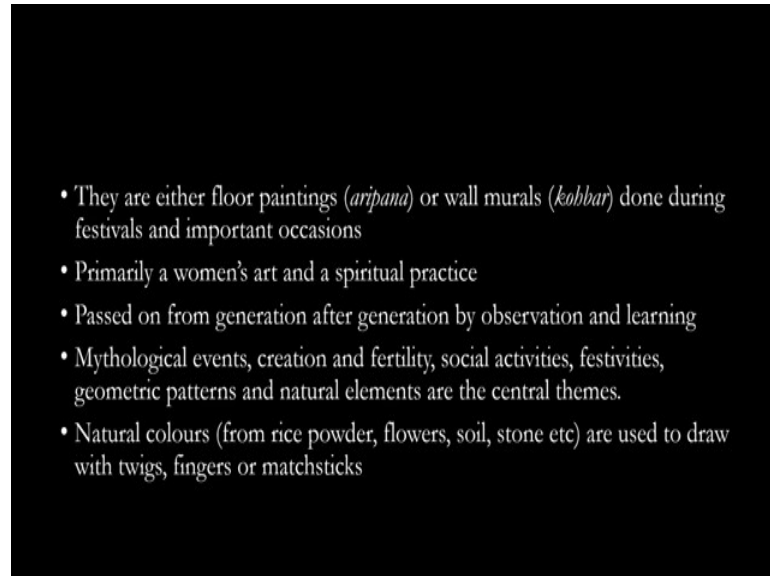
So far we have discussed five art forms including to that is the Madhubani, Warli, Gond, Chittara, and Sohrai. So, let us quickly have a recap of a what we have discussed so far.

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So, Madhubani art form was the first one that we have discussed has we seen that it was it is a art form of the Madhubani area of Bihar.

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And these are its features they are either floor painting aripana or wall murals called 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, creations and fertility, social activities, festivities, geometric patterns and natural elements are the central theme. Natural colours from rice powder, flowers soil, stone, etcetera are used to draw with twigs, fingers or matchsticks. So, this is about the Madhubani painting and it can be of three forms as we have seen earlier (Refer Time: 24:31) gehru are the different forms.

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This is Warli, which is from Maharashtra, we discussed this form also.

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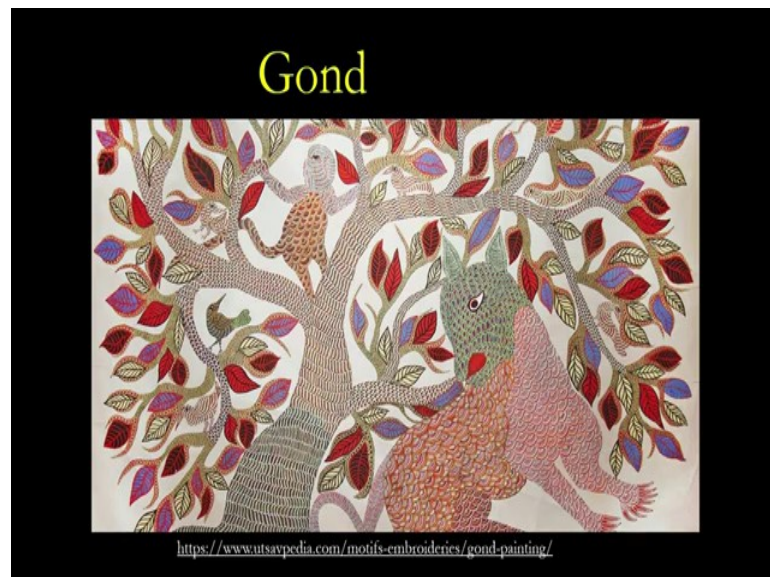
- Warli art use basic geometric shapes for depicting symbols of life and the world around. Three basic shapes commonly used are—the circle, the triangle and the square.
- In rare cases the paintings are composed of straight lines, mostly occurs in the form of dots and dashes.
- There is absence of mythological 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.

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 form of dots and dashes. There is absence of mythological or religious figures, this is very typical of Warli, Warli painting, but in other folk art paintings you might see mythological characters, but here it is very rare or none. 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. So, circle is used to show the eternal life cycle, there life after death.

Originally these paintings were made on the walls of the huts of the tribal people. It was the woman who made these paintings like in Madhubani, this is also a women base art. 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 in walls that were made of red, brown or ochre mud.

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Then, we discussed the Gond art of Madhyapradesh, UP area the central India.

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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 one 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, like the one that we discussed today, the Sohrai painting the Gond art is also believed to be a derivation or a continuation of cave art, which was from the Mesolithic period.

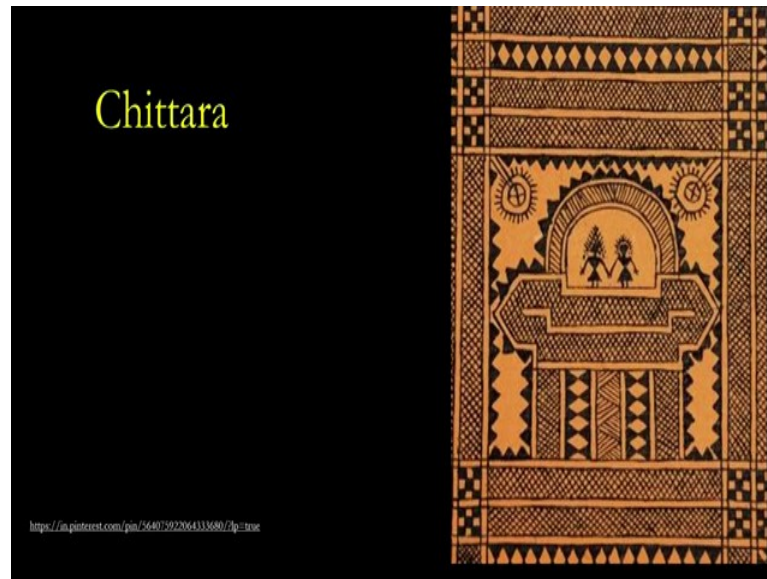
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Gond paintings are described as on line work. The artists draw the inner as well as outer lines with much care as possible. Lines are used in such a way that it conveys a sense of movement to the still images. Dots and dashes are added to impart a 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 plants 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 hibiscus flower.

Gond paintings bear a remarkable likeness to aboriginal art from Australia as both style use dots and to create the paintings, so that was about the Gond painting.

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Chittara or hase chittara is a folk art practiced by the Deewaru community in Shimoga, Sagara and Uttara kannada district of Karnataka. The walls are colored with red mud found abundantly in the region and designs are drawn in white paint derived from rice paste and white mud. The lines and patterns on these paintings each symbolize an aspect of nature or depict the religious, social agricultural practices of the community. The stylised figures of Chittara painting are generally symbols of brides and grooms, fertility, the sowing of the auspicious paddy, birds, trees, animals etc. Musicians play auspicious music, brides and grooms affect yogic poses or stand in conjugal harmony. The delicacy in its delineation and its repetitiveness. The practice of drawing this art is accompanied by music and singing. Every situation and chore depicted on the wall, has a relevant song.

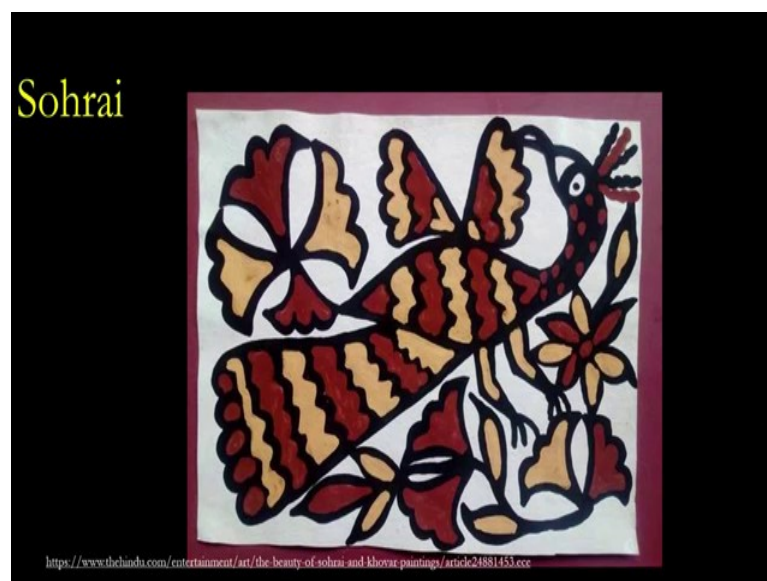
Then we also discuss Chittara art form from Karnataka, from the Shimoga region of Karnakata. Chittara or hase chittara is a folk art practiced by the Deewaru community in Shimoga, Sagara and Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka. The walls are colored with

red mud found abundantly in the region and designs are drawn in white paint derived from rice paste and white mud.

The lines and patterns on these paintings each symbolize an aspect of nature or depict the religious, social agricultural practices of the community. The stylized figures of Chittara painting are generally symbols of brides and grooms, fertility the sowing of the auspicious paddy, birds, trees, animals, etcetera. So, these are the common motives in Chittara painting. Musicians play auspicious music, brides and grooms affect yogic poses or stand in conjugal harmony. So, these are the figures that are drawn in Chittara painting.

The delicacy in its delineation and its repetitiveness; so, your repetitiveness is actually the beauty of the Chittara painting. The practice of drawing this art is accompanied by music and singing every situation and core depict on the wall, has a relevant song. So, for every painting there is a relevant song that is sung during the painting is done.

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And finally, today we discussed the Sohrai art form from Hazaribagh area of Jharkhand.

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The women of farming communities of Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand keeps alive a vibrant tradition of mural painting, practiced as a ritual art form known as Sohrai. Sohrai is the art of harvest festival in autumn, using red, black, yellow and white earth. In Hazaribagh within a small distance there are strikingly different painted village houses. Each village belongs to a different community or tribe. Hence their motifs and style of drawings are different

Large images are painted with twigs on the walls - bulls, horses with riders, wild animals, trees, lotuses, peacocks, and horned deities. Sohrai paintings are considered to be good luck paintings.

The women of farming community of Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand keeps alive a vibrant tradition of mural paintings, practiced as a ritual art form known as Sohrai. Sohrai is the art of harvest festival in autumn using red, black, yellow, and white earth. In Hazaribagh within a small distance there are strikingly different painted village houses. Each village belongs to a different community or tribe. Hence their motifs and styles of the drawings are different.

Large images are painted with twigs on the walls – bull, horse and with riders, wild animals, trees, lotuses, peacock, and horned deities. Sohrai paintings are considered to be good luck paintings. So, friends we have seen five different art forms from the country from India. Just observe the commonality between them and also the difference between them. You will see fine differences between them and , certain kind of commonality also. So, just go to the slides just reflect on them and think what are the differences and what are the similarities between the folk art forms within across the country.

So, next class we will see how we can bring together the folk art forms of the country and science to have a meaningful dialogue. It is noble and a new kind of exploration let us see how , what kind of results we derived from it, see you in the class.