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Gond artist on the art form and his inspiration

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● **Solo show**

'My mother was my first teacher'

We were three brothers and we saw our mother draw traditional patterns of Gond art on several festive occasions. Generally it is the girls who learn this art from their mothers. But we don't have a sister, so we had to help our mother. She was our first teacher," says Gond artist Bhajju Shyam, who has dedicated his exhibition 'Ma Matre' to his

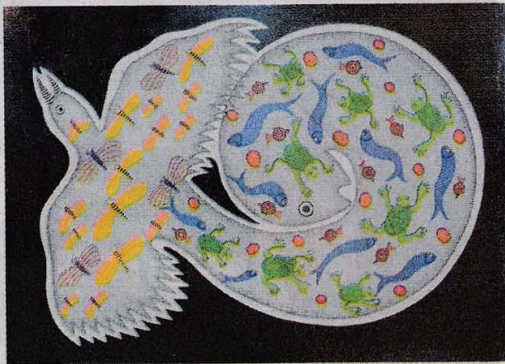
mother and named it after her.

The exhibition focuses on nature and folklore. "A lot of stories about magical creatures are prevalent in the folklore. These stories are not told anymore but I have tried to add an element from these stories," he adds.

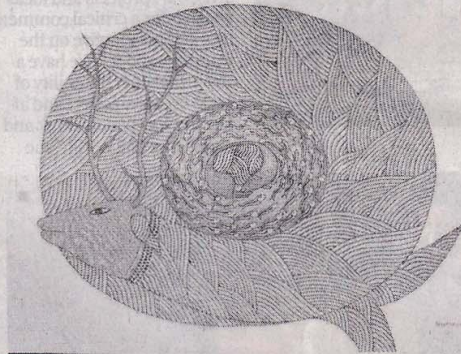
Shyam has been a professional Gond artist for 25 years now. "Earlier we

were mostly commissioned by the government bodies who wanted tribal art for their office spaces or for museums. Now things have changed. A lot of private players have come into the picture. And people always want to invest in new and different art forms," he says.

Shyam has also ventured into children's books with Gond art form and has



INDIGENOUS Tribal art is finding favour with a lot of art enthusiasts.



contributed to 12 books. "As an artist you have to find various ways to reach and affect art enthusiasts. It is important to let art reach as many people as possible. It can have powerful effects. Also, such ventures help artists financially."

While he has had many solo shows abroad, this is the first time he is showcasing his works as a solo artist in India.

Talking about the importance of making tribal

art visible, curator Anubhav Nath from Ojas Art says, "It is truly special for all of us. This solo show is a part of our commitment to the tribal and traditional arts. The best works of these artists must be shown extensively in India and newer audience must be generated."

Maa Matre is on display at Ojas Art, IAQ Outub Minar, main roundabout, Mehrauli, till December 11.

Suridhi Sharma