

LADO BAI

THE EARLY YEARS

a rare series of archival works by Lado Bai, an early proponent of the Bheel Art form. The works in the exhibition were mostly created in the 1980s when Lado Bai arrived at the Bharat Bhavan site in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh and was encouraged by modernist J Swaminathan to explore her own creativity.

Preview: Friday, December 16th, 3 to 9 pm.
Show continues till January 25th.
11 am to 7 pm. Closed on Monday.

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Taking Bhil Art as a case study, it can be said that tribal or indigenous art forms are essentially linked with their evolving tangible and intangible domain of culture and need to be understood from a historical perspective. It is evident that across the globe such communities are passing through a phase of transition as they are exposed to multiple agents of change. Naturally, its reflections can be traced in their creative domain as well as in their emerging cognition concerning sacred or secular elements of culture or world views and in their everyday nuances of life. When we try to understand this changing phase of Adivasi or indigenous art forms in the wider context of our collective civilizational journey then we may appreciate J. Swaminathan's perception as he says, "Representing the innate creative genius of the Adivasi people, just as we respect our own, we are seeing them as living in commonality with us. We see our fates inexorably linked together, and the new artistic ethos can only be born if this commonality is realized".

N Shakmacha Singh and **Prof. Sarit Kumar Chaudhari**

The Bhil People find a mention in the epics of *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat* and are the most populous tribe in India. Their art with its dots and points has a very strong resonance with Australian Aboriginal art, which is considered to be among the oldest surviving art forms. In this exhibition we present rare examples of early works by

Lado Bai. These works were mostly created in the 1980s. She arrived at Bharat Bhavan in Bhopal as a construction worker and was encouraged by the institution's founder, artist J. Swaminathan to explore painting. The work presented spans two decades of her practice. The early works exemplify the inventiveness which is unique to the beginning of an artist's journey

and as the work evolves one can see her find new ground.

We discovered Lado Bai and her art practice through the Ojas Art Award Project, which is an attempt to create a sustainable platform for marginalized art forms. We, as a team are thankful to all our supporters, especially the artists who have gotten us this far.

Anubhav Nath
Director, Ojas Art

Peepal ka ped
(Peepal Tree)
Early 1980s,
Acrylic on paper,
20 x 28 inch
LB001





Haathi (Elephant)
Early 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 20 x 28 inch
LB002



Haathi (Elephant)
Mid 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 7 x 10 inch
LB014



Pithora
Mid 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB021



Ghoda (Horse)
Early 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 19 x 27 inch
LB003



Saap aur Magarmach (Snake and crocodile)
Mid 1980, Acrylic on paper, 7 x 11 inch
LB013



Saap (Snake)
Early 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 20 x 28 inch
LB005



Jungle (Forest)
Mid 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 11 inch
LB015



Tittir aur uske Bachhe (pheasant and her chicks)
Mid 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB018



Simul ke phed pe Chidia aur Makri (Bird and Spider on Simal tree)
Mid 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB024



Do Mor (Two Peacock)
Late 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB039



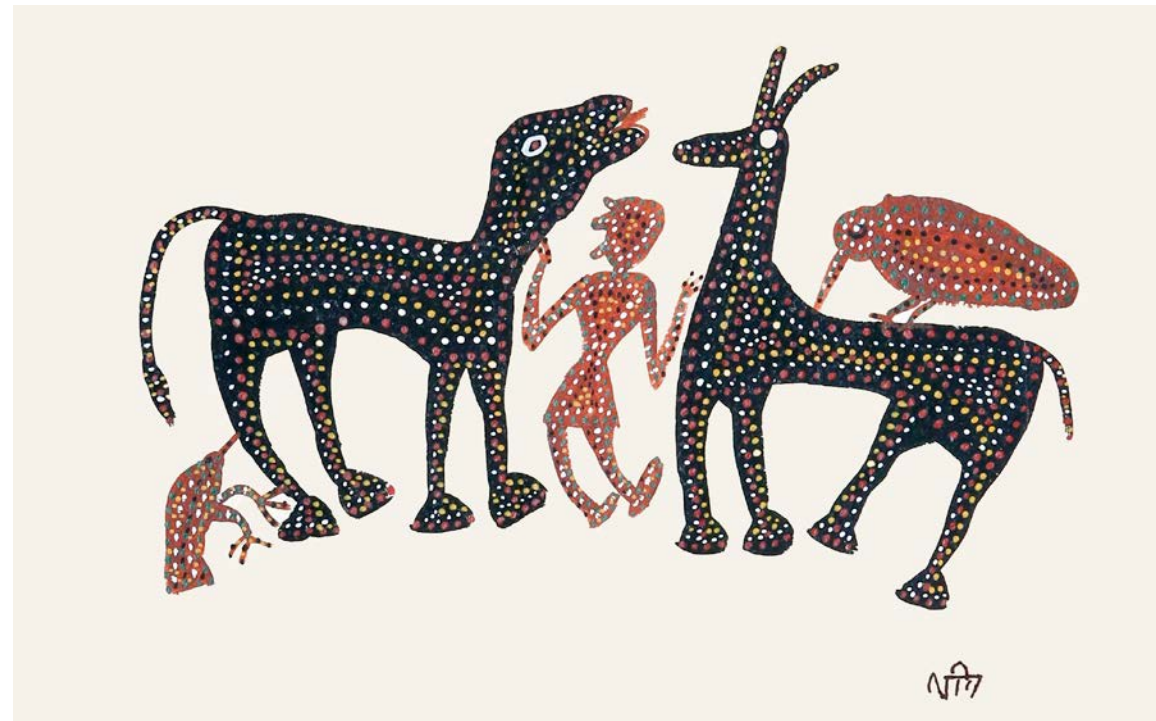
Untitled
Acrylic on paper, 28 x 20 inch
LB032



Ganesha
(Lord Ganesha)
Mid 1980s,
Acrylic on paper,
14 x 15 inch
LB027



Ashray (Shelter)
Mid 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 9 x 11 inch
LB035



Untitled,
Mid 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 14 x 22 inch
LB028



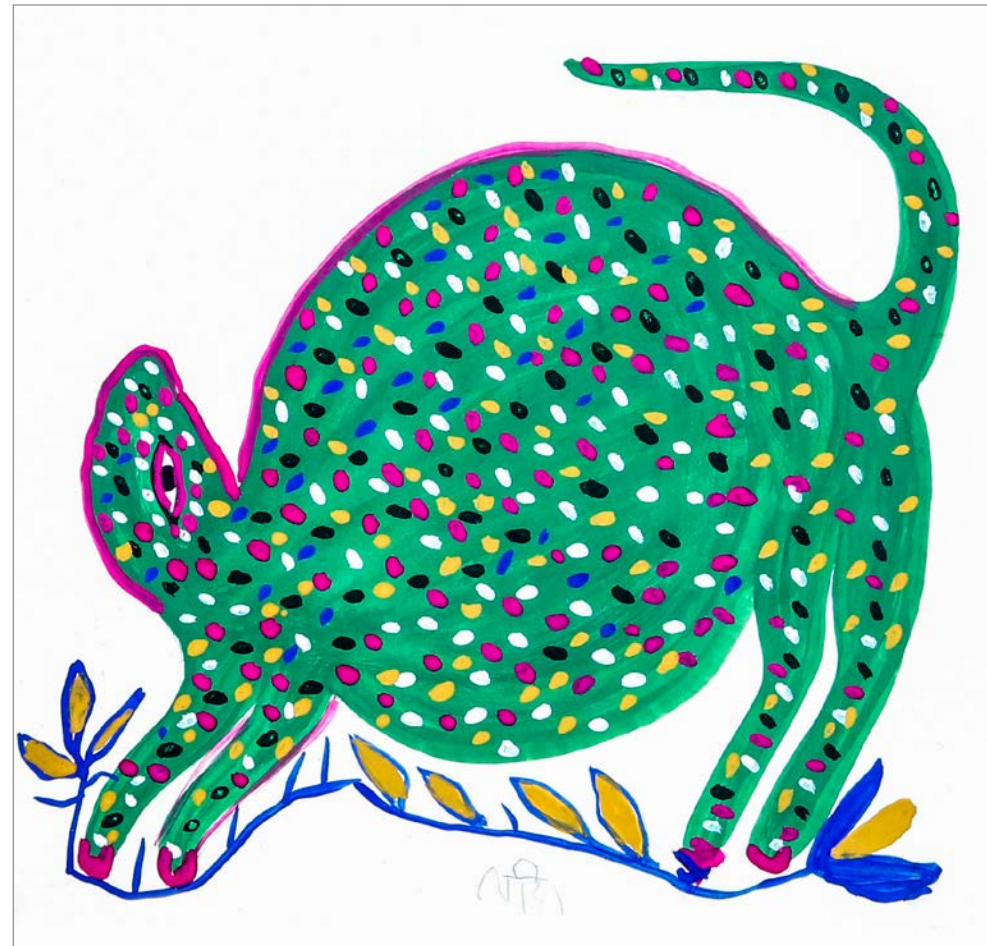
Titori (Pheasant)
Mid 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 10 x 22 inch
LB029



Murgiyaan (Chickens)
Early 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB030



Dosti (Friendship)
Early 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 7 x 10 inch
LB033



Janwar (Animal)
Mid 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 11 inch
LB034



Untitled
Early 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 11 inch
LB043



Mor aur uske Bacche (Peacock with his peachicks)
Late 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 11 inch
LB040



Dosti III (Friendship III)
Late 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB056



Jungle (Forest)
Mid 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 11 inch
LB042



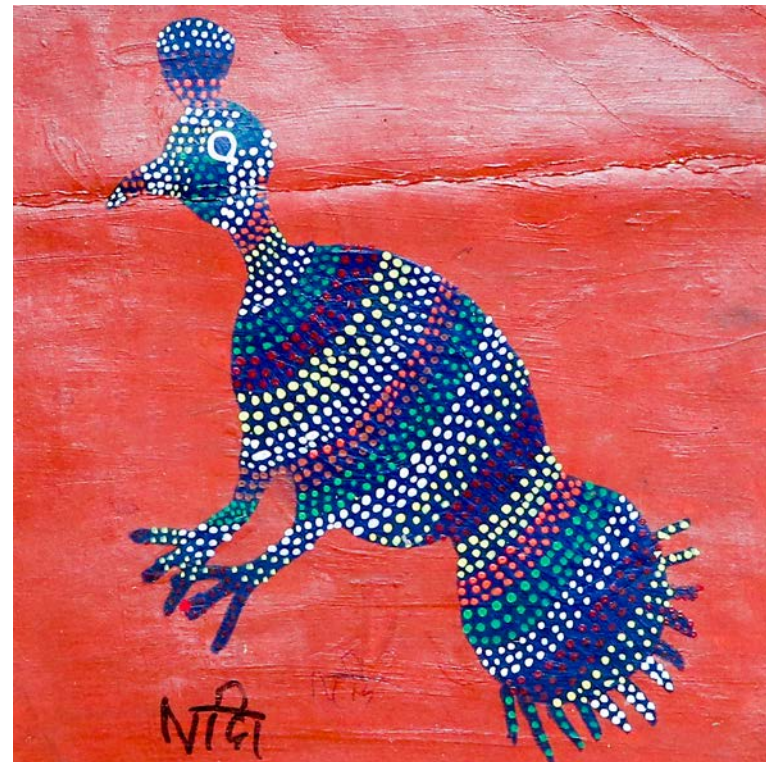
Gal Bapsi
Mid 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB055



Bharari
Late 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 14 x 11 inch
LB051



Chirio ka Jhund (Flock of birds)
Early 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB066



Mor (Peacock)
Early 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 8 x 8 inch
LB063



Morni aur Bacche Mor (Peahen with her peachicks)
Early 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB070



Mor (Peacock)
Early 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB068



Murgiyaan (Chickens)
Early 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB077



Mor (Peacock)
Early 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB074



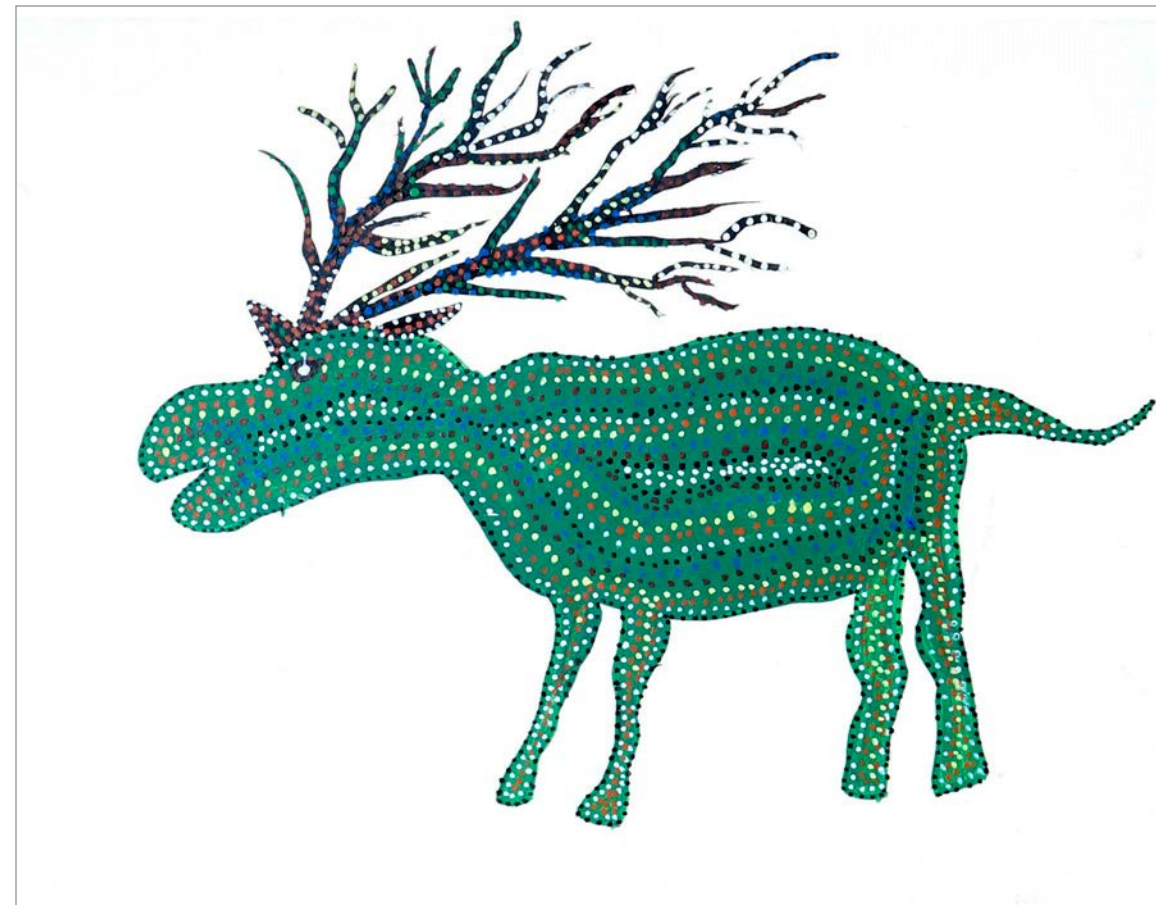
Per, Hiran aur Panchiyaan
(Tree, Deer and Birds)
Early 1990s, Acrylic on paper,
11 x 14 inch
LB076



Untitled
Early 1990s, Acrylic on
paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB078



Do Mor (Peacock)
Mid 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 10 x
14 inch
LB083



Barasingha (Swamp Deer)
Mid 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB081



Ped pe Pakshiyaan (Birds on tree)
Mid 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 8 x
11 inch
LB087



Utsav (Celebration)
Mid 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 14 x 22 inch
LB091



Mor, Parivaar (Peacock Family)
Mid 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB088



Baccho ke saath Mor
(Peacock with his
peachicks)
Early 2000s, Acrylic on
paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB115



Chipkaliyaan aur Makri (Lizards and Spider)
Early 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 14 x 21 inch
LB092



Ganesha aur Haathi
(Lord Ganesha and Elephant)
Early 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 15 x 21 inch
LB094



Pithora Chitra
Early 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 21 x 28 inch
LB095



Rakhwal (Care takers)
Early 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 21 x 28 inch
LB096



Shikar (Prey)
Mid 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 14 x 21 inch
LB093



Mendak, Kekada, Saap aur Machli (Frog, crab, snake and fish)
Late 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 14 x 21 inch
LB100



Mor (Peacock)
Late 1990s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB102



Mor II (Peacock II)
Early 2000s, Acrylic on paper, 14 x 21 inch
LB108



Untitled
Mid 1980s, Acrylic on paper, 7 x 7 inch
LB106



Untitled
Mid 2000s, Acrylic on paper, 10 x 14 inch
LB119



Ghode ke Upar Pakshi (Bird on horse)
Early 2000s, Acrylic on paper, 11 x 14 inch
LB116



Untitled
Acrylic on paper, 10 x 14 inch
LB192



Untitled
Acrylic on paper, 10 x 15 inch
LB203



Untitled
Acrylic on paper, 14 x 20 inch
LB230



Untitled
Acrylic on paper, 14 x 20 inch
LB229

As a child, Lado Bai vividly remembers using charcoal to draw on the walls of her mud hut. She collected colored berries and leaves from the jungle and made them into a paste to use them as color for her wall paintings. Whenever she wanted a sooty black, she used a paste of crushed charcoal.

We got Lado Bai to revisit her childhood drawings and experiment with charcoal. This was a dramatic contrast to her otherwise multi color oeuvre. Interestingly, the textures that emerged on the drying of the charcoal paste were unpredictable and organic, making each work distinctive and engaging.

Facing page all

Untitled
Charcoal powder and Indian glue on
wood treated with soil
5 x 6 inch



LB173



LB172



LB171



LB170



Untitled
2022, Charcoal powder and glue
on Paper, 14.5 x 20 inch
LB314



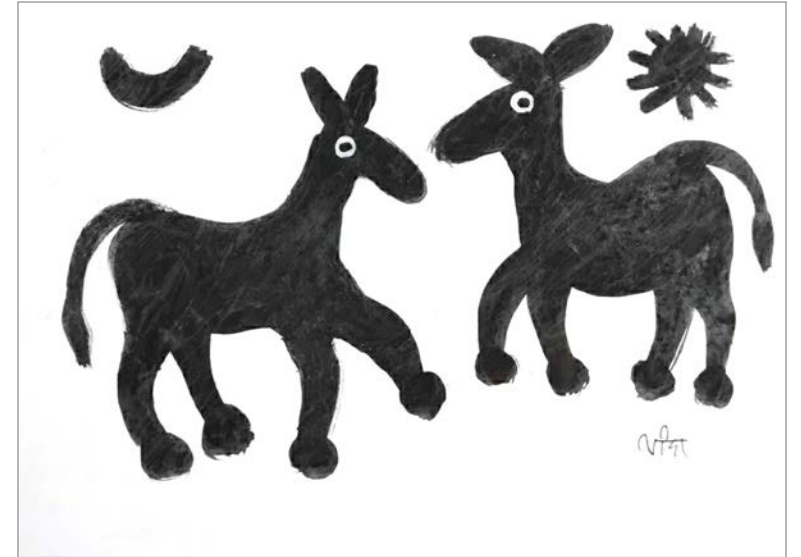
Untitled
2022, Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14.5 x 20 inch
LB318



Untitled
Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14 x 11 inch
LB253



Untitled
Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14 x 10 inch
LB249



Ghoda I, (Horse I)
Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14 x
11 inch
LB245



Untitled
Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14 x 10 inch
LB296



Untitled
Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14 x 10 inch
LB297



Untitled
Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 15 x
11 inch
LB298



Untitled
Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14 x 10 inch
LB300



Untitled
Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14 x 10 inch
LB302



Untitled
2022, Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14 x 10 inch
LB305



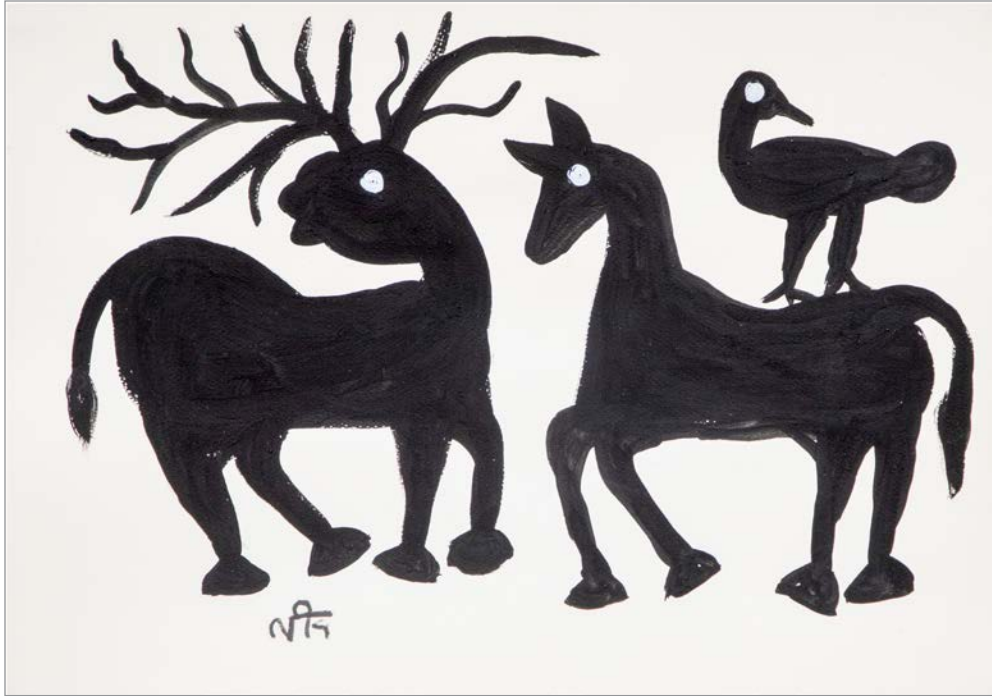
Untitled
2022, Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14.5 x 20 inch
LB313



Untitled
2022, Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 15 x 11 inch
LB312



Untitled
2022, Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14 x 10 inch
LB307



Untitled
2022, Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14.5 x 20 inch
LB316



Untitled
2022, Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14.5 x 20 inch
LB315



Untitled
2022, Charcoal powder and glue on Paper, 14.5 x 20 inch
LB319

Lado Bai

b. 1954

Lado Bai is an early proponent of the Bhil art tradition and has worked closely with the celebrated modernist artist, Jagdish Swaminathan. Her works are in prominent institutional collections in India and abroad, including Bharat Bhavan, Indira Gandhi Manav Sangrhalaya, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in India and the Philadelphia Museum of Art in the USA.

She was felicitated by the Govt. of Madhya Pradesh with the Shikhar Samman and Tulsidas Samaan in 2019 and 2018 respectively. She was the Ojas Art Master Artist awardee in 2017.

Under the tutelage of Swaminathan, Lado Bai evolved the traditional motifs to create her own signature style. She uses the classic filler pattern of Bhil art — the multi-coloured dots, and creates subtle wave-like formations with them to give the impression of rolling movement. Her birds, especially, appear to take on fluid forms in flight.

