

# satrangji

BENGAL PATACHITRA



OJAS  
ART



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# Ojas Art Award

*A*rt has a bigger social good is a firm belief and I have seen art at work in changing lives of communities through the economic independence and sustainability that it had the potential to provide.

A few years ago, I met some accomplished Gond artists in Delhi and really liked their art and the history behind it. Subsequent reading and a visit to Bhopal revealed a lot. The legendary artist J. Swamintahan recognised the importance of the indigenous arts within the contemporary framework, which eventually lead to the establishment and development of institutions like Bharat Bhavan, IGRMS and Tribal Museum.

Over the decades, many art forms have been lost to time and it is important to keep the surviving ones alive. There are many institutions and galleries that have been working for decades towards this aim and thanks to their efforts many of the artforms have made it this far. I felt one of the best ways to further the indigenous arts would be by creating a sustainable model in which the art flourishes and artists are motivated to further their creativity.

To create a sustainable model, greater visibility for the indigenous arts in the mainstream would be a starting point. Exhibitions in galleries, publications and documentation will make collectors and institutions consider these artists and their art more seriously. Also, the documentation would help create contemporary records and history.

With these thoughts, in 2014, we proposed *Ojas Art Award* to Teamwork Arts, organisers of ZEE Jaipur Literature Festival. Annually, an indigenous genre of art will be shortlisted and working artists will be encouraged to apply. The winners will be felicitated at ZEE JLF with an award and an exhibition of their artworks; followed by Satrangi, an exhibition in Delhi focussing on the contemporary voices in the genre.

In 2015 we held the first award, exploring the genre of Gond Art. In 2016 we explored Madhubani-Mithila, in 2017, Bheel Art was in focus and this year Bengal Patachitra is the genre in focus. Anwar Chitrakar and Uttam Chitrakar won the Master Artist and Protégé Artist awards respectively. The exhibition showcases their works and works of some of the other important artists of the genre.

Through the last three years our exhibitions have gotten a great response from the media, attracted numerous visitors and introduced collectors to new artforms that are



actually thousands of years old. Most importantly, the artists see this as a value add in their lives and careers and are motivated to do more with their artworks.

The year, 2018 brought with it some great news for Ojas Art Awardees. Bhajju Shyam, Ojas Art Awardee 2015 for Gond Art was conferred with the Padma Shri by the Government of India followed by a solo art exhibition at Bonhams, Hong Kong. Two months later, Lado Bai, Ojas Art Awardee 2016 for Bheel Art was conferred with the Tulsi Samman, the highest award for an artist by the Government of Madhya Pradesh.

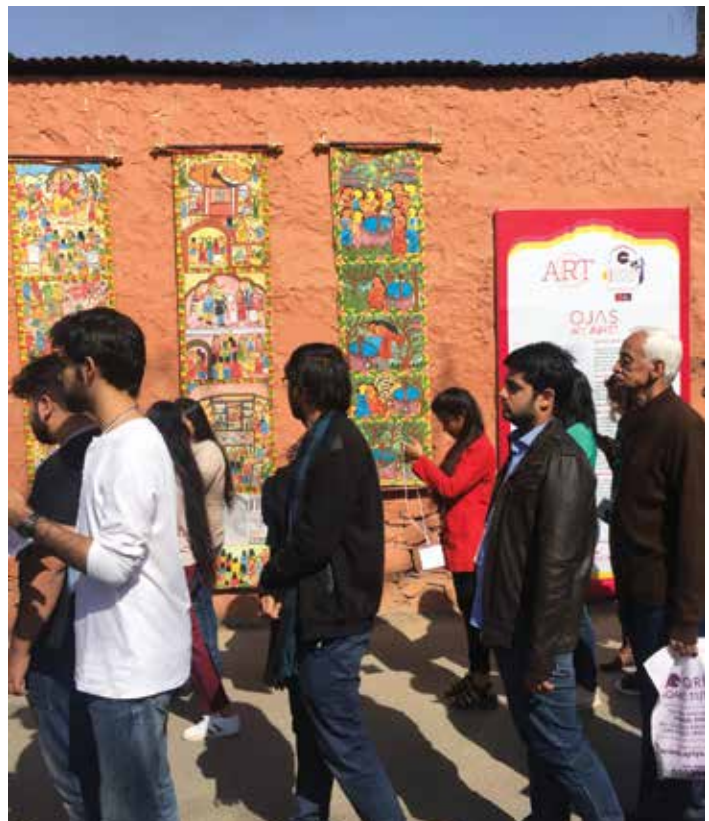
The Ojas Art Award project is an attempt to create a sustainable platform for marginalized art forms and to try and make this a start-point and not an end-point. We, as a team are thankful to all our supporters, especially the artists who have gotten us this far.

## Anubhav R Nath

Director, Ojas Art  
August 2018



*Left to right: Anubhav Nath (Director, Ojas Art); Prof BN Goswamy (Author and Art Historian), Anwar Chitrakar (Ojas Art Award Master Artist 2018); Uttam Chitrakar (Ojas Art Award Protege Artist 2018) and Sanjoy Roy (MD, Teamwork Arts) at the award ceremony at Zee JLF, Jaipur, 2018.*



# The mesmerizing domains of Patta-chित्रa

Prof Neeru Misra

The Indian traditions of artistic expressions have been par excellence from times immemorial. The craftsmen have passed their skills and knowledge from one generations to the next. Man was inspired by the experiences of his surroundings and desired to record them in the visuals for posterity. These pictorial depictions encouraged the humankind to further create drawings and fill it with colours.

Subsequently, mythological legends and historical themes became centre stage of creativity along with contemporaneous happenings and milieus of community living, giving rise to tribal-folk art. This form of art has always been a creative expression of group activity of togetherness of community living.

The *patta-chित्रa* of Bengal, which is widely spread up to Odisha has historical background and antiquity. Multi-panelled scrolls are made in rural areas of Bengal, mainly Midnapore, Murshidabad and Kalighat. These scrolls are both, vertical and horizontal. As a narrative art, associated with highly skilled performance based on a story line, it is still a popular art form. The artisans, called *patua*, through their creativity carry forward the traditions of religious faith and history from place to place. The oral narratives supplement the paintings and assist the *patuas* in propagating their beliefs.

The preparation of the *patta* or the canvas is an elaborate exercise, involving curing with chalk, tamarind seeds and gum, and may take days to be ready. The sizes can be 4 inches to 15 feet, the larger panels achieved by joining several smaller sheets.

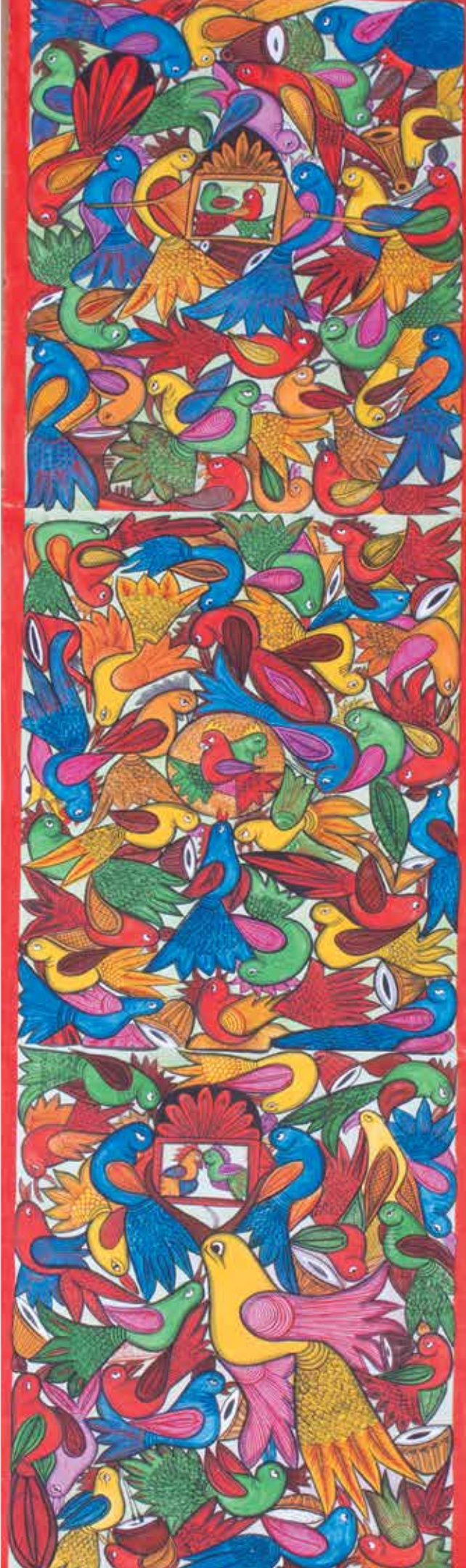




The lines are drawn by the master artists under whose directions and supervision, women folk fill the colours. The outline drawings, instead of using pencils are generally drawn directly by the brush. Colours used are usually organic, vegetable or derived from traditional earth stones. To protect the colours from weathering, a coating of lacquer is skilfully applied as a protective laminate.

Themes covered by these paintings have been changing with skilful adaptations by the artists. The earlier leitmotifs revolved mainly around the epic mythologies, and with stream of time, the artists started painting contemporary social issues and subjects. More recently, protection of biodiversity, the menace of human trafficking and events like 26/11 have also been painted, bringing the art to the latest realm of global happenings. Like several other art forms, *patta-chittra* have also accomplished a special niche and maturity over the centuries.

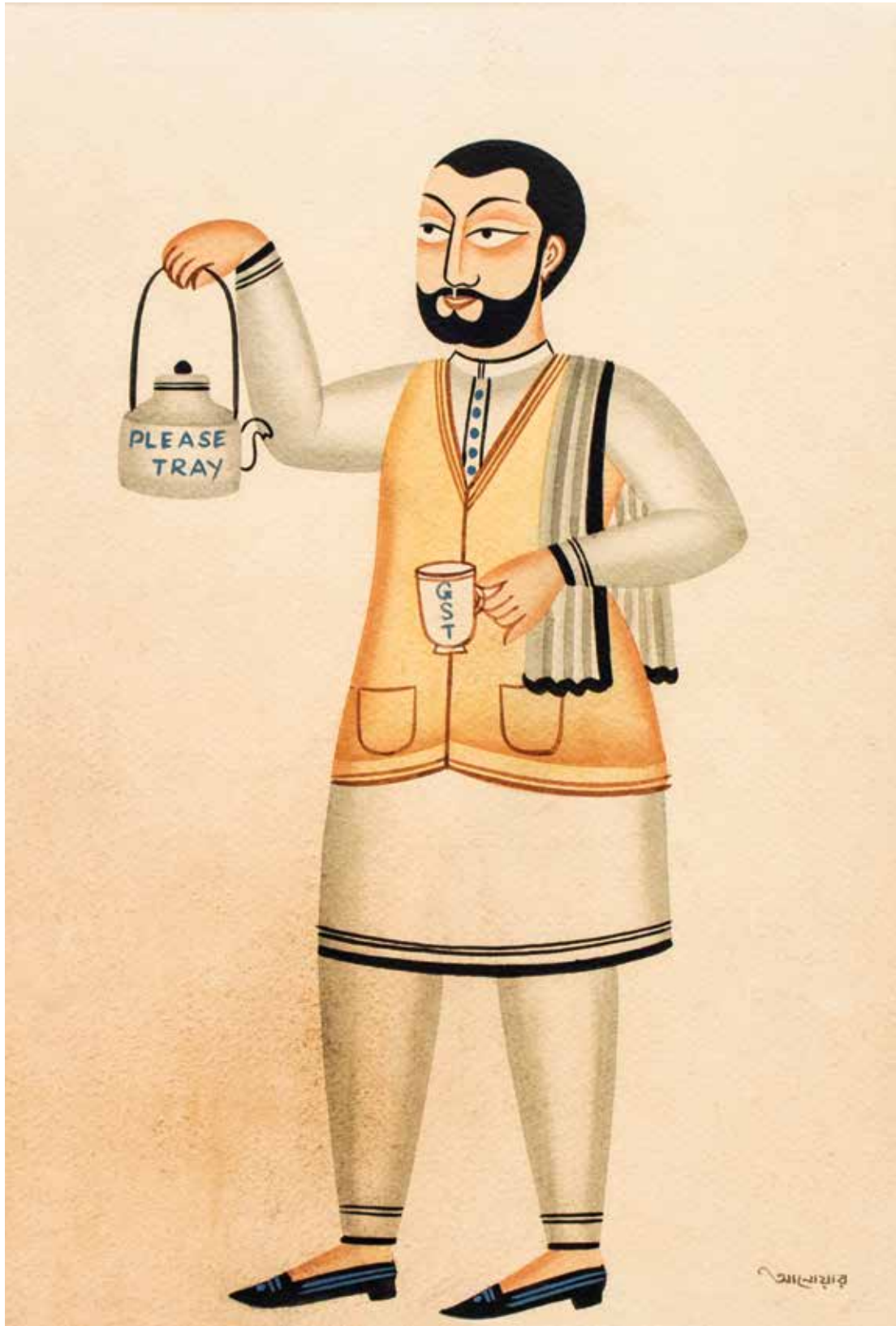
*Prof Neeru Misra is Visiting Professor at Manipur Culture University, a National Tagore Research Scholar and Former Director at ICCR, Ministry of External Affairs.*





Anwar Chitrakar, *Cat Catching Lobster*, 2017, Vegetable colour on white paper, 10.5x16.5 inch



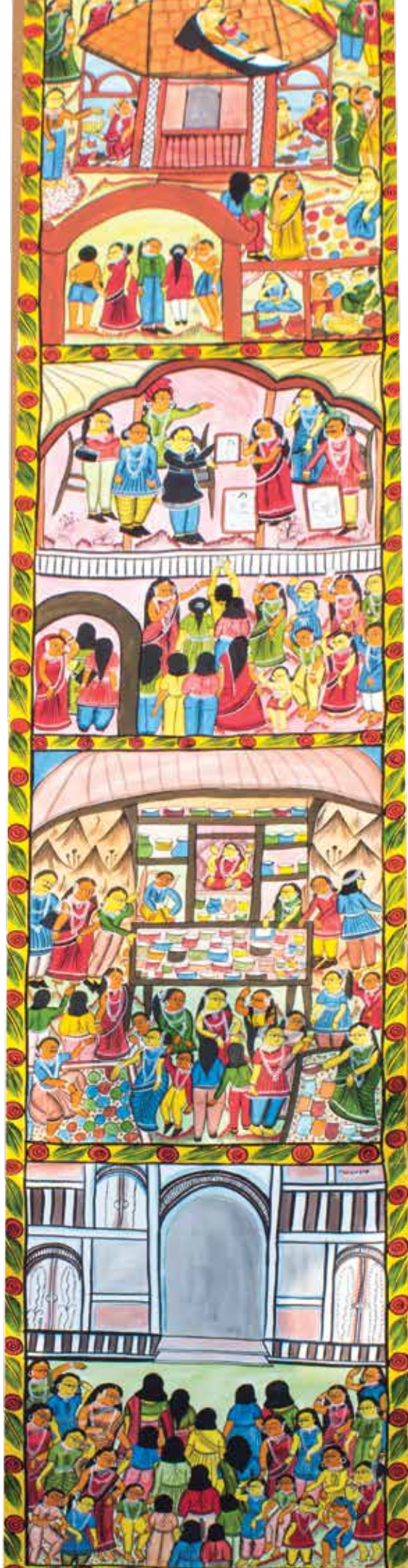


Anwar Chitrakar, *Modi*, 2017, Vegetable colour on brown paper, 10x15 inch



Anwar Chitrakar, *Nayika*, 2017, Vegetable colour on brown paper, 10x15 inch





Anwar Chitrakar, *Zee JLF*, 2017,  
Vegetable colour on brown paper,  
20x108 inch



## Communal Harmony in Bengal

The scroll by Anwar Chitrakar shows the cultural integration in Bengal through communal harmony.

Communal harmony is deep-rooted within Bengali people. People of all faiths celebrate Durga Puja, Eid, Muharram, Christmas, Diwali and Buddha Purnima together as they view these as celebrations and not rather religious events.

In October 2017, during Durga Puja the day of immersion of idol (*Ekadashi*) and Muharram fell on the same day. There was a bit of political unrest considering the sensitivity of the situation and propagation of misconceptions about the cultural and communal disturbance in Bengal. The matter reached High Court and it was pronounced that both would be observed on the same day as per the traditional calendars.

The people of Bengal ignored the political dilemma, peacefully participated in both the processions and proved incredibility of Bengal where religion and caste are mere words.

Bengal has been carrying the culture of unity in diversity from many decades and the scroll depicts the true sense of secularism, free-expression and democracy in Bengal.

Anwar Chitrakar,  
*Communal Harmony in Bengal*,  
2017, Vegetable colour on brown  
paper, 20x108 inch





# Bengal Pata Chitra: Painting, narrating and singing with twists and turns

Prof Soumik Nandy Majumdar

The scroll painting tradition of Bengal – commonly and locally known as *Pata-chitra* or *Jorano Pata* – is a rather curious phenomenon in the larger tradition of the rural cultural context of undivided Bengal. Seemingly, the antiquity of this tradition is quite old and evidences of its existence have been sighted in the ancient Sanskrit texts such as *Harshacharita* by Banabhatta composed in 7th century A.D. or in Western Indian Jain paintings of 14th or 15th century. Apparently the earlier forms of *Pata-chitra* followed a square or rectangular format, a single page painting – commonly known as *Chauko Pata* or square *pata* in Bengal – with a single composition, often a single image of any icon or mythological character. Always synoptic in visual representation and ritualistic in nature these square format *patas* are often called *Yama Pata* as well because of its association with death-ritual or hell-scenes to warn the people of good and bad deeds. The moralizing and preaching aspect used to be a privileged feature in most of the early *patas*. However, the scroll format which often runs several feet in length appears to be a later development (as far as literary evidences are concerned) and according to some scholars this narrative format is an offshoot of the medieval culture of Bengal when more than the iconic presence of deities it was the vast range of stories – mythologies, epics, popular legends and regional tales – that gripped the imagination of common people. Painted stories in a sequential mode, unrolling of it gradually along with the illustrative song, all packed into one amidst an enthralled audience was certainly a mesmerizing experience for the villagers in the bygone days, particularly in the pre-television era. People who also watched the local theatres in the *Jatra* format performed on the makeshift proscenium certainly found a special and highly exciting element in the *Pata* painting performance predominantly for the use of painting as the chief medium of communication.

The original purpose of these paintings was performative. Since the late 1970s and 80s the Patua tradition gradually lost its identification as an oral and visual performance and acquired a status of being a work of art. Commoditisation of *Pata* painting attracted new patronage. ‘With these new patrons’, as Beatrix Hauser writes in her well researched essay *From Oral Tradition to “Folk Art” Reevaluating Bengali Scroll Paintings* ‘the context of showing scrolls also changed. The picture showmen’s emphasis was less on the actual process of narrating and illustrating a story (i.e., then entertainment) than on the display of his scrolls as a means to attract his customers. His performance became part of selling his art; hence the customer/patron was given the right to hear the song to match “his”



scroll. The song or performance itself was not paid for. Instead one bargained about the price of the painting. Naturally the Patuas gave less and less time to the singing and skipped many rhymes. Apart from that, those narratives that required an extensive story were neglected so that over time some of them disappeared.'

Nevertheless, as a very significant intangible cultural heritage *Pata chitra* tradition has survived the onslaughts of rapidly changing times and interestingly, its survival tools depended less on conservation of an archetype and more on creative innovation and transformation with a great deal of readjustments yet without compromising with its essential features and motivations.

*Pata chitra* tradition of Bengal can also be seen as a highly effective means of mass communication sourcing its themes from shared myths, religious tales, topical subjects, local happenings and contemporary events. Hence Patuas feel absolutely comfortable to paint a theme based on the frolics of Lord Krishna, the theme of recent, the exploits of Ravana, the sequential happenings of Twin Tower attack at New York or the devastating scenes of Tsunami in Asian subcontinent.

Culturally and geographically far away incidents were wonderfully accommodated within the fold of their conventional visual idiom creating ever curious visual ideas and solutions to new challenges on part of the painters. It is this ease of movement between diverse themes and subject matters that makes the *Pata chitras* vibrant with a liberating energy and it also confers the paintings with a great sense of satire.

K. G. Subramanyan rechristened this tradition in one of his essays as 'The comic strip from Bengal!' Truly, *Pata paintings* particularly the narrative formats with its accompanying songs usually sung in high pitched voice create a stunning performative ambience wherein the entire experience of watching or listening unfolds.

The narrative, to some extent controls and guides the time and movement of this performance which includes the peculiar visual narrative structure of the *Pata Painting* itself and the way it is sung in an apparently monotonous repetitive melodious tune. In other words, in the given space of the scroll and the performance *Patuas* introduce an alternative sense of time that moves back and forth, takes a pause occasionally, flirts with different time zones – thus, making the whole pictorial narrative potent with possible interventions – either within the picture itself or in the add-on song. Seen from this perspective, *Pata paintings* of Bengal, at the ideational level, work most efficiently in multiple time zones without subscribing itself to any specific time trap – be it mythological or historical or contemporary. *Pata paintings*, no matter what, have the inbuilt facility to be timeless, thus, transcending time and surviving it by the same token.

*Prof Soumik Nandy Majumdar teaches History of Art at Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan.*



Dukhushyam Chitrakar, *Sherawali Mata*, 2018, Natural colour on brown paper, 22x28 inch





Dukhshyam Chitrakar, *Mahishasur Mardini*, 2018, Vegetable colour on brown paper, 22x28 inch





Dukhushyam Chitrakar, *Ramayan*, 2017, Natural colour on brown paper, 22x14 inch





சென்னை





Dukhushyam Chitrakar, *Kamal Kamani*, 2018, Natural colour on brown, 22x28 inch





Dukhushyam Chitrakar, *Royal Bengal Tiger*, 2018, Vegetable colour on brown paper, 22x28 inch





Dukhushyam Chitrakar, *Elephant & Tiger*, 2018, Natural colour on brown, 22x18 inch





Dukhushyam Chitrakar, *Bagh Shikar*, 2018, Natural colour on brown, 22x28 inch





Moyna & Joydeb Chitakar  
*Manasha Mangal Pat*, 2018  
Vegetable colour on Brown paper  
28x86 inch



## Manasha Mangal

The story of *Manasha Mangal* by **Moyna and Joydeb Chitrakar** narrates the legend of the snake-goddess Manasha, and how she goes about increasing her worship and popularity on earth.

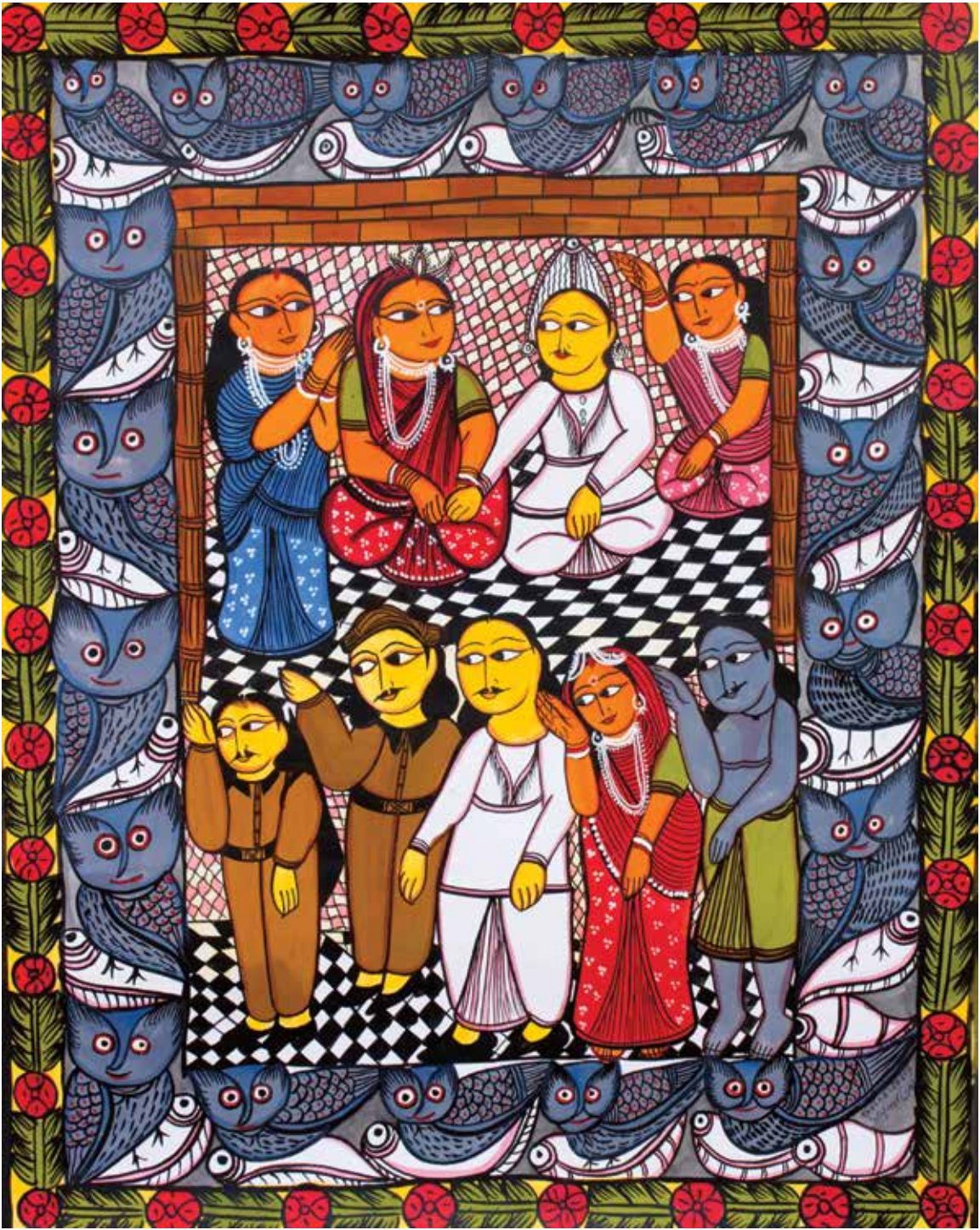
The story goes, Chand Saodagar, a reputed and devout upper-cast merchant was an ardent worshipper of Lord Shiva. On the other hand, Manasha the snake-goddess, was worshipped by the lower castes. Manasha devised, if Chand Saodagar would worship her she too would gain popularity among the upper classes and approached Sadogar. He out rightly refused this request, which hurt and angered Manasha. In vengeance, she killed six of his seven sons.

Chand fixed Lakhindar, his only surviving son's wedding with Amulya-Benani's daughter Behula. Fearing Manasha, the bridal-chamber was constructed on top of Sarali hill, complete with iron walls. In spite of the precautions, Lakhindar died on his wedding night of a snake bite.

Behula did not allow the cremation of her husband as she did not accept his death and set afloat on a raft along the river Gangur. Along the journey she became friends with Netai, the washer woman of the gods. Behula started helping Netai, who promised to arrange a meeting for her with Shiva.

Shiva was very pleased with the cleanliness of his clothes and Netai informed him that Behula helped in the laundry. Shiva called for Behula and granted her a boon. She asked for the lives of her husband and his six brothers who has all died of Manasha's curse. Shiva requested Manasha for their lives back but she demanded that Chand Saodagar must worship her and help increase her popularity. The seven brothers regained their lives and she returned home with them, catching a ride on Manasha's 'Mangla-Bora Snake'.

Seeing all his seven sons come back to life, Chand finally agreed to worship Manasha. Nonetheless, being a Shiva worshipper he could offer flowers to Manasha only with his left hand. Manasha was pleased as her divinity was finally accepted on Earth.



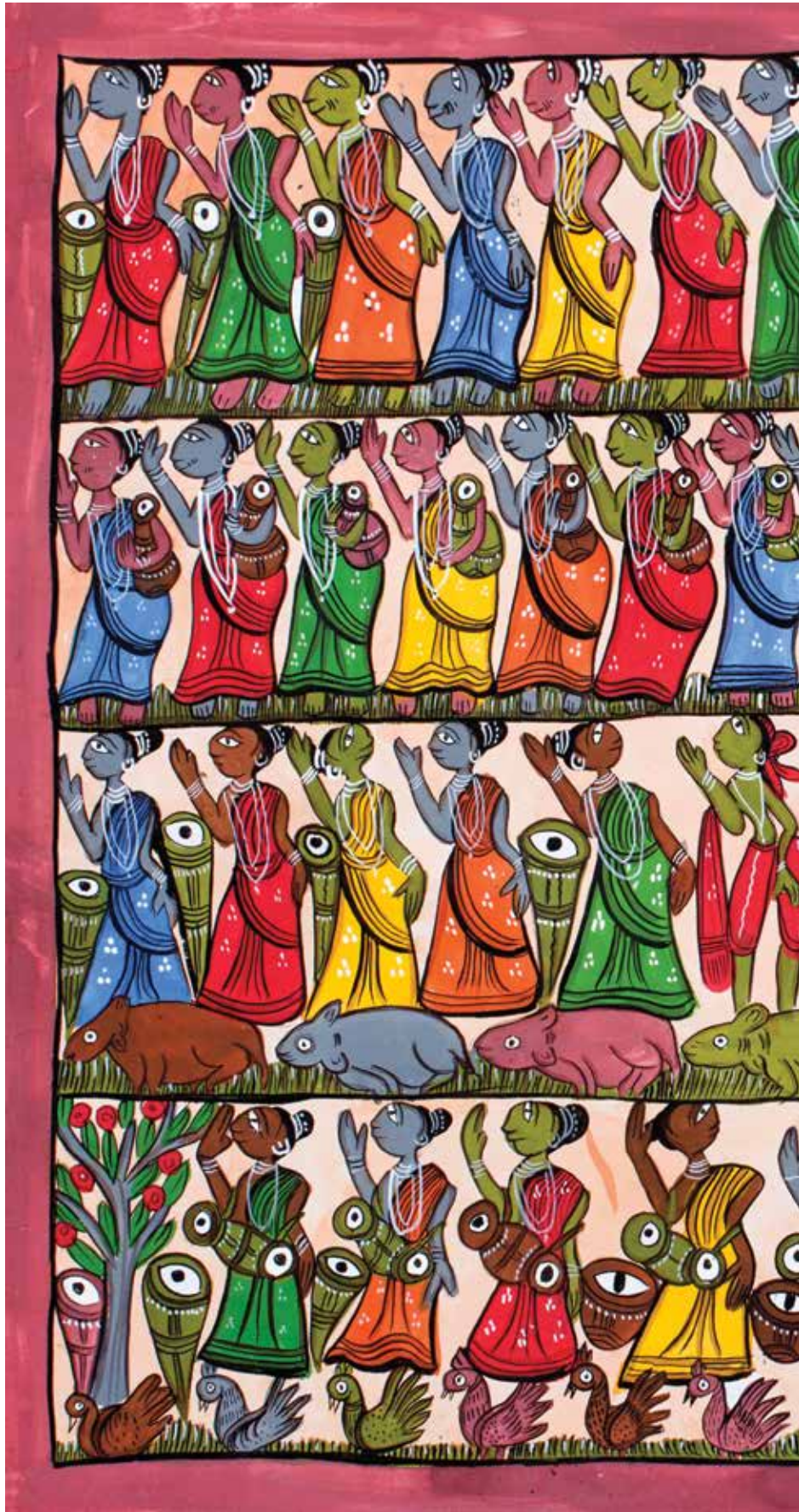
Moyna & Joydeb Chitakar, *Child marriage*, 2018, Vegetable colour on Brown paper, 22x28 inch





Moyna & Joydeb Chitrakar, *Kanyashree* (campaign by Mamta Banerjee), 2018, Vegetable colour on white paper, 22x28 inch





Moyna & Joydeb Chitakar  
*Santhal Pat* (The story of Adivasa)  
Vegetable colour on Brown paper  
22x28 inch







*Detail*  
Moyna & Joydeb Chitakar  
*Durga Pat*, 2018  
Vegetable colour on Brown paper  
28x48 inch













## Chandi Mangal, Durga Pat

*Durga Pat* by Moyna and Joydeb Chitrakar is based on 'Chandi Mangal Kavya' by the poet Mukundaram. It has two stories that show the machinations of the goddess to have heavenly beings cursed and sent to earth to propagate her worship.

In the first story, the king of gods Indra's son Nilambar is cursed and is born into the untouchable hunter community as Kalketu. His wife Chaya, is born on earth as Kalketu's wife, Phullara. Once Devi Chandi, an incarnation of Durga grants immense wealth to the couple, asks them to cut down the forest and set up a kingdom where her worship will be propagated. His mission accomplished, he returns to heaven as Nilambar, Indra's lost son.

In the second story, Chandi is seen soliciting worship from a woman of the upper classes as her principal votary. The scene therefore shifts from the untouchable hunter family to the wealthy and powerful high caste spice-merchant community, headed by Dhanapati Saudgar, a staunch Saivite.

A dancer at Indra's court is sent to earth by virtue of a curse as the beautiful Khullana. In accordance with the social customs and taboos, Khullana is in a polygamous marriage to Dhanapati Saudagar and undergoes various trials and tribulations at the hands of the head wife Lahana. The ensuing distress exposes her to the privileges of goddess worship, which can be performed by the faithful regardless of the class, caste or gender.

However, goddess worship is unacceptable to Saivite Dhanapati and he rejects it as sorcery. The terrible wrath of a spurned goddess leads to the drowning of Dhanapati's ships, the loss of his merchandise and his own imprisonment. Khullana's son, Sripati, reared in the goddess tradition, rescues his father which consolidates Dhanapati's belief in the power of the Devi. Having been granted an androgynous vision of Siva and Parvati, which exposes to him his foolishness in discriminating between the two, Dhanapati reluctantly agrees to worship the goddess.

Moyna & Joydeb Chitakar  
*Durga Pat*, 2018  
Vegetable colour on brown paper  
28x48 inch

# Pattachitra of Bengal: An emotion of a community

Urmila Banu

**B**engal – one of the most fertile deltas, where art hypothetically began with sketching uncouth lines over soft river-bed soil, is an abode of art, culture and folklore. After the Pala corollary, during medieval period, Bengal had given birth to its own art linguistic by synthesis of Islam and Hinduism in rural culture. Pattachitra Art of Bengal is an echo of this amalgamation -- an emotion of a community.

An earthy alley from the concrete road suddenly downs to a small and isolated village – Naya, known as ‘Pater Gram’ home to approximately 400 artisans who have been practicing Pattachitra art for generations. The creators of the art are called ‘Patuas’, who are minstrels, and roam around villages to entertain people by performing with their scrolls for small amounts. Depending on regions and nature of works they are classified as pattikar, patkere, pattidar, mistry, pal and saha.

There is a myth regarding the origin of Patuas. Dukkushyam Chitrakar, a living legend from Naya shared that Patuas believe themselves to be the descendents of Chitrakara’, children of celestial parents- Viswakarma and Ghitarchi. Ironically, in reality they were considered to be untouchable and ostracized since they had violated the norms of painting, set by the Brahmins. Consequently, with the spread of Islam, many of them converted to Islam to uplift their social status. In 1951, the patuas were recognized as Chitrakars by Government of India.

Pattachitra art has a pivotal position in Bengali culture. Patuas, from the Islamic community work with Hindu themes, characters, gods and goddesses. Some Patuas from the Hindu community work with Islamic themes. This religious integration carries an underlying symphony of unparalleled cultural harmony. The origin of Pattachitra (painted scrolls) has been found in the tombs of the pharaohs in Egypt. In India, the first description of Chitrakara is mentioned in the writing of Patanjali dating back to 200 BC and thereafter in writings of Kalidas, Banbhatta and Vishakdutta. In Bengal, two forms of pattachitra are created – Ekachitra, known as Chauko Pat, containing a story in small square pata and Dighal Patta, known as Jorano Pat (Scroll Painting).

Initially, the patas were made on cloth or hand-made paper; now they use mill-made paper. The art form has evolved in medium, style, technique and theme and is a blend of antiquity and modernism. 19th century Kalighat painting is an instance of urban incarnation of Bengal Pat, which played an imperative role to create mass

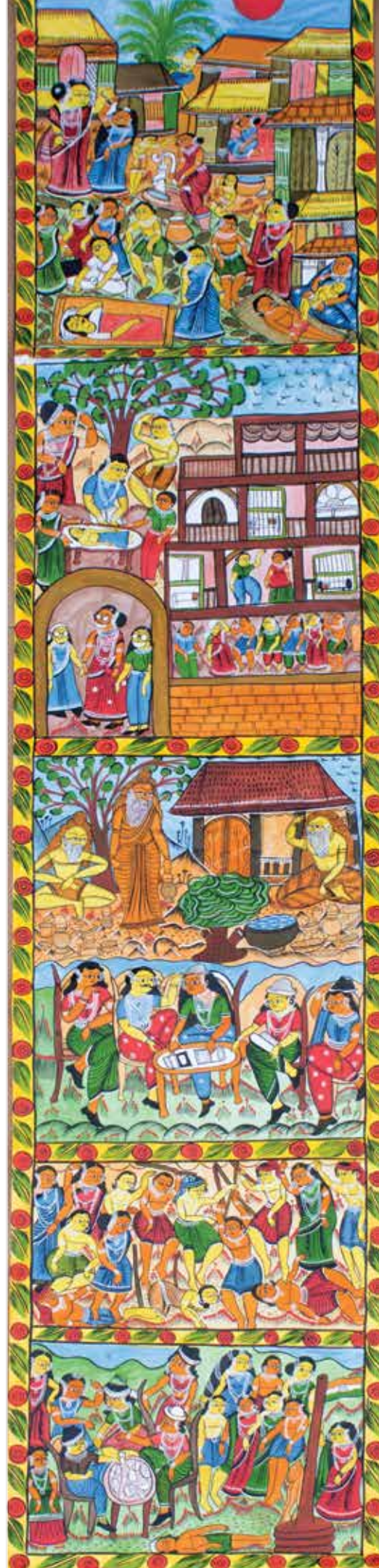


awareness against Babu Culture and British during colonial time. Initially, the Patuas created paintings of gods and goddesses to entertain the pilgrims visiting Kalighat Temple in southern Kolkata. During the Mughal period the context shifted to a more social one and eventually the art form had a pioneering role in Bengal Art Movement in the 20th century. Today, the patuas are practicing Bengal Pat and Kalighat renovating their techniques and themes, keeping the essence of antiquity.

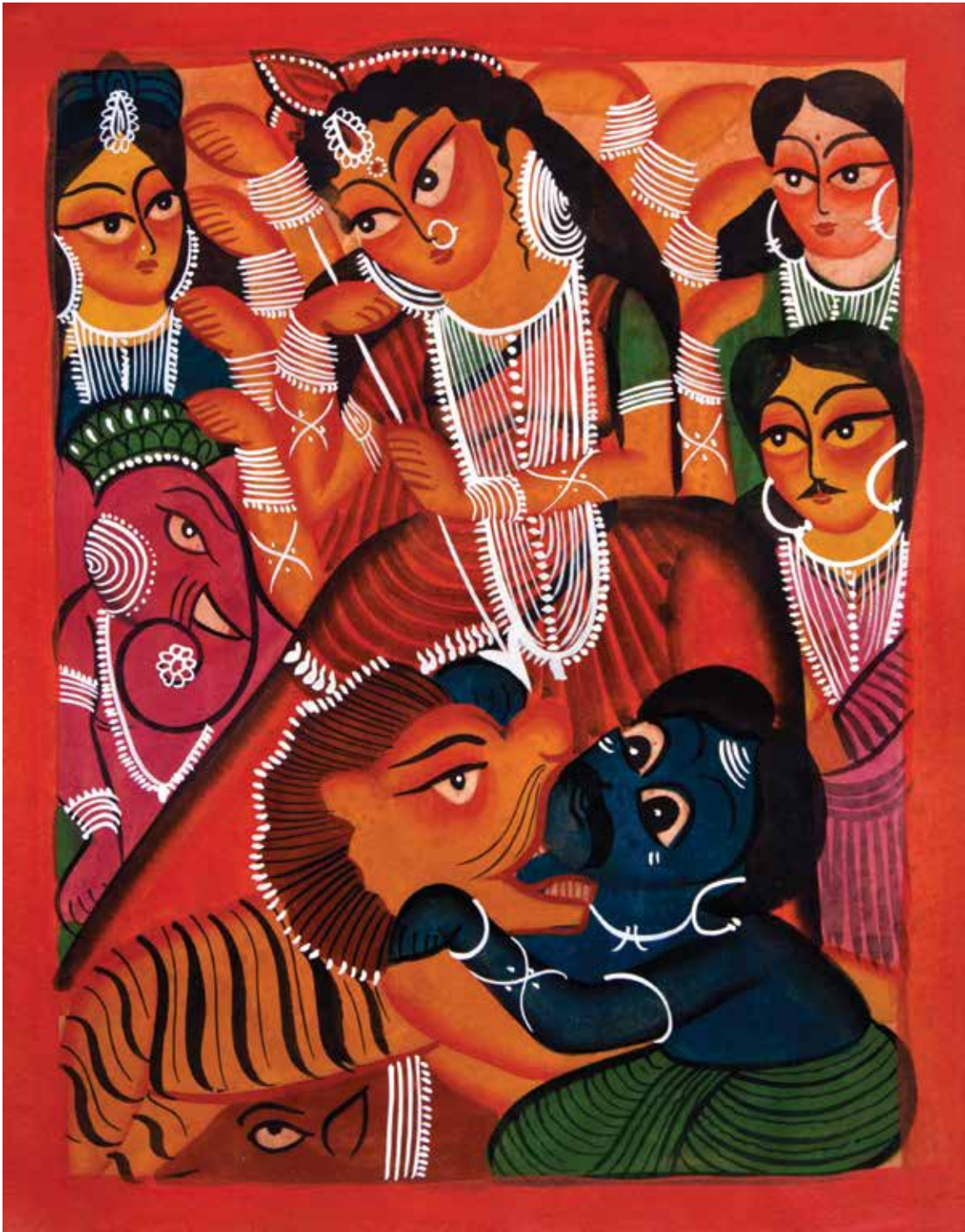
Traditionally, apart from Midnapur, Pata paintings are found in Birbhum, Murshidabad, Bankura, Burdwan and 24 Parganas with different themes. Well known modernists have been inspired by this style of work. Jamini Roy's paintings are highly influenced by Kalighat style and Ram Kinkar Baij was first inspired by Bankura Pata, practiced in his locality. Previously, the patuas were uneducated; now they have become literate and are well conversant. Most of them live in not-so-pleasant conditions, though the situation has changed over the last decade as the community has gotten international recognition with scholars writing on this unique performative tradition and museums commissioning artworks regularly.

Similarly, more promotional activities and awareness could help to create an enthralling presence of Pattachitra art to a larger audience and broaden up an optimistic way to ensure the longevity and continuity of this art form.

*Urmila Banu is a Research Associate with a special interest in the indigenous art.*

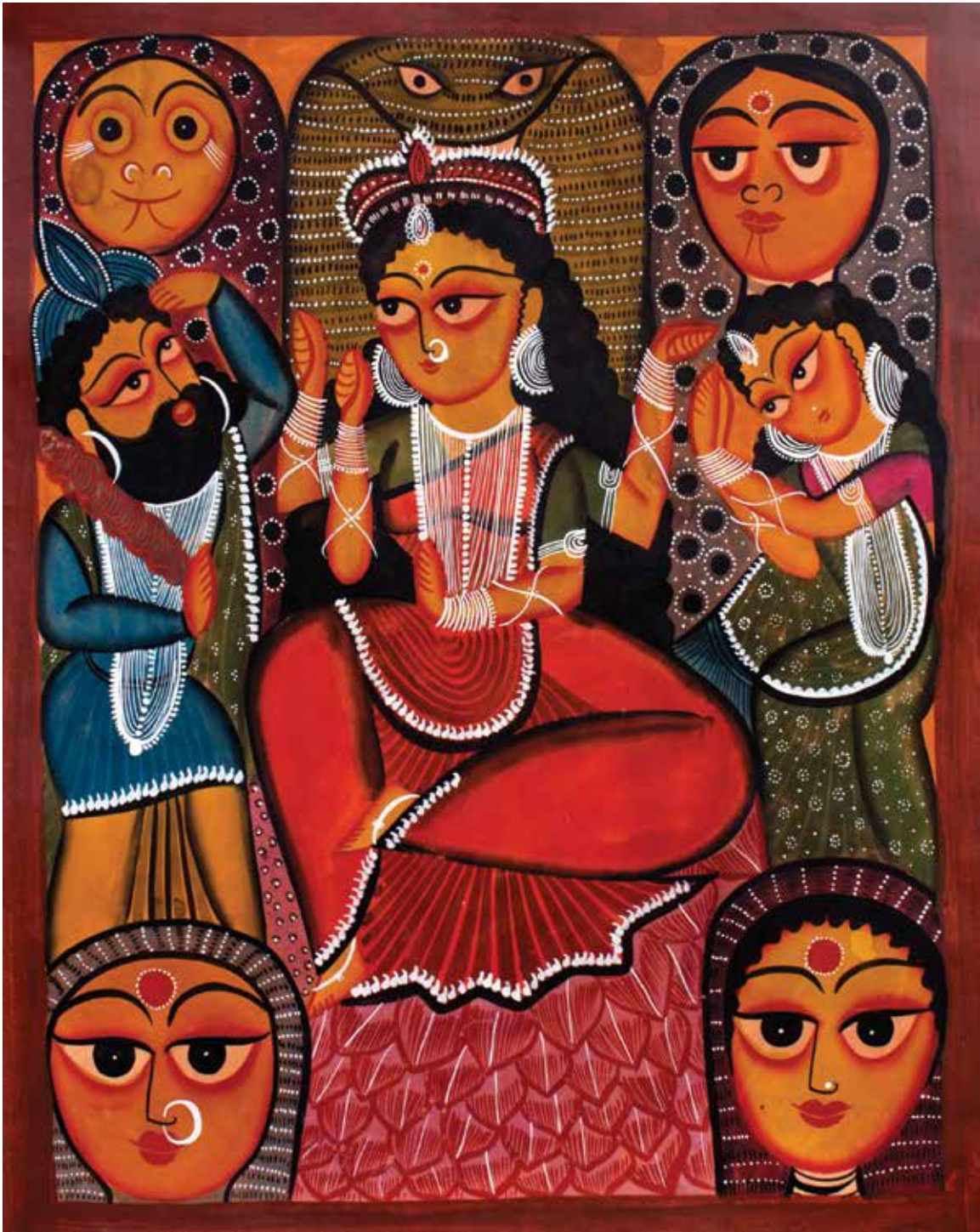






Swarna Chitrakar, *Durga*, 2018, Vegetable colour on brown paper, 11x14 inch





Swarna Chitrakar, *Manasha Mangal*, 2018, Vegetable colour on brown paper, 22x28 inch







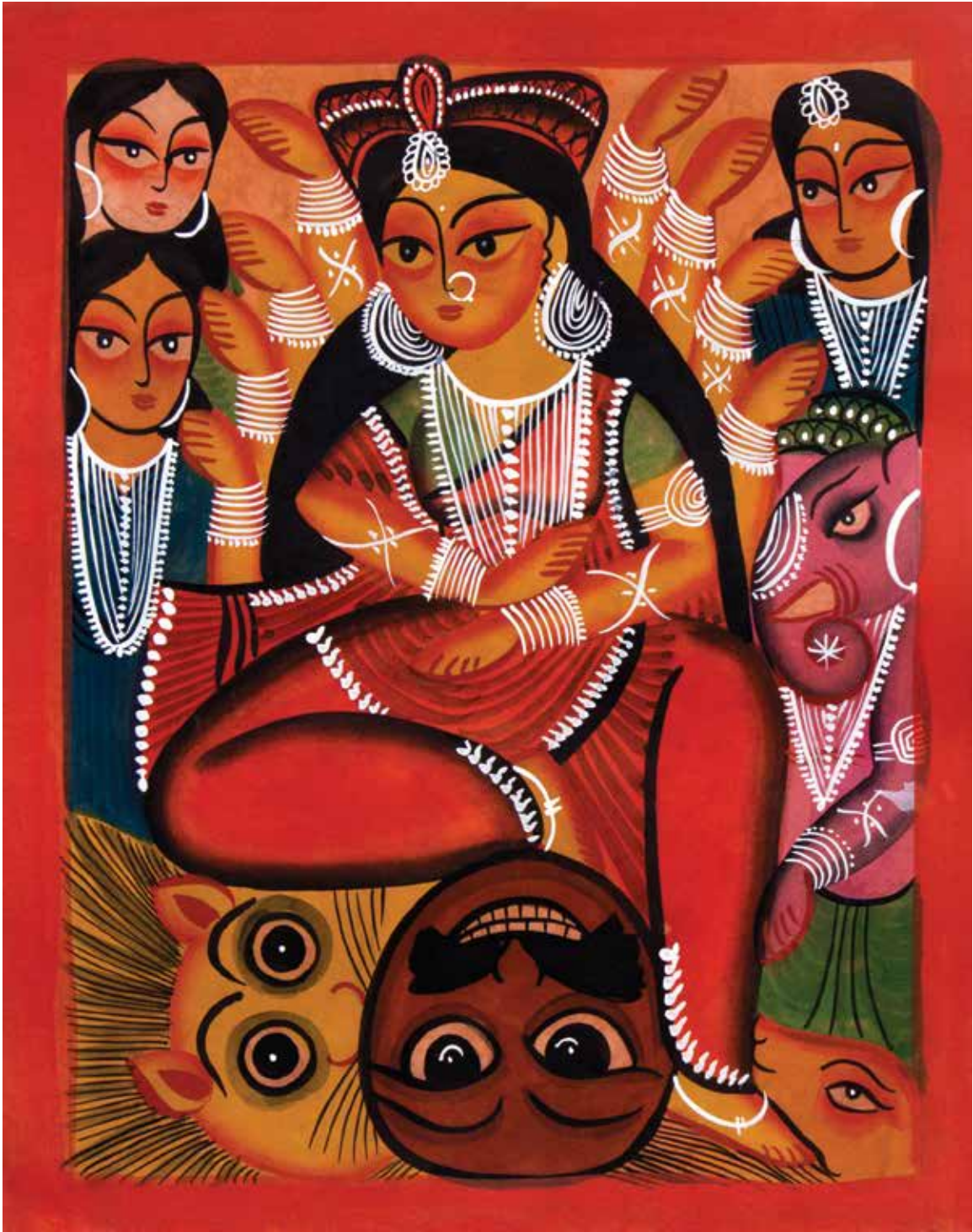


Swarna Chitrakar  
*Santhal Pat*, 2018  
Vegetable colour on brown paper  
29x11 inch



Swarna Chitrakar  
*Santhal Wedding Ritual*, 2018  
Vegetable colour on brown paper  
28x132 inch





Swarna Chitrakar, *Durga (Local Goddess)*, 2018, Vegetable colour on brown paper, 11x14 inch





Swarna Chitrakar, *Mahishasur Mardini*, 2018, Vegetable colour on brown paper, 11x14 inch





Swarna Chitrakar  
*Owls*, 2018  
Vegetable colour on brown paper  
42x14 inch









## Macher Biye (The Fish Wedding)

*“Darinya Macher Biye Karate Chalo go Rangila  
Katla Mach Bale Ami Palki Laye Jabo Lo Rangila  
Punti Mach Bale Ami Madol Bajai Lo Rangila”*

...

O Rangila! Let's go to organise the marriage of Darinya fish

Kalta fish says, 'I am taking the palanquin, my Rangila.'

Punti fish says, 'I am playing the madol (a tribal musical instrument), my Rangila.'

...

Created by **Swarna Chitrakar** the scroll depicts the Santhal based story – *Maacher Biye* – The Fish Wedding. Schools of small fish (in local dialect *Darinya*) are happily gathered together – singing, dancing, distributing sweets, beating drums in celebrating the wedding of their fellow fish. The bride and groom are carried in a palanquin. A giant fish (in local dialect *Boyal*), is not invited to the wedding as it may attack the smaller fish. As fate would have it, the uninvited *Boyal* gets angry and decides to swallow the celebrating *Darniyas*.

Swarna Chitrakar,  
*Macher Biye* (Fish Marriage), 2018,  
Vegetable colour on brown paper, 24x84 inch









*Facing page left*

Swarna Chitrakar  
*Pakhir Biye* (Marriage ceremony of birds), 2018  
Vegetable colour on brown paper  
24x84 inch









## Titanic

This scroll by **Swarna Chitrakar** is inspired by the movie *Titanic* (1997), directed by James Cameron, mainly focused on the love story of Jack and Rose and the sinking of RMS Titanic. This is best understood as a “scroll” version of the movie.

Originally, the luxury steamship RMS Titanic sank in April 15, 1912, off the coast of Newfoundland in the North Atlantic after collision with an iceberg during its maiden voyage. Near about 2,240 passengers and more than 1500 crew on board lost their lives in the disaster.

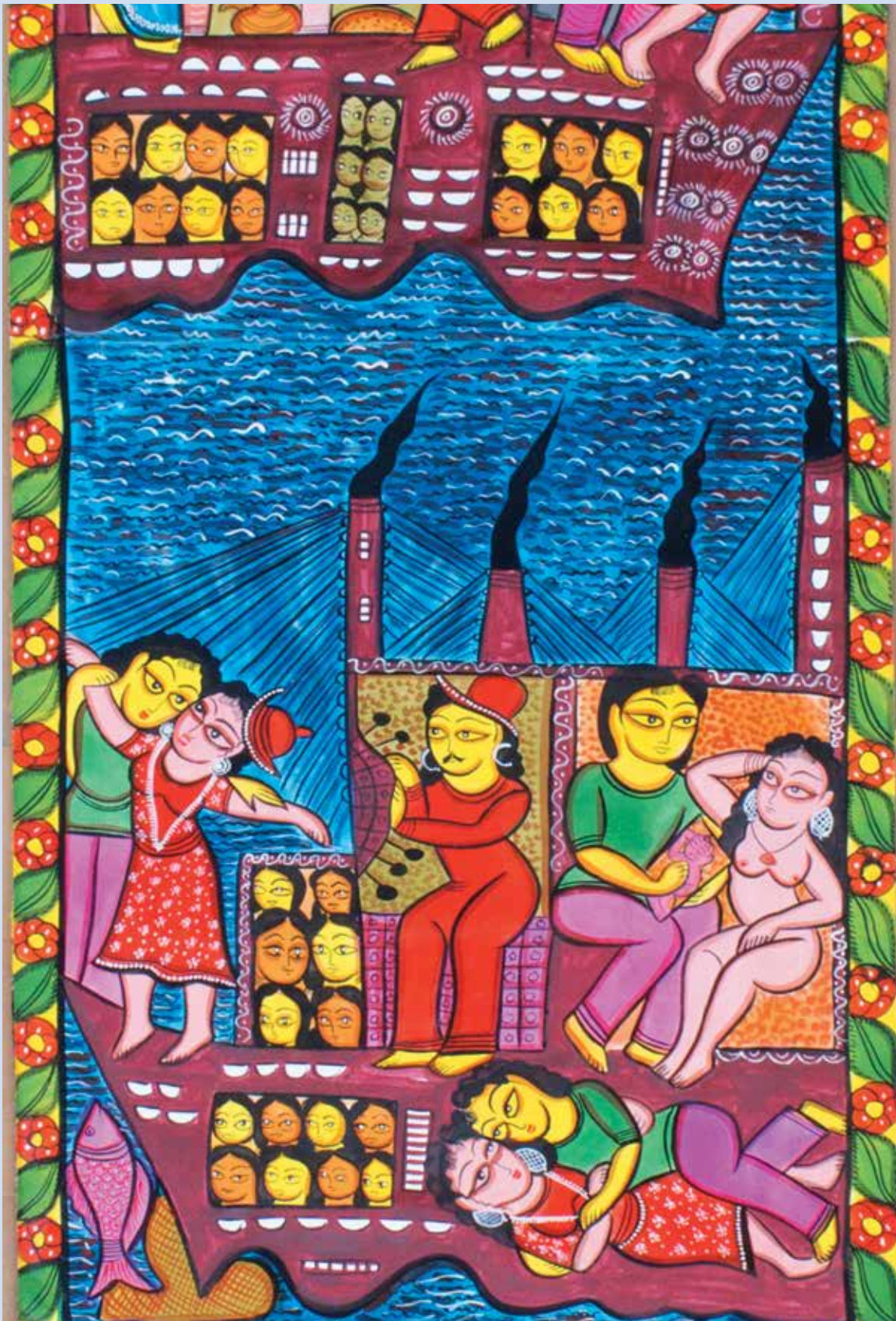
According to the movie, a 17 years old Rose DeWitt Bukater, a first class passenger with her fiancé Cal Hockley and mother Ruth board in Titanic. Distraught over the engagement, Rose considers suicide by jumping from the stern; Jack Dawson, a penniless artist, intervenes and discourages her. Discovered with Jack, Rose tells a concerned Cal that she was peering over the edge and Jack saved her from falling. When Cal becomes indifferent, she suggests to him that Jack deserves a reward. He invites Jack to dine with them in first class the following night. Jack and Rose develop a tentative friendship. Following dinner, Rose secretly joins Jack at a party in third class. After rendezvousing on the bow at sunset, Rose takes Jack to her state room; at her request, Jack sketches Rose posing nude wearing Cal’s engagement present, the Heart of the Ocean necklace. After a while, Titanic collides with an ice-berg and the tragedy begins.

Going through a labyrinth of ups and downs, Rose and Jack are separated as Jack dies of hypothermia and Rose goes on to live a long life.

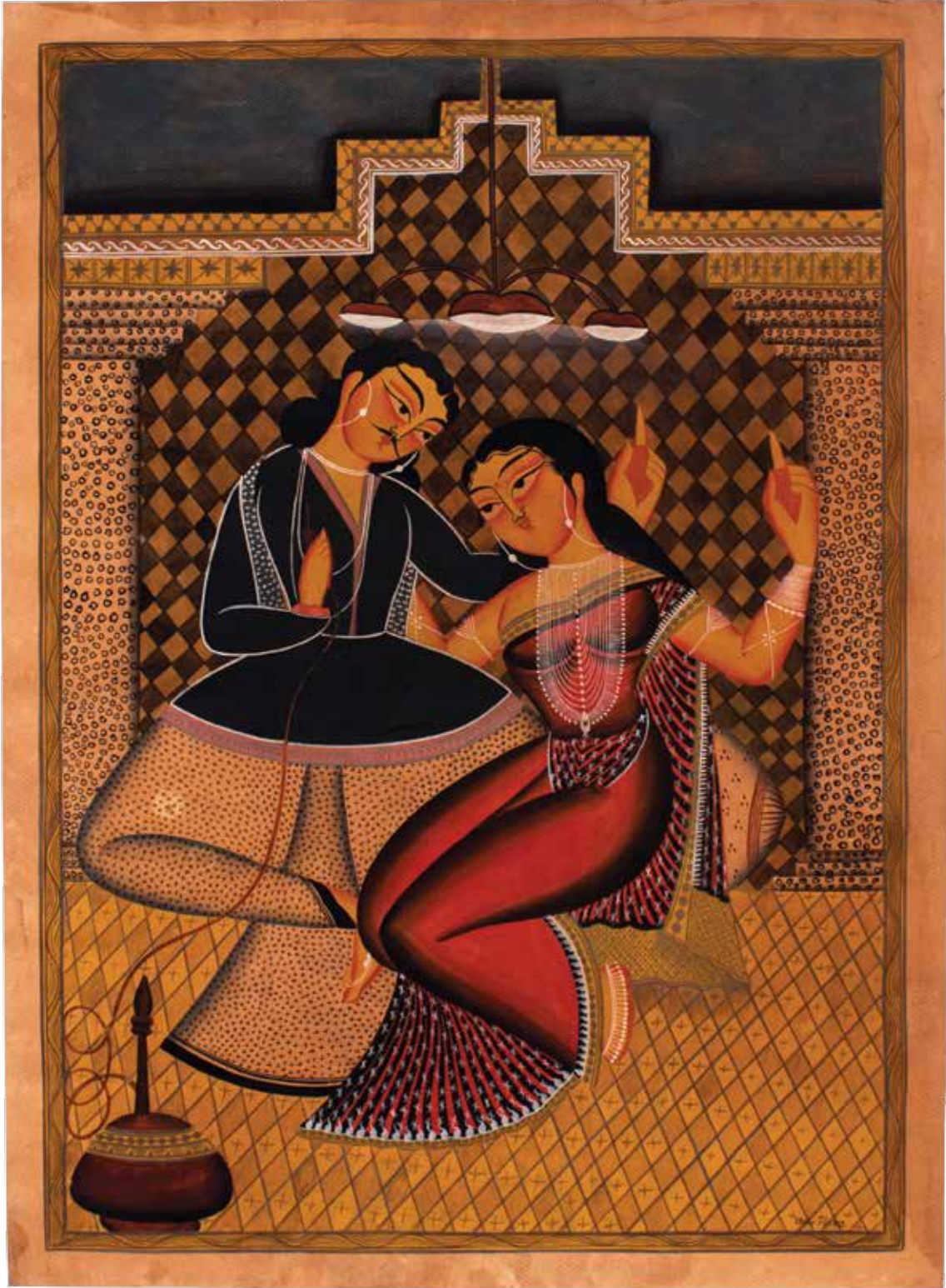
Swarna Chitrakar, *Titanic*, 2018  
Vegetable colour on brown paper, 24x132 inch

*facing page: detail*



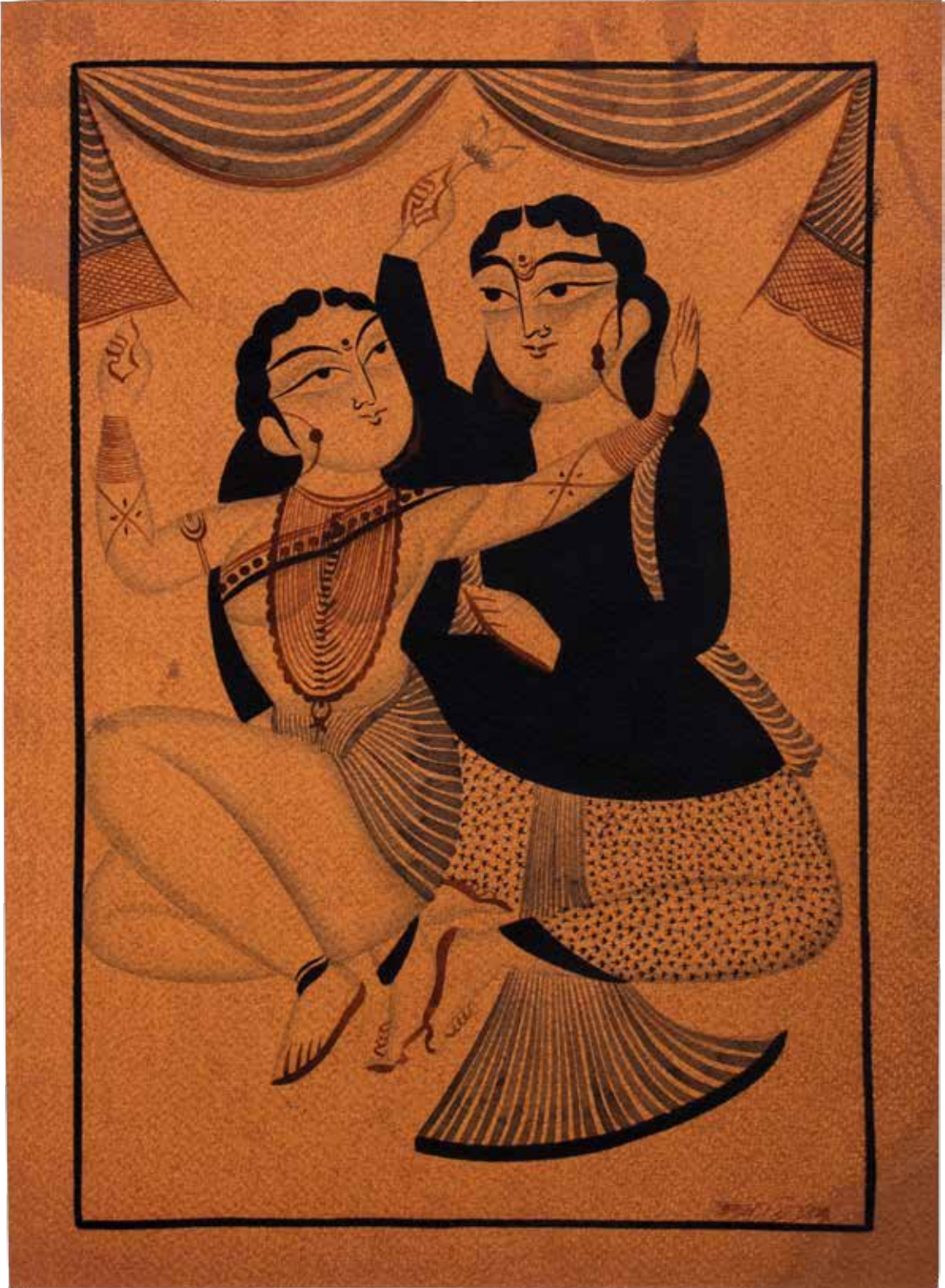






Uttam Chitrakar, 2017, Vegetable colour on brown paper, 29x21 inch





Uttam Chitakar, 2017, Vegetable colour on brown paper, 10x14 inch





Uttam Chitakar, *Shivji and Parvati*, 2017, Vegetable colour on paper, 21x11 inch





Uttam Chitrakar, *Durga with Family*, 2018, Vegetable colour on brown paper, 22x30 inch



## Baul Pat

*“How does religion look?”  
I’ve never laid eyes on it.  
Some wear malas [Hindu rosaries] around their necks,  
Some tasbis [Muslim rosaries], and so people say  
They’ve got different religions.  
But do you bear the sign of your religion  
When you come or when you go?” – Lalon Fakir*

Bauls are a group of mystic bards from Bengal, usually identified by their distinctive saffron attire and a single string musical instrument called the ‘Ektara’. Bauls believe in universal love that transcends religion and reject the division of society into communities, protesting and satirising religious fundamentalism. They celebrate humanitarian philosophy through their music and are an integral part of Bengali culture.

In this **Baul Pat**, **Uttam Chitrakar** demonstrates the tradition, philosophy and festivals of Bauls and their integral connection with Santiniketan.

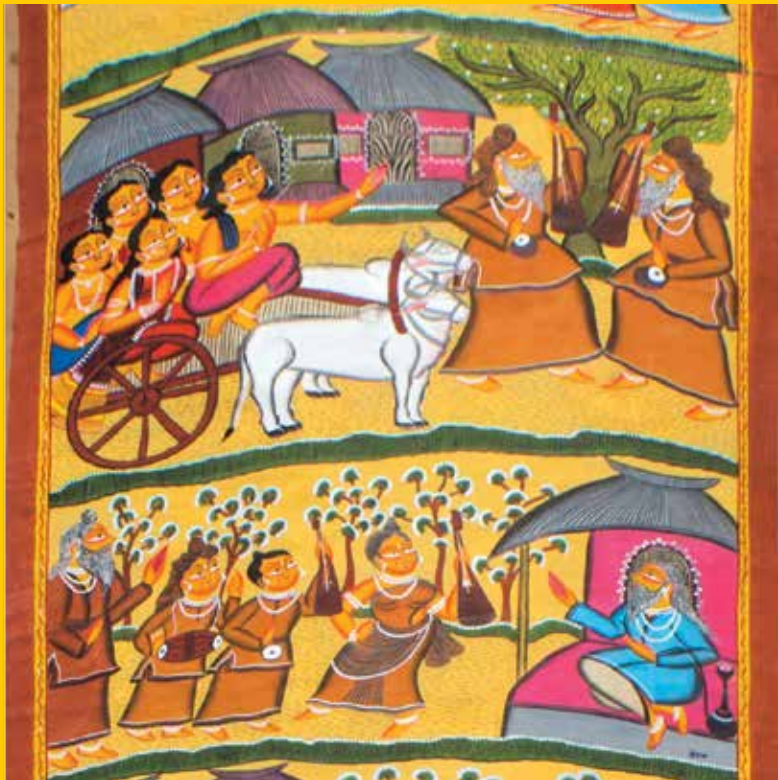
Birbhum, *Lal Mati-r Desh* (Land of the Red Soil) is the land of Bauls, where their music is in the mud and air and in the heart of people. Today, Santiniketan, a town of Birbhum district continues to be the hub of the Baul culture in West Bengal. The Baul gurukul or ‘*akhara*’ is situated near Santiniketan, where they practice their tradition. From many decades, in the village of Kenduli, ‘*Jaydeb Mela*’ is organized on Makar Shankranti on January 14th, it is the biggest Baul Fair of Bengal.

Nowhere did the Baul philosophy leave its imprint more effectively than on the works of Rabindranath Tagore, who composed:

*Amar praner manush ache prane  
Tai heri taye sakol khane  
Achhe she nayontarey, alok-dharay, tai na haraye–  
Ogo tai dekhi taye jethay sethay  
Takai ami je dik-pane*

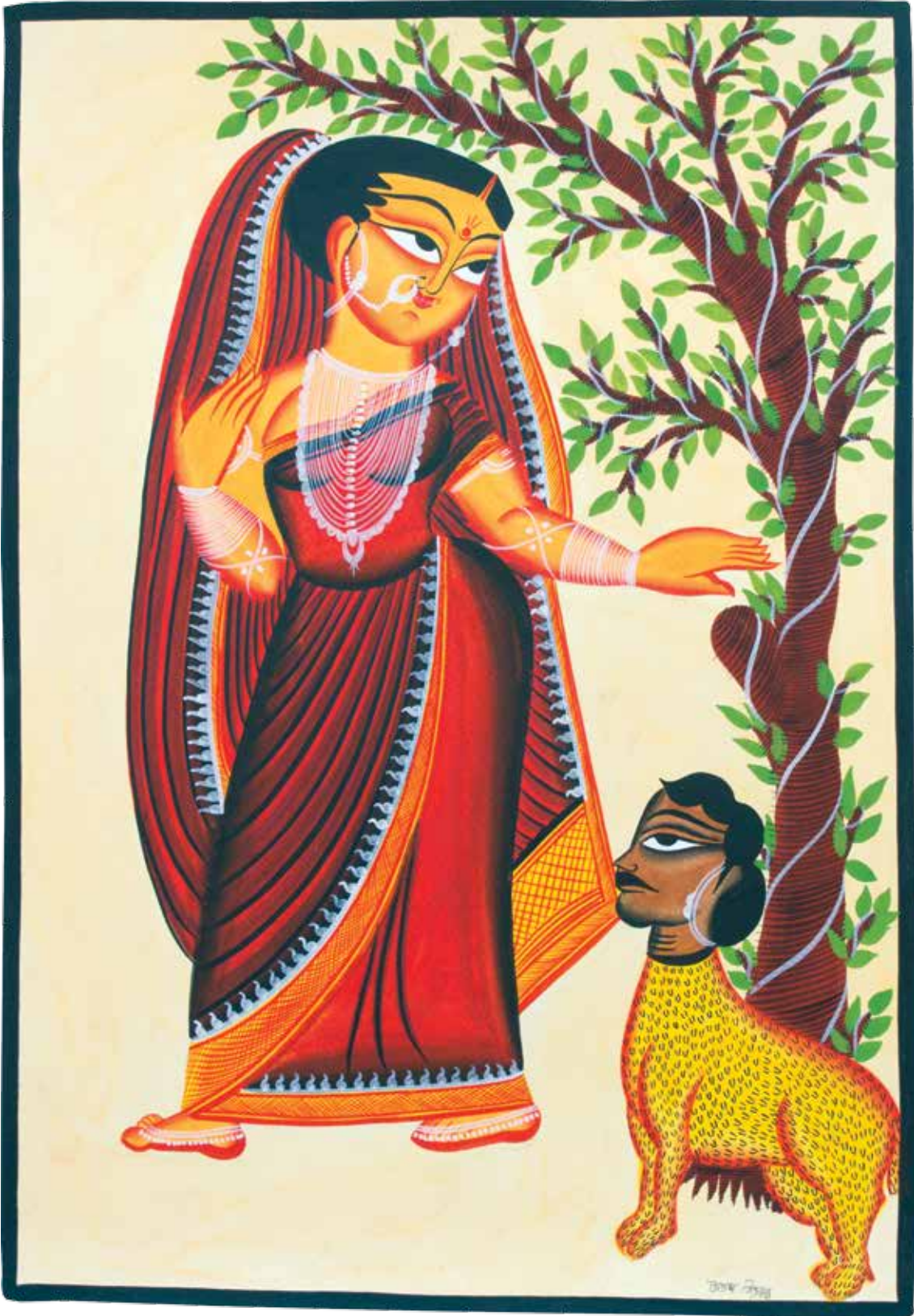
(The man of my heart dwells inside me.  
Everywhere I look, it is he.  
In my every sight, in the sparkle of light  
Oh, I can never lose him–  
Here, there and everywhere,  
Wherever I turn, he is right there!)





Uttam Chitakar  
Baul Pat, 2017  
Vegetable colour on paper  
29x144 inch





Uttam Chitrakar, *Mager Bhera* (The Sleep of Mistress), 2018, Vegetable colour on paper, 15x20.5 inch





Uttam Chitakar, *Cat catching Lobster*, 2017, Vegetable colour on white paper, 10x14 inch





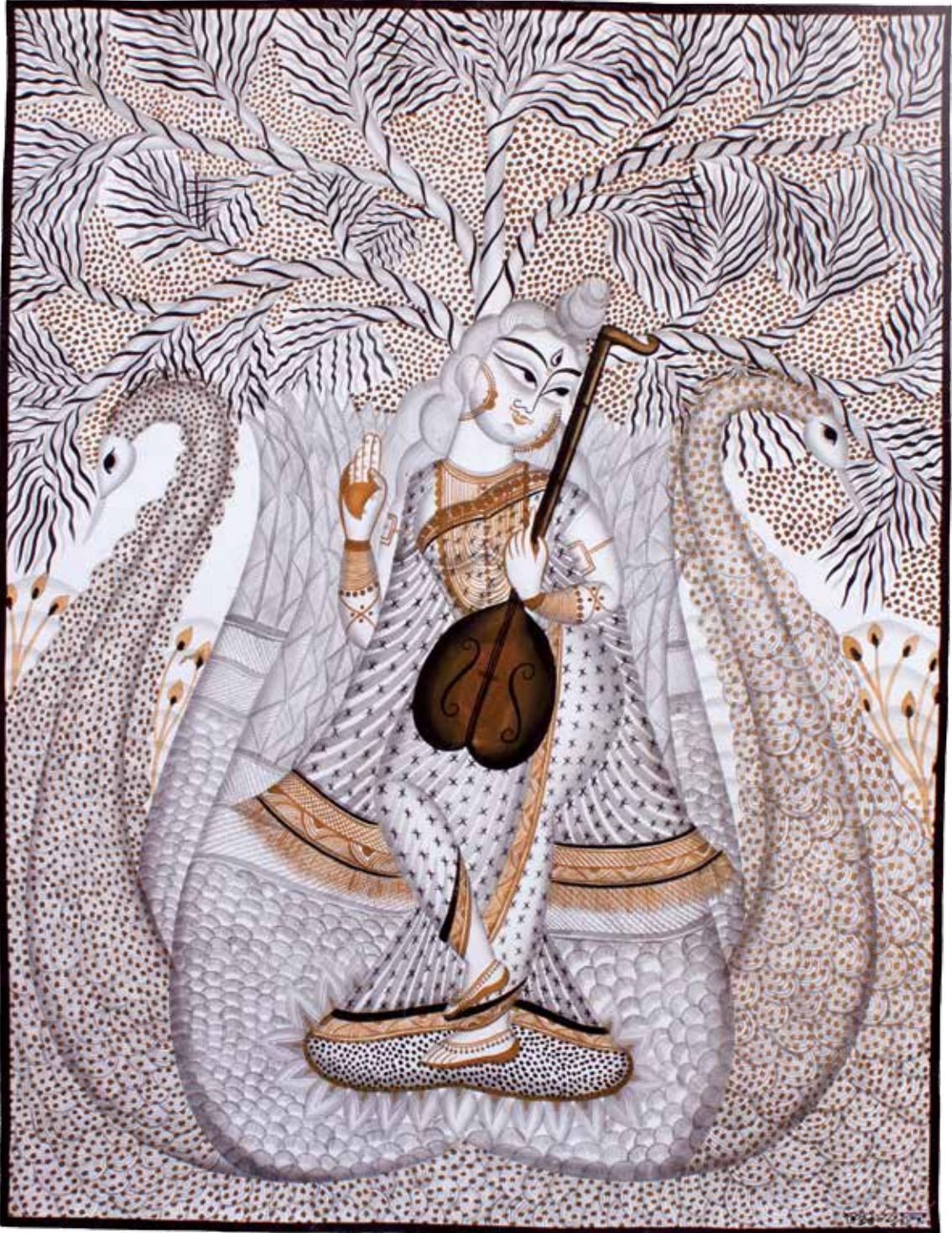
Uttam Chitakar, *Bengali couple on cart*, 2018, Vegetable colour on paper, 15x20.5 inch





Uttam Chitakar, *Couple in Babu style*, 2018, Vegetable colour on paper, 15x20.5 inch





Uttam Chitakar, *Saraswati 1*, 2018, Vegetable colour on paper, 22x30 inch





Uttam Chitakar, *Saraswati on Lotus*, Vegetable colour on paper, 22x30 inch





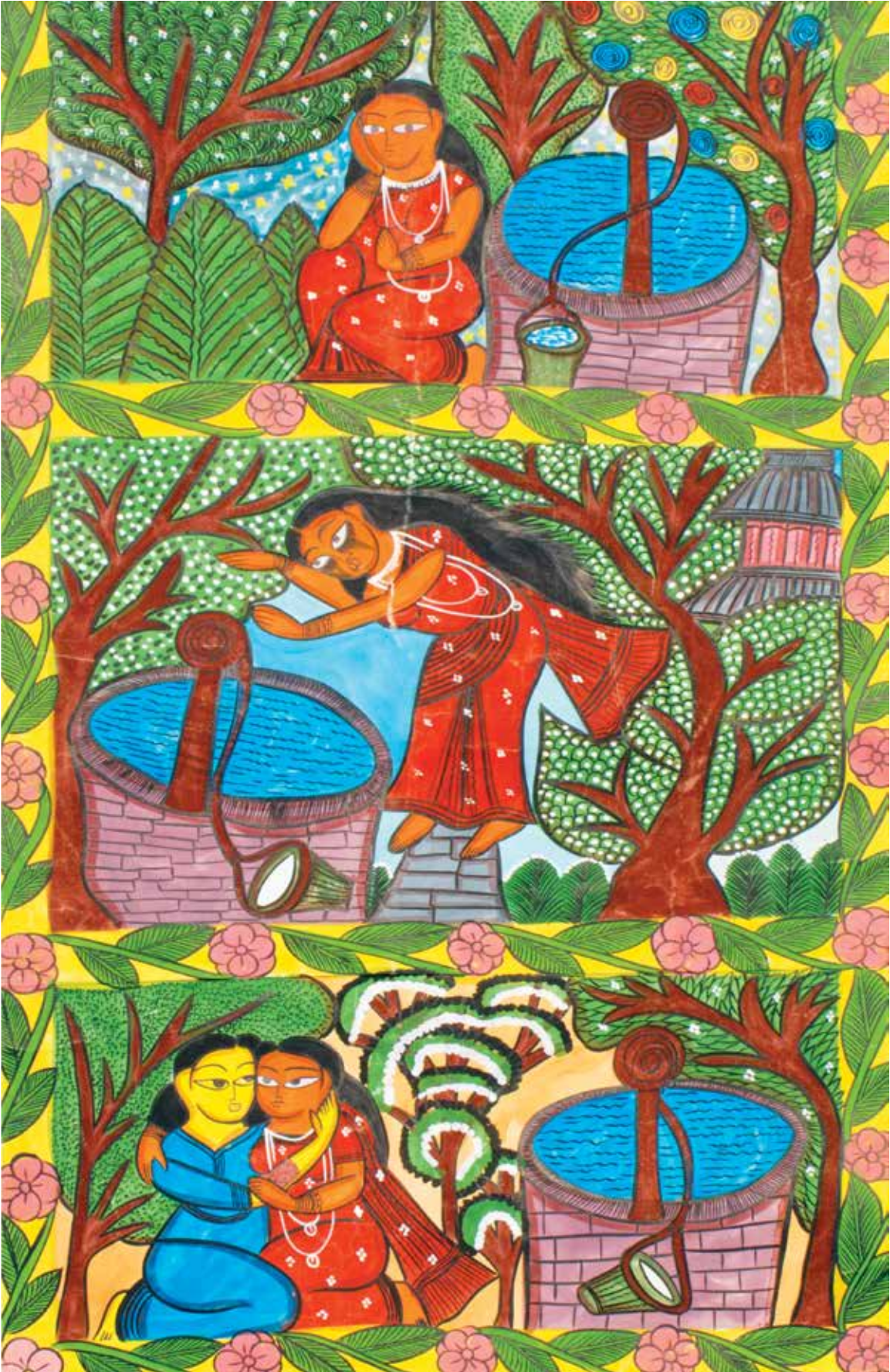
Uttam Chitakar, *Couple riding on Bullock Cart*, 2017, Vegetable colour on brown paper, 29x 21 inch





Uttam Chitakar, *Lord Ganesh*, 2018, Vegetable colour on paper, 22x30 inch









Uttam Chitakar  
*Domestic Violence*, 2017  
Vegetable colour on paper  
18x81 inch



# About the artists

## ANWAR CHITRAKAR

Born in 1980, Anwar Chitrakar trained in the Kalighat style of art. Traditional myths and stories form the basis of his work, which stem from his background as an artist and storyteller.

**OJAS**  
ART AWARD

Anwar has participated in many exhibitions in India and abroad. Some are: The Berlin Festival, Germany and Namaste India Festival, Japan; both in 2012. Devi Art Foundation's, 'Vernacular in Contemporary' in Delhi. His artworks are in many collections including the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Anwar won the West Bengal State Award in 2002, National Award in 2006 followed by the President's Award and Ojas Art Master Artist Award in 2018.

## DUKHUSHYAM CHITRAKAR

Dukhushyam Chitrakar is a living legend of Patachitra Art of Bengal. An octogenarian, he is a mystic, poet, singer and painter from Naya in West Midnapur. For 25 years he lived in Santhal. He shows Santhali culture, language and art in his scrolls.

He has painted on the British Raj and India's struggle for independence. He is a social activist and was jailed in 1975-77 at the time of National Emergency.

In 1970, he started a school to teach Patachitra art and songs to village women and the tradition continues. His works have been showcased in India, Italy, France, Australia, Bangladesh and are in the collections of Victoria Memorial, Kolkata and Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

## MOYNA & JOYDEB CHITRAKAR

Moyna Chitrakar is an artist and storyteller from Nirbhaypur in West Midnapur. She learnt painting from her mother Gauri Chitrakar, a master woman patua. She married Joydeb Chitrakar, from a family of idol makers. Gradually, Moyna & Joydeb started working together. Their artworks

have been showcased in Bangalore, Kolkata, Goa, Mumbai and Delhi. They have worked extensively with Tara Books, illustrating *Tsunami* in 2009; Samhita Arni's *Sita's Ramayana* in 2010 and *The Enduring Ark* in 2013.

## SWARNA CHITRAKAR

Born in Naya village in West Midnapur, Swarna Chitrakar learned painting from her father. Swarna received the State Award in 1994 and District Award in 1995 followed by a participation at a grand fair in Kolkata. Overseas she has participated in major festivals in France, Germany, Australia, USA, Sweden, China and England.

Through her art, Swarna has given a voice to women's issues – and has raised a voice against female infanticide, girls trafficking and rape.

She has two books to her credit *The Patua Pinocchio* with Carlo Collodi and *Monkey Photo* with Gita Wolf; both published by Tara Books.

## UTTAM CHITRAKAR

Born in 1991, Uttam Chitrakar initially learnt painting from his father. He further enhanced his skills by learning from Swarna Chitrakar. His works depict the Babu Culture, a prime theme of the Kalighat style. In 2018, he was recognised as an Ojas Art Protégé Artist.

His artworks have been exhibited at institutions like Chitrakala Parishad, Bengaluru; IGNCA, Delhi; Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata, and Crafts Museum, Delhi.

**OJAS**  
ART AWARD





Ojas Art is a Delhi based art organization bringing forth the newest ideas in the contemporary art space and presents thought provoking art at platforms across the world. The Ojas Art Award is an annual feature, exploring different genres in contemporary indigenous arts (tribal and traditional), and recognising and celebrating artists who fuse together contemporary ideas with their art. The 2018 edition of the Award focusses on the art of the Bengal Patachitra. In 2016 and 2017 the focus was on Mithila/Madhubani and the Bheel Art forms respectively.



A distinctly versatile entertainment company, Teamwork has roots in the performing arts, social movement, and the corporate world. Their expertise lies in the areas of entertainment such as television, film – documentary and feature, and the creation and development of contemporary performing arts, visual arts & literary festivals across the world.

Teamwork produces one of the world's largest literary gatherings, the annual Jaipur Literature Festival.



Described as the 'greatest literary show on Earth' and the 'Kumbh of literature', the ZEE Jaipur Literature Festival is a sumptuous feast of ideas. The past decade has seen it transform into a global literary phenomenon having hosted nearly 2000 speakers and welcoming over a million book lovers from across India and the globe. The Festival's core values remain unchanged; to serve as a democratic, non-aligned platform offering free and fair access. Every year, the Festival brings together a diverse mix of the world's greatest writers, thinkers, humanitarians, politicians, business leaders, sports people and entertainers on one stage to champion the freedom to express and engage in thoughtful debate and dialogue.



Maharatna Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) is the largest crude oil and natural gas Company in India, contributing around 70 per cent to Indian domestic production.

ONGC ranks 11th among global energy majors (Platts). It is the only public sector Indian company to feature in Fortune's 'Most Admired Energy Companies' list. ONGC ranks 18th in 'Oil and Gas operations' and 183rd overall in Forbes Global 2000.

ONGC has a unique distinction of being a company with in-house service capabilities in all areas of exploration and production of oil & gas and related oil-field services. Winner of the Best Employer award, this public sector enterprise has a dedicated team of over 33,500 professionals.



**Satrangi**  
**Bengal Patachitra**

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OJAS  
ART

Ojas is a Sanskrit word which is best transliterated as 'the nectar of the third eye and an embodiment of the creative energy of the universe'.

Ojas endeavours to bring forth the newest ideas in contemporary art.



Cover:  
Swarna Chitrakar  
*Santhal Wedding Ritual*, 2018  
Vegetable colour on brown paper  
28x132 inch

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