

Satranghi 19

Art of the Warlis

5 to 26 September
11 am to 7 pm.

Ojas Art



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*Ojas is a Sanskrit word
and may be inferred as the
embodiment of the creative
energy of the universe.
Ojas is also described as the
nectar of the third eye.*

Headed by Anubhav Nath, OJAS ART is a Delhi based art organization bringing forth the newest ideas in the contemporary art space. We endeavour to bring together artists and ideas supported by extensive research and thoughtful dialogues enabling creativity and innovation. We are actively involved in research, consultancy, and advising on building collections.

For the last decade we have been involved in promoting the contemporary Indian Indigenous Arts in a holistic manner involving an annual art award, exhibitions and publications.

Satranji 19

Art of the Warlis

Amit Mahadev Dombhare

Kishore Mashe

Mayur & Tushar Vayeda

Rajesh Vangad

Sadashiv Mashe

Shantaram Gorkhana

Project Advisor Prof Neeru Misra

The Art of the Warlis

Prof. Neeru Misra

emanating in the laps of the foothills of northern parts of the Sahyadri range of the Western Ghats, Warli style of painting has a rich legacy of over a thousand years. Mostly confined to the surrounding areas close to Mumbai, Palghar, and Nasik, in Maharashtra; Dang, Navsari and Surat in Gujarat and the Union Territories of Daman, Dadar and Nagar Haveli, Warli paintings were associated with the rituals of the Warli tribe for last ten centuries. Warlis were dependent on agriculture, farming and wild life for their sustenance and by that virtue, held Mother Nature, *Palaghata*, in the highest esteem. Warli is also a derivative of 'varal' meaning patch of cultivated land. Five headed god or *panch sirya dev* - a headless warrior usually shown on a horse is also an important supernatural symbol among the Warlis.

The paintings have a striking similarity to the cave art of the rock shelters spread from Alaniya in Rajasthan to Bhim Bhetka in Madhya Pradesh and some scholars have thus traced the ancestry of Warli painting traditions to more than 5000 years. The clay walls of the huts were the canvas for hundreds of years. Mostly these walls were readily available to lap the expressions of any painter, and yet sometimes the walls were specially prepared with fine powder of earth or brick to provide for a contrasting red-ochre background to make the drawings more visible. Mud, *geru*, indigo and henna has also been used to prepare the background. Paste of white rice powder, considered to be replete with magical powers to ward off the evil, mixed with gum and crushed ends of a slender bamboo stick as the paint-brush or sometimes pen made with the wood of *baharu* tree was all that an artist required to enhance the celebrations of harvest season or weddings. Sometimes yellow or red dots are also used to enrich the paintings. All these elements of Warli paintings represent a community culture, an age old cultural identity, rather than an individual expression.

The painters for years were able to base their paintings on triangles, circles and squares, each having a simple but deep symbolism. Circle represented the Sun and Moon, triangle was symbolic of the conical mountain tops and squares symbolized the enclosures or fields and even villages, huts or human dwellings. That an art can sustain for more than a thousand years on such minimal foundations was perhaps the greatest strength of Warli art form.

The square or enclosure of the Warli paintings is known as *chauk* or *chaukhat* and is further subdivided into two categories – the *deva-chauk* or the divine enclosure, and is also a symbol of fertility or Mother Goddess, the Palaghat. The other is *lagna-chauk*, related to the special occasions. A third variety, *kanna*, a square painting is a symbol of virginity and is drawn on the brides house, distinguishable with a prominent cross and usually also decorated with some yellow turmeric dots or red-orange *sindur*. Besides, *mutthi* painting or the impression of fist made out of first rice harvest by women on the outer and inner walls, the granaries and even on the bread (*bhakhri*) baskets and ploughs is a common site. Repeated impressions of fists symbolize handfuls of grains or prosperity brought home.

Triangles have been used to paint human bodies – two inverse triangles joined at the vertex – the upper part being the shoulder, tapering to the slender waist and spreading out into the lower pelvic region gave artists further creativity to depict male and female forms using the same two triangles. The larger upper triangle symbolized a male with broad shoulders, and the larger lower triangle symbolized a female. Similarly, triangles in different angles and sizes enjoined together have been used to depict the animal world. Symbolism of Warli painters instantly communicates with the viewer. Its appropriate and proportionate placing on walls and the meanings associated with fertility, creation and nature lend paintings the desired strength to convey a great deal with white

lines drawn on an ochre red background. 'Irregular strokes of brush or sticks...are not the deformities, but distinctive traits of the art.'

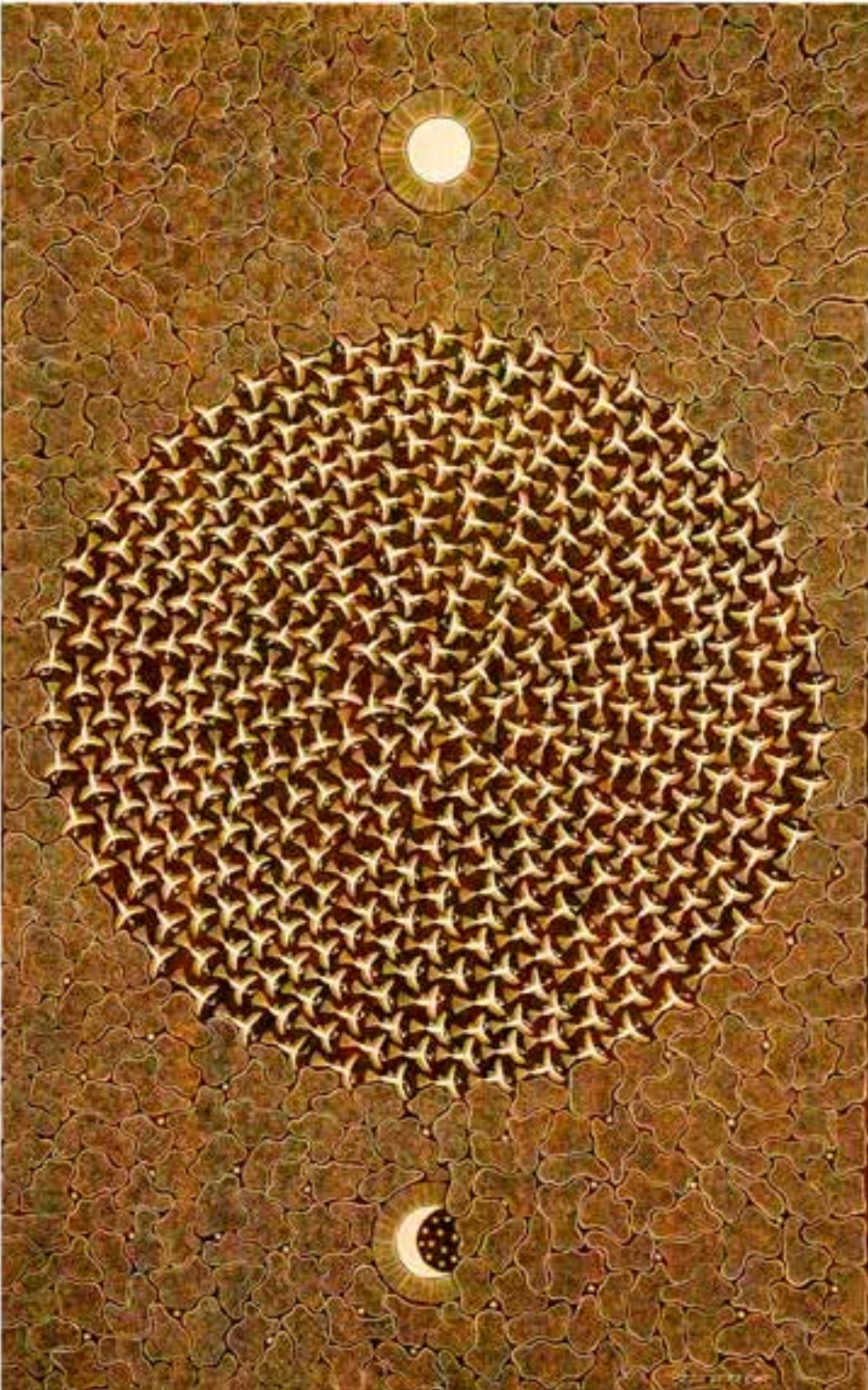
The paintings were not confined only to celebrations of rituals and harvest seasons, but the artists were also free to paint their walls showing day to day life of the community. The scenes and themes have portrayed dances, celebrations, hunting scenes, as also farming and fishing. *Tarpa* – a six-feet long, trumpet like instrument or *ghangli*, a string instrument is played during dancing. Warlis believe that *tarpa* was gifted to them by *Narandeva*. Performed anti-clockwise in sync with the cosmic forces, with vigorous movements, by youngsters and watched by elderly *tarpa*-dance scenes are a common sight in most of the paintings. The male gods are almost absent in Warli paintings, though some male spirits can occasionally be noticed.

The tradition of Warli wall paintings saw a revolution when Jivya Soma Mashe in 1970s started painting on paper and cloth. Thus the tradition of a thousand years which was confined to walls and thus hidden from the outside world, travelled out and due to its simplicity and uniqueness, spread like a wild fire. It became instantly very popular and Mashe's family joined and thus started the artistic pursuit of the Warli painters.

The present exhibition presents some of the finest Warli paintings in contemporary times, covering almost all the variegated aspects of the thousand year old tradition. It is an attempt to give art connoisseurs an opportunity to peep into this most ancient art tradition which is still alive in its original pristine form.

Prof Neeru Misra is Visiting Professor at Manipur Culture University and has nine books to her credit including original researches based on manuscripts. She is reachable at neeru.misra@gmail.com

Amit Mahadev Dombhare



Birds (Aashra), 2019
Mixed media on traditionally
treated cloth,
37 x 60 inches



Lady Life (Poricha Jeevan), 2019
Mixed media on traditionally
treated cloth,
56 x 30 inches



Harvesting (Sheti), 2018
Mixed media on
traditionally treated cloth,
13 x 33 inches



Village, 2019
Mixed media on
traditionally treated
cloth,
12 x 34 inches



Tree (Jhaad), 2018
Mixed media on
traditionally treated
cloth,
35 x 7 inches



Fish Net (*Paagir*), 2019
Mixed media on traditionally
treated cloth,
37 x 48 inches



Rice Cutting (Bhaat Kapani), 2019
Mixed media on traditionally treated cloth,
37 x 48 inches

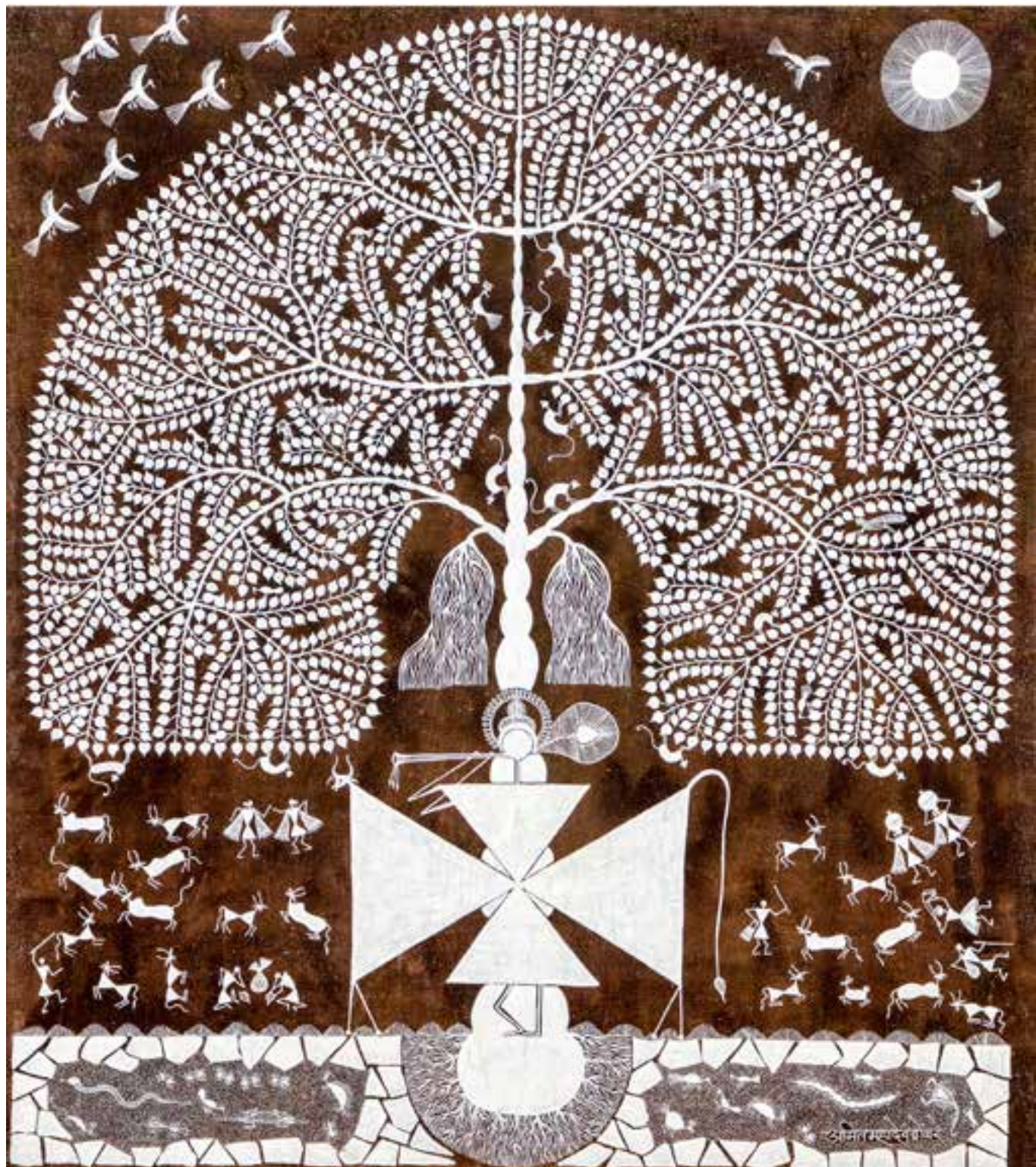


Kunbee, 2019
Mixed media on traditionally treated cloth,
37 x 48 inches



Ant House (Bhone), 2019
Mixed media on traditionally treated cloth,
36 x 48 inches

Facing page:
Tree of Life (Krishna), 2018
Mixed media on traditionally treated cloth,
32 x 36 inches



Kishore Sadashiv Mashe

Paddy Goddess (Kansari Mata), 2019
Mixed media on traditionally treated
cloth done with bamboo sticks,
55 x 33 inches





*How the earth turned green (Prithvi Harvi
Kashi Jhali), 2019*
Mixed media on traditionally treated cloth
done with bamboo sticks,
22 x 35 inches

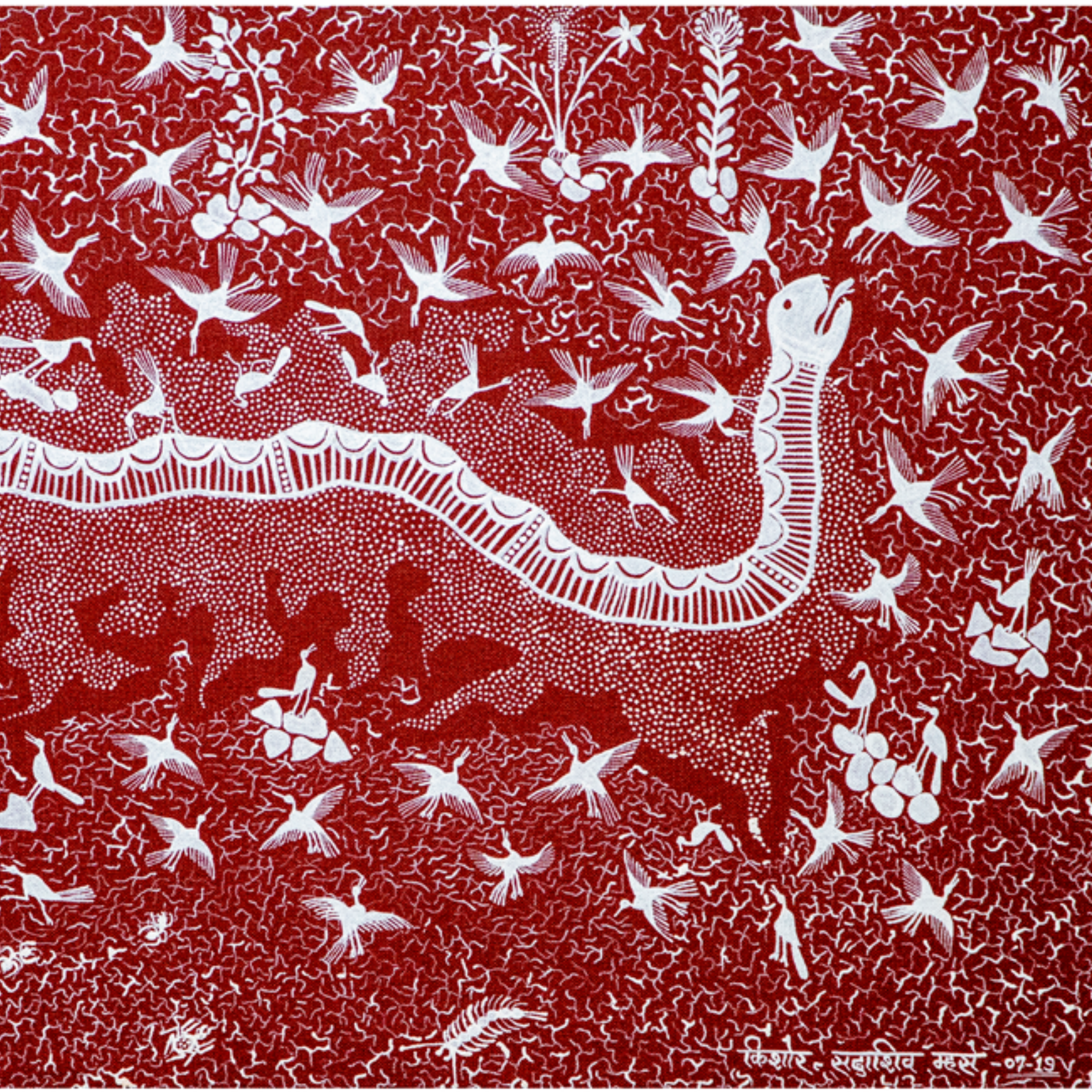


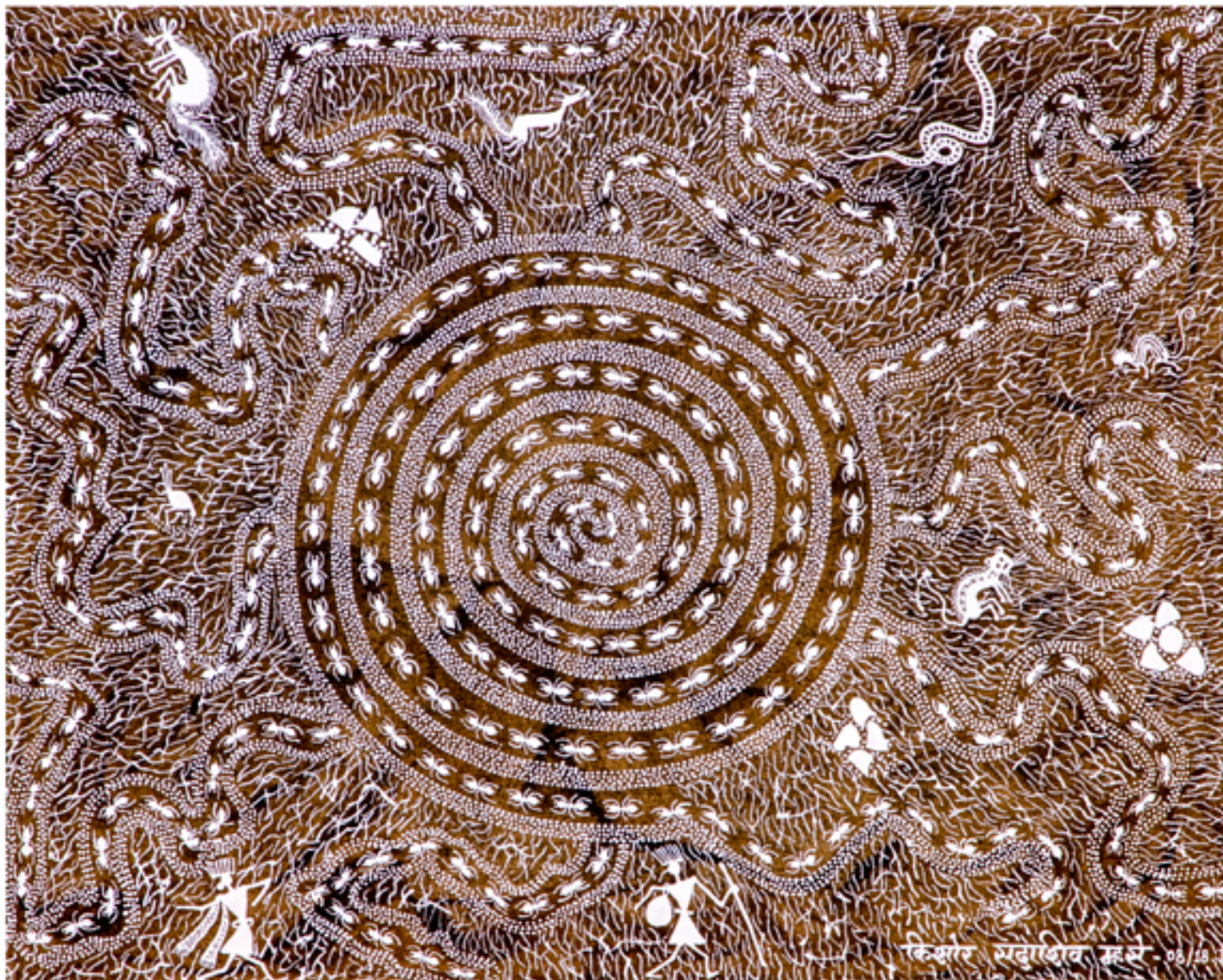


How the earth turned balance, 2015
Mixed media on traditionally treated cloth
done with bamboo sticks,
38 x 54 inches

The Hunter Maina (Shikari Saalhaya), 2019
Mixed media on traditionally treated cloth
done with bamboo sticks,
32 x 20 inches







Ant Circle (Bhone), 2018
Mixed media on traditionally treated cloth done
with bamboo sticks,
21 x 17 inches

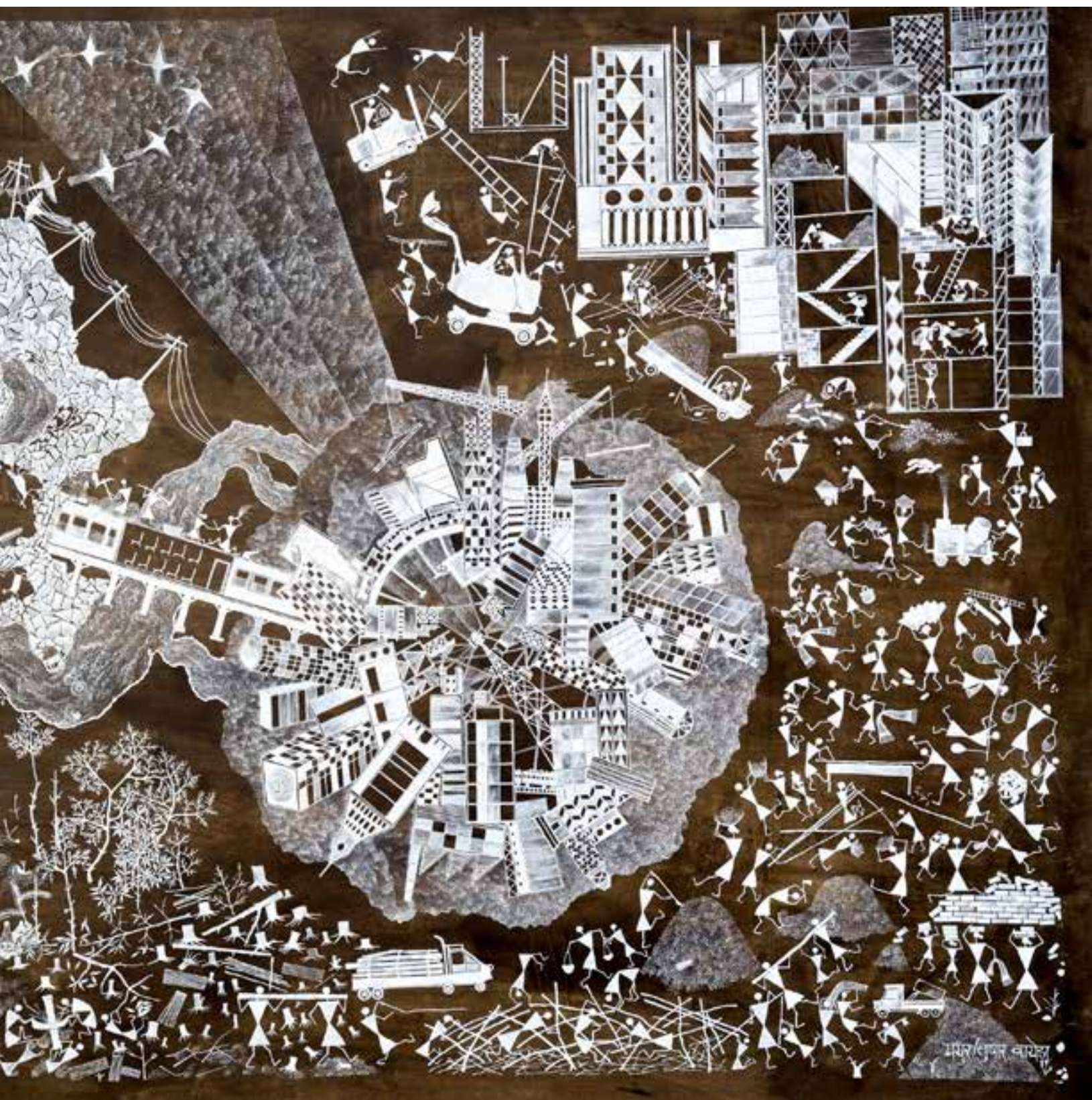


The Daughter of bell fruit (Belavat Kanya), 2019
Mixed media on traditionally treated cloth done
with bamboo sticks,
31 x 20 inches

Mayur & Tushar Vayeda

Untitled
Poster colours on traditionally treated
cloth done with bamboo sticks
84 x 48 inches







The source - Beginning before the Earth, 2019
 Acrylic and Natural Glue on cloth
 Set of three each is 16 x 16 inches





Deep Forest, 2019
Acrylic and Natural Glue on cloth,
Set of three each is 11 x 11 inches





Birth, 2019
Acrylic and Natural Glue on cloth
Set of Two each is 11 x 11 inches



Veer (The statue of legends)
Poster colours on traditionally treated
cloth drawn with bamboo sticks,
27 x 40 inches

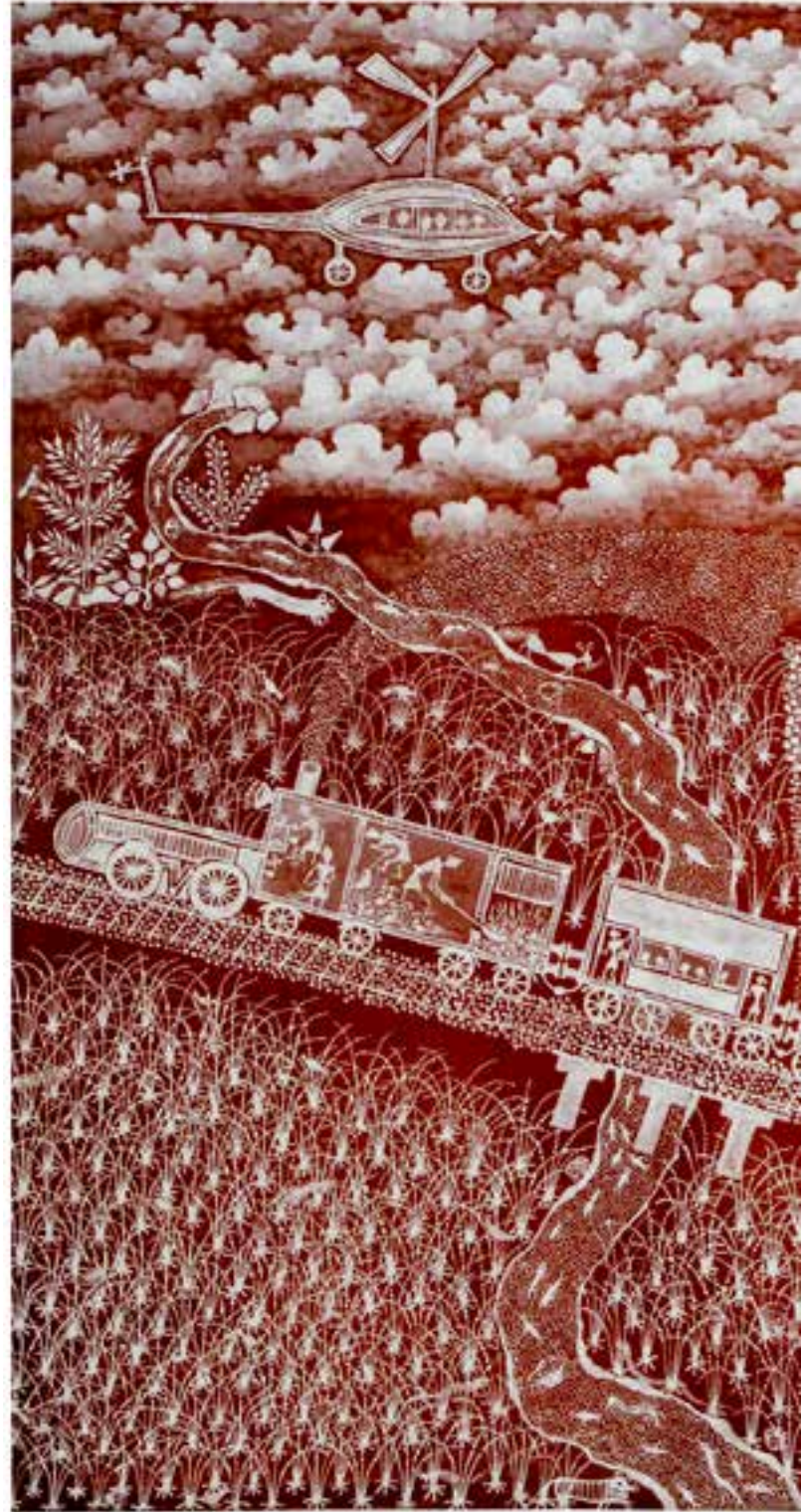
Gathering of Gods
Poster colours on traditionally treated cloth
35 x 60 inches

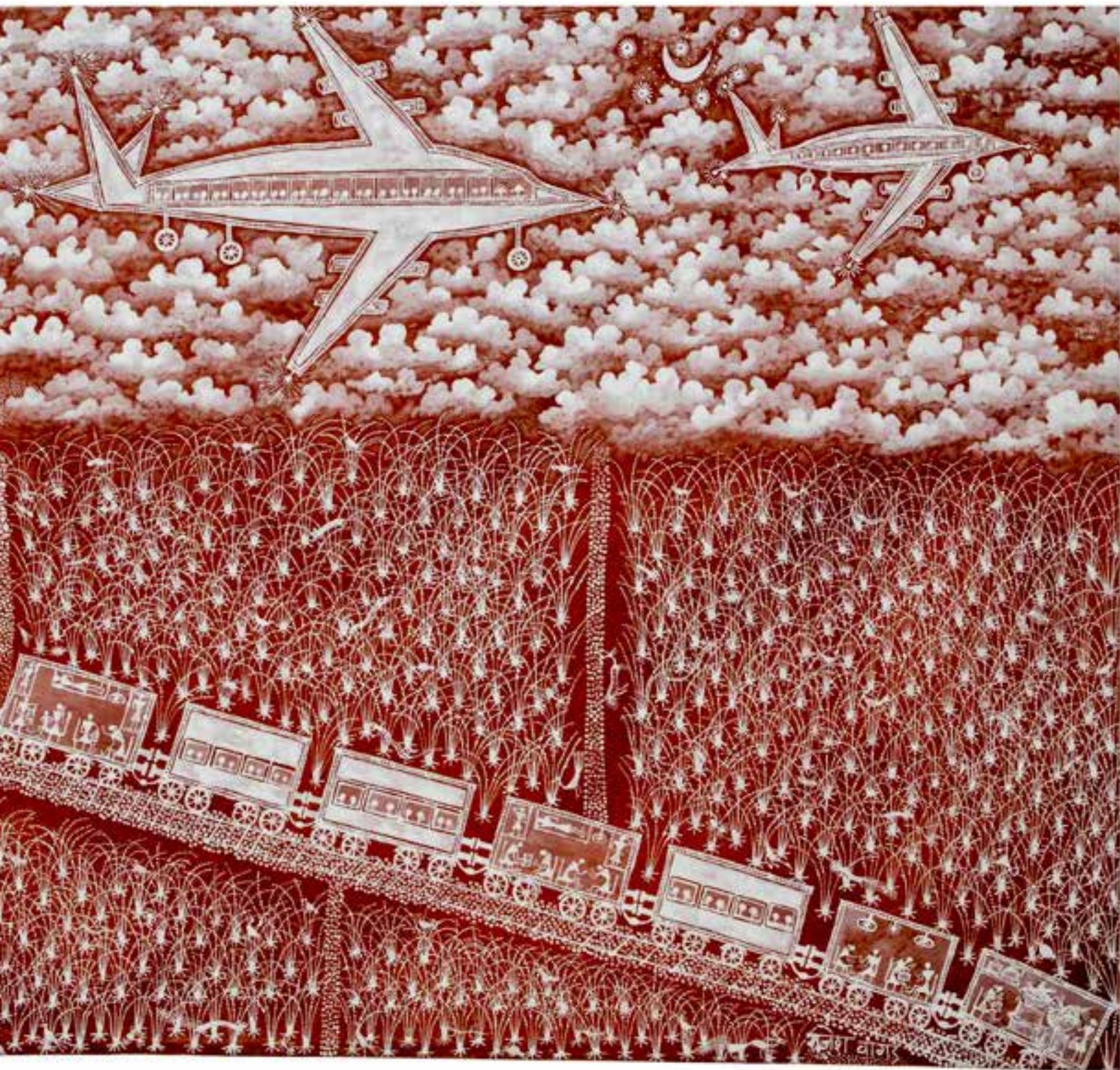




Rajesh Chaitya Vangad

Kheti Viman
Mixed media on traditionally treated
cloth drawn with bamboo sticks
34 x 53 inches







Wheat fields (Dhaan Ke Khet)
Mixed media on traditionally
treated cloth done with
bamboo sticks
35 x 56 inches

Birds
Mixed media on
traditionally treated
cloth done with
bamboo sticks
41 x 33 inches









Untitled, 2018
Mixed media on traditionally
treated cloth done with
bamboo sticks
96 x 60 inches



Pashu Pakshi Jan Jeevan
Mixed media on traditionally
treated cloth done with
bamboo sticks
32 x 67 inches



Mahadev Ganga Gauri
Mixed media on traditionally treated
cloth done with bamboo sticks
34 x 67 inches

Untitled, 2018
Mixed media on
traditionally treated cloth
done with bamboo sticks
96 x 60 inches







Fish Net

Mixed media on traditionally treated
cloth done with bamboo sticks
41 x 33 inches

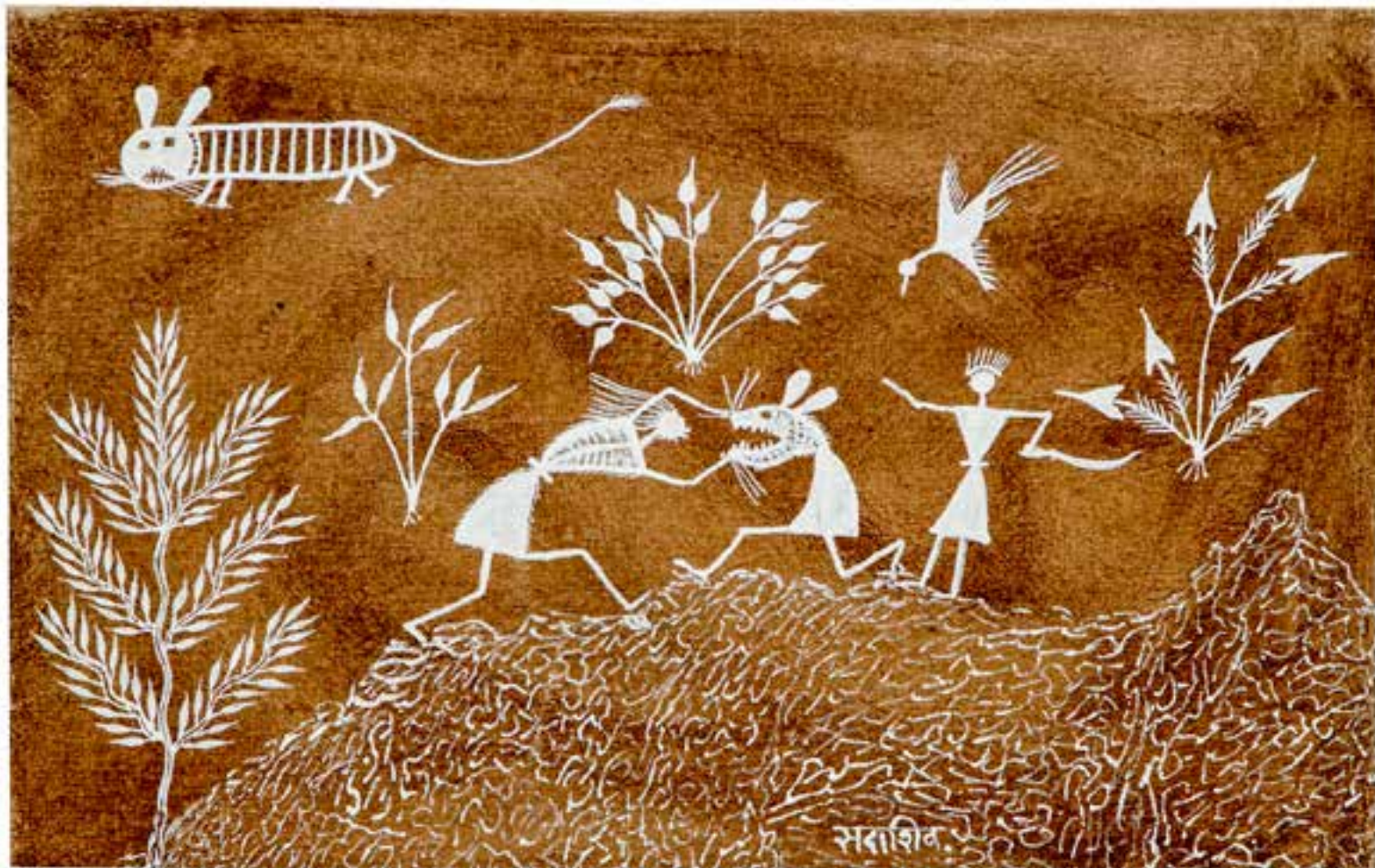


Untitled, 2018
Mixed media on
traditionally treated cloth
done with bamboo sticks
96 x 60 inches

Sadashiv Jivya Mashe

Child Birth
(*Santaan Prapti*)
Poster colours on
traditionally treated cloth
done with bamboo sticks,
20 x 14 inches





Tiger God (Vaagh Dev)
Poster colours on traditionally treated cloth done
with bamboo sticks,
14 x 9 inches



Fish Catcher women's (Maase pakadnaari Baaya), Poster colours on traditionally treated cloth done with bamboo sticks, 34 x 17 inches



सदाशिव जिब्बा म्हरी



Crane and Crab (Nilhaya aani Belkad)

Poster colours on traditionally treated cloth
done with bamboo sticks,

14 x 20 inches



Racism (Jaati Bhed)

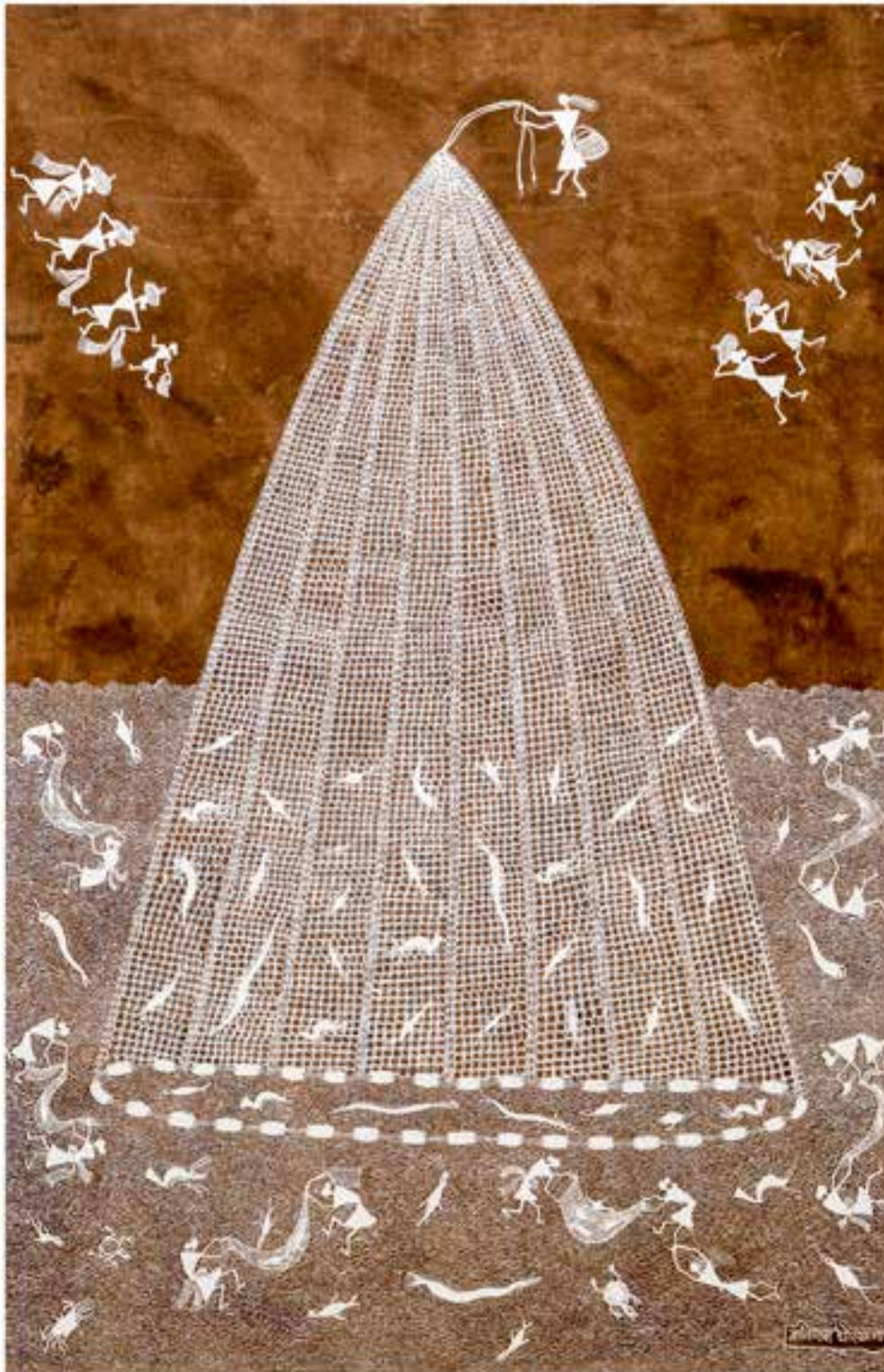
Poster colours on traditionally treated
cloth done with bamboo sticks,
14 x 20 inches

The Daughter of Bell Fruit (Belavat Kanya)
Poster colours on traditionally treated
cloth done with bamboo sticks,
31 x 20 inches





Shantaram Gorkhana



Fishing Net I (Paagir), 2018
Poster colours on
traditionally treated cloth,
37 x 25 inches

Facing page:
Fishing Net II (Paagir), 2019
Poster colours on
traditionally treated cloth,
14 x 14 inches



Marriage Ceremony
(*Lagnachi Varaat*), 2018
Poster colours on
traditionally treated cloth,
20 x 12 inches





शांताराम घोखना



Train (Aaggadhi), 2019
Poster colours on traditionally treated cloth,
25 x 38 inches



Ship (Jahaaj), 2019
Poster colours on traditionally treated cloth,
25 x 32 inches

Paddy Goddess (Kansari Mata), 2018
Poster colours on traditionally treated cloth,
24 x 32 inches





शान्तराम चव्हाण

Rajesh Chaitya Vangad

Rajesh Chaitya Vangad was born in 1975 in Ganjad, Maharashtra. Vangad has painted notable murals at the Craft Museum, New Delhi; Homi Bhaba Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai and International Airport, Mumbai. He has also exhibited his works in UK, Spain, Germany and Japan. Vangad has published three books: *My Gandhi Story*, *Kabir Saamagri* and *The Indian Craft Journey*. In 2017, his artworks were a part of Documenta 14 Kassel, Germany.

In 2013, he worked on a collaborative series with photographer Gauri Gill. The photo essay has been published in *Granta* magazine and exhibited in art galleries across India.

He received the Master Artist, Ojas Art Award 2019 for excellence in Warli Art.



Mayur & Tushar Vayeda

Mayur Vayeda, born in 1992 in Ganjad, Maharashtra. He completed Bachelor of Management Studies in 2013, followed by Masters in 2017, both from the University of Mumbai.

Tushar Vayeda, born in 1987 in Ganjad, Maharashtra. In 2014, he completed a multimedia course from the University of Mumbai.

Brothers by blood, Mayur and Tushar work together as a collective. They are formally educated and are very mature in their thinking and art practice. They work together with an equal zeal for detailing. They have been a part of many projects internationally.

In 2017, they had a residency with the Mithila Museum, Japan followed by a project at the Aomori Museum of Art, Japan. In 2018, they were a part of Inde au Manoir de la ville de Maerigny, Switzerland and Pentures Warli de l'Inde, Espace d'art FL, France.

In 2019, they undertook a public art project in Hong Kong in collaboration with Teamwork Arts and HK Walls. They have also participated at Setouchi Triennale, Japan.

They received the Protégé Artists, Ojas Art Award 2019 for excellence in Warli Art.



Kishore Mashe

Born in 1984 at Ganjad village in Maharashtra, Kishore Sadashiv Mashe is the grandson of legendary Warli master Jivya Soma Mashe. Kishore has been painting since childhood and learnt the living art form as practiced by his family. Kishore Mashe has painted walls at the Homi Bhaba Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai; International Airport in Mumbai and the Wall Art Festival at Sakura city, Japan. He has also exhibited his works in Queens Museum, New York and Germany.

In 2017, he received Gold Medal from Prafulla Dahanukar Art Foundation.

Sadashiv Mashe

Born in 1960, Sadashiv Mashe is the son of the renowned Warli artist Jivya Soma Mashe. His pictorial style is rooted in the tradition of Warli, with rhythmic, simplified forms representing the complexities of the world around him. Like his father, Sadashiv has travelled to many countries, including Japan. He continues the tradition of Warli painting along with his brother, Balu Mashe.

Amit Mahadev Dombhare

Born in 1985 in Ganjad, Maharashtra. He has exhibited his works in Bangalore, Goa, Shimla, Bhopal and Craft Museum, New Delhi. He also participated in Adi Shilp Mela, Jaipur and Shilp Bazaar, Gwalior.

Shantaram Gorkhana

Born in 1967. He has also exhibited his works at Craft Museum Delhi; Kalighat, Calcutta; Kala Ghoda, Mumbai and Indira Gandhi National Museum, Mumbai. In 2015 he has painted walls in Brazil.

Since 1997, Shantaram Gorkhana has been regularly visiting Mithila Museum, Japan for residencies and workshops.

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