



Drawing Life

BALU J MASHE | MAYUR & TUSHAR VAYEDA

RAJESH VANGAD | RAMESH LAXMAN HENGADI

SADASHIV J MASHE | SHANTARAM GORKHANA

OJAS ART

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OJAS ART

In 2019, we hosted our first major Warli Art exhibition, and learnt a lot over the next few years. Among the indigenous arts, on first look Warli seems plodding with essentially a brown base and white imagery. It takes a little bit of time to understand and appreciate Warli and it emerges as the most simplistic, to-the-point, and lightest art form.

In the 1970s Jivya Soma Mashe started painting on paper and cloth, enabling the travel of the art form, from walls to the world. Today, it is one of the most recognized art forms coming out of India and is celebrated for its simplicity and poignancy.

Anubhav Nath, Ojas Art

We see a whole wave of movement of humanity as it swirls one way and then another, with the ebb and flow of life. Hills, mountains, fields, rivers are separate patterns interlocked into a protoplasmic whole. The river in some paintings could be descending from the heavens or rising from the subterranean depths of one's own consciousness. Within the unfolding vistas, similar to the Warli landscape, we have a concrete depiction of everyday life-of plants, animals and men, where the minutest creature is not forgotten. The narration of the story is not linear but rather one which takes place in boundless space, where action is not sequential but simultaneous. The main thread of the story is encompassed in the continuously changing, forever moving life of the multitudes.

And this may well be the vital difference between the documentation of an oral tradition in words and in visual images: while the one tends to inhibit future possibilities of development, the visual is open, reflecting the changing inflections of a living community. The grandeur of these paintings on Warli myths and legends consists in their sweeping movements that still pay meticulous attention to the humblest, the most ordinary: to life.

Yashodhara Dalmia, *The Warlis: Tribal Paintings and Legends*



Drawing Life : Form - From - Form

Nikhil Purohit, Artist, Curator, Educator

May we draw life/ from life or bring the form to life?

Our venture today is beyond the debate of what delineates the art from tribes and that from the civil world. The notion of contemporaneity lies in the coexistence of the subliminal cultures along with the mainstream. Perhaps, as witnessed in their metropolitan pictorials, the Warli writers today have access to the world and life, past the agrarian culture.

We set our foot into a region of Warli writers who not only have the exposure to the contemporary industrialised world, but are making their observations of the 'new' world vividly through their non-religious notes. The iconic versatile glyphic units used by the elderly practitioners viz. Balu Mashe, Sadashiv Mashe and Shantaram Gorkhana allow them to seamlessly venture through painting surfaces-small or large. The 'Mashe' signature is evident in the use of

their spatial arrangements. And their individuality is observed through their sense of ground preparation and its tonality- allowing for a medley of formal distributions. Their cryptic works provide a cosmogenic view to a living world. Engrossed in their self indulgent banality - the variety of agrarian domestic sub-routines allow them to scale up or down their compositions suitable to the size of the painting surface and scope of their topic. The monumental forms of the industrial age viz. planes, submarines, sea-bridges are now a common graphic sentiment engulfed into the Warli cosmogenic realm.

The elder Shantaram Gorkhana is known to meticulously isolate a lateral view of a plane or a submarine depicted like a mythical giant animal into space voyaging gallantly.

Inhabiting near to the seashore offers an obvious subject for marine depictions. The fishing net - one of the most

popular idioms is handled uniquely by the Gorkhana where he converges a bunch of three nets towards a void space similar to a cytoplasmic vacuole. In contrast to it, the double net by Balu Mashe almost instantaneously renders the notion of gravity void. Rajesh Vangad's 'fisherman' appears to be a godly creature surmounting the waters, where the marine life appears to be submissive under his eternal net. The peculiarity lies in the exploiting of the brush where once dipped in the paint, it leaves a faint trail creating a medley of visible-invisible cover- a painterly approach.

The schematic principle of the Warli rendition is rather a satellite study of a microculture where the life patterns are objectively noted without any emotive engagement. As wanderers of the visual world, the scripts of Vayeda brothers appear as the Avante Garde of Warli tradition. They conjoin geometric formations and an intimate painterly method of treating the pigment

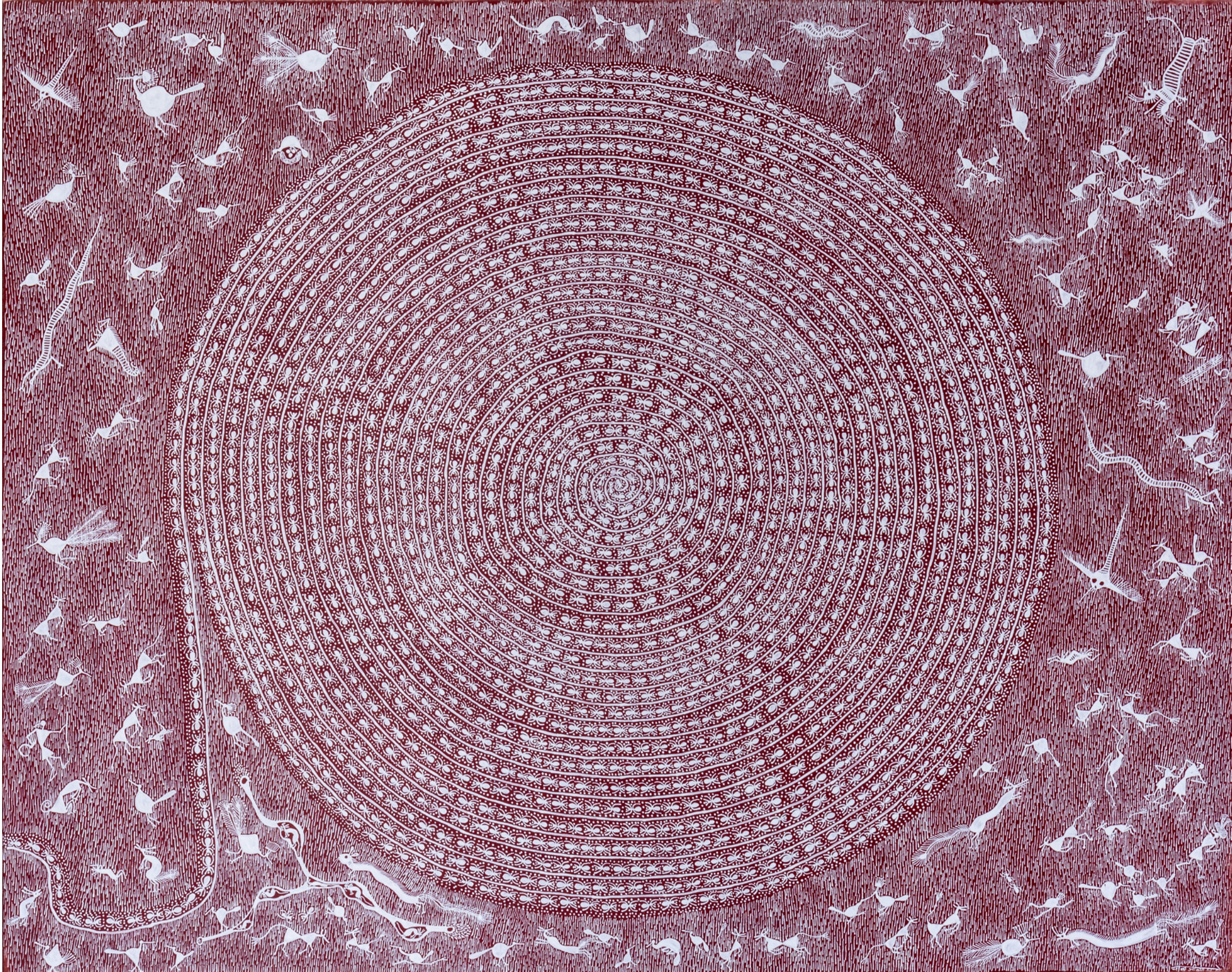
offering a modulation unusual to the Warli methods. The Realm of Energy (Forest), the Hero (Veer)

invokes a reverential feeling and an experience of subtle emotion almost absent in the cryptic tradition. The occupational agrarian engagement is witnessed in the works of Ramesh Hengadi. His abstractionist approach resonates a sort of exposure to Modernism where a farm's aerial view is treated as a symmetrical plan of organic geometry.

Through a cumulative visual thought - the current Warli are moving towards some form of acculturation where their intrinsic objectivity of absolute iconic forms assume qualities of emotiveness and painterly aesthetics.



Balu J Mashe



Bhone, 2023
Water based color
on cloth using
traditional methods
48 x 38 inch



Chera God, 2023
Water based color on
cloth using traditional
methods
83 x 54 inch

Mayur & Tushar Vayeda



Tree of Life, 2023
Water based color on
cloth using traditional
methods
56 x 90 inch



Veer, 2023
Water based
color on
cloth using
traditional
methods
52 x 31 inch



Realm of Energy, 2023
Water based color on cloth using traditional methods
37 x 20 inch

Rajesh Chaitya Vangad is one of the finest proponents of Warli art in India, and therefore the world. He uses a language which is as typical as distinct, as exacting as exuberant, draws from a vast khazana of an imagination, and has an instinctive understanding of all kinds of art forms—including the avant garde and the contemporary, of which he may be said to form a vital part. He is literary, and brings complex narratives to bear on his visual art. Having studied with masters like Jivya Soma Mashe, he now extends the same generosity to many young artists himself. He is my friend, with whom I have had the great privilege of working since 2013. These long years spent together have taught me much. One of the things I am still learning from him, is how to sit still without distracting oneself. Needless to say, I have some way to go.”

Gauri Gill, Artist



Rajesh Chaitya Vangad



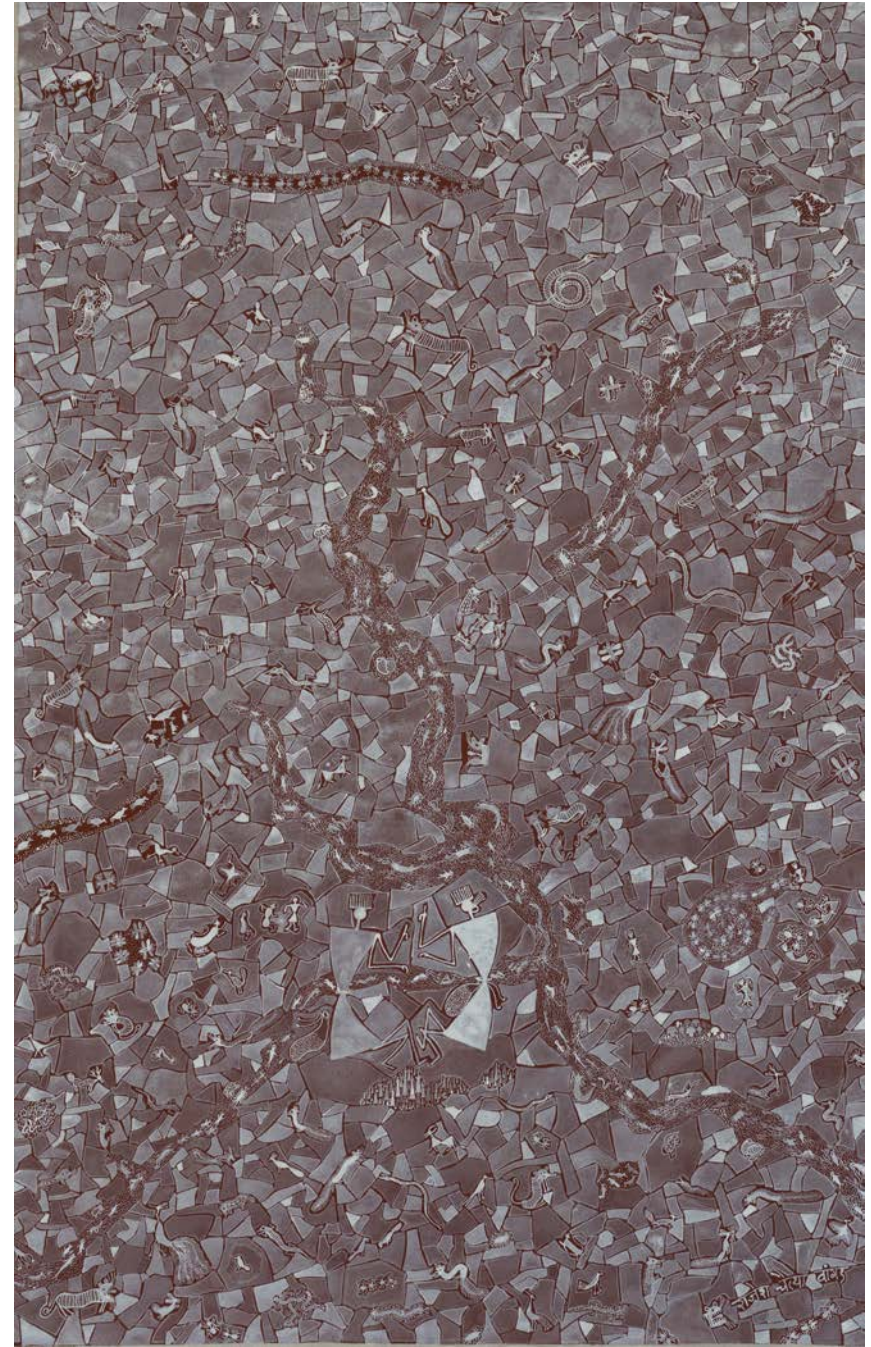
Untitled, 2018
Water based color on
cloth using traditional
methods
65 x 103 inch



Untitled, 2018
Water based
color on
cloth using
traditional
methods
65 x 103 inch



Creator I, 2022
Water based color on cloth using traditional methods
52 x 32 inch



Creator III, 2023
Water based color on cloth using traditional methods
52 x 33 inch



Creator II, 2022
Water based color on cloth using traditional methods
47 x 35 inch



Warli tradition of preparing the paints.

The journey from raw materials to expressive artwork begins first with the careful selection of soil based on shade and texture. There are various shades of brown earth, or the vivid reddish brick hue locally known as 'Geru.'

After soaking the chosen soil in water for a day and sieving it multiple times to achieve a fine paste, the next crucial step involves refining this paste by passing it through a fine cloth. Glue is added, to enhance durability, which was historically extracted from trees but now the ready options are also used.

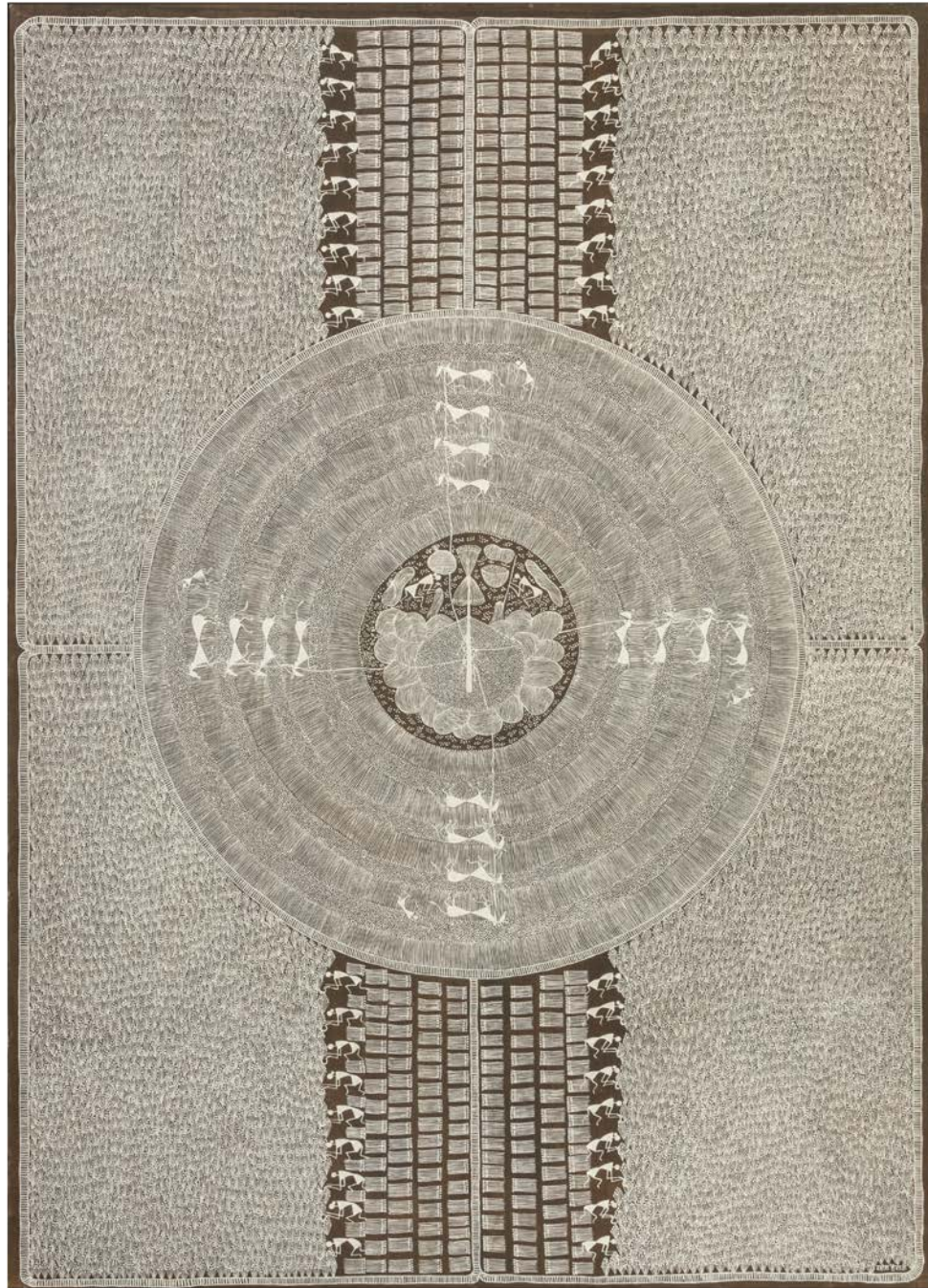
The distinct Warli white color is historically created by soaking rice overnight, drying and grinding it into a fine powder using a flat stone and pestle. This white pigment is then combined with water to get a fine paste and once again sieved through a fine cloth several times to get the desired smooth consistency. The paste needs to stand for a few hours to separate the excess water.

The residual rice paint is mixed with glue and applied with a bamboo thistle.

Very few artists are working using this rice based color, which has been substituted with water based colors.

*As told by Ramesh Hengadi to
Devyani Sahai*

Ramesh Hengadi

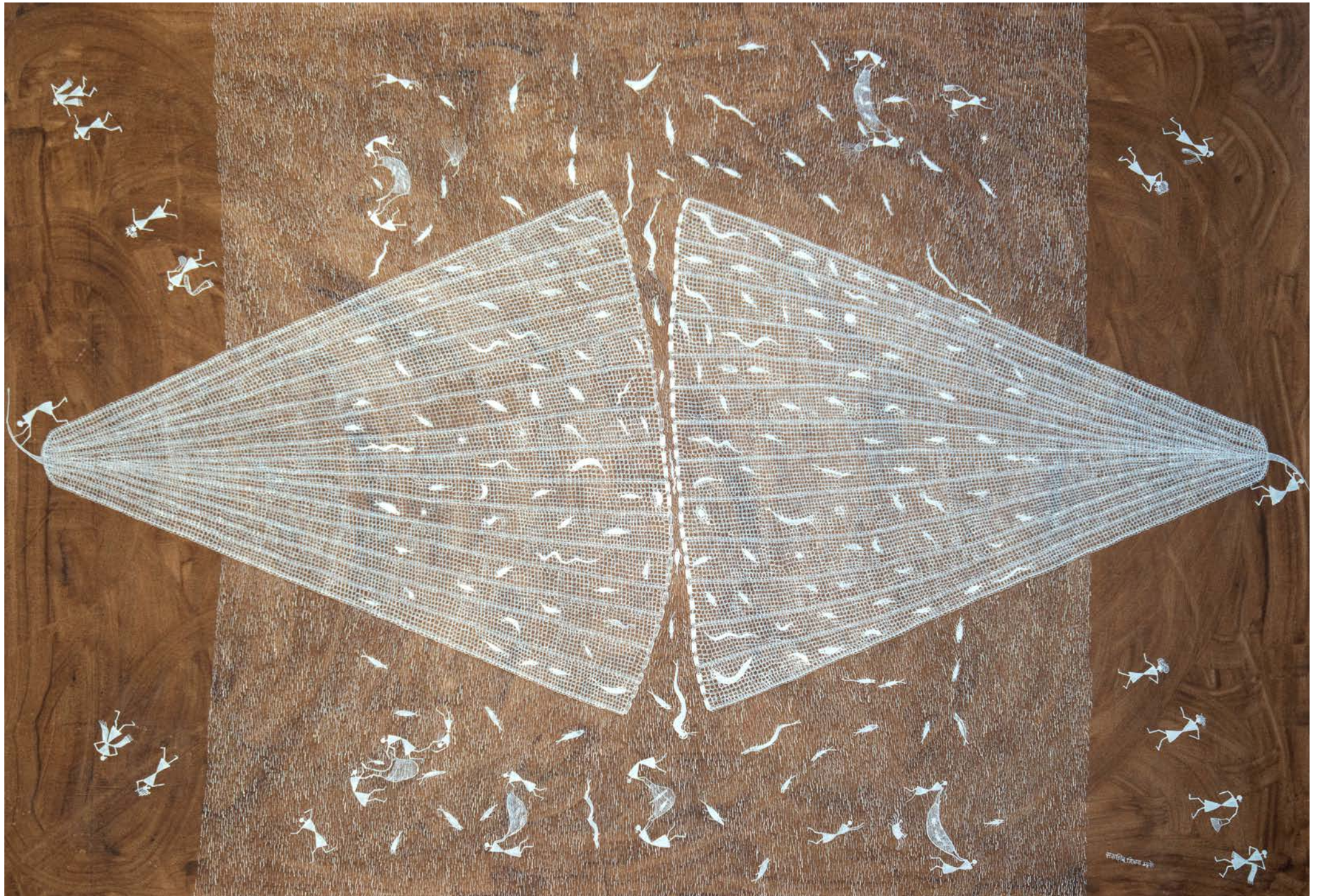


Harvesting (Khaliyan), 2023
 White rice paste on traditionally treated cloth
 84 x 60 inch



Wedding Chowk, 2023
 White rice paste on traditionally treated cloth
 82 x 58 inch

Sadashiv Jivya Mashe



Fish Net, 2019
Water based color on cloth
using traditional methods
77 x 54 inch



Sethi Brahma, 2023
Water based color on cloth using traditional methods
79 x 61 inch



Wavdiwara, 2023
Water based color on cloth using traditional methods
69 x 57 inch

Shantaram Gorkhana



Submarine, 2022
Water based color on
cloth using traditional
methods
70 x 46 inch



Three Fishnets, 2021
Water based color on cloth using traditional methods
113 x 42 inch

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Balu Jivya Mashe

Balu Jivya 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.

In 2007, the artist exhibited some of his recent paintings along with his father at Gallery Chemould. The paintings were noted for both Balu continues the tradition of Warli painting along with his brother, Sadashiv Mashe.

Mayur & Tushar Vayeda

(b. 1992 & 1987)

Brothers by blood, Mayur and Tushar work together as a collective. They have been a part of many projects internationally and graduated from the University of Mumbai.

In 2017, they had a residency with the Mithila Museum, Japan followed by a project at the Aomori Museum of Art, Japan. In Europe, they were a part of an exhibition at Manoir de la Ville de Martigny, Switzerland and Espace d'art, Normandie, Galerie

Herve Perdriolle, Paris and Modesti Perdriolle Gallery, Brussels.

In 2019, they participated at the Setouchi Triennale. In 2022, they were part of The Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT) at the Queensland Art Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Australia. Their artworks feature in important collections in India and overseas. Recently, their artworks were acquired by the Art Institute of Chicago and QAGOMA.

Vayeda Brothers received the Ojas Art Award 2019 for excellence in Warli Art. They have a number of public art projects to their credit in Hong Kong, Kagawa Island, Japan, Lodhi Art District, New Delhi and Sassoon Dock, Mumbai. They have authored two books with Tara Books.

Rajesh Chaitya Vangad

Born in 1975 in Ganjad, Maharashtra. Vangad has painted notable murals at the Craft Museum, New Delhi, Homi Bhaba Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai and the T2 Terminal at the International Airport in 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 mainstream art galleries across India.

Ramesh Laxman Hengadi

Ramesh Laxman Hengadi (born. 1976) belongs to the Warli tribe and has been practising his art for more than three decades, starting at a very early age.

These early encounters with art exposed him to the rich customs and traditions of his tribal community, inspiring him to vividly portray them through his paintings. He received an award from the Pune-based Adivasiparm Parikrang Kala and Sanshodhan Kendra which encouraged him to work more.

Hengadi was selected by to create a Warli painting for the cover of INTACH Magazine.

Hengadi has been at the forefront of reviving old methodologies and believes in working slowly. He has been a part of numerous projects globally and his works feature in many collections in India and abroad.

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.

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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