

## CREATIVE DESIGN WITH REFERENCE TO TRIBAL AND FOLK ART

Design is that area of human experience, skill and knowledge concerned with man's ability to mould his environment to suit his material and everyday need. As we will see these tribal and folk art forms of India, like Madhubani painting, Bhill art and Kolam from South India. We will exploit all these folk art forms by adapting their motifs to create something new. So design could be viewed as an activity that translate an idea into a blueprint for something useful and decorative i.e. why we are going to adapt these folk motifs to give a new expression to our idea with the help of rearrangement and repetitions of these forms.

Madhubani painting (also known as Mithila Painting) originated during the Ramayana age when king Janak a ruler of Mithila, made people paint the floors and walls of their houses on the occasion of his daughter Sita's wedding to Lord Rama. Although, Madhubani painting has remained confined to a compact geographical area and the skills have been passed on through centuries, the content and style have largely remained the same.

Bhills are the second largest tribal community in India after the Gonds in western and central India. The history of India's (Adivasi) tribes dates back to the pre-Aryan era. For ages, they reigned over the subcontinent's hilly terrains. Like (Adivasi) tribes, the Bhills live close to nature and lead a predominantly agricultural life. Their art focuses on their natural environment filled with songs, rituals and folklore.

Kolam is a beautiful art of women, related to Brahmin culture, which originated in south India more than 300 years ago. The decoration is not the sole purpose of Kolam; it is also thought to be bestowing prosperity to homes.



## OBJECTIVES

The learner will be able to:

- differentiate the various tribal and folk art forms of India;
- identify different forms, symbols and motifs used in the enlisted folk style of painting;
- state the concept of creating these tribal and folk art forms;
- discriminate the old traditional techniques of these art forms from the modern approach;
- create a different style from geometrical shapes; and
- use folk motifs, symbols and patterns for creating the design.

### 9.1 MADHUBANI PAINTING

Madhubani or Mithila paintings have been done traditionally by the women of villages around the present town of Madhubani, Darbhanga and the other areas of Mithila. They are not just attractive drawings, but an expression of folk legends which simple villagers turn to prey in their daily rituals and also their



**Fig. 9.1**



**Notes**

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association with nature. The painting is traditionally done freshly smeared with cow dung and mud and finally coated with a paste of powdered rice. Madhubani painting also uses two-dimensional imagery. The colours used are derived from plants. Then ornate floral patterns, figures with bulging eyes and outlines of borders etc. are made. Figures from nature and mythology are also adapted to suit their style.



Fig. 9.2

The themes and designs widely painted are the worship of Hindu deities such as Krishna, Shiva, Durga, Laxmi, Saraswati, the Sun and the Moon, the Tulsi plant, wedding scenes and social happenings around them. Floral, animal and bird designs are used to fill up the gaps. There is hardly any empty space in this style. The colours are applied flat with no shading. A double line is drawn for outlines and the gap is filled with either cross or tiny straight lines. In linear painting, no colours are applied; only the outlines are drawn. In today's world, for commercial purposes, the work is now being done on paper, cloth, canvas etc.

**Symbols, Motifs and Forms used in Madhubani Painting:** Human figures, Birds, Borders, Krishna, Fish, Sun god, Floral Patterns and Tree.

### 9.2 BHIL ART

The tradition of Pithora Bhil painting first stemmed from home. Myriad images from myths and folklore are seen to be adorning their walls and ceilings. Every year a new plaster of Mittichitra (clay relief work) and paintings are applied



to the interiors of the house. Pigments are made with natural materials like leaves and flowers, while brushes are made with neem twigs. Mittichitra's painting reflects the changing seasons, the natural phenomenon guiding their harvest and the Gods protecting them. The Bhill Painting also depicts the simple human joys of birth and other ceremonial occasions.



Fig. 9.3



Fig. 9.4

**Symbols, Motifs and Forms used in Bhill Paintings:** Deer, Border design, Mouse, Snake, Bird, Elephant ride, Human at work, Cock, etc.

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### 9.3 KOLAM

In the olden days, Kolam used to be drawn in coarse rice flour so the ants didn't have to walk too long for a meal. The rice powder is said to invite birds and other small creatures to eat it, thus inviting other beings into one's home and everyday life, a daily tribute to harmonious coexistence. It is the Hindu belief that the geometrical patterns and designs applied with rice flour at the entrance invite goddess Lakshmi into the household and drive away the evil spirits. There are specific Kolam attributed to the various deities. The pattern range between geometrical and mathematical line drawings around a matrix of dots to free form artwork and closed shapes. Dots (Pulli) are arranged in a specific sequence and order; these dots are joined to make pictorial designs. The designs are of two types- joining the dots with straight lines to create the pattern and formation of twisted chains by linking one loop with the other and forming a wonderful design. It is believed that the dots are symbols of challenges which we have to face in our lives, and the curvy lines around the dots are the journey of our life.

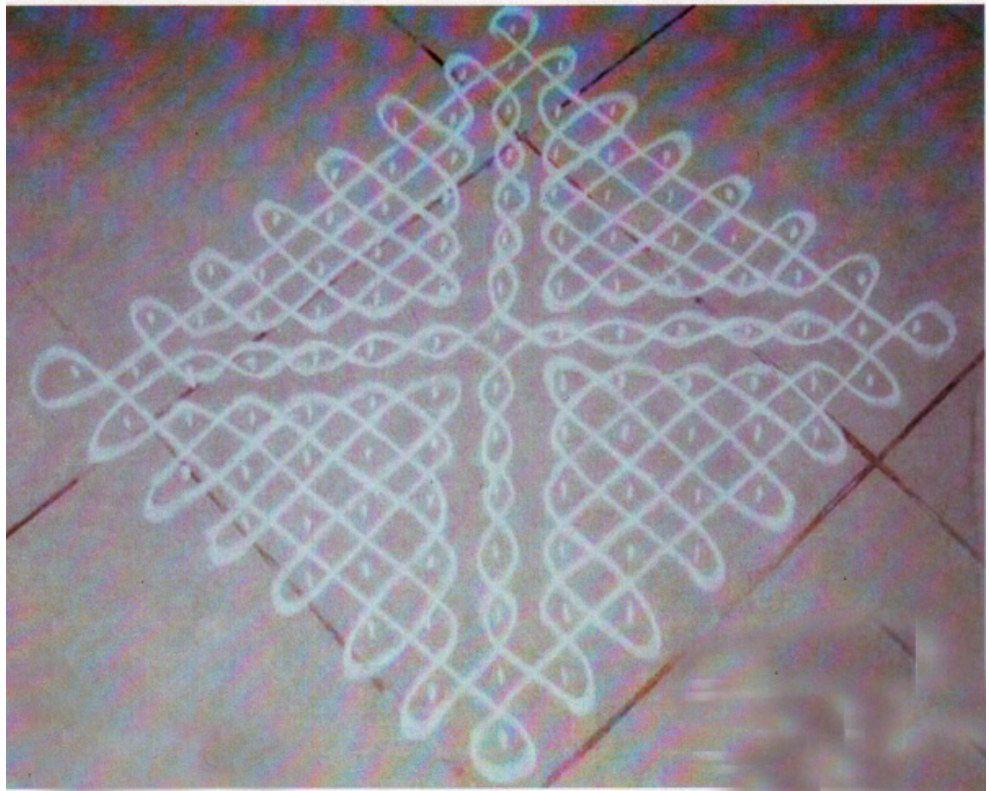


Fig. 9.5



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**Fig. 9.6**

**Symbols, Motifs and Forms used in Kolam:** Dots, dots joined with a straight line, dots joined with curved lines, curved lines leaving the dots, straight lines leaving the dots, and continuous lines without removing the hand.

#### **9.4 REQUIRED MATERIAL**

A student, should have the following material for Madhubani, Bhill and Kolam painting:

1. Drawing board or hard board
2. Drawing paper or cloth
3. Drawing pins
4. Pencil
5. Eraser
6. Water soluble colour
7. Colour mixing palette
8. Watercolour brushes
9. Black pen
10. Clothes and rice paste for practising on the floor
11. Colour mixing bowl

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### EXERCISE 1

#### Draw Picture In Madhubani Style on a Drawing Sheet

##### First Step

First, draw the required pattern on the tracing paper and copy the design into the drawing sheet using carbon paper (See Fig. 9.7).

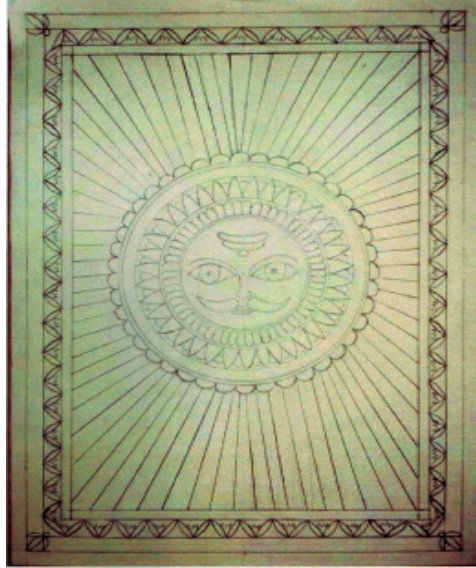


Fig. 9.7

##### Second Step

You can make the features of face, as it generally seen in Madhubani painting (See Fig. 9.8).

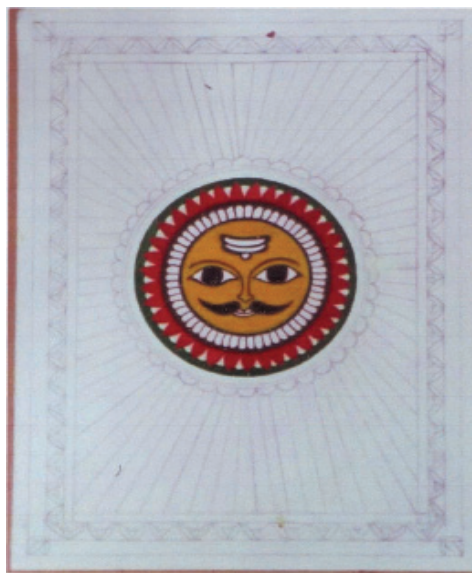


Fig. 9.8



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### Third Step

Use Poster colours for paper. The colours are applied flat with no shading. Traditionally there are only basic colours used, like orange and red but you can also add colours like pink, purple, and blue to make it more attractive (see Fig. 9.9).



Fig. 9.9

### Forth Step

Draw outlines using the black colour. There is normally a double line drawn for the outlines, with the gap between the lines filled by cross or tiny straight lines. Make sure you have a border. It will add new dimensions to your painting (See Fig. 9.10).

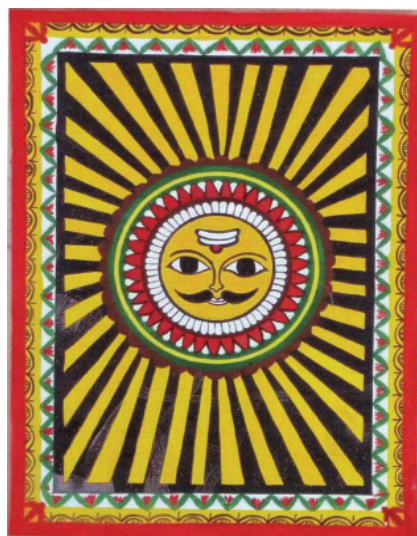


Fig. 9.10

Draw outlines using the black colour and leave them to dry for 24 hours. Your Madhubani painting is ready.



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### EXERCISE 2

#### Draw Picture in Pithora Style on a Drawing Sheet

It's a Bhill belief that their gods and goddesses travel on horseback. Therefore they draw the Pithora Horses as auspicious symbols.

#### First Step

It is a very simple art form of painting. First, draw the required pattern on the drawing sheet (See Fig. 9.11).



Fig. 9.11

#### Second Step

You can make the features of the face and character of the animal, as it is generally seen in Bhill's painting (See Fig. 9.12).



Fig. 9.12



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### Third Step

Use flat Poster colours without shading on the paper. Traditionally only basic colours are used, like orange, green and red (See Fig. 9.13).

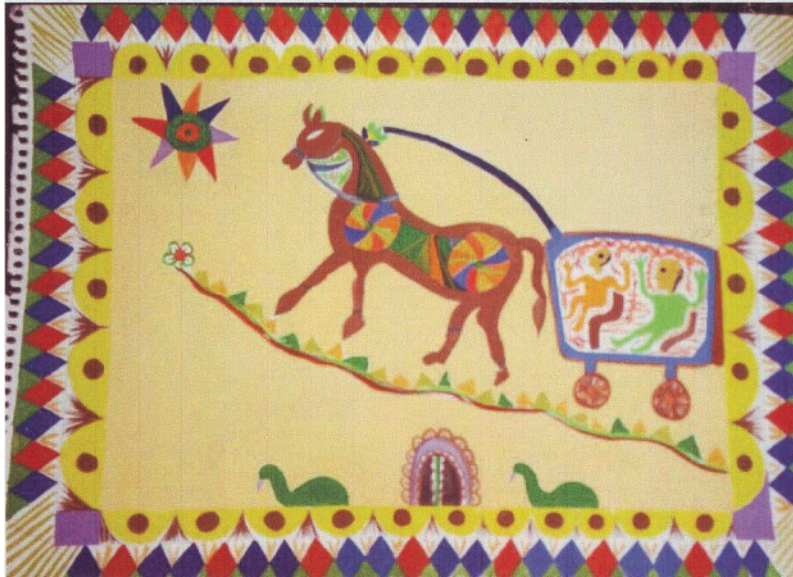


Fig. 9.13

### Forth Step

After you colour the horses, put symmetrical dots on the line with white, green, blue and yellow inside the horse and fill the whole area (See Fig. 9.14).



Fig. 9.14

Now, your Bhil painting of Pithora horses is complete.

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### EXERCISE 3

#### Draw Kolam on drawing sheet

##### First Step

Draw 7 dots in the central column of the array. On either side of this centre column two columns, each with 5 dots. At the extreme end there are single dots on both the left-hand and right-hand sides of the array (See Fig. 9.15).

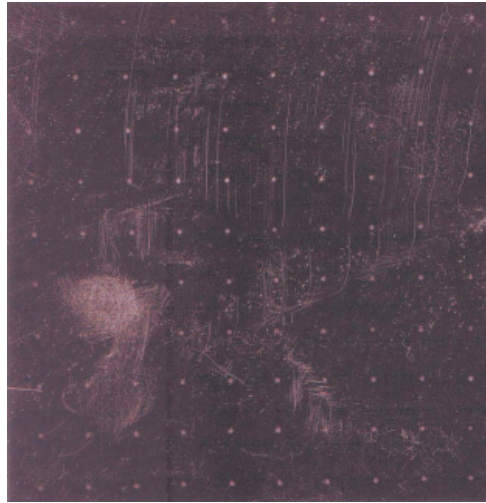


Fig. 9.15

##### Second Step

Now, draw a simple loop through the gaps between dots in an overlapping way (See Fig. 9.16).

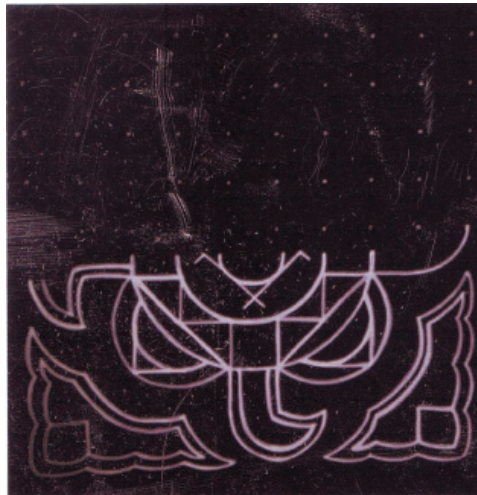


Fig. 9.16



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### Third Step

Then, draw another loop that runs along the periphery of this Kolam design connecting the previous loops (See Fig. 9.17).



**Fig. 9.17**

### Forth Step

Small circles usually are drawn around such independent dots in a Kolam, and lastly draw, four circles around the above-mentioned dots to complete the Kolam pattern (See Fig. 9.18).



**Fig. 9.18**

Now, your Kolam painting is complete.

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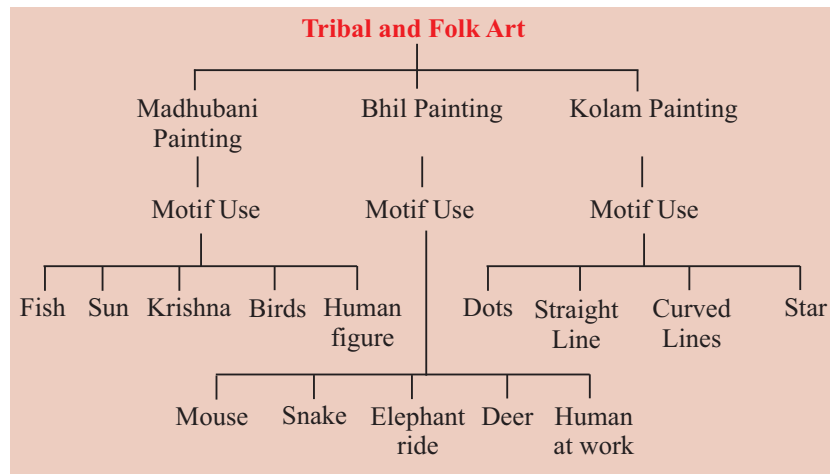
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### WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT



### TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Choose a simple motif of the Madhubani painting and draw it on a sheet, keeping in mind the use of double lines, borders and earth colours.
2. Create a composition of animals and birds from the given motifs of Bhil art and colour it according to the technique of Bhil painting on a drawing sheet.
3. Create a Kolam with the help of straight lines on a drawing sheet.
4. Draw a Kolam on the floor using the traditional technique.
5. List the themes and designs widely painted by the Madhubani painters.

### GLOSSARY

Adjoining	neighbouring
Confined	Restricted
Folk legends	popular village stories
Rituals	esthetic religious ceremony
Ornate	to decorate
Jolting	bumpy
Reigned	ruled
Terrains	a region

Prosperity	success or wealth
Myriad	modern interpretation of mythical concept
Folklore	Myths and legends related to the folk people
Harvest	cultivating crops
Ceremonial	ritualise occasion
Coarse	Thick, rough
Blueprint	Original document
Exploit	in this context, it means to learn more and use the knowledge
Sole	Only
Adivasio	Tribes the original residents of a particular area

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