



Smt. Bowa Devi

Smt. Bowa Devi was born in 1942 in a family of traditional Mithila painters in village Jitwarpur of Madhubani. Smt. Bowa Devi started painting the walls of the huts in her village at the age of twelve and gradually acquired mastery over her lines. She painted many stories of Ramayana, Mahabharata and local myths. In 1986 Smt. Bowa Devi received the National Award for her excellence in Mithila folk paintings.

Bowa Devi's paintings on paper explore an array of personal and mythological themes. An image which she has come to adopt as her own is the nag kanya, or snake maiden, a creature with the torso and head of a beautiful woman and the lower body of a snake. The nag kanya resembles the snake goddess Manasa, whose attributes include the powers of destruction and regeneration. While such attributes echo those of the key Hindu god Shiva, they also may derive from the actual snakes that occupy the watery region where Bowa Devi lives.

The strength implicit in the image of a snake maiden evokes Bowa Devi's own remarkable story of survival, perseverance, and success. Born in the 1950s into the caste of Mahapatras –the lowest of the five Brahmin castes, who traditionally perform ceremonies on the occasion or anniversary of a death-she survived a disastrous arranged childhood marriage.



Smt. Leela Devi

Smt. Leela Devi was born on 15th January 1954 in village Chichri of district Madhubani in Bihar. She had studied till class seven and was married to Shri Umesh Nandan Lal Das of village Rashidpur. In 1976 in Radhidpur she had started learning Mithila painting from Late Smt. Ganga Devi who was a pioneer of traditional Mithila paintings. In 1985 she got Bihar state award and in 1987 National Award for Master craftsperson.

She makes pen drawings and paintings with natural colours. Her favorite subjects are religious, stories, Kohbar and Aripan. Her works were displayed at various places in India and in Japan.



Smt. Shashikala Devi

Shashikala Devi was born in 1938 at Bahadurpur village of Darbhanga district in Bihar. Her father Ras Bihari Das died when she was just few months old. The fate of her marriage was similar-her husband R. A. Lal Das passed away within a few years of her marriage.

A childless Shashikala Devi then decided to devote her life to Mithila Arts, concentrating all her attention on the Mithila style of painting. Shashikala received training from her mother, later Smt. Subhadra Devi and from her elder sister and renowned Mithila painter Smt. Godawari Dutta.

In a span of more than twenty years of her painting career on paper Shashikala Devi received several awards including the first prize of Master Craft Person by the government of Bihar in 1982. Beside several appreciation certificates from various individuals and institutions, was awarded the National Merit Certificate in 1993.

Apart from Mithila Paintings, Shashikala Devi has also tried her hand successfully in other forms of Mithila Folk Arts like appliqué, dolls (of cloth etc.), papier-mâché, Sikki-Art, Sujani (work on thick piece of cloth with the help of needle and thread to create images), sculptures and of course Aripan (Alpana) on the floor.



Smt. Moti Karn

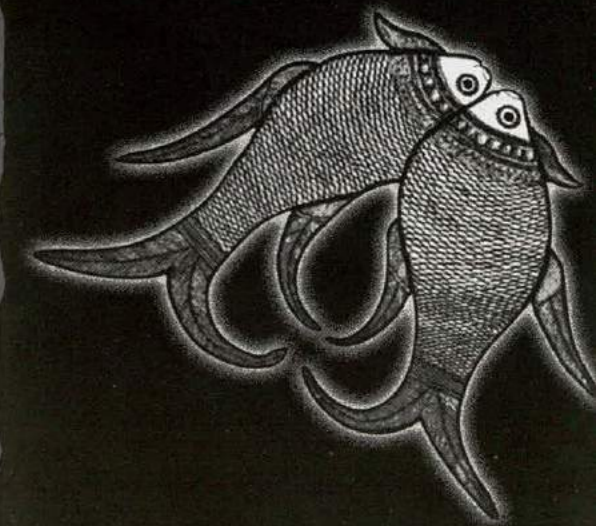
Smt. Moti Karn, wife of Shri Satya Narayan Lal Karn was born on 3rd May 1960 at Ranti of Madhubani district in a traditional craft family. She learnt the traditional art of Mithila from her mother who is an expert in this craft. She with her husband jointly received National Merit Certificate in 1999 and the National Award in 2000-2001.

Her husband Shri Satya Narayan Lal Karn was born on 4th December 1952 at Jitwarpur of Madhubani district in Bihar. His mother was the Late Padmashri Smt. Jagadamba Devi. Smt. Moti Karn and her husband have conducted many exhibitions and workshops on this craft at New Delhi and also participated in various exhibitions in Australia, France, Bulgaria and USA. Shri Karn is working with National Bal Bhawan, New Delhi Since 1971.



abhivyakti

an exhibition of the individual expression in mithila art



Presented by Crafts Museum
New Delhi

Mithila painting

Mithila, the legendary state of the King Janak of Ramayan, is spread from the northern side of the river Ganga in Bihar up to the Terai region in Nepal. Painting flourished in this area as an integral part of village life mainly practised by Maithili Brahmins and kayastha women as also by the Harijan women. In Mithila, paintings on the walls of the house were made by these women during family and religious occasions such as Janeyu, marriage and Chathh, Debathan Ekadasi etc. Like Aripan or floor drawing, murals or painting on the walls of the wedding chamber or Kohbar, at the time of marriage was a family tradition.

The materials for these wall paintings were simple. The smooth mud wall plastered with cowdung would be given a coat of whitewash or used bare. Earlier vegetable colours such as the Kusum and Palasa flowers were used, but now it is generally poster colours that are applied. Black may still be made from burnt straw and white from rice powder. The painting would be done by a group of women from the family and the neighborhood, with the most experienced drawing the outline and the others helping to fill in the details and the colouring. Little girls would help with the pots and brushes, thus absorbing the practice of the ritual effortlessly by association. Several families also kept paper patterns of their designs.

The principal motifs in Madhubani painting, as it has come to be known, are the gods and goddesses, bride and bridegroom, animals and birds and the whole decorated with a frame of floral trellis or chain of fishes and embellished by patterns. The drawings would tell often of anecdotes from the Ramayana or local myths. While the larger individual figures are preferred, but in anecdotes several figures are drawn, though in a frontal plane, without depth. The colours are generally rich and convey a sense of joyousness and brightness.

The Mithila region was undergoing a blistering drought in the mid sixties. In 1965, an aid worker for the Indian government, Bhaskar Kulkarni, arrived from Delhi and encouraged the idea of executing on paper the paintings traditionally created by Mithili women on the walls and floors of their mud homes. He supplied materials and helped to sell the resulting works through government handicrafts shops in Delhi and other major Indian cities. With the development of this art outside the realms of domestic traditions, exponents have started evolving their individual styles, in terms of composition, design, motifs, and colours. The exhibition Abhivyakti attempts to display this individual expression in the traditional idiom.



Smt. Godawari Dutta

Born in 1930 in Village Bahadurpur of Darbhanga district of Bihar. Her father late Shri Ras. Biahari Das expired in early childhood. She had learnt the art of Mithila Paintings from her mother Late Smt. Subhadara Devi. In 1947, she was married to Shri Upendra Dutta of village Ranti of District Madhubani. Her married life was not so happy and later she lived with her son.

Godwari Dutta has set new heights in the field of Mithila Painting. She has given demonstration of this art in almost all the major towns and cities of India and at several important centres of Germany and Japan. She is a recipient of a number of awards including National Award (1980) for her contribution to this art. She has also worked as lecturer in Brahma Nand Kala Maha Vidhalaya (Darbhanga) since 1981-1989. Godawari Dutta is still very active in Painting and imparts training to budding artists and art teachers despite her old age.



Smt. Shanti Devi Paswan

Smt. Shanti Devi was born on 4th March 1956 in village Seema of District Madhubani Bihar. She studied till matric. She was married to Shri

Shivan Paswan of village Lehriya Ganj district Madhubani. She was interested in painting from her childhood but after marriage she devoted her time to painting work. Her husband is also a very good painter and both of them paint in Harijan tradition of Mithila painting.

In 1979-80 she won Bihar state award. In 1983-84 with her husband Shivan Paswan she jointly won National Award for Master Craftsperson. Her favorite subject for paintings is the story of Raja Sallesh. Her works have been displayed in various exhibitions in India and in Japan and Denmark.



Smt. Mahasundri Devi

Smt. Mahasundri Devi was born on 15th April 1922 in a Kaystha family of village Chatra of Madhubani district, Bihar. Her father late Shri Ramjivan Labh and mother late Smt. Dulari Devi

expired in her early childhood. Though she had interest in painting since her childhood but her actual painting work started after marriage. After marriage to Shri Krishan Kumar Das, she came to village Ranti where she was inspired and encouraged by her sister in law Smt. Karpoori Devi.

In 1961 her paintings were displayed in a group show. In 1972 she won Bihar State Award, in 1982 she won National Award and in 1994-95 she was awarded Tulsi Samaan a life time achievement award from Government of Madhya Pradesh. Her works are in the collections of Bihar Hast Kala Kendra, Upendra Maharathi Institute of Patna, Votal Patliputra Patna, Osaka Museum Japan and also in France.



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