

Cheriyal Scroll Paintings

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Acknowledgement

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Questionnaire

1. Describe the process of making a painting?
2. What are the materials used to complete a painting?
3. What is the time period required to finish an art piece?
4. How many pieces do you produce in one go?
5. How do you manage to teach practical artwork in online mode?
6. How do you advertise the craft and the workshops?
7. Is it your full-time work or part-time?
8. What are your goals in the future?
9. How do you decide the theme of the paintings?
10. Who are your customers?
11. What is the price range and how do you set the prices?
12. How do you divide the work between your family?
13. How did you decide that what should be painted according to the theme given by the customers?
14. Do you produce the painting in bulk?
15. How do you deal with customer tendencies and sales production?
16. How do you publicize your work or how do your customers find you?
17. Where do go for the exhibition?
18. Who are customers?

Questionnaire

19. What are the ways do you use for your promotion?
20. Are you Socially active/ what is your username?
21. What are modes of payment do you use?
22. How do you manage your social media page?
23. Are you Vaccinated or not?
24. Do you also customize the color of the painting according to the customer?
25. Do you also design customized products?
26. What do you do if you made a mistake while making a painting?
27. How do you differentiate between a good art piece and a bad art piece?
28. As we know there are so many artists how do you make your painting one of your kind?
29. How long will a painting last in a normal condition?
30. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you and your family?

History

Cheriyal is a tiny village in the Telangana state's Warangal district. Cheriyal painting of the Deccan, like other forms of folk painting like Pattachitra, Warli, and Phad paintings, has been classed as a form of storytelling and entertainment for the audience, and it carries the rich cultural history and tradition with it. Cheriyal paintings are a stylized type of Nakashi art that is thought to have been carried to the south by Mughal emperors. These paintings are known as one of the most important scroll paintings because they are created on a long vertical piece of cloth in a narrative manner, similar to a comic strip or film roll in the modern world. These paintings can be seen all across the region and show scenes from Indian mythical epics like the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Garuda Purana, Krishna Leela, Markandeya Purana, and others.



The artisan who creates these paintings is from the Chitrakara tribe. In this ancient type of storytelling, the painter, narrator, and listeners all come from distinct groups and are devoted to their own occupations. A storyteller instructs a painter to present the scroll by the folktale he is narrating, which is in turn dependent on the desire of the people in the surrounding regions. In the past, the storyteller would usually bring the requisite piece of cloth, which could be anywhere from three feet to sixty feet in length, from which the scroll would be created. White mud, rice starch, tamarind seeds, and natural tree gum are used to prepare the cloth specifically for this painting. The mixture is applied in three layers, creating a thick canvas on which to paint. The cloth is preserved, and the painting is done on it, and the process lasts for hundreds of years.



These folklore paintings were vanished due to caste restrictions, but in 1978, this skill regained prominence, and Cheriyal workers began exporting scrolls to "Lepakshi" stores (Andhra Pradesh's handicraft export showroom), as well as displaying them at various exhibitions and stalls. Small scrolls or canvases are now commonly created using subjects such as Indian mythology, rural life, and other fusions of contemporary themes. All the Cheriyal artisans have evolved in diverting their occupations as a result of print media and other technological advancements, but an artist named D.Vaikuntam, who currently resides in Hyderabad, capital of Telangana state. A hundred kilometers away from the traditional village of Cheriyal. He is keeping the tradition of doing Cheriyal painting. He's been working on it for the past five decades, and it's a family heirloom. He's also known for being the lone artisan for this particular craft. Mr. Vaikuntam works with a variety of materials, including walls, stone, metal, plywood, and traditional canvas cloth. Due of movies and other forms of entertainment, there are no storytellers available to order a scroll nowadays. He usually paints scrolls of lesser sizes for commission, as well as masks for interior decoration.

Cheriyal artwork was designated as a GI (Geographical Indication) in 2007 for its distinct folklore, rich heritage, and cultural significance.

Cheriyal Paintings

A traditional Cheriyal painter always begins by painting Lord Ganesh, as it is considered auspicious in Hindu tradition to begin any new work with Lord Ganesh, followed by Lord Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara, as they are symbolized as the creators of the world in Hindu mythology, which is an introduction to the formation of the world, living beings, and castes/communities that are described according to the Hindu caste system. For a traditional storytelling scroll, these are regarded as required. Colors have a crucial role in Cheriyal painting in terms of the whole story's attractiveness and feel. The background is frequently painted in a bright red color to showcase anything that is painted on it. These paints are made with natural stone colors known as "Gaddalu ranga" in the area. Only a few hues, such as white, black, yellow, and green, are available. These colors' shades are created by adding black or white to the fundamental hues.



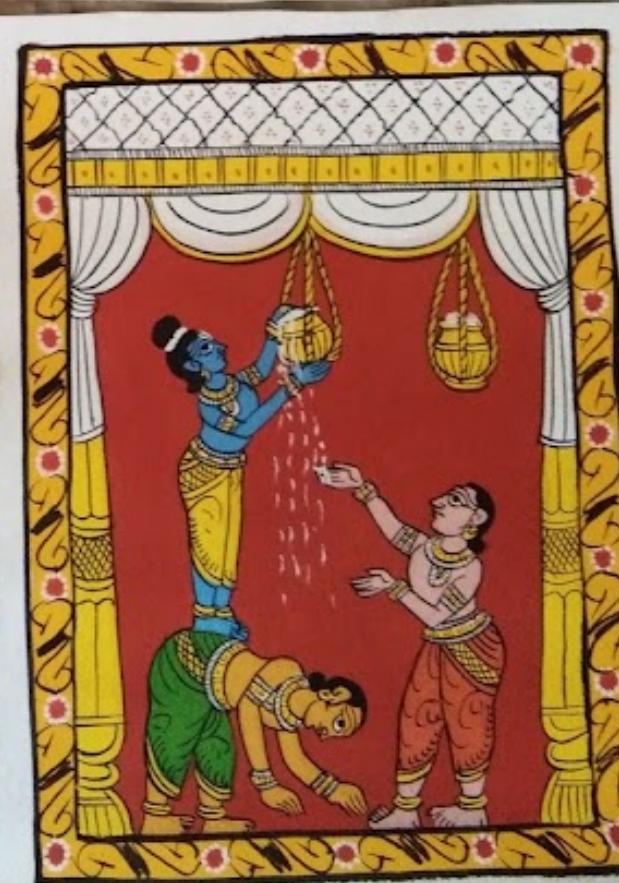
Characters in this scroll painting are immediately identifiable thanks to the color schemes employed to depict the story's characters. Krishna, for example, has a blue face, Rama has a black face, Hanuman has a green face, and all the female characters have primarily red faces. This gives each scroll its own personality and helps to distinguish them from one another.

Cheriyal paintings include figures that are flat in size and face one another. These characters are described in a profile perspective, giving the impression that they are having a conversation or fighting. These characters' viewpoints and proportions are given the least attention, yet their expression has a local flavor to it, and they symbolize the qualities of the area. When the painting is finished, it is given to the storyteller, who celebrates it by offering an animal as a sacrifice to god.



As part of the tradition, the storyteller also gives the painter a new pair of clothes, rice, and other items. The storyteller continues his journey after receiving the scroll by wandering among the various villages, where he performs his responsibility of narrating the story by unfolding the scroll. He's accompanied by musicians and dancers to liven up the narration and grab the audience's attention. The storyteller, the painter, and the audience are all tightly authorized to a specific community and are not allowed to undertake any other employment or work that does not belong to their community.

A scroll can be kept in good condition for up to a century and a half, after which the storyteller must commission a new one from the painter. Meanwhile, the painter creates Cheriyal masks, which are little decorative scrolls that can be framed and displayed in homes. Cheriyal artisans also make Cheriyal-themed toys, Garuda vahana (known as god's chariot, in which deity procession takes place), and wooden frameworks with the painter's painting on them. Coconut shells were traditionally used as receptacles for mixing colors, and goat and squirrel hair was used to make paintbrushes.



Raw Materials



- *Khadi Cloth:* A handwoven cotton cloth, used as a canvas for Cheriyal painting.



- *Colors:* Natural colors
- Nowadays these paintings are also made by using acrylic and watercolor.



- *Rice Starch:* Rice Starch is made by boiling rice in a large amount of water. Rice starch is the thick water that remains after the rice has been cooked.



- *Tamarind Seeds:* Tamarind seeds are used in both masks and canvas preparation as a base for sculpting the shape onto the mask and as a natural hardener.



- *Gum:* Tree gum is a natural gum produced from the barks of a certain tree that is utilized in Cheriyal painting for mask construction and canvas preparation.



- *White Mud:* White mud is a form of mud that can be found locally and is collected from the ground at a specified depth. It is known locally as "Sudda matti" and is regarded as the purest form of mud.



- *Chalk powder:* It gives a white finish to the canvas in preparation process

Tools



- *Goat hair and squirrel brushes:* These brushes are used in painting the traditional Cheriyal style scrolls and masks.
- *Presently, Synthetic brushes and hand made squirrel hairbrushes are used*



- Wooden or Steel Scale for drawing borders



- coconut shells are used to store colors.



- Pencil for sketching the basic outlines of the painting.

PROCESS

Pre-treatment of Khadi cloth



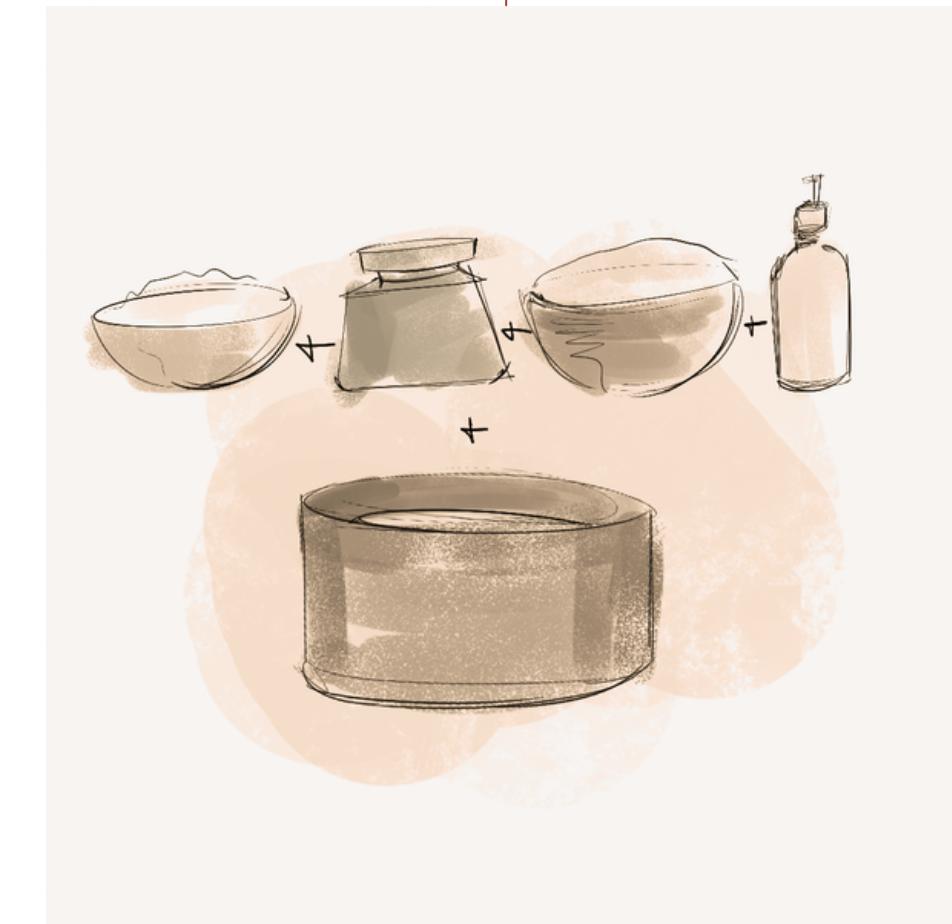
Fabric cutting:

The artist cuts the khadi fabric to fit the size of the artwork.



Preparation of paste

The paste is made by combining water and tamarind seed powder in a container and boiling it for 15 minutes.



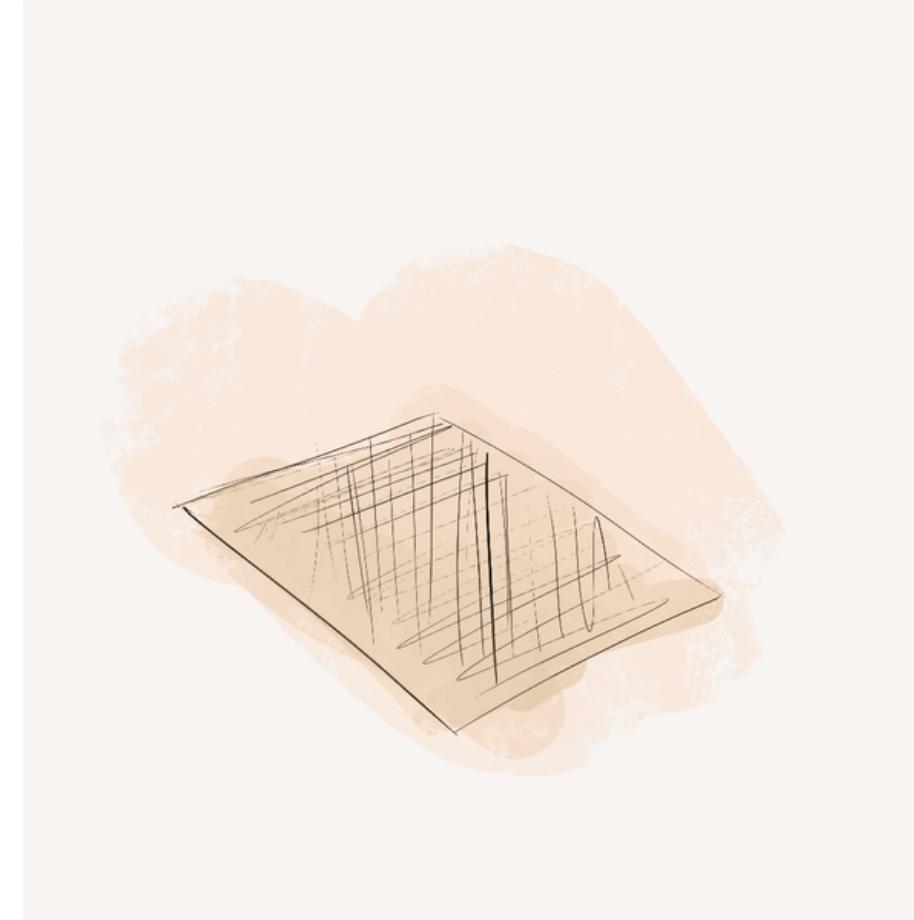
Adding other ingredients

The prepared tamarind paste is then mixed with tree gum, chalk powder, rice starch, and Fevicol



Application of the paste

To give the khadi fabric rigidity, it is coated with 2 to 3 coats of tamarind paste with a little piece of cloth



Drying the fabric

The fabric is dried to give it stretchiness.

PROCESS

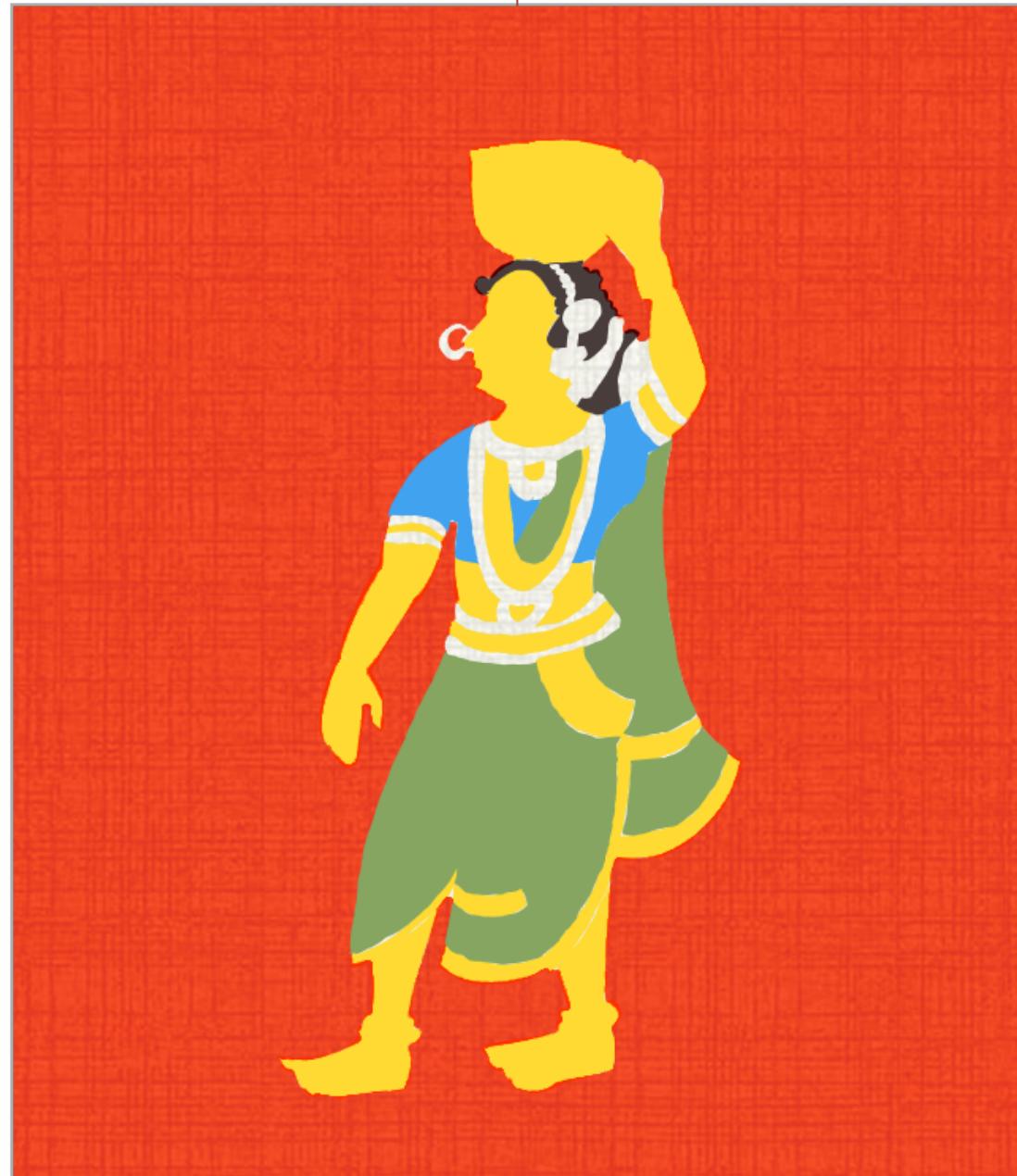
Painting



The **initial sketching** is done with a **pencil**.



The background is painted **(mostly red)** except the characters using a **goat hair brush**.



The artisan then uses a **goat hair brush** to fill in the **colors of the characters**.

The **outlines** and the details are done with black color using fine **squirrel hair brushes**. The borders are then painted with swirls, curves, stylized flowers, foliage, and other elements.







about the artisan



D.Venkataramana

In the urge of saving the heritage and the art. Years ago a child started to learn the chemical craft from his father along with his studies, as time flies his hobby became his education then his education became his passion and now his passion became his job. Here we have Mr. D Venkat Ramana, He completed his BFA in Painting from Sri Venkatrshwara College of Fine Arts at Madhapur to follow his Ancestral craft. The happiest part of him is that his whole family contributes their part to the craft, his wife follows the art more immensely as compared to him. His passion leads him to the roads of appreciation and respect. He had already been awarded national and state-level awards.

His ancestors had started doing this art before many years ago, now he is trying to forward it from all his soul and heart, stated Mr. Venkat. He is also teaching but not forcing his children to forward their legacy. As it is his Talent the Craft Is His Pride.

Present Scenario of Cheriyal Paintings

Cheriyal paintings have gone through many changes.

Around 50 years ago, scroll painting gave employment to a large number of people in the cheriyal village. When people began to lose interest in ballads and folklores as television and movies became more popular. These artists adapt to their skills as wall art.

The scroll paintings that depicted long mythological stories now show a single frame from the story. A character or an event. The size of paintings has been trimmed down as now they are mostly used as home décor on walls. They now go up to 56 to 3 feet in length. The paintings range in price from Rs 250 to Rs 1 lakh, depending on their size.

The style of the craft has changed over time. In recent times, the decorations, colours, and personalities in paintings have altered. These can be subjective depending on the needs of the client.

Synthetic watercolors have mostly replaced natural watercolors used by artisans in recent years.



In addition to scroll paintings, artisans began creating masks from coconut shells. They can transform a boring living space into a vibrant and artistic one. These masks are available in a variety of sizes, colors, and patterns. They've started thinking outside the box to get the art to appeal to a wider audience. They manufacture key chains, pen holders, wall décor, and paint on melamine plates that may be used as wall hangings, among other things. They have been able to attract more people to buy their traditional artworks in this manner.

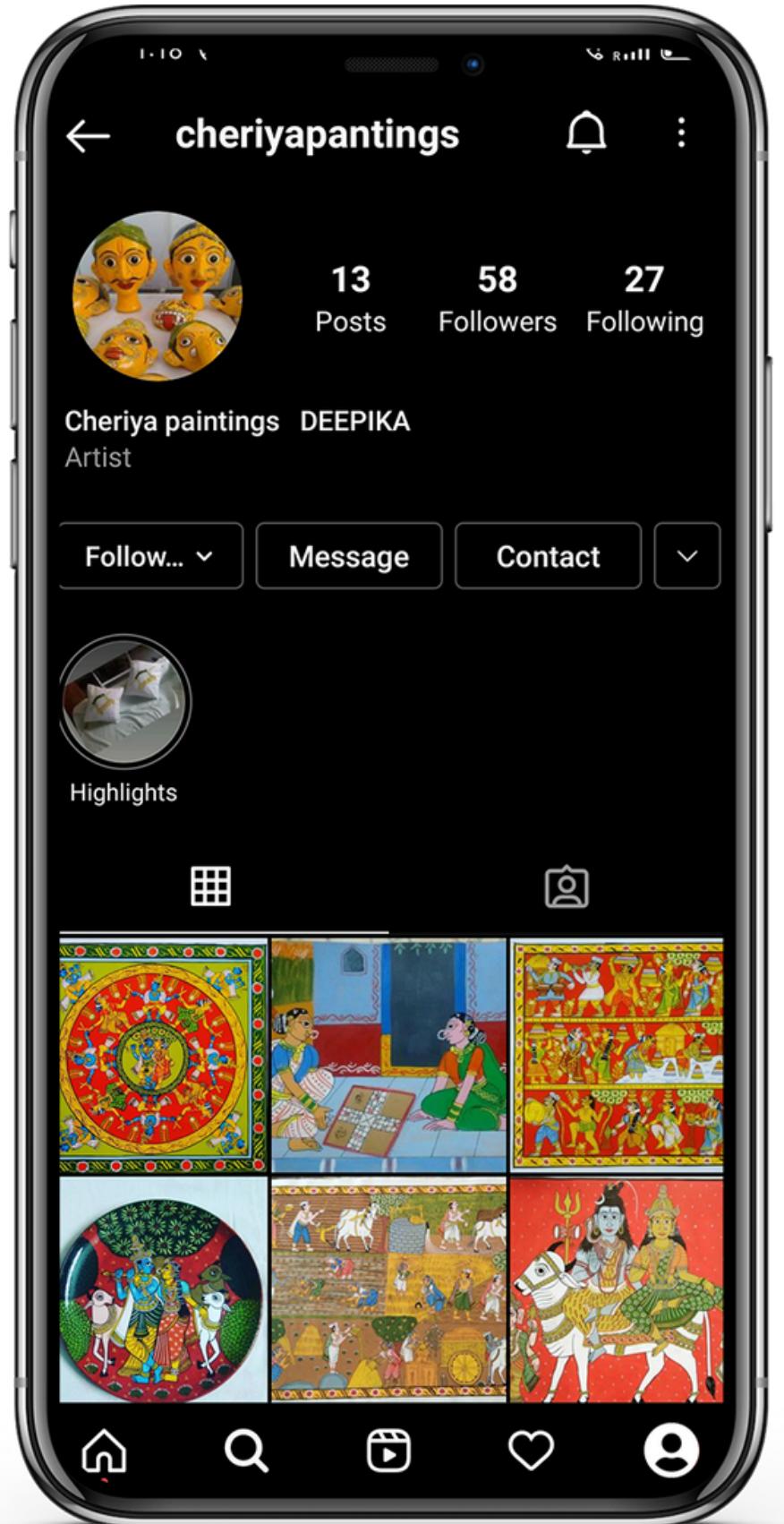


Fighting the Pandemic

COVID-19 Pandemic has significantly reduced the business. Even though there are several initiatives by the government of Telangana State to support this craft. Amid pandemic, the Art and Craft were considered as non-essential commodities, thus Cheriyal did not receive government aid to support the economy during the lock-down.

Before the pandemic, Artists were also welcome to participate in free exhibits where they can set up stalls. Art exhibitions were one of the main sources of customers. The inability to conduct exhibitions also had affected them. They have a hard time reaching out to the audience.

They are trying to learn and integrate online social media platforms to the craft and think from a modern perspective.



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Thank You

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