



राष्ट्रीय फैशन टेक्नालॉजी संस्थान
National Institute of Fashion Technology

Craft Research and Documentation on Cheriyal Scroll Paintings

FACULTY MENTOR
Mr. M. C. Mohan

Department of Fashion Communication
Batch 2019 - 2023



This craft documentation has been written, illustrated,
photographed, edited and designed by student researchers of
the Fashion Communication batch of 2019- 2023

**Names: Khushbu, Vidhu Shukla, Nishant Kumar,
Muhammed Vasil, Satyam Das, Piyush Kumar,
Bhupendra**

Department of Fashion Communication
National Institute of Fashion Technology, Hyderabad
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Tales of Cheriyal

Cheriyal Scroll Painting

Acknowledgement

In order to successfully complete this project, our group mates have put in continuous effort. We would like to thank all those who are related to this project. We would like to express our special thanks of gratitude to our mentor, Mr. M. C. Mohan, who gave us the golden opportunity to study and document Cheriyal Painting. This project required tons of primary and secondary research providing us in-depth knowledge about the craft of the artisans who practice it. We would also like to thank Cheriyal Scroll Painting Artisans, Mr Venkatramana and Mrs Deepika, for their knowledge, support, and guidance.

Preface

Craft Research is still relatively new, and that craft is traditionally associated with the creation of artefacts as a source of experience and emotion while research is devoted to the production of knowledge. It introduces the need for creative research and expertise in crafts. The document further dives deeply into the process of the craft, the lives of people who practice the craft and the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the craft and the practitioners.

The outcome and contribution of the paper is a better understanding of the relationship between scroll painting and research, which will help makers overcome the opposing perceptions of craft and research. It explains the potential and value of research for the development of craft, both as practice and as discipline, and thus for advancing Cheriyal scroll painting as a discipline that is viable and relevant for the future.

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Primary Research

Questionnaire

About the artisan

- Can you introduce yourself to us?
- Can you tell us about your family and how long you've been practicing Cheriyal scroll painting?

Painting

- Describe the process of making a painting?
- What are the materials used to complete a painting?
- What is the time period required to finish an art piece?
- How many pieces do you produce in one go?
- How do you decide the theme of the paintings?
- How do you divide the work between your family?
- How did you decide that what should be painted according to the theme given by the customers?
- Do you also customize the color of the painting according to the customer?
- Do you also design customized products?
- What do you do if you made a mistake while making a painting?
- How do you differentiate between a good art piece and a bad art piece?
- As we know there are so many artists how do you make your painting one of your kind?
- How long will a painting last in a normal condition?

Questionnaire

Consumer handling

- Who are your customers?
- What is the price range and how do you set the prices?
- How do you advertise the craft and the workshops?
- Is it your full-time work or part-time?
- Do you produce the painting in bulk?
- How do you deal with customer tendencies and sales production?
- How do you publicize your work or how do your customers find you?
- Where do go for the exhibition?
- What are the ways do you use for your promotion?
- Are you Socially active/ what is your username?
- What are modes of payment do you use?
- How do you manage your social media page?

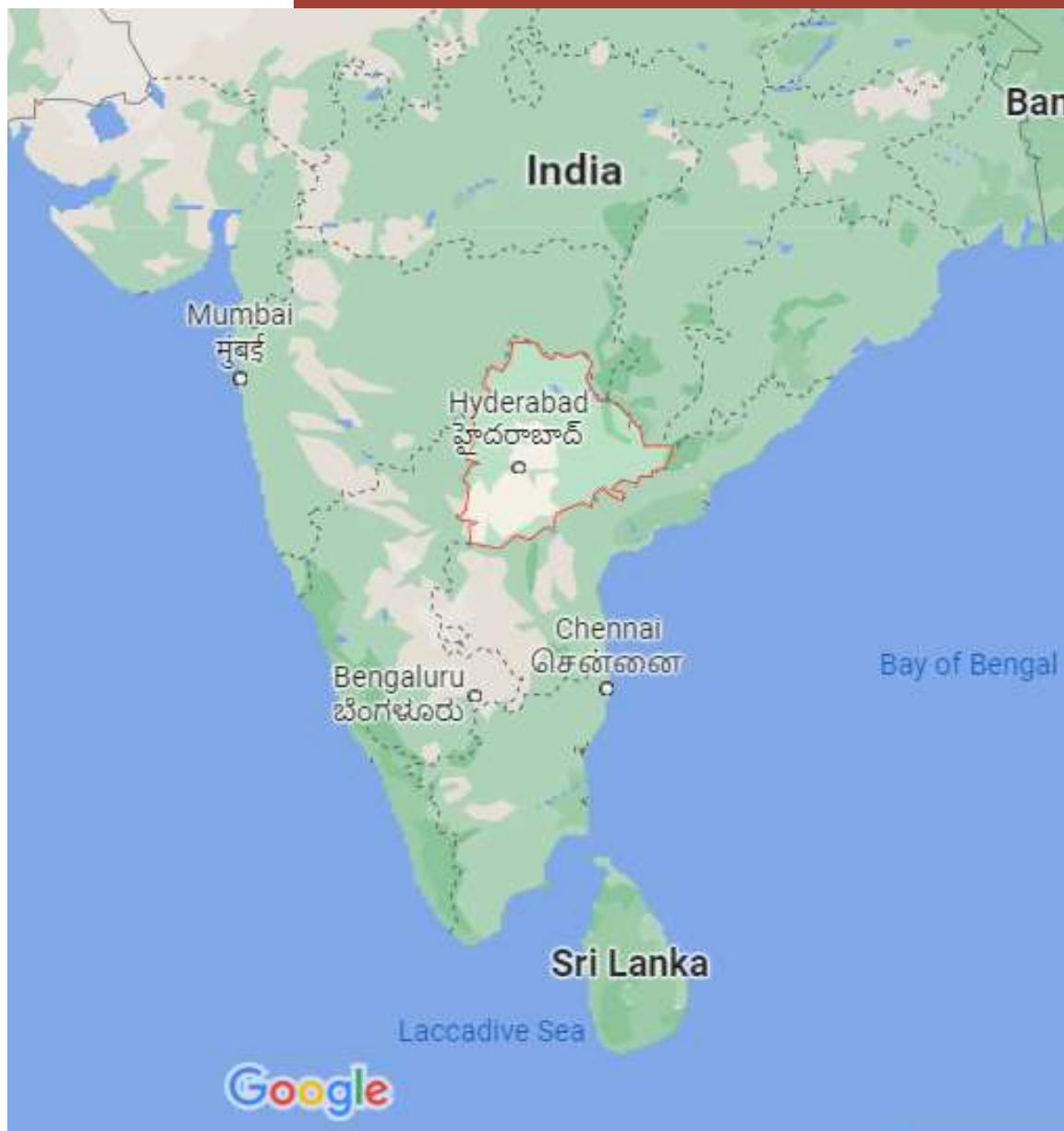
Pandemic

- Are you Vaccinated?
- How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you, your family and the craft?
- How do you manage to teach practical artwork in online mode for your workshops?

About the Region

Telangana, India

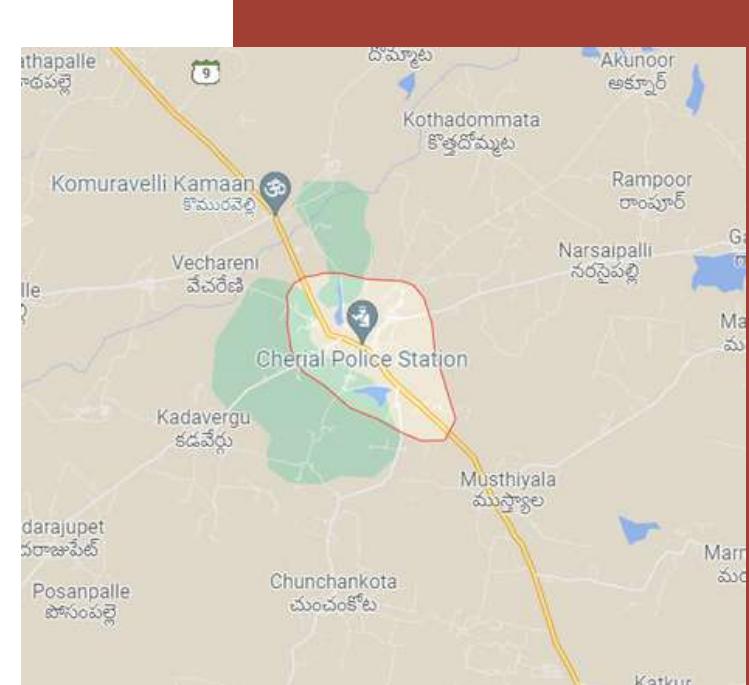
- Telangana lies in the southern part of India, and it has a diverse population.
- Generally, the state's various communities are identified by a combination of language, religion, and social class or caste than they are by specific ethnic affiliation.
- The Dravidian language Telugu is the official and most widely spoken language in the state. A large number of people also speak Hindi and Urdu.
- Telangana is the 29th state of India. Hyderabad is the capital city. Its area is 1,14,840 sq km. It is the 12th largest state in the country in terms of area.
- Telangana means "the land of Telugu speakers".
- The state of Telangana shares its border with Chhattisgarh in the east, Karnataka in the west, Maharashtra in the north and Andhra Pradesh in the northeast.
- It came out of existence on 2 june 2014 from a part of Andhra Pradesh.



Souce: Google Maps

Cheriyal

- Cheriyal is a small village in the Warangal district of Telangana state. It is located 100kms away from Hyderabad.
- Cheriyal scroll paintings are prepared by Nakashi caste people in Telangana state.
- Hundreds of years ago, the storytelling communities used to travel through the villages of Telangana, singing and narrating stories using the scroll as their visual aid. The scroll measures about 3 feet in width and can extend over 60 feet. The scrolls contain about 40 to 50 panels, each depicting a part of the story and would be displayed as the story unfolds.



Source: Google Maps

Craft Origin and History

Origin

- The exact origins of scroll painting are unknown.
- But it is found in many states including Rajasthan, Orissa, Karnataka and Telangana.

Cheriyal scroll Painting origin:

- The similarities in Rajasthan and Cheriyal scroll painting in style and colour has led a lot of researchers to believe that the painters of Rajasthan brought their artistic tradition down south.
- Another historic belief about the origin of Cheriyal scroll painting is that storytelling itself gave rise to the scroll painting tradition in the Telangana region. This led to the commissioning of scrolls.
- It is also believed that the Nizam of Hyderabad invited the painters to decorate the inside of his palace.
- In 2007, Cheriyal artwork was designated as a GI (Geographical Indication) for its distinct folklore, rich heritage, and cultural significance.



Themes, Style & Characteristics

Themes

Mythology

- Stories from Hindu Mythology like, Ramayan and Mahabharat are very popular.
- The one here shows the story of birth of Lord Krishna



Cherriyal Painting in Nift RC. Photographed by M.Vasil

Festivals

- Stories about the events of festivals like Bathukamma, Sankranti, Bonalu etc are very popular.
- The first one shows a panel depicting Bathukamma festival.
- The second picture shows a panel depicting Sankranti



Photo Courtesy: D. Venkataramana

Agriculture

- Stories about how growing, harvesting and selling crops are very popular.
- The picture here shows three panels depicting growing and harvesting of rice crop.

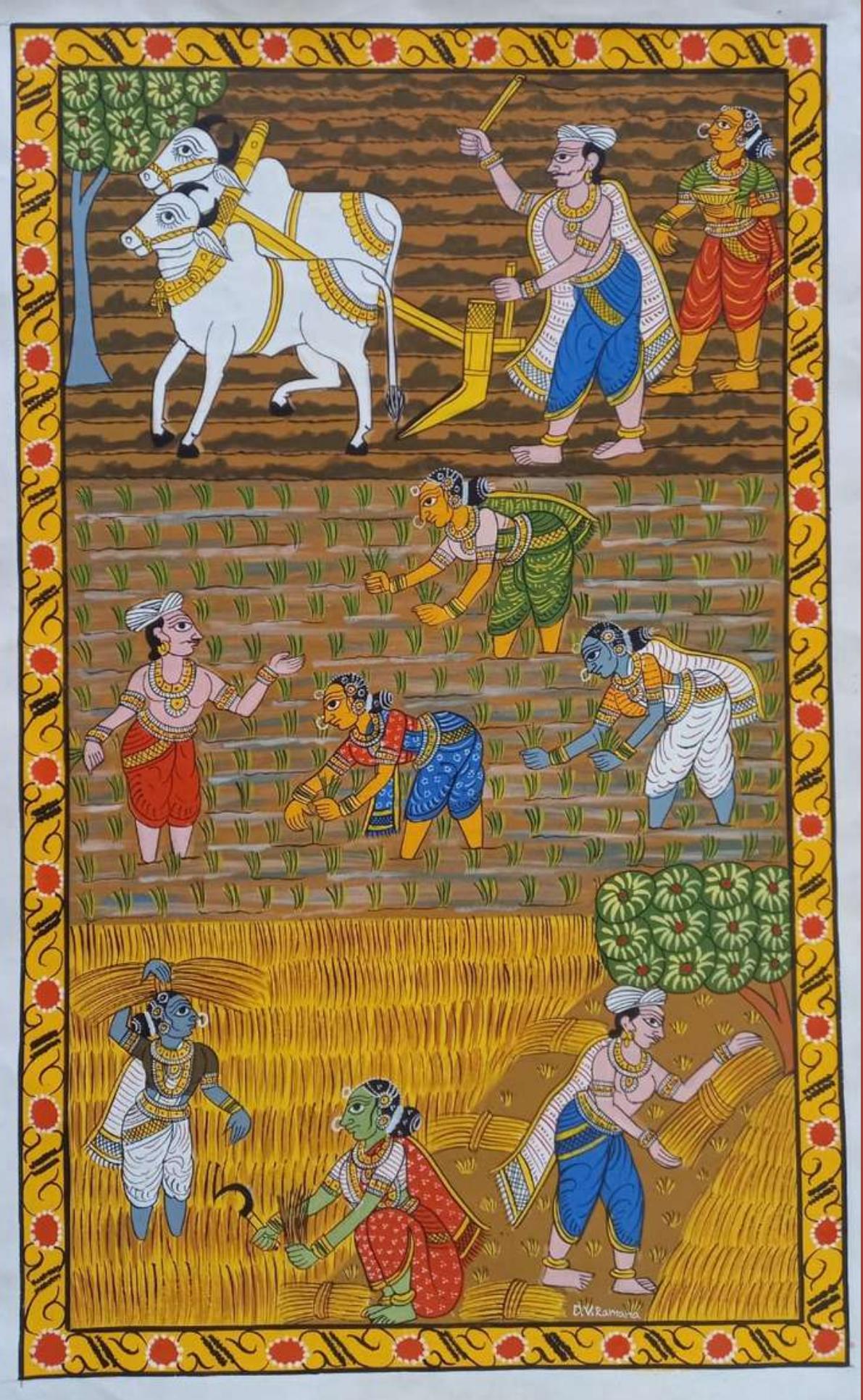


Photo Courtesy: D. Venkataramana

Rural living

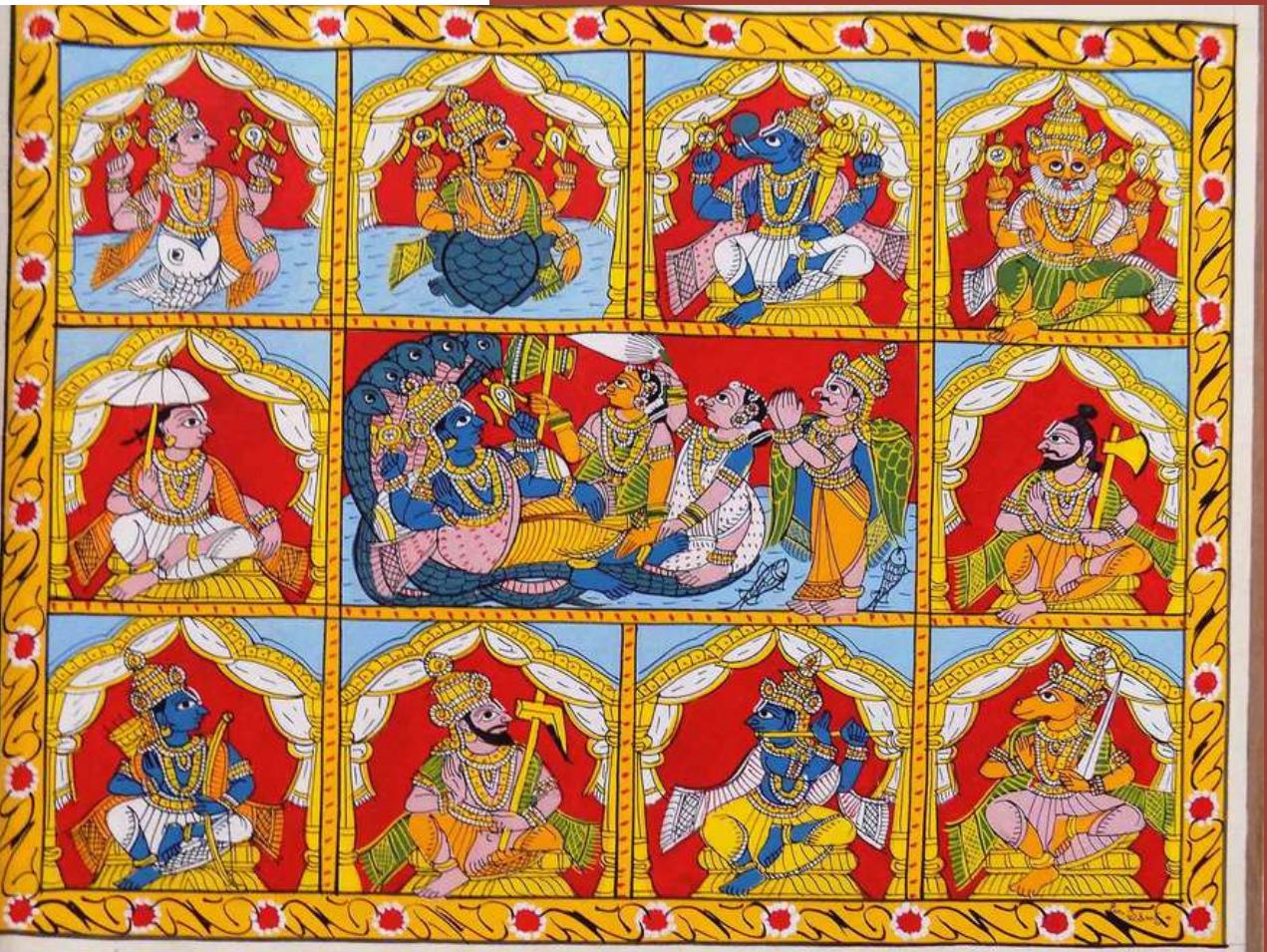
- Stories about living in a village, the culture, the people and the activities.
- The first painting depicts various thing women do in day to day lives.
- The second painting depicts rearing of cattle in a village.



Photo Courtesy: D. Venkataramana

Tradition

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.



Source: Huesnrokes website

Styling

The stylization is given a lot of importance to remind the audience that the visuals are only to aid the storytelling. The flowing lines and the visual impact of the characters against the background allows it to be attractive enough to grab the attention of the audience. The use of thin and thick lines are used for the accordance of the characters. the thin lines are used for the design of the jewellery. It gives an insight into people's love for ornamentation and also gives a clue as to when the story was set in place.



Photo Courtesy: D. Venkataramana

Colours

- Colours 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 colour to showcase anything that is painted on it.
- These paints are made with natural stone colours known as "Gaddalu ranga" in the area. Only a few hues, such as white, black, yellow, and green, are available.
- Characters in these paintings are immediately identifiable thanks to the colour schemes employed to depict the story's characters.
- Krishna, for example, has a blue face.
- Light colours were used for Gods, Kings and people of high caste, while dark colours were used for people of lower caste, devils and evildoers.
- This gives each painting its own personality and helps to distinguish them from one another.



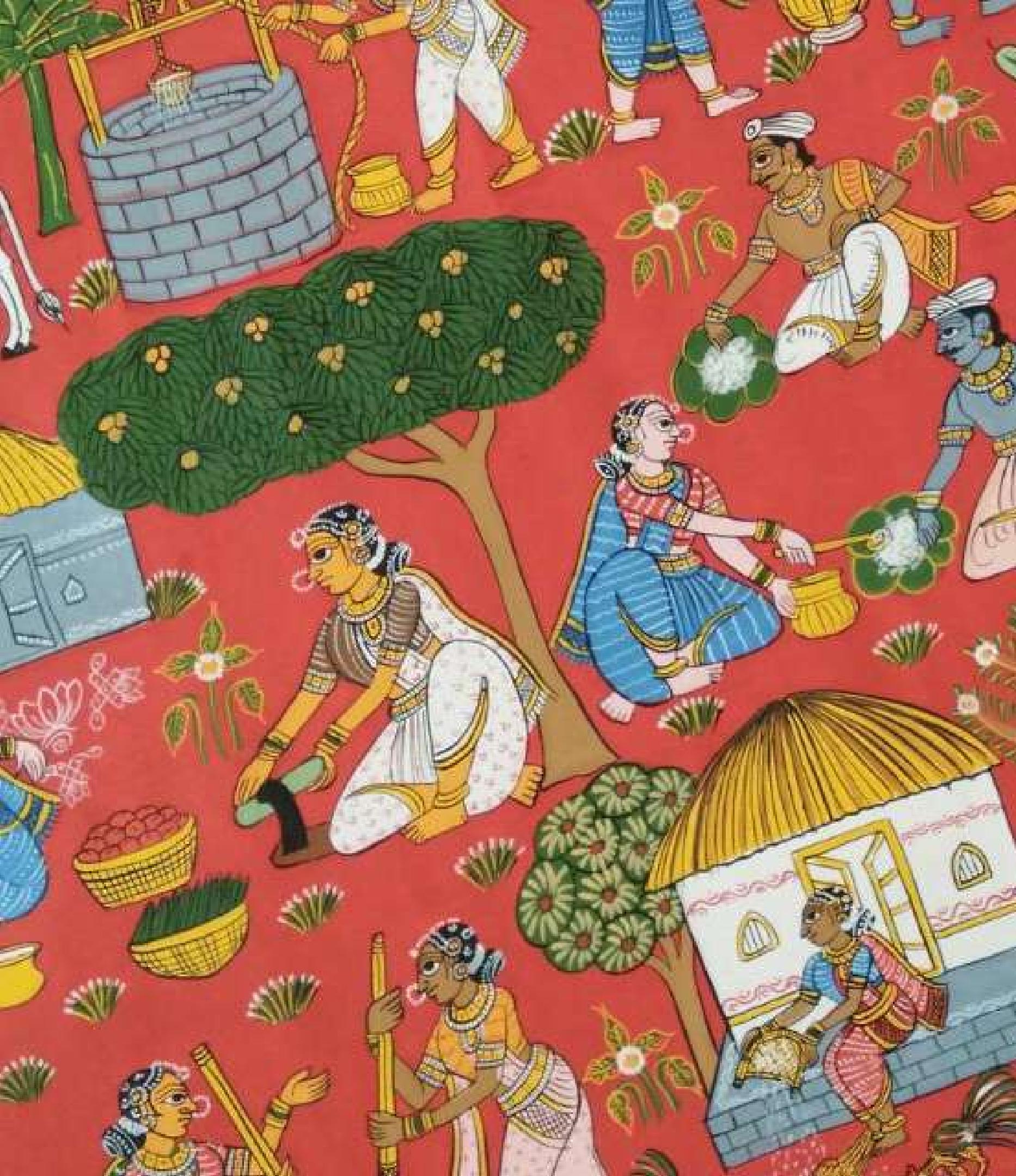
Photo Courtesy: D. Venkataramana

Composition

- The narrative stories are formed in sections and panels.
- Each panel is outlined with floral motifs and bright colours known as "pitta kallu".
- The dimension of the panel is relative to the importance of the scenes. Most communities carry vertical scroll paintings. Some communities like Dakkallolus carry horizontally.
- Lines are free-flowing and easy and are called 'Banthi'.
- According to the importance of the characters, placement in the frame is done. Spectacular characters are placed in the foreground. Modest characters occupy the background. Major characters are the largest in the scene and insignificant characters are relatively minuscule.. .
- The eyes of the characters do not show perspective. Cheriyal paintings don't have any depth or perspective. The concentration is on symbolically representing an event.



Photo Courtesy: Venkataramana



Characteristics

- Distinct in the wealth of ornate characters with high foreheads, startling eyes depicted in assorted and brilliant colours, they mainly constitute characters from myths as the scroll paintings are empathetic in their strong religious overtones.
- The scenes in the scrolls are detailed with descriptive elements like animals and vehicles.
- Cheriyal paintings include figures that are flat and face one another. These characters are described in a profile perspective, giving the impression that they are having a conversation.
- These characters' viewpoints and proportions are given the least prominence, yet their expression has a local flavour to it, and they symbolize the qualities of the area.

Costumes

- The representation of the garments shows the creation of new fabrics as well as the influence of many civilizations on the Telangana region.
- Because each scroll survived for up to a hundred years, they mirrored the current situation and recorded the evolution of clothes.
- It is unavoidable that the outfits of the figures alter before they are replicated again by another artist.
- Ties and dyes, as well as prints, are described on scrolls. As a result, Cheriyal's scroll paintings include a pictorial record of several costume periods.



Evolution of Scroll sizes



Scroll Illustrating the creation
of dhobi caste
121cm x 1073cm

Photo courtesy: christies.com



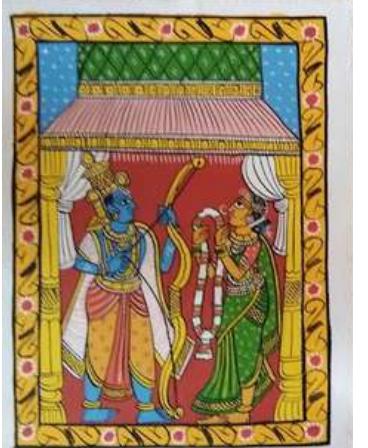
Story from Ramayana
91cm x 122cm

Photo Courtesy: Venkataramana



Stories of rural living and festivals
20cm x 40cms

Photo Courtesy: Venkataramana



Story from Ramyana
15cm x 20 cm

Photo Courtesy: Venkataramana

Raw Materials, Tools, Preparation and Painting Process

Raw Materials



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



- *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.



- *Tree 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.



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



- *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.



- *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.

Tools



- *Pencil for drawing the basic outlines of the painting.*



- *coconut shells are used to store colors.*



- *Wooden or Steel Scale for drawing borders*



- *Goat hair and squirrel brushes:* Presently, Synthetic brushes and hand made squirrel hairbrushes are used.

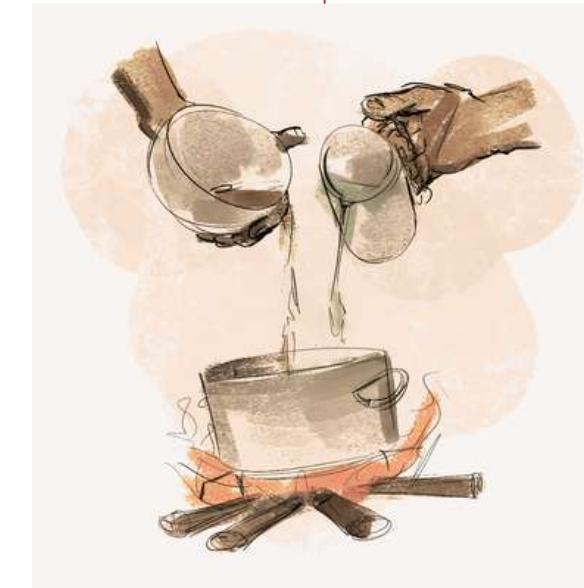
PROCESS

Preparation of Canvas



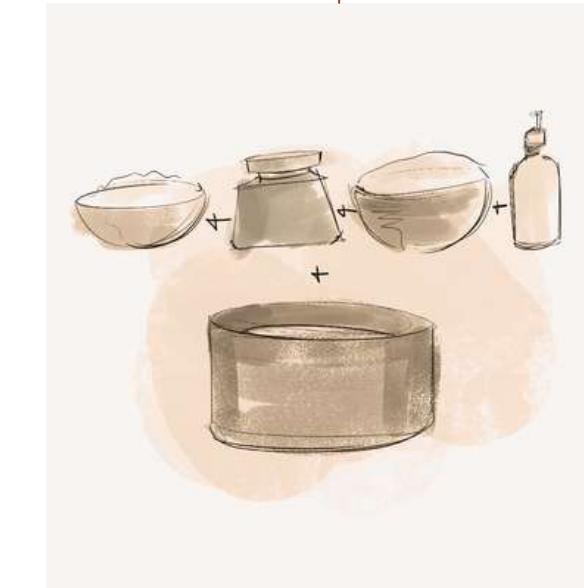
Fabric cutting:

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.



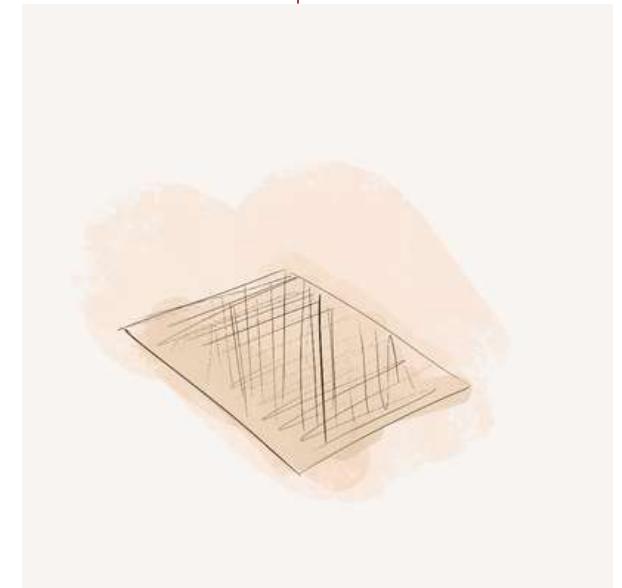
Adding other ingredients:

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:

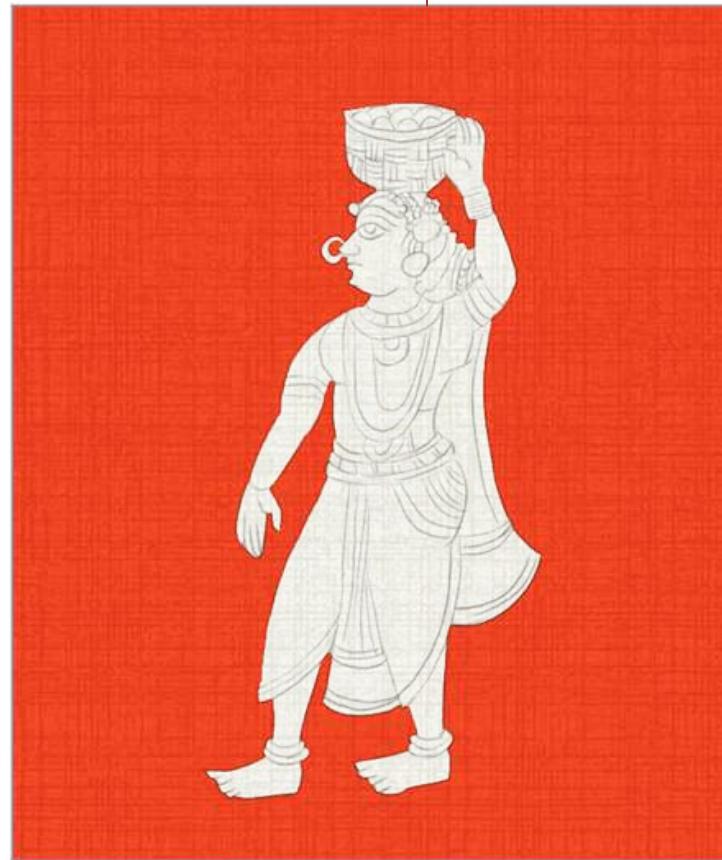
The fabric is dried to give it stretchiness.

Process

Painting



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



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

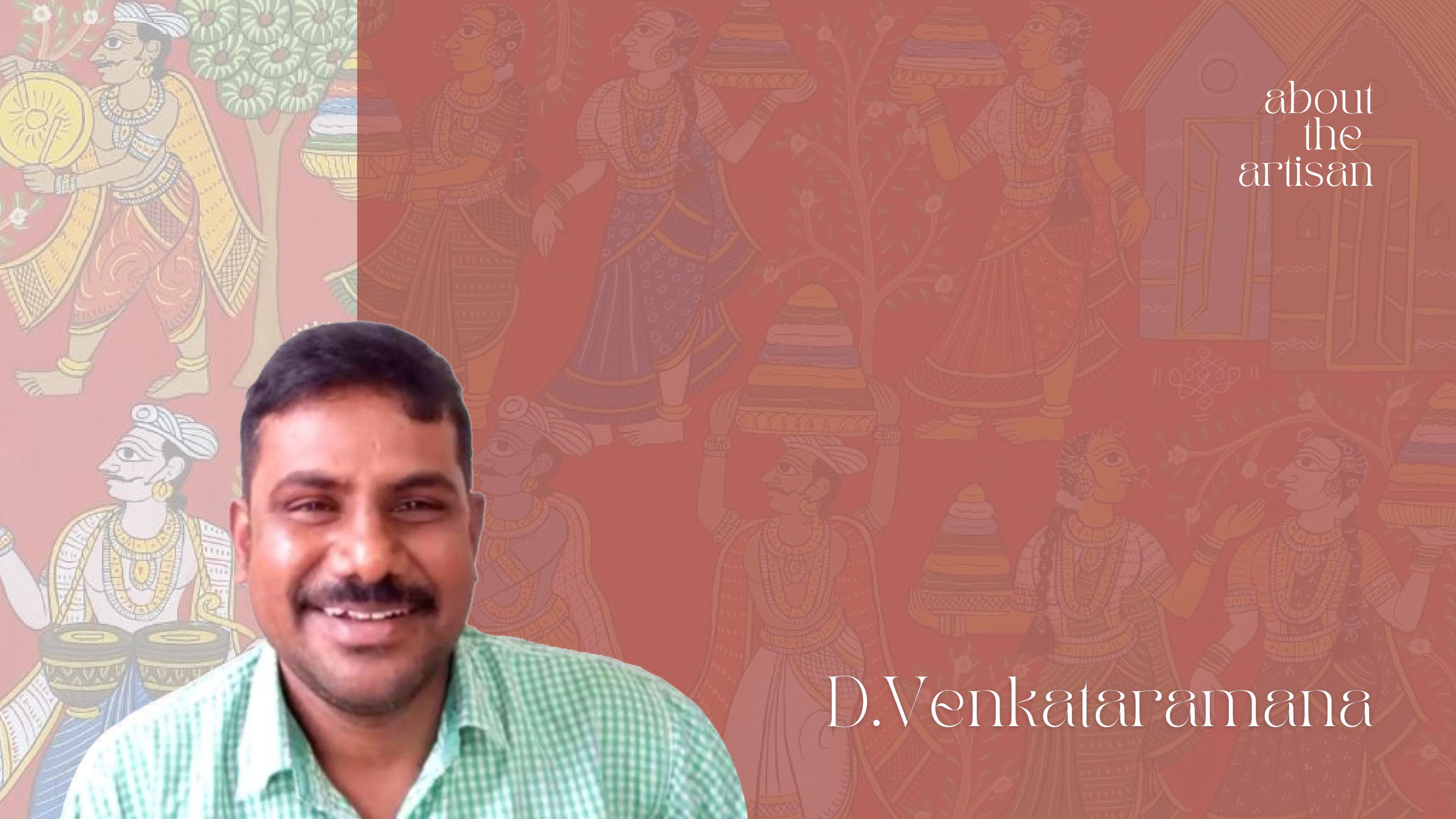


The artisan then uses a **goat hair brush** to fill in the **colors of the characters**.



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



about
the
artisan

D.Venkataramana

about the artisan



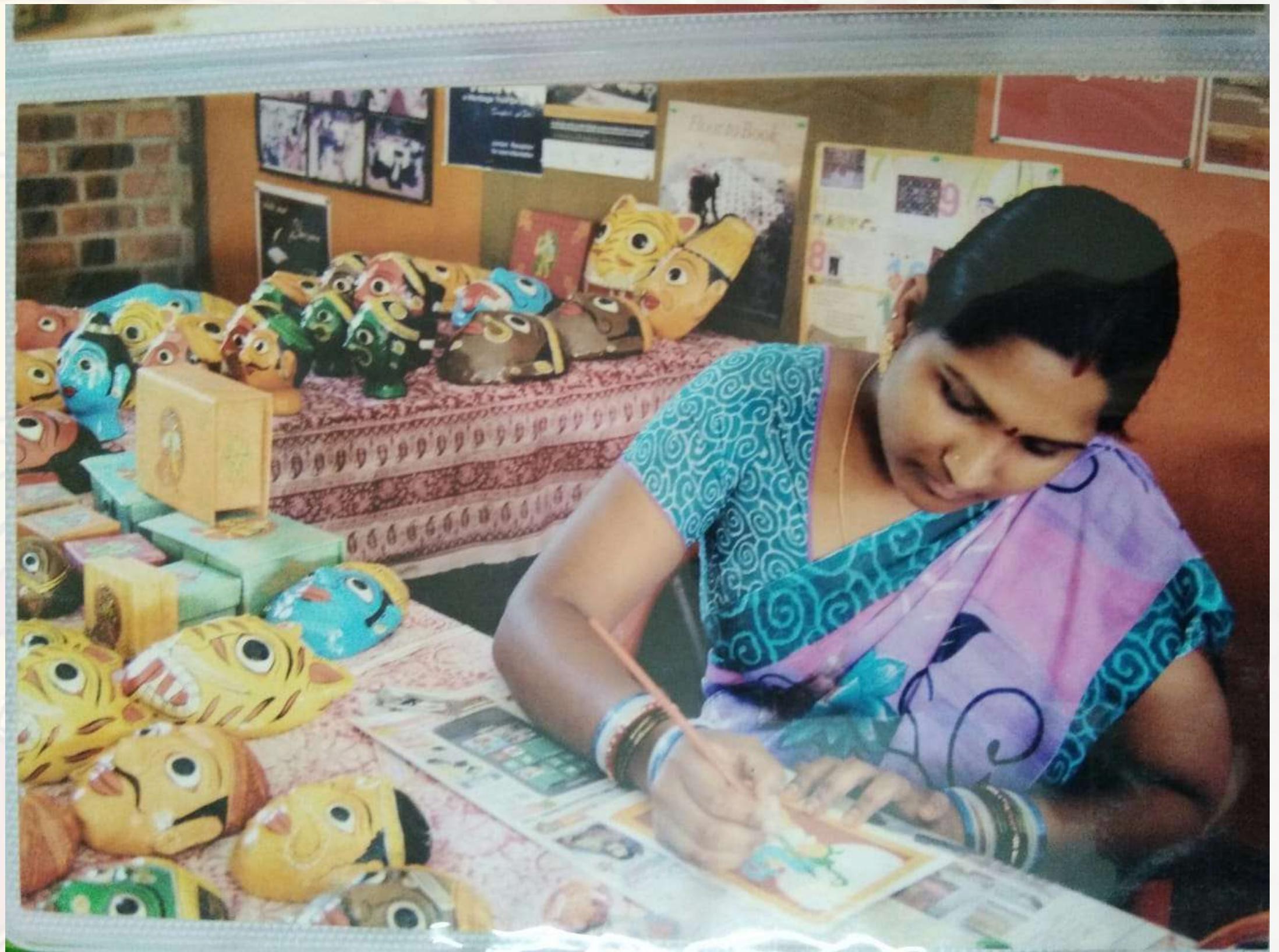
D.Venkataramana

In the urge of saving the heritage and the art. Years ago, As a child, he learned the Cheriyal 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 Venkateshwara 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 was also awarded national and several state-level awards.

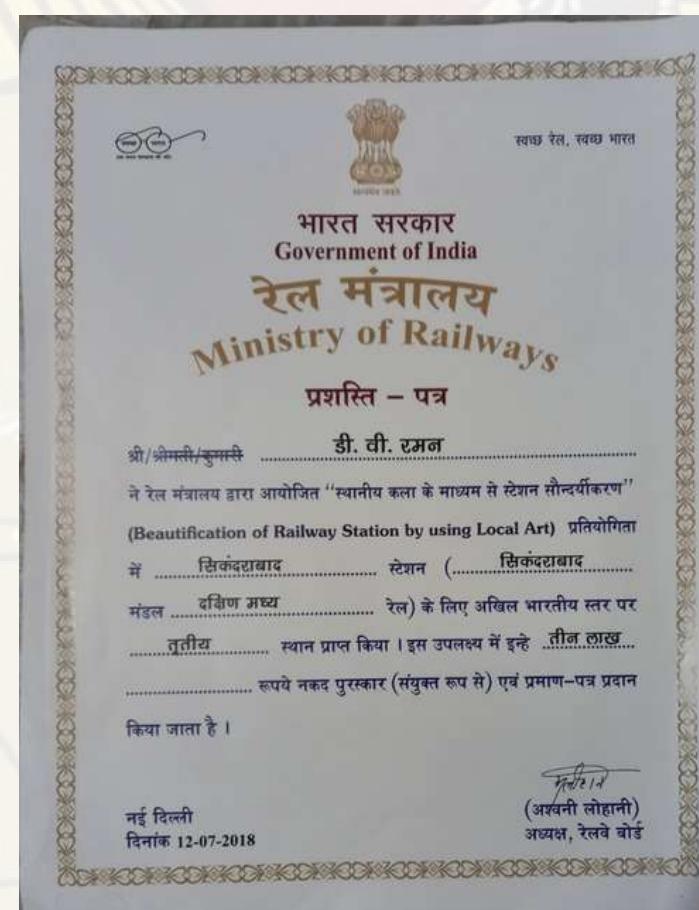
His ancestors have been practising this art for decades, now he is trying to forward it from all his soul and heart, stated Mr Venkat. He is also teaching but not forcing his children to forward their legacy. As it is his talent the craft Is his pride.



Venkataramana



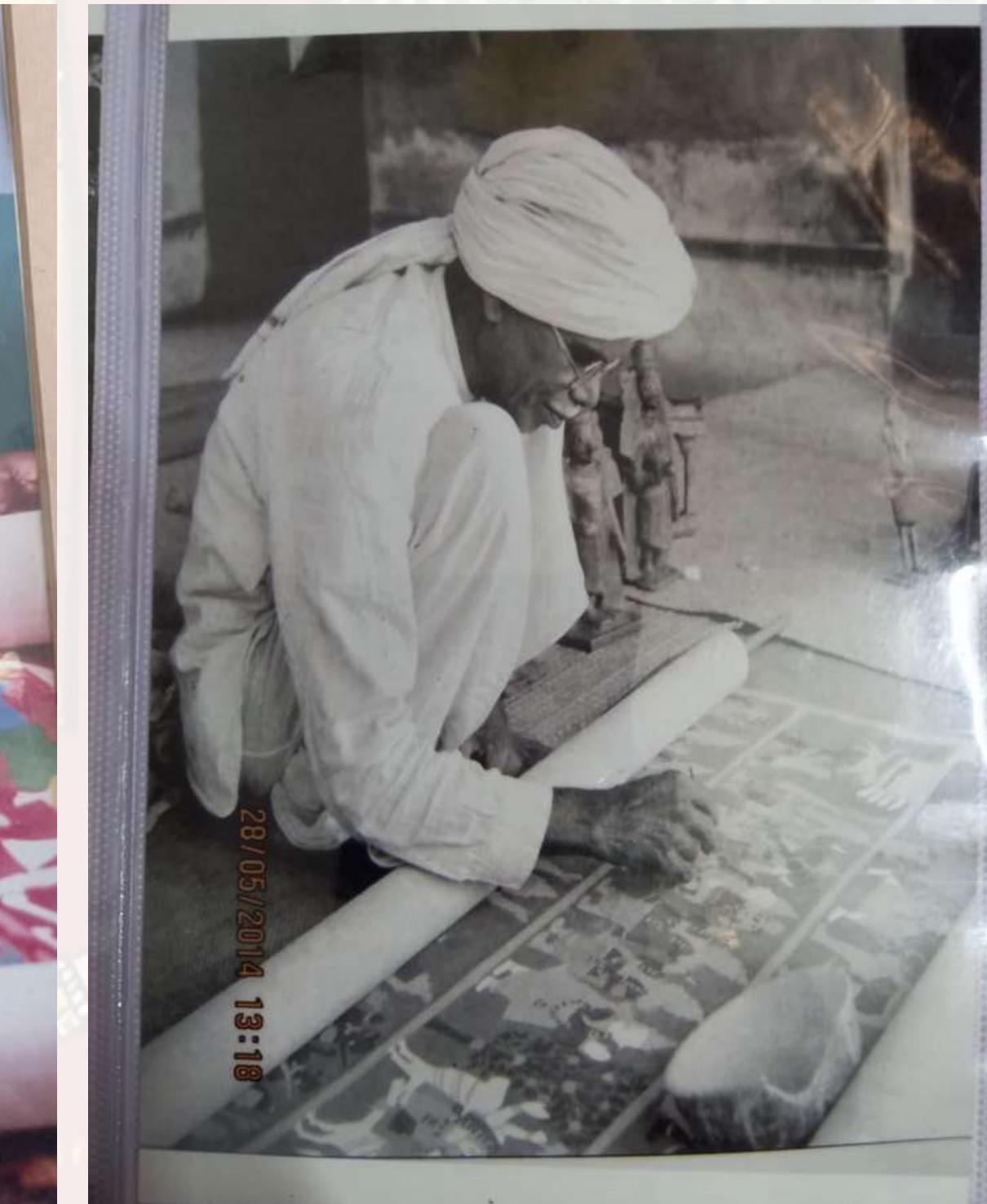
Deepika



State and National
Railway award
certificates



VenkataRamana's Father
Chandraiya



VenkataRamana's GrandFather
Venkat Ramaiya

Artisan's work at Secunderabad Railway Station

- Rural living



Artisan's work at NIFT Hyderabad



Various Workshops held across the country



Artisan Contact Details

D. Venkata Ramana (Nakash)

BFA in Painting

State Award Winner and National Railway Award Winner

+91 98499 61926

D. Deepika (Nakash)

+91 95502 64217

Address: H.No. 44-88/1/2,

Beerappa Nagar,

Jagathgirigutta

Hyderabad - 500 037

Telangana, India.

Email: dvramana.cheriyalpainting@gmail.com

Present Scenario of Craft Practitioners

Present Status of Cheriyal scroll Painting

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. They were painted for Storytellers, who would travel around the country and tell stories. For that, they would display these paintings as a visual representation. When people began to lose interest in ballads and folklores as television and movies became more popular. These artists adapt to the situation and they trimmed down the size for paintings to be used as home decor.

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. They now go up to 60 to 90 cm 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, colors, 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 these 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.



Storage boxes



Masks

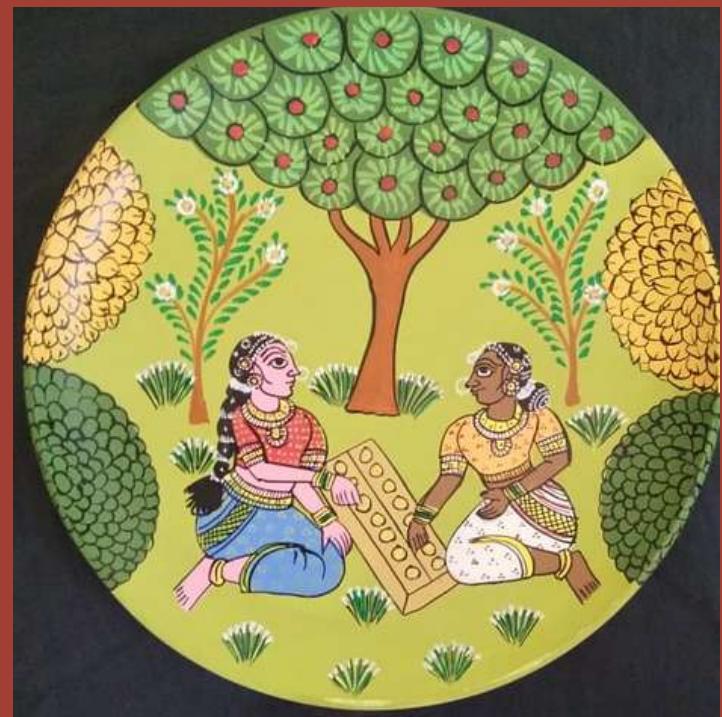


Decorative plates



Sattakudi game

Photo Courtesy: Venkataramana

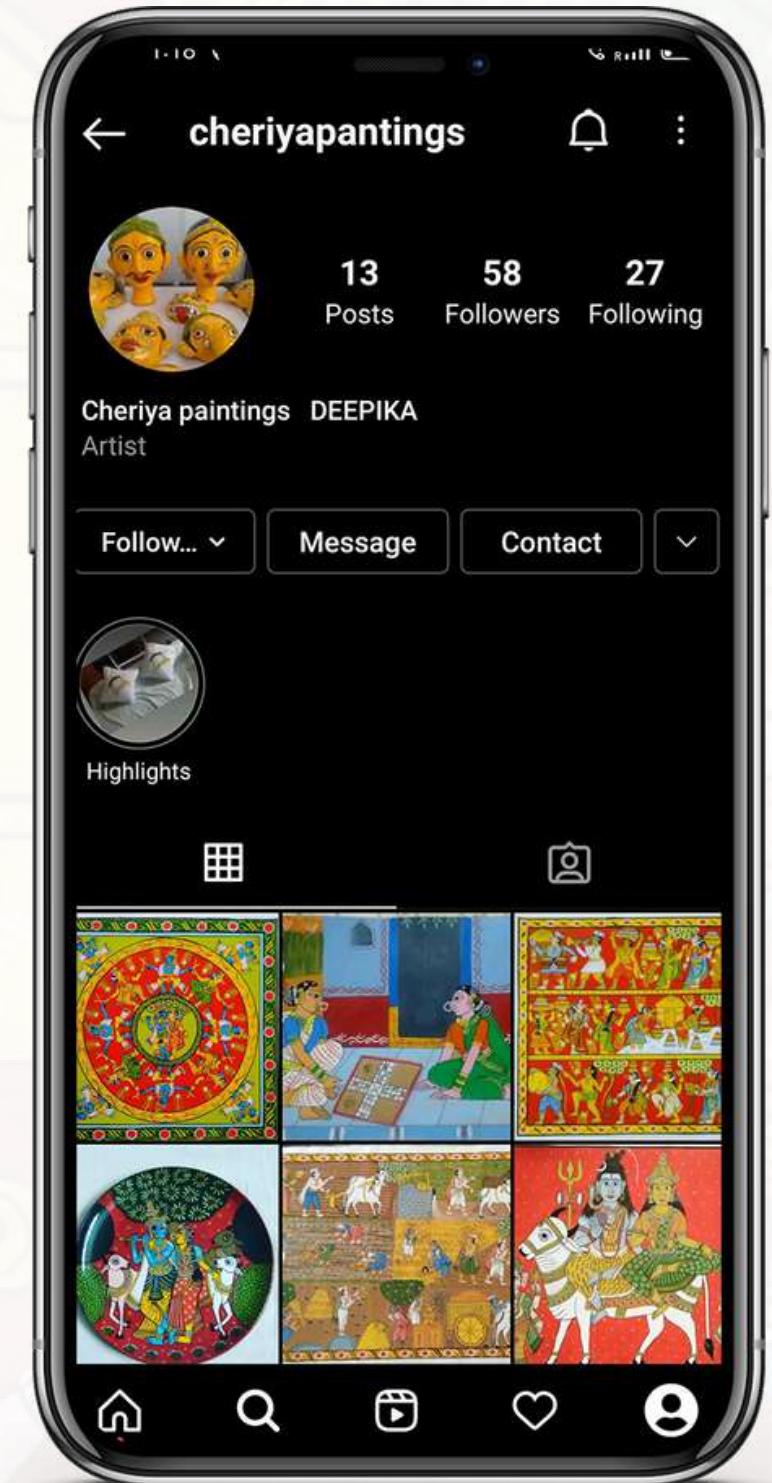


Fighting the Pandemic

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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D. Venkata Ramana (Nakash)

D. Deepika (Nakash)

Date: 13 August 2021

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Meet the team

Khushbu

Writing
Layout and design
Primary research - Interview
Secondary research

Vidhu Shukla

Writing
Secondary research
Primary research - Interview

Muhammed Vasil

Illustrations
Writing
Secondary research
Layout and design

Nishant Kumar

Writing - Costumes and characteristics

Satyam Das

Writing - Colours

Piyush Kumar

Writing - Styling

Bhupendra

Writing

Thank You