

# Arts & Craft of Bihar

Traditional Art



# Patna Kalam

Patna School of Painting or Patna Qalaam (Patna Kalam) or Company Painting is a style of Indian Painting, which existed in Bihar, India in the 18th and 19th centuries. Patna Kalam caught the connoisseurs eye for its clear stylistic difference and unusual use of water colours. For the first time, there was a rich coherence between realism and visual perspective. This style combined elements of the Mughal and British styles of paintings so well, that it was called the Feringhee Kalam (the White man's art). The paintings were done on surfaces as diverse as paper, mica and even ivory diskettes, that were used as brooches. That it was the world's first independent school of painting which dealt exclusively with the commoner and his lifestyle also helped Patna Kalam paintings gain in popularity. The subjects of these paintings had always been the common man and his mundane routines. It's basically a miniature form of painting which has, because of its unique style and form, occupied separate shelves at art galleries in London and museums in Prague.



# Madhubani Art

- \* Named after the village where it originated, Madhubani paintings have spread the name of Bihar the world over. Although it is believed to be prevalent from the time of Ramayana, it acquired the deserved recognition only after 1950s. Earlier the paintings were drawn on mud plastered walls during important festivals and personal ceremonies. For commercial purposes, today they are made on handmade paper, canvas and different types of clothes. Images of Gods and Goddesses, natural subjects like Sun, Moon, Tulasi Plant, birds, animals and scened of wedding or other celebrations are the main themes of the painting. Even after so many years the method of production has not changed a bit. A bamboo sticks wrapped around with cotton is used as the paintbrush and colors used are all obtained from nature. For example, powdered rice is used as white color, red color comes from red sandalwood or kusam flower juice, yellow from turmeric.



# Tikuli Art

Having its origin in Patna city, the craft, which is believed to be around 800 years old, involved melting glass, adding traced pattern in natural colours and thereafter embellishing it with gold foil to create the “tikuli” or “bindi”, which is worn by married Indian women on their forehead.



# Stone Art

- \* path of Middle Living. The stone images of Gaya reiterate the messages delivered by Lord Buddha.
- \* The tradition of the stone craft of Bihar dates back to the ancient eras and it had reached its zenith during the Mauryan period as the dynasty was characterised by its craftsmanship. The **Pattharkatti** region of Atri in Gaya is one of the major centres of stone craft in Bihar. Other centres are located in Nalanda, and Patna. The stone craft of Bihar demonstrates some huge statues of the great sage, Buddha that are basically found in the neighbouring places of Gaya. Including these, various Stupas and monasteries stand as the great examples of the excellent artistic quality of the artisans of Bihar. Among the most popular stone carvings, the Ashoka pillar at Sarnath is the beautiful piece that exhibit marvellous art of stone craft of Bihar. Black stone artisans of Gaya in Bihar are also well acclaimed for their creation of the Vishnapad temple in black stone in Gaya.



# Applique

- \* Textiles
- \* Applique
- \* Khatwa is the name given to appliqué works in Bihar. Khatwa is about designing by cutting of one fabric and stitching the pieces to another fabric. Khatwa is mainly used to create designer tents, canopies, shamianas and much more. Making of such tents involves work by both men and women. While cutting of clothes is done by men, women use their expertise in stitching part. Khatwa is also used in designing women garments as well. This is where the real talent of Bihar people is seen in the work. The designs created are more sharp, intricate and highly appealing. Most of the garments shop sell these highly artistic clothes.
- \* People in some villages of Bihar are involved only in art works and it is their main source of income. Since the same skills are passed down to generations, the expertise and innovations are immaculate. So when you are visiting Bihar, don't forget to buy yourself some really great paintings and some exquisite clothes.

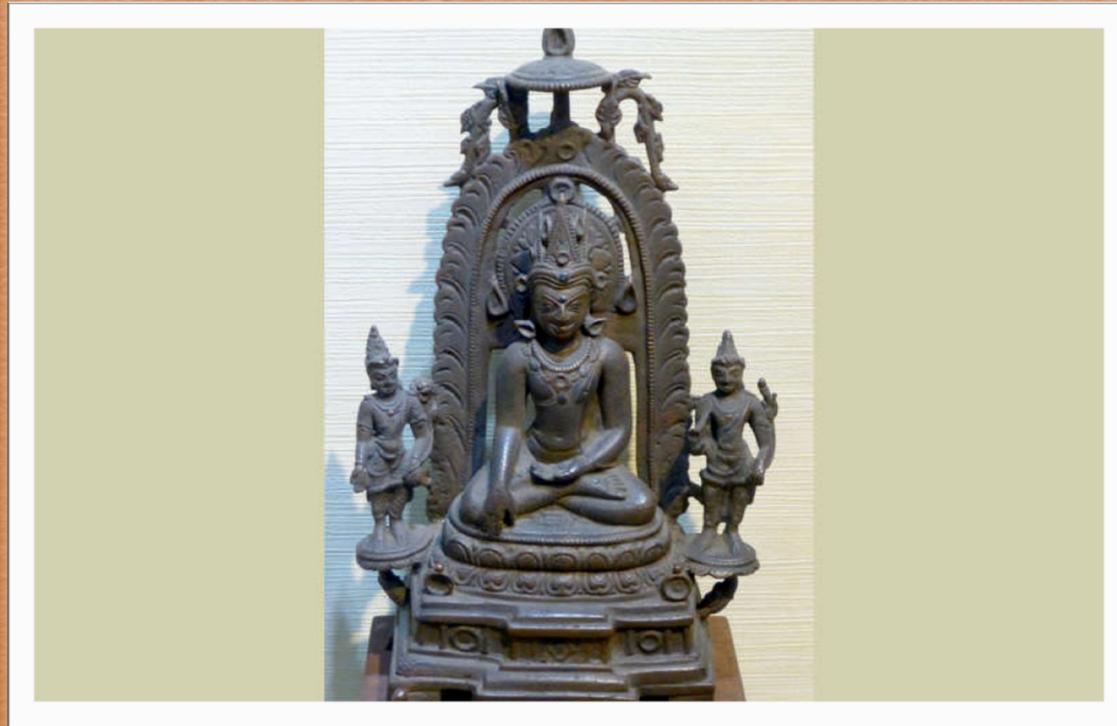


# Sikki Art



# Bangals of Lakh



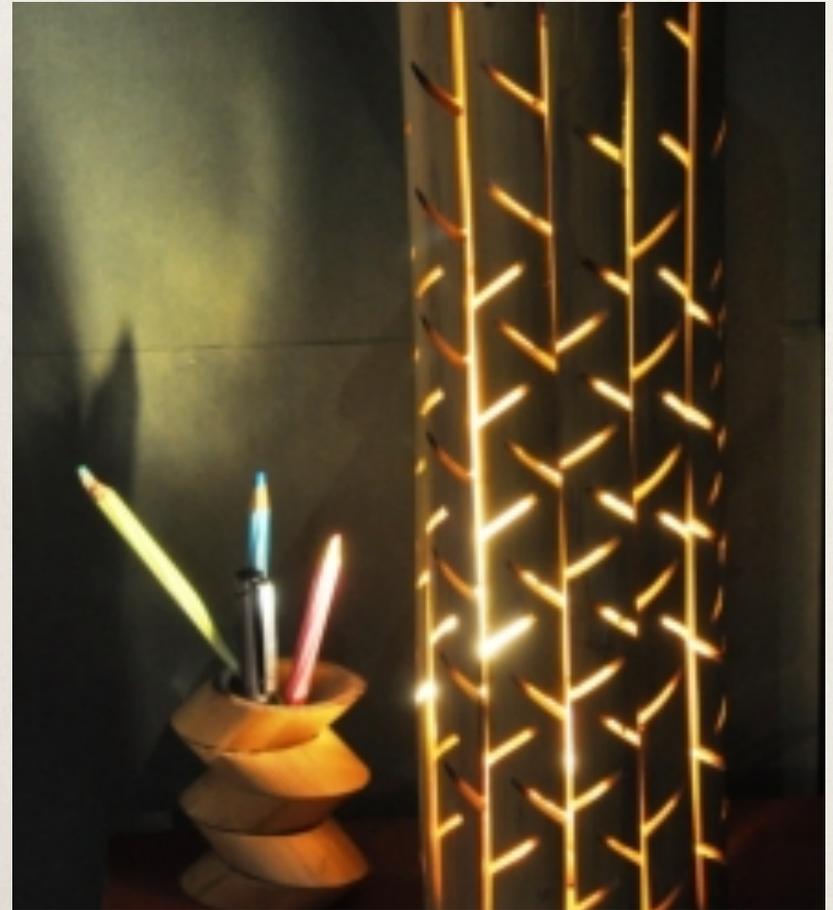


# Metal Art

Brass and Bell Metal art is about 300 years old in Bihar. It is popular for decorative items like idols of God-Goddesses, statues and other daily utility items.

# Bamboo Craft Work

- \* The bamboo and cane crafts of Bihar have a rich historical past that is amalgamated with the preferences of the modern urban people. As Bihar is affluent in the tradition of the powerful dynasties like Magadha Majanapadas, Mauryan Empire and Gupta Empire, the artisans had received encouragement from them. With the introduction of modern technologies the bamboo and cane craft of Bihar has flourished. As the time precedes the tradition of the past and the style of the modern age have developed the cult of the bamboo and cane crafts of Bihar. This has also led to improvements of the products at a high grade with subtle changes.



# Pottery Art

- \* Bihar has a rich history of clay pottery work. Since the time of Mauryan and Gupta this art has been in practice in Bihar. The archeological excavations at places like Nalanda and Rajgir had confirmed the existence of this artistic craft in Bihar. Beautiful earthen utensils and tiles are made by potters of Bihar. They have the abilities and skill to do artistic and beautiful paintings on earthen pots. Patna is very famous for such work. Patna is also famous for making earthen statues of various gods and goddess.

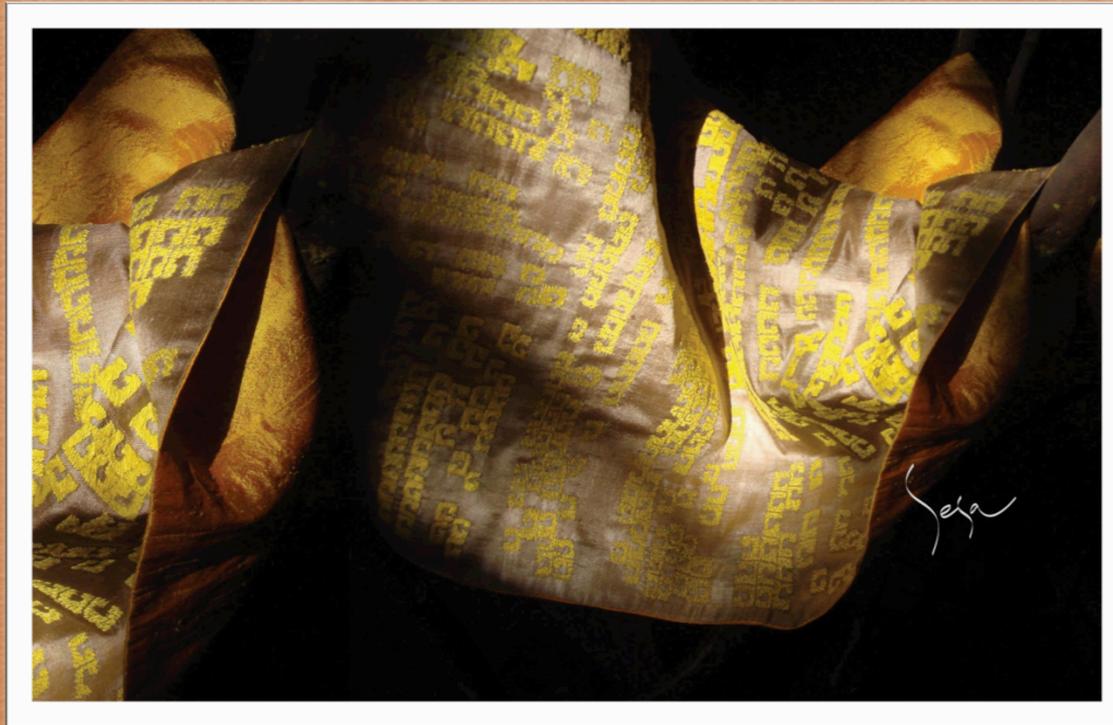




# Paper Mache

Paper Mache is a great recycle craft of Bihar.

First, the dry paper is soaked in water for about one week. After it has fragmented in the water, it is crushed in khal musal, or beaten with a hammer, to make it into a paste. Multani mitti is soaked in water for at least 24 hours. Then, the paper, multani mitti, methi powder and adhesive are mixed together to form various shapes and sizes. Whole process is done by hand and at the end the shapes are dried and painted to give it a perfect look. At present paper mache is used in production of utilitarian accessories and households. There is a huge collection of paper mache crafts in the museum of Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan. The institute also gives training on paper mache to the students and artisans



# Sujni Work

Sujani (or Sujini) is one of the most popular form of conventional art and craft prevailing in Bihar. It is a traditional quilt made in the rural areas of that state. The art has been preserved in the remote villages by the women who prepare articles of great aesthetic value, primarily meant for household use. Created with the simplest of stitches, with readily available fabrics and at times with well-worn pieces of clothes, the Sujani works are generally crafted by women in their free time at home.

The craftswomen produce furnishings such as bedspreads, wall hangings, cushion and bolster covers, as well as clothing items like saris, dupaattas, and kurtas.

