

# A White Wonderland

Warli Painting

**DISCOVER MAP**



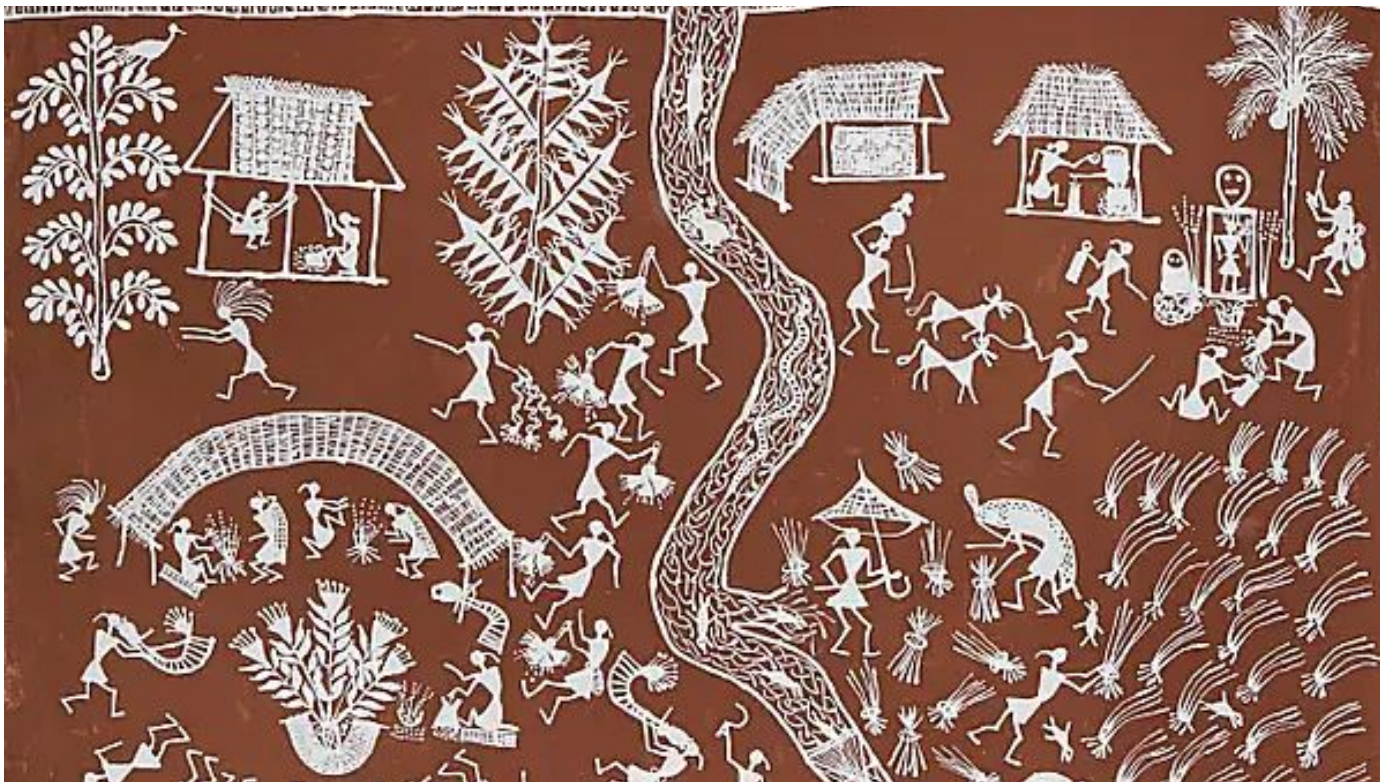




Before we dig deeper into this Discover MAP pack, here is a quick game for you that can start us off!

## **COMPARE & CONTRAST**

Can you find common elements between the two images you see here?



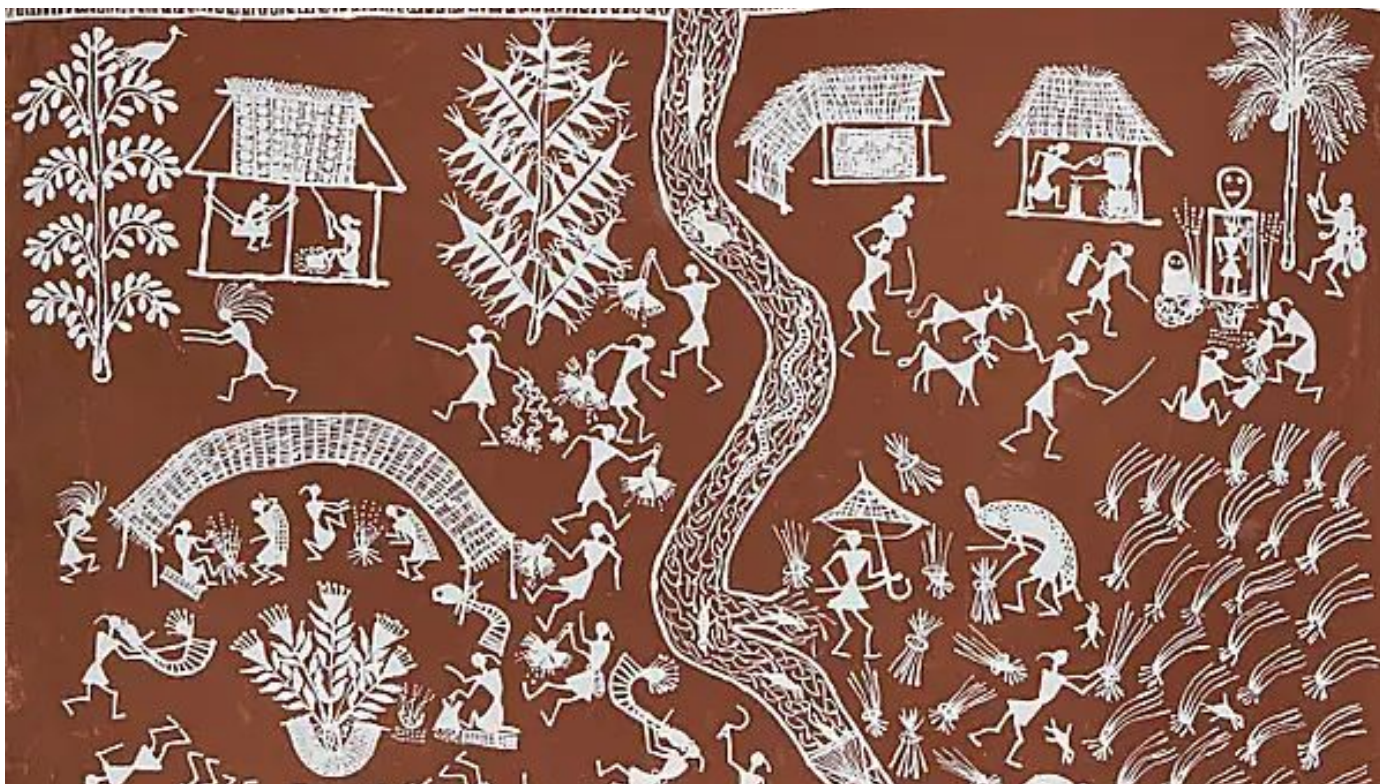
How many did you find?  
Make a list!

The image on top is from the walls of a cave in Bhimbetka, Madhya Pradesh, believed to be over 10,000 years old!





The image at the bottom is of an artwork in the MAP collection made on cloth in late 20th to early 21st century. It belongs to an indigenous tradition of art making called Warli paintings, made by people who are also called Warlis!



These works look similar because the Warlis continue to use simple colours and motifs to make art, very much like some of our earliest ancestors.

The Warlis are one of the oldest living communities of India, and their lifestyle and culture is very much in tune with nature and its elements.

Most of the population lives in Maharashtra and some near Gujarat border.

Can you point out the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat in this map of India?







The Warlis originally made paintings on walls as ritual and for decoration. They did not have a written script until recent times and their art was a way to transmit their belief systems from one generation to the next.





Image: Uploaded by Jignesh, distributed under a CC0 license.

## THINK.

When do you think this wall painting was made? What do you see that can help you with your guess?

**If this was an advert, what do you think it would be about?**



Like the Warlis, many old cultures didn't have written scripts and mainly used art to tell their stories. But there were also cultures that developed pictographic scripts, using pictures as their form of writing!

### **VOCABULARY ALERT!**

Pictographic scripts are scripts that use pictographs or pictograms instead of letters. A pictogram is a picture that represents an object or concept. For example, an envelope is used to represent e-mail and a speech bubble represents messages! The emojis that we use are also pictograms!



Collection: The Metropolitan Museum, New York

**Do you know of any writing system that is composed entirely of pictures and symbols?**





Figure A  
Collection: Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio



Figure B  
Collection: The Metropolitan Museum, New York



Figure C  
Collection: The Louvre, Paris

The script from the Harappan civilisation (figures A and B) and the hieroglyphs of Egypt (figure C) are examples of pictographic scripts.

## EXTEND.

Have you ever tried sending a text to someone that is entirely composed of emojis? See if your friend gets what you want to say!

**What do you think the circled signs in these images symbolise?**



## CREATE.

How about creating your own script using symbols, shapes and forms from Warli paintings?

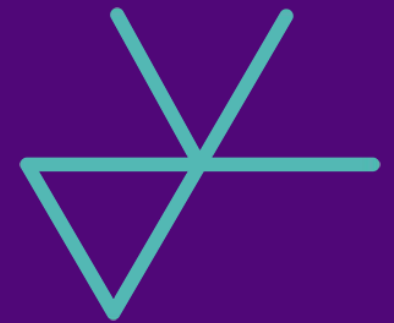


First, think of a sentence you want to write in your new Warli-style script.

Now, look at a Warli painting from the previous pages to identify any shapes or forms you can use to represent words from your chosen sentence. You can also use elements from the painting to form your own meanings!



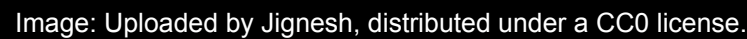
Now arrange these shapes and symbols to form your sentence! Show it to your friend or family member and have them guess your Warli style sentence.



**This is what we have written.  
Can you guess what we're trying to say?**

**\*insert sentence\***





If this part of the wall painting we looked at earlier was meant to be a written script, what do you think it would say? Can you try reading it like a language?

What kind of materials do you think were used to make this wall painting?

# How many colours can you spot in this image?





Warli paintings are made using colours derived from nature and brushes made out of twigs and sticks.

Can you guess which natural elements are used to produce the brown colours of this artwork? Here are some options for you:

- a. Cow dung
- b. Mud
- c. Bricks
- d. All of the above!

**What title would you give this painting?**

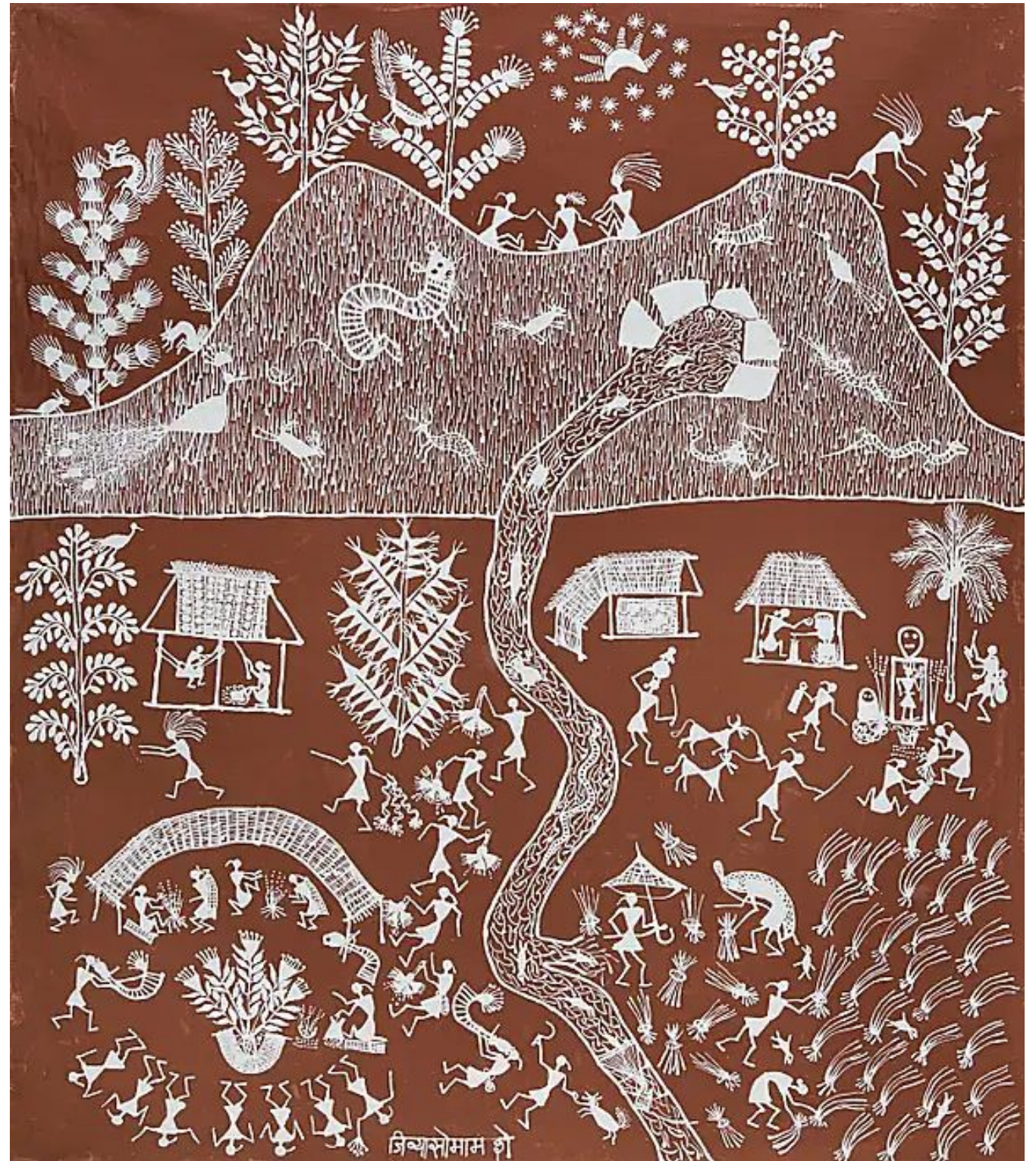






Image: Uploaded by Carla Antonini on Wikimedia Commons, distributed under a CC-BY 2.0 license.

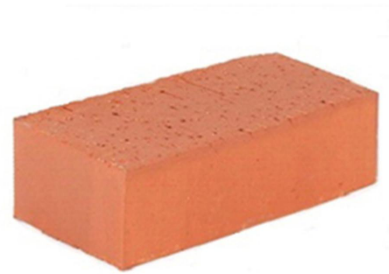


Image: Uploaded by Andrewlister on Wikimedia Commons, distributed under a CC-BY 2.0 license.



Image: Uploaded by Abu Sayyid on Wikimedia Commons, distributed under a CC-BY 2.0 license.

This is how a Warli painting is made:

First, a mix of cow dung and mud is used to coat the surface.

Next, brick dust is added to this mix to make it more red.

And finally, rice paste is used to make the white colour and paint over the red surface using twigs.





Here is another Warli piece from the MAP collection.

## LOOK CLOSELY.

Can you point out one major difference in the colours of this one from the last image?

Why do you think that is the case? Tilt your screen (or your neck!) to learn the answer!

Background is painted using only cow dung.



After the colours are ready, the Warli artists begin to paint. Subjects can vary from everyday scenes they see around them to even myths and stories!

### LOOK CLOSELY.

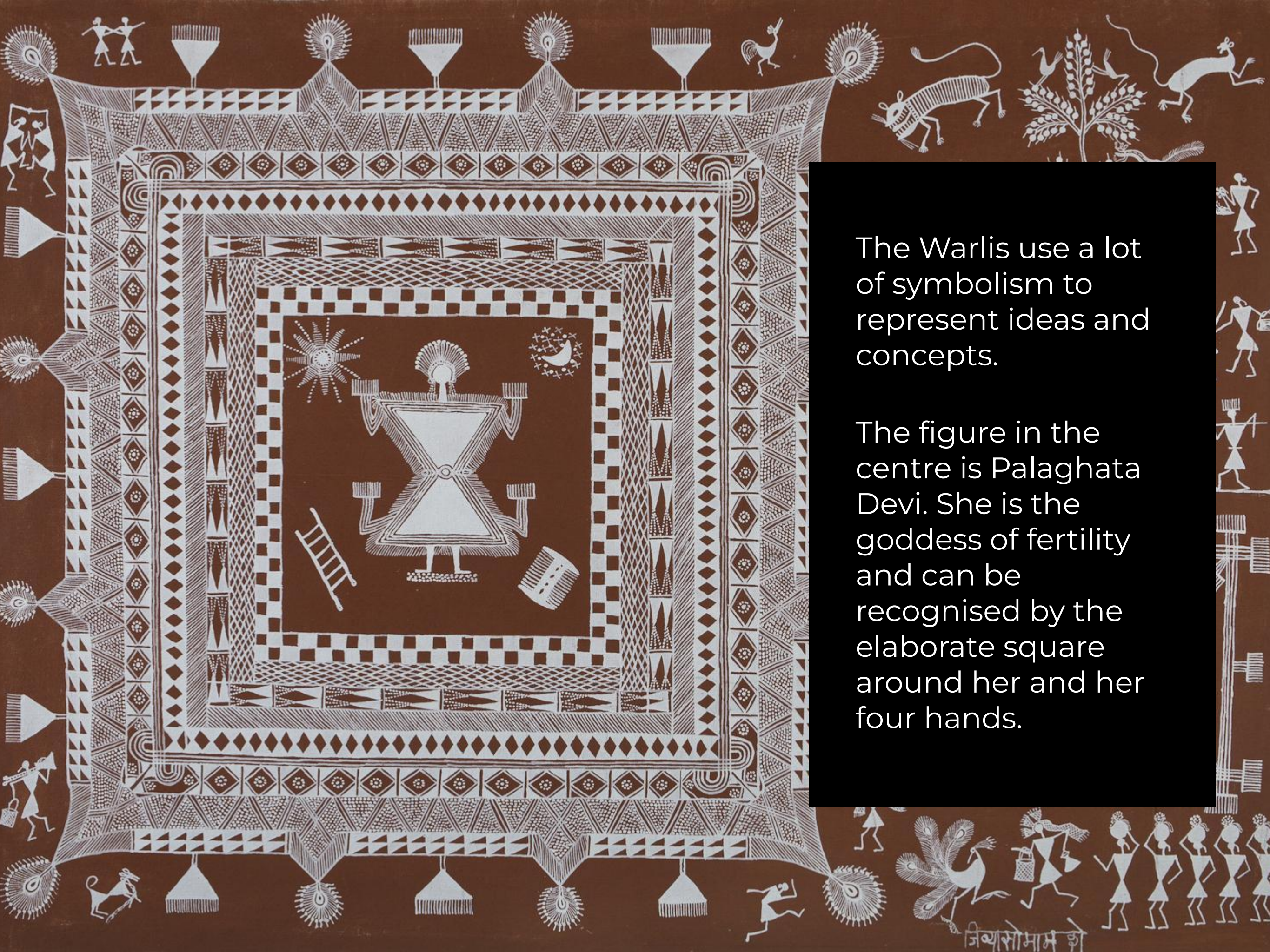
Here is an interesting piece.

- Do you see a figure inside a square? Who do you think that is?
- How many pairs of people can you spot outside the big square?
- Do you spot a horse inside a box? What do you think it represents?



**Try replicating the decorative square border on a paper. Was it easy or difficult?**





The Warlis use a lot of symbolism to represent ideas and concepts.

The figure in the centre is Palaghata Devi. She is the goddess of fertility and can be recognised by the elaborate square around her and her four hands.

जिथसोमाम डे



What do you think  
he is a god of?\*





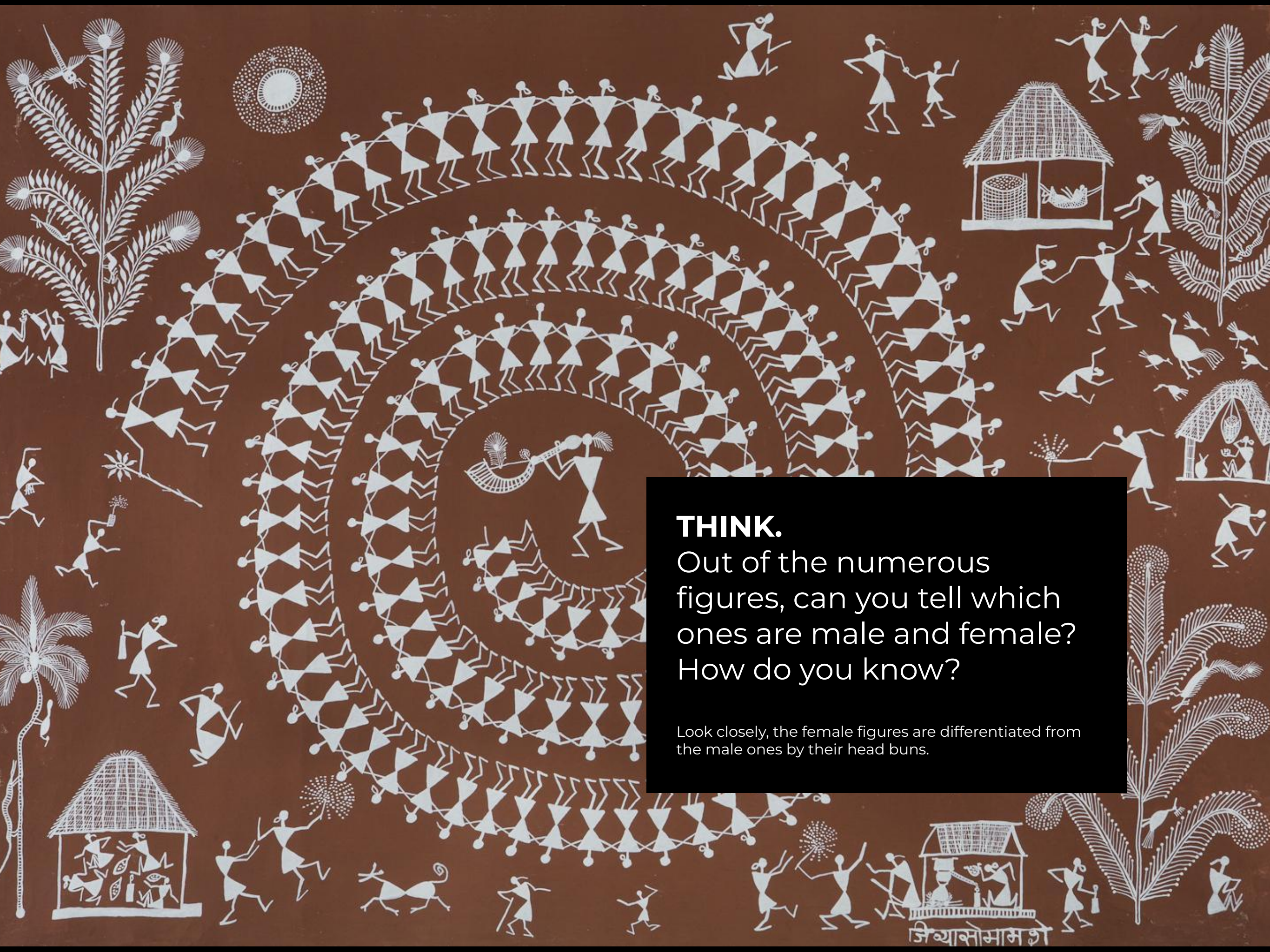
Apart from the square, there are other shapes used in Warli paintings.

Look at this image closely. Which other shapes can you spot?

Can you think of any real-life equivalents that may have inspired them?

**What do you think is happening in the centre of this painting?**





## THINK.

Out of the numerous figures, can you tell which ones are male and female? How do you know?

Look closely, the female figures are differentiated from the male ones by their head buns.



The Warlis are inspired by nature and the world around them, mainly painting what they see.

The circular formation you see in this painting is the *tarpa* dance. It is a dance performed by both men and women at weddings, festivals and other joyous occasions.

## EXPLORE.

The dance is incomplete without one element – a musical instrument called the *tarpa*! Learn more about it and make some music with our **DIY Guide Extra!**



**What is the figure right in the centre of this painting doing?**



Like the giant circle of dancers in the previous painting, the Warli paintings feature a lot of geometric shapes. In fact, although they're so action-packed and detailed, and look very complicated, their basic components are also simple geometric shapes.



**The triangle** inspired by the mountains and pointed trees.



**The circle** inspired by the sun and moon.



**The square** that has no parallels in nature, and thus considered sacred.



Additionally, the paintings are almost always about movement!

Everyday activities like dancing, hunting, fishing, farming and weddings are some themes they love to paint.

### **LOOK CLOSELY.**

What everyday activities can you spot in this scene?



### **EXTEND.**

Can you think of connecting everyday events and movement in your daily life? Pick something that you do everyday - like going to school? What kind of a dance move will best represent this, will your parents get what you are trying to communicate by making this move? Try it!



## GAME TIME!

Can you spot all of the  
animals listed below?

**Tiger**

**Rooster**

**Peacock**

**Cat**

**Squirrel**



How many did you spot?  
Check the next page for  
answers!





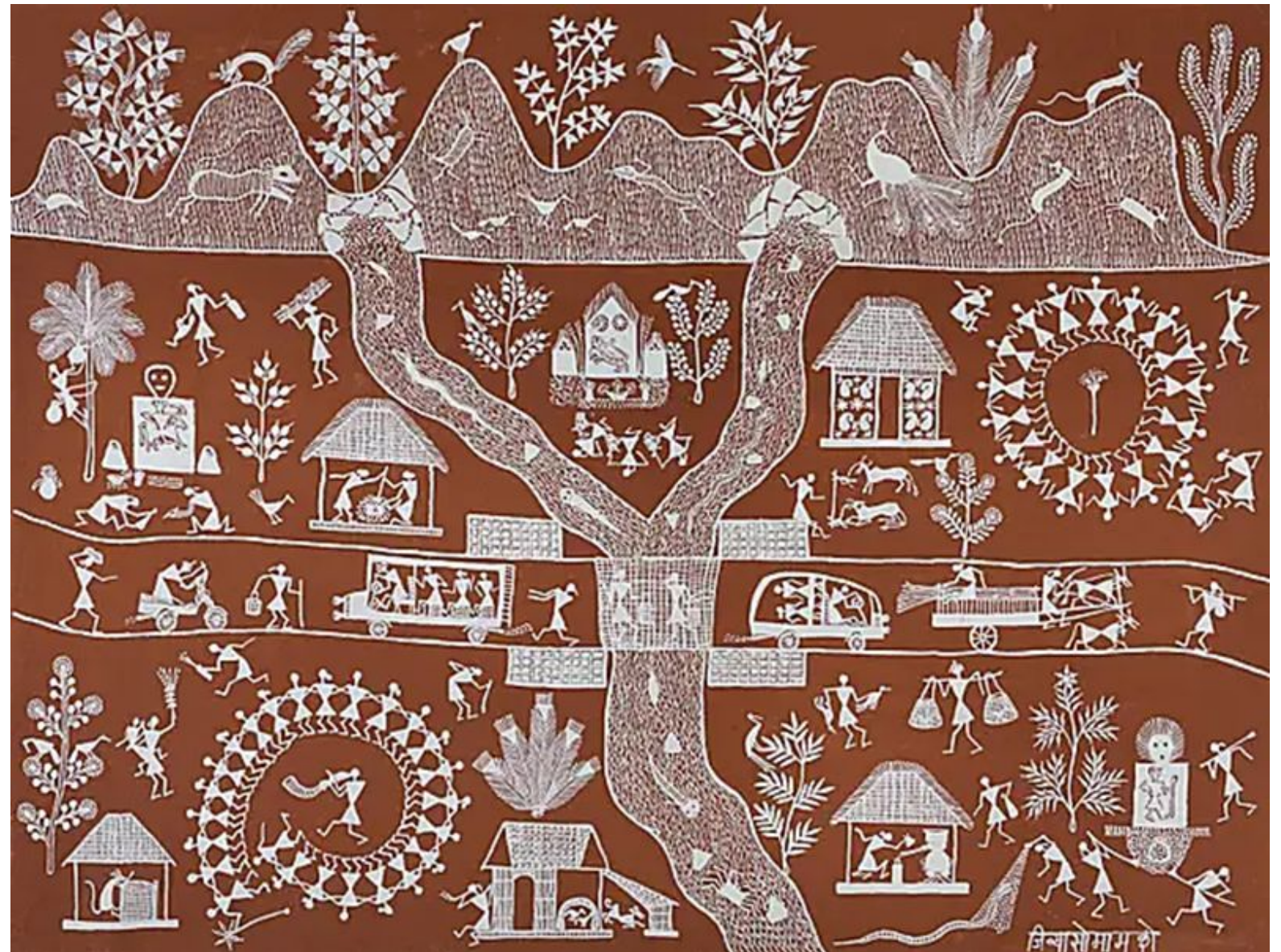
जिवा सोममो



For the longest time, Warli paintings were limited to the community and the outside world had not seen or heard of them at all!

One man is responsible for changing all this. His name is **Jivya Soma Mashe**.

He was the first to make Warli paintings on canvas and paper (like the one you see here), and others soon began to follow him.



**What are the means of transport you can spot in this artwork?**





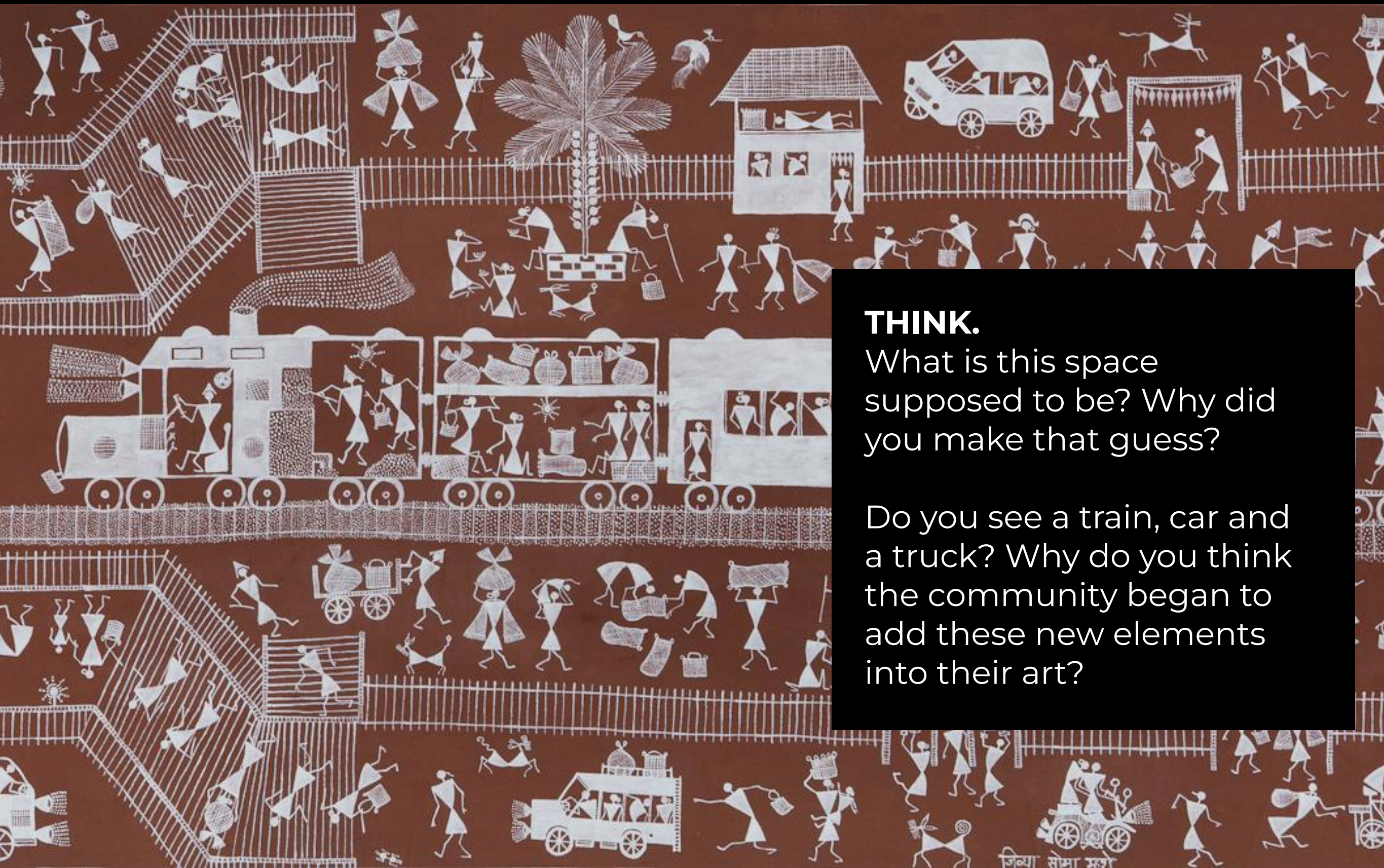
Let's look at another painting by Mashe.

## IMAGINE.

If you were inside this painting:  
What kind of sounds do you think  
you would hear? What about the smells?  
Will there be any? What kinds?

**If this were the  
cover of a book,  
what do you think it  
would be about?**





## **THINK.**

What is this space supposed to be? Why did you make that guess?

Do you see a train, car and a truck? Why do you think the community began to add these new elements into their art?

जिव्या सेमा प्रगते



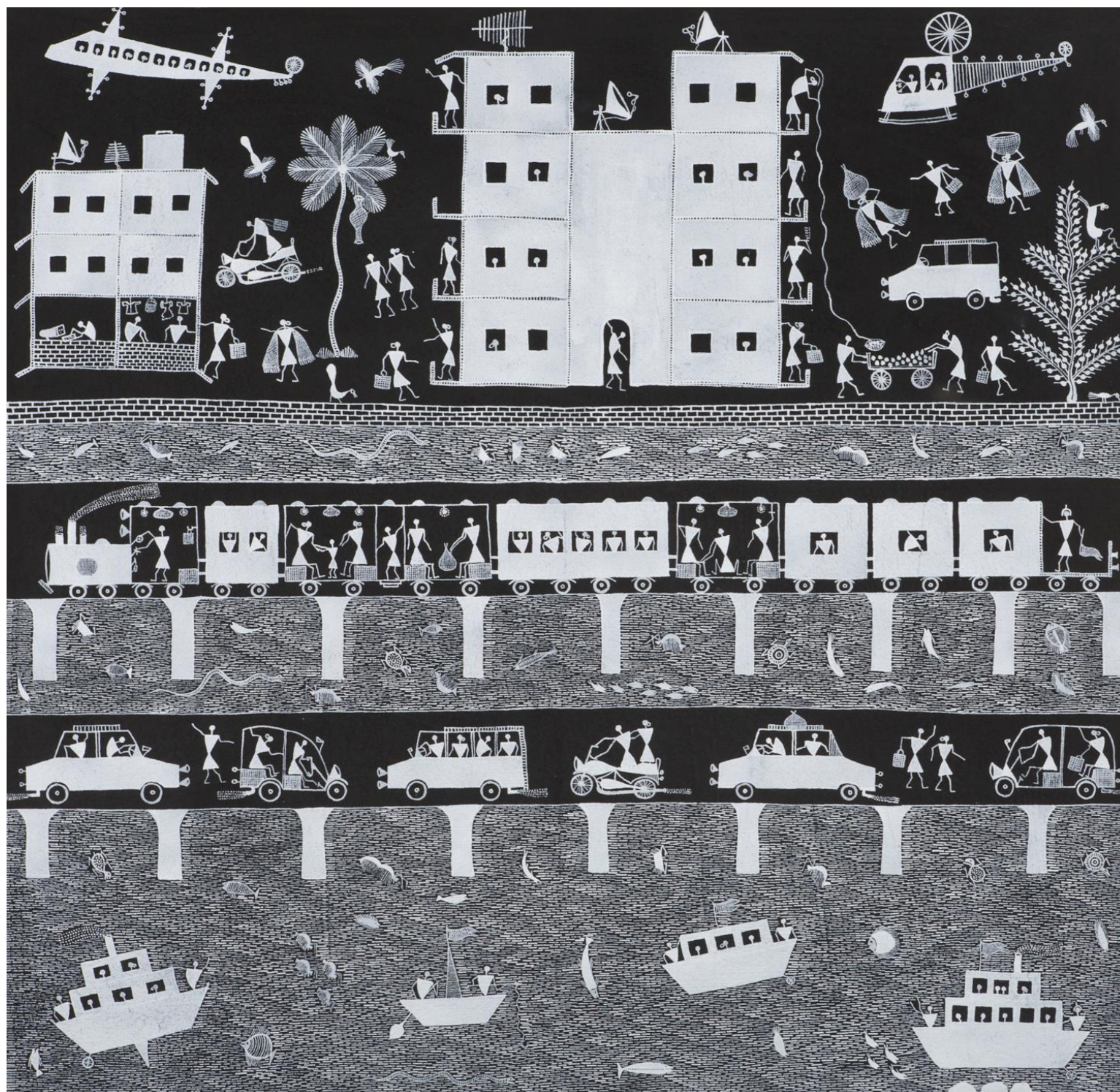
## **REFLECT.**

The Warli community, like other indigenous groups, are now exposed to the outside world and modern inventions, which they then represent in their art as well.

Do you think this is a good change? Can there be any negative impacts of globalisation on communities like the Warlis and their traditional ways of life?







Here is another work that includes things that you may have seen in your day to day life.

### **LOOK CLOSELY.**

Can you find a motorcycle in this work? What other means of transport do you spot?

Can you spot a woman buying vegetables from her balcony on the top floor? Check out how!

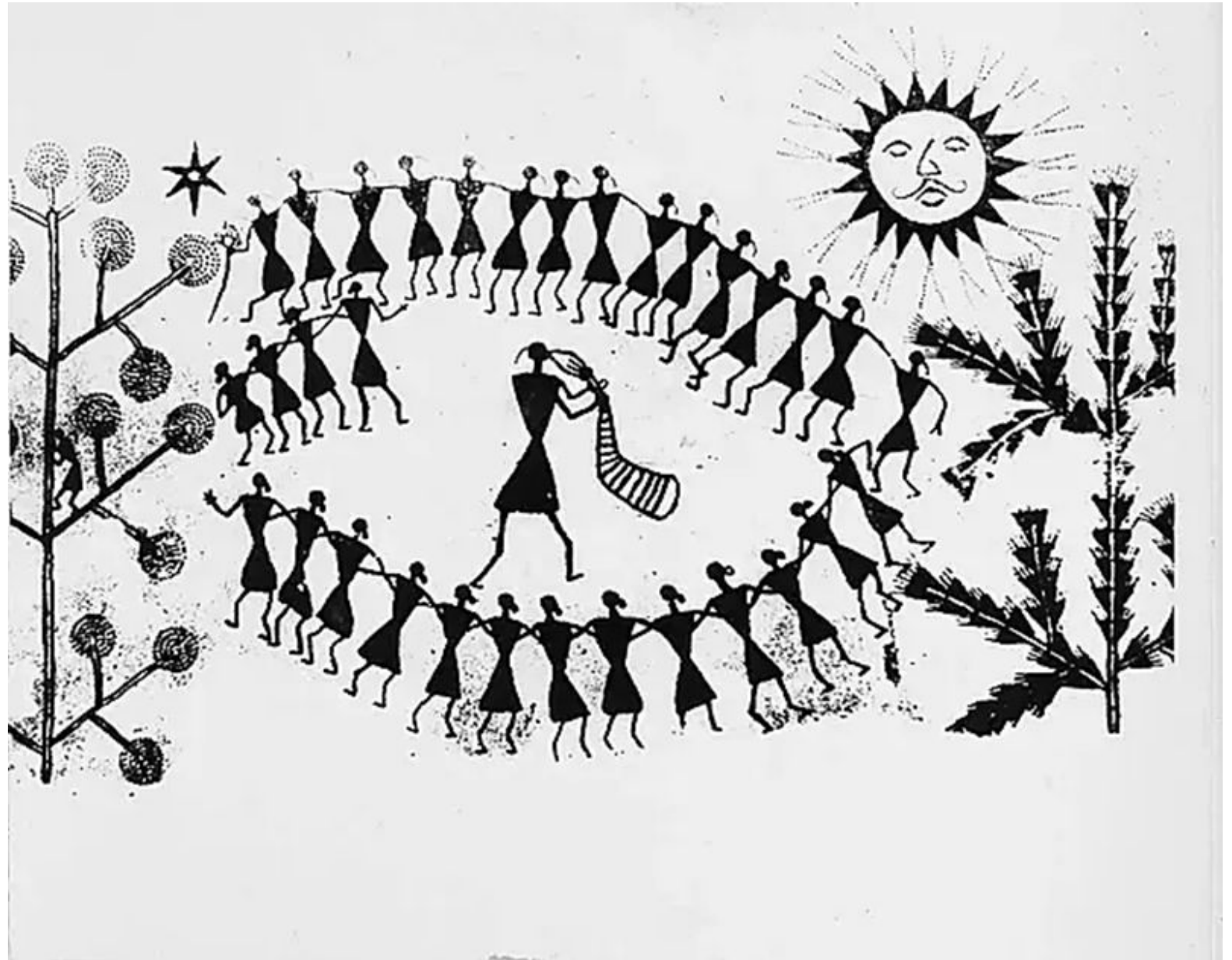
### **EXPLORE.**

Head to our **Stories With Art extra** to look at more details and make your own Warli cityscape!



In 1975, Jivya Soma Mashe showcased his works for the first time in Mumbai. The show was a hit, Warli art became super-duper famous and other artists soon began to make art inspired by the style.

Here is an example of a Warli-like print by a celebrated Indian artist – the printmaker and photographer, Jyoti Bhatt.



Does this print remind you of a Warli painting you saw earlier in this pack? What elements in this painting are different, and not typical of the Warli style?



Today, Warli art has become very popular and is sold all over the world. Not just limited to paintings, Warli art can now be seen on various products like lamps, stationery, clothes, etc.

An extraordinary journey isn't it? From life to walls to paper and canvas, and back to life with everyday products we all use!

## EXPLORE.

Can you find any items at home that may have designs inspired by Warli art?

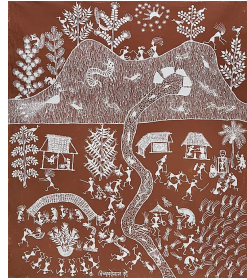


Image (top):  
Image (bottom):





Untitled, 1990-2000  
Amit Mahadev  
Dombre  
Natural pigments on cloth  
H. 135 cm, W. 85.5 cm  
PTG.00876



Untitled (Harvest), late 20th-early 21st century  
Jivya Soma Mashe  
Natural pigments on cloth  
H. 94.5 cm, W. 82.5 cm  
PTG.00852



Untitled (Harvest), c. 1990s  
Jivya Soma Mashe  
Natural pigments on cloth  
H. 158 cm, W. 164 cm  
PTG. 00921



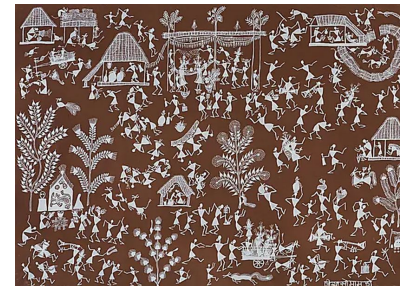
Untitled (Warli Wedding/Chauk Palghata Mata Temple), late 20th-early 21st century  
Jivya Soma Mashe  
Natural pigments on cloth  
H. 55 cm, W. 76.5 cm  
PTG.00849



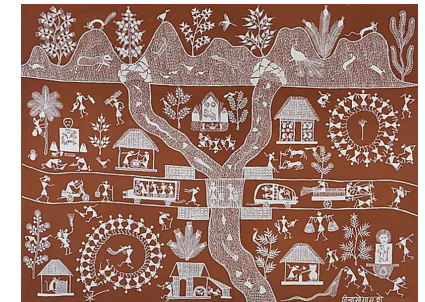
Untitled (Tarpa Dance), c. 1990s  
Jivya Soma Mashe  
Natural pigments on cloth  
H. 72 cm, W. 100 cm  
PTG.00844



Untitled (Diwali Night), c.1990  
Jivya Soma Mashe  
Natural pigments on cloth  
H. 64 cm, W. 92 cm  
PTG.00871

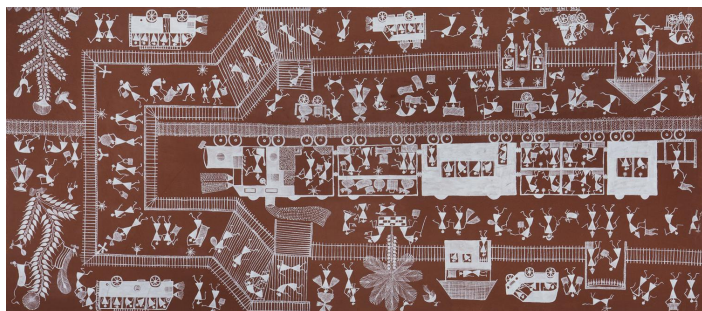


Untitled (Wedding), c. 1990s  
Jivya Soma Mashe  
Natural pigments on cloth  
H. 72 cm, W. 100.5 cm  
PTG.00843

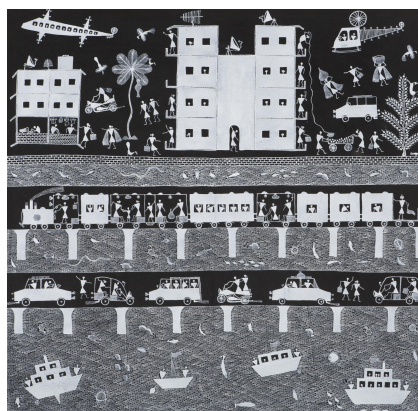


Untitled (Village Landscape), 21st century  
Jivya Soma Mashe  
Natural pigments on cloth  
H. 55 cm, W. 73.5 cm  
PTG.00850

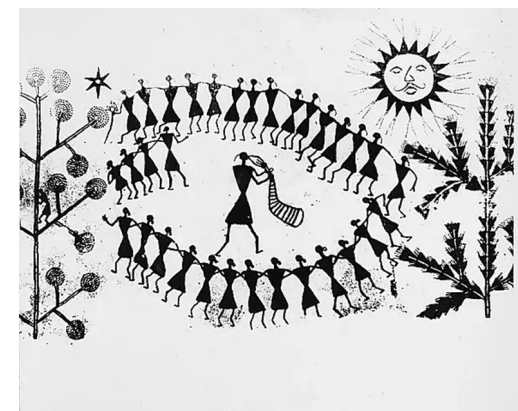




Untitled (City scene), c. 1990s  
 Jivya Soma Mashe  
 Natural pigments on cloth  
 H. 62 cm, W. 134 cm  
 PTG.00868



Untitled (View of Mumbai), 1990-2000  
 Unknown  
 Natural pigments on cloth  
 H. 75 cm, W. 77.5 cm  
 PTG.00875



Warli Painting),undated  
 Jyoti Bhatt  
 Silver gelatin print  
 H. 15.5 cm, W. 19.3 cm  
 PHY.03446





**MAP**

Museum of Art  
& Photography

**MAP**

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26/1 Kasturba Cross Road  
Bangalore 560 001, India

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