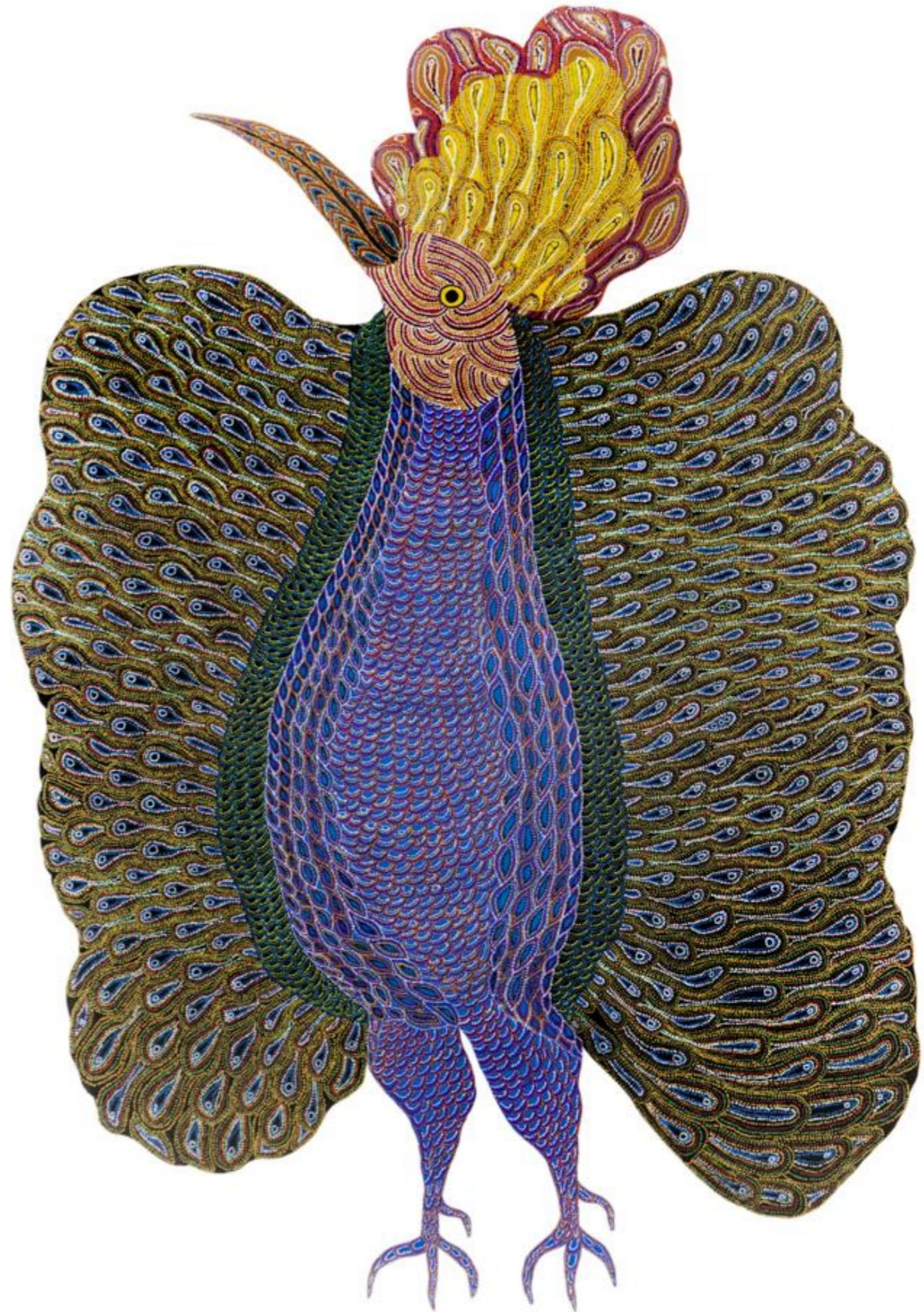


ENGINEER OF THE ENCHANTED FOREST

Jangarh Singh Shyam

MAP DISCOVER



Jangarh Singh Shyam was a very talented artist, who belonged to a community called the Pardhans.

The Pardhans are one of the oldest living communities of the world!

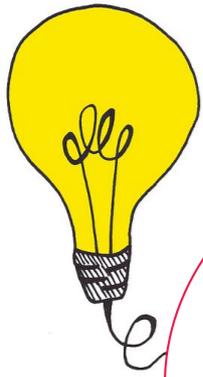
Once upon a time, they used to all be singers and storytellers by profession. As time went by though, there was less interest and money in it. So they started to take up other jobs like farming, tending to cattle, weaving baskets and so on.



Jangarh Singh Shyam at work.

Image Uploaded by Jimparsons73 on Wikimedia Commons, distributed under a CC-BY 2.0 license.

THINK.



Sometimes, jobs can go out of fashion or simply stop being important. Did you know that earlier, there used to be quite a few earwax cleaners? These were people who actually cleaned your earwax for you on the street!

Do you know of any other jobs that are no longer in demand? Can you think of a job that might disappear in another few years?

The large majority of Pardhans live in the state of Madhya Pradesh, by the Narmada river, surrounded by lush forests and tall mountains.

Jangarh Singh Shyam was also from Madhya Pradesh. He was born in a village called Patangarh, where he also grew up.

Can you point out where Madhya Pradesh is on this map?



Jangarh was a regular boy with a regular life – he spent his days working in the fields, playing his flute or watching his mother make ‘dignas’ on the walls and floors of their home.

He was also very good at painting. In his free time, he would paint the walls of his and other people’s houses in the village.

LEARN MORE.

The geometric drawings that Pardhan women make on the walls and floors of their homes, particularly during festivals, weddings and other special occasions are known as digna. [Watch a video of one being made here.](#)



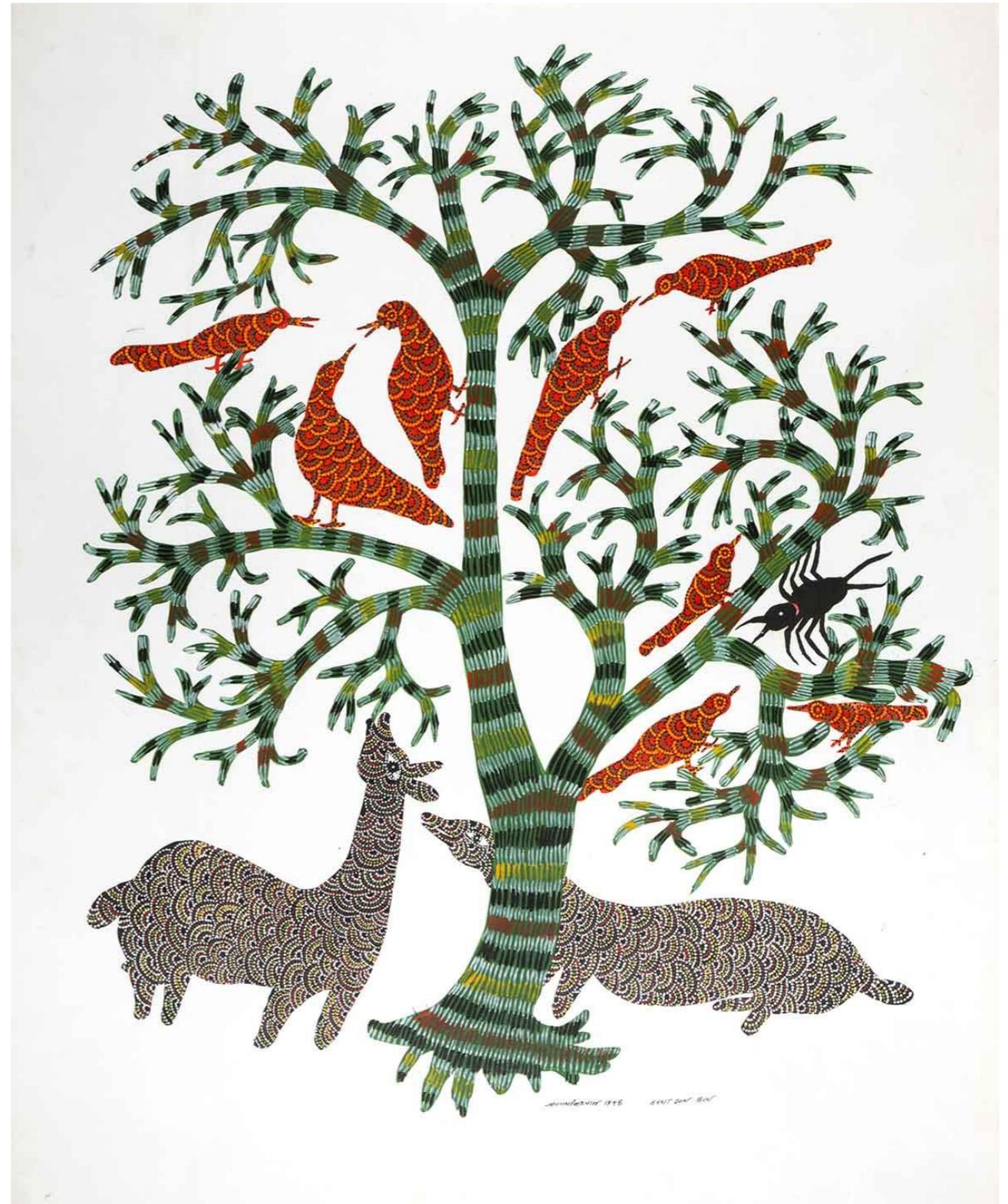
Woman drawing a digna

Image: Uploaded on facebook by St+art India

One day, Jangarh was playing his flute and tending to the cows as usual, when he heard that some people were looking for him.

It turned out that some city-men had come to his village. They had seen some of his paintings and were very impressed.

They were from a museum in Bhopal, and invited him to come live and paint there.



LOOK CLOSELY.

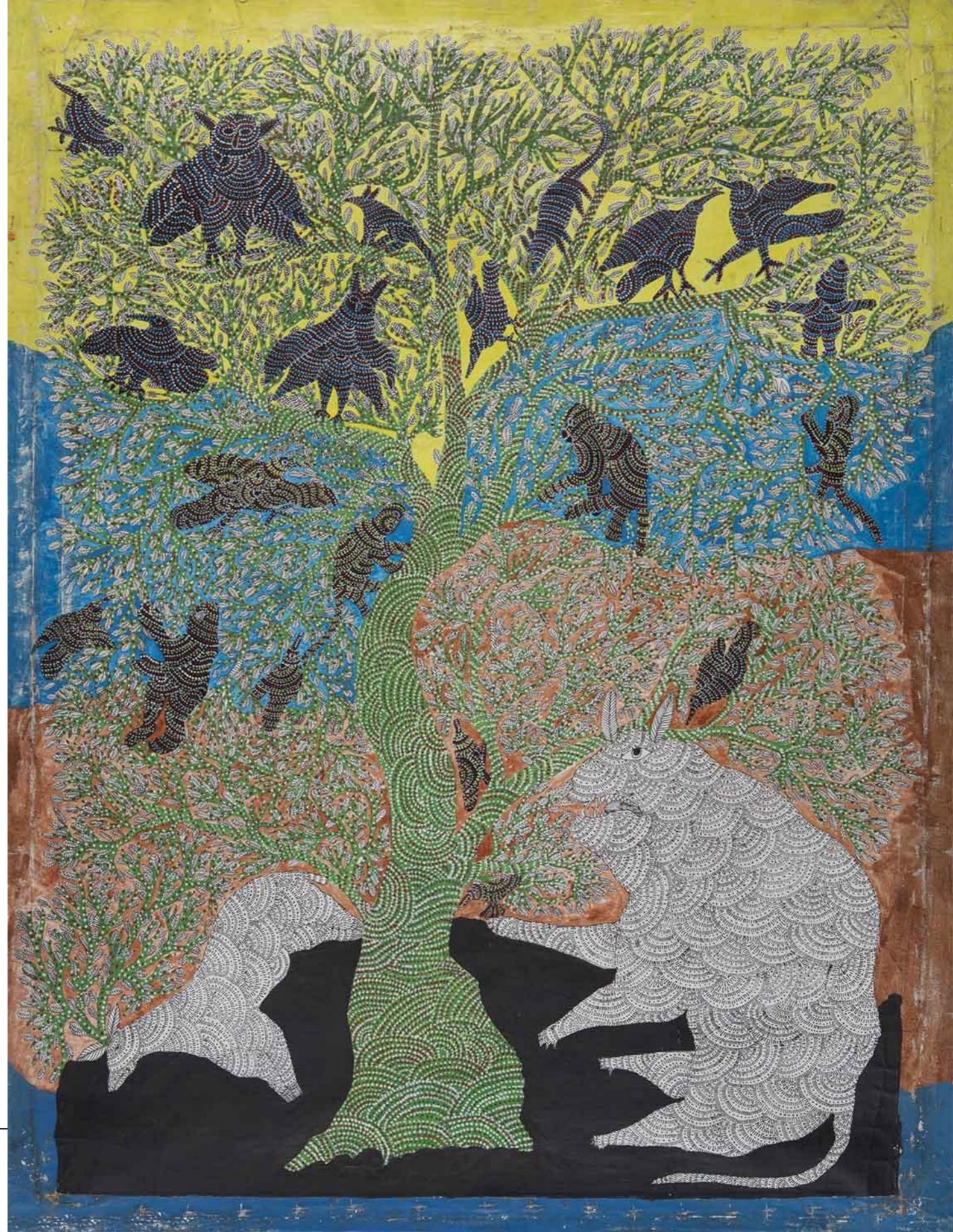
How many birds and animals can you spot?

Can you name the different creatures you see?

Can you spot any human beings in the painting?

Where do you think this scene is located?

What do you think is actually happening in this painting?



Everything in the city was so strange – machines on the road, buildings that reached the sky and people who spoke in tongues Jangarh did not understand. He was nervous, but also excited!

Seeing so many new things in the city, he started drawing them too. In Bhopal, he also discovered the canvas and acrylic paint, which he had never heard of before.



Detail of a painting made by Jangarh Singh Shyam.

A detail of an artwork is only one part of it, like when you zoom into a photograph.



REFLECT.

Is there a message that Jangarh is trying to give us through this painting?

Before he discovered acrylic paint, what do you think Jangarh made his paintings with?

People have been making colours from nature for a long time – using flowers, seeds and even bark. And now, you can make them too!

Use our fun **DIY Guide** and a Jangarh **Colouring Sheet** to create your own colours and paint like Jangarh.



What do you think is happening in this painting?
How many creatures can you spot? Can you name them?



Jangarh had a special skill. No matter how big or how difficult his painting was, he would create it using only two things: a dot and a dash.

This was his own idea, his original style. He used it everywhere and people loved it so much that they gave it a name of its own. They called it the '**Jangarh Kalam**' or Jangarh's pen.

This is a painting of a chameleon by Jangarh. Can you see the dots and dashes he's used to make it?



Here are some details of the same painting.

- Can you see it now?
- How would you describe this to somebody else?
- Have you seen anything like this before?

CREATE.

Have you ever tried drawing something using only dots and dashes? Try it now! All you need is a pen and paper.

If you want some extra help to get you going, use one of our Jangarh **Colouring Sheets** and try filling in the outlines.

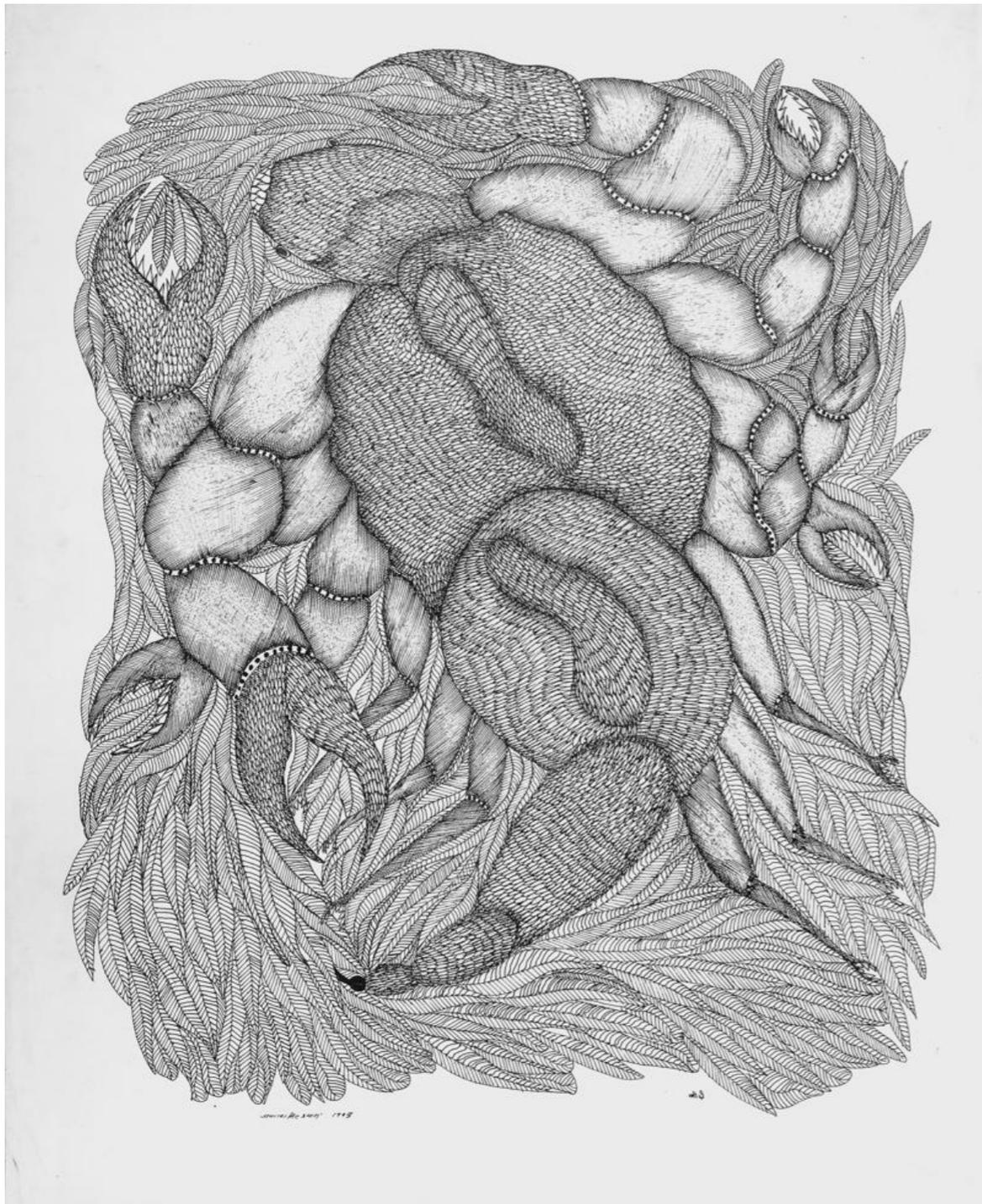


What would your signature be?

EXPRESS.

All the artists who paint in the Jangarh Kalam have their own signatures – one design that they repeat. These designs are inspired by different things. For someone it's the impression of a cow's hoof, for someone else it is the half moon.

On one of our **Colouring Sheets**, draw using that design and give your style a name.



Jangarh also did monochromatic or single-coloured drawings with ink and pens. Can you tell what animal this is?



Once he was in the Bhopal museum, they told Jangarh to paint whatever he wanted to and whatever he could think of.

He thought about what he knew well: his village, his people, and the forest with all its animals and trees.

He also thought of the gods that lived in those trees and all the stories he had heard about them while growing up.

So that is what he started to paint.

What do you think this Jangarh painting is about?
Have you seen anything that looks like this before? Does it remind you of any stories you've heard?

Though Jangarh had heard stories about the gods who lived in the forest since he was a little boy, he didn't know what they looked like.

Nobody in his village knew. They didn't have any drawings of the gods. They didn't feel the need for it. The gods were all alive in their imaginations and they really 'knew' them.

So Jangarh had no reference to go by, no paintings or statues to copy. He painted them just as he visualised them in his mind and created unique images – images that only he could make.



THE MADE-UP CREATURES GAME!

Here's a fun game to play with your family and friends.

- 1 *Make up an imaginary creature in your head.*
- 2 *Get yourself a partner (maybe a parent, sibling or friend) and make sure they have a sheet of paper and pens or crayons.*
- 3 *Now describe your imaginary creature to your partner, one step at a time, while they draw it. Have you ever seen movies where an artist in a police station draws portraits while listening to a witness give details? They go step by step, right? First they do the hair, then the eyes, and then maybe the nose or ears? You have to do something similar with your imaginary creature.*
- 4 *Once your partner is done, reverse roles.*
- 5 *Reveal your drawings to each other and now it's time to score!*

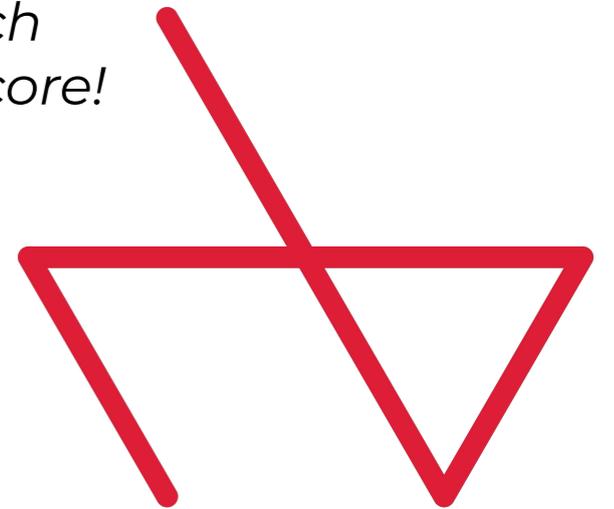
The Scoring Guide: Each person scores the other and the person with the most points wins!

On a scale of 1 to 10 give your partner points for their drawing.

1 being nothing like you imagined
10 being exactly as you imagined

On a scale of 1 to 10 give your partner points for their description.

1 being super easy and clear
10 being super hard to follow



Jangarh drew many of the Pardhan gods.

There was **Maido ki Mai** the Goddess of the Granary, **Chulha Dev** the God of the Hearth and **Bada Dev**, the Great God.

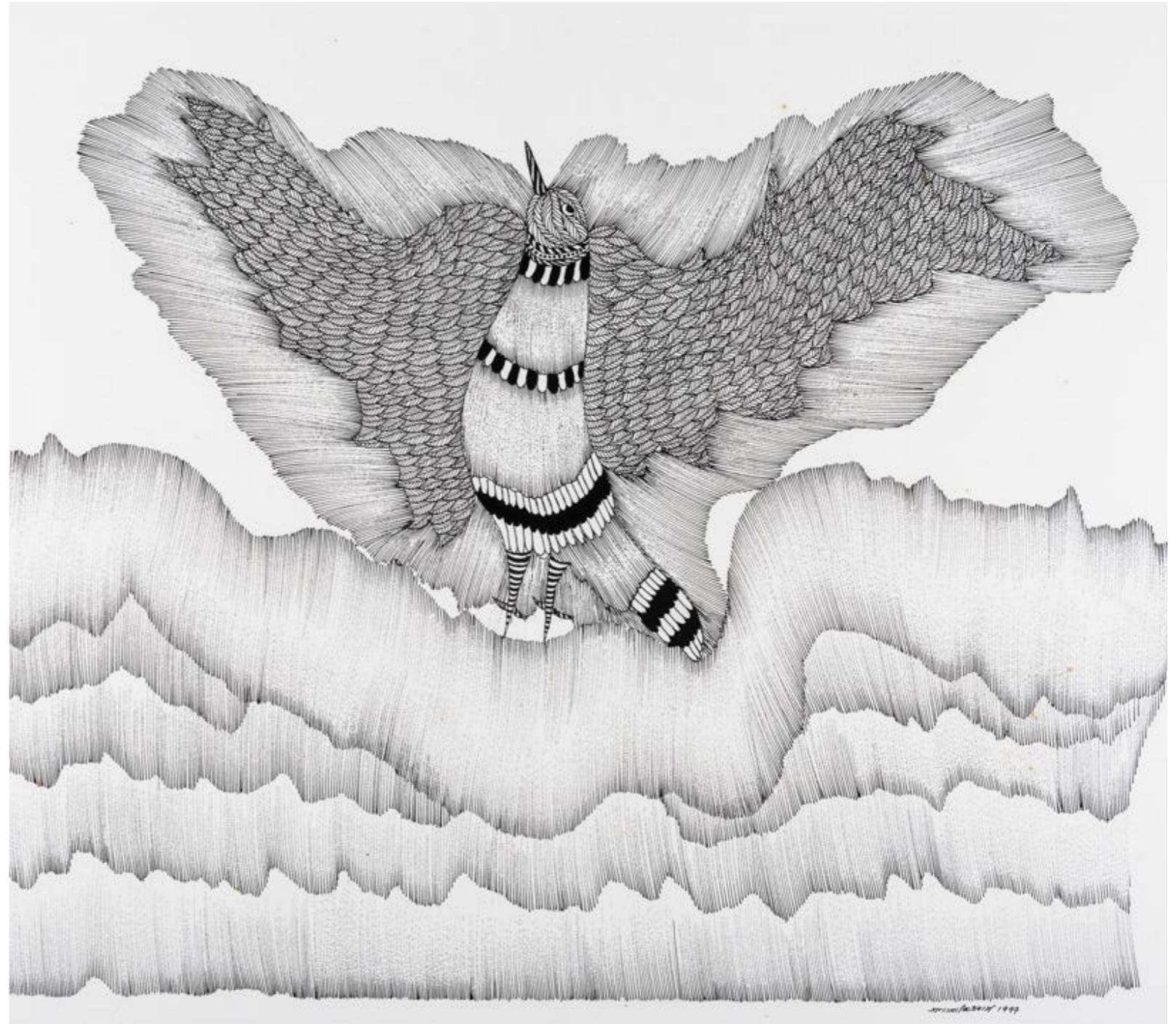
His stories were also full of fantastic beings – a flying elephant, a snake that carried the world on its hood and trees that housed magical creatures!



This is a painting by
Jangarh of a crow.

Not just any crow.
This is Crow.

The crow, who was
Bada-Dev's
right-hand man.





This is a painting of a crab, but there's something different about him. Look at his trunk!

His name is Kakramal, and according to the Pardhan stories, he and Crow came together to help Baba Dev create the first human beings.

You can read the full story and do two fun related activities with our **Stories With Art** extra!

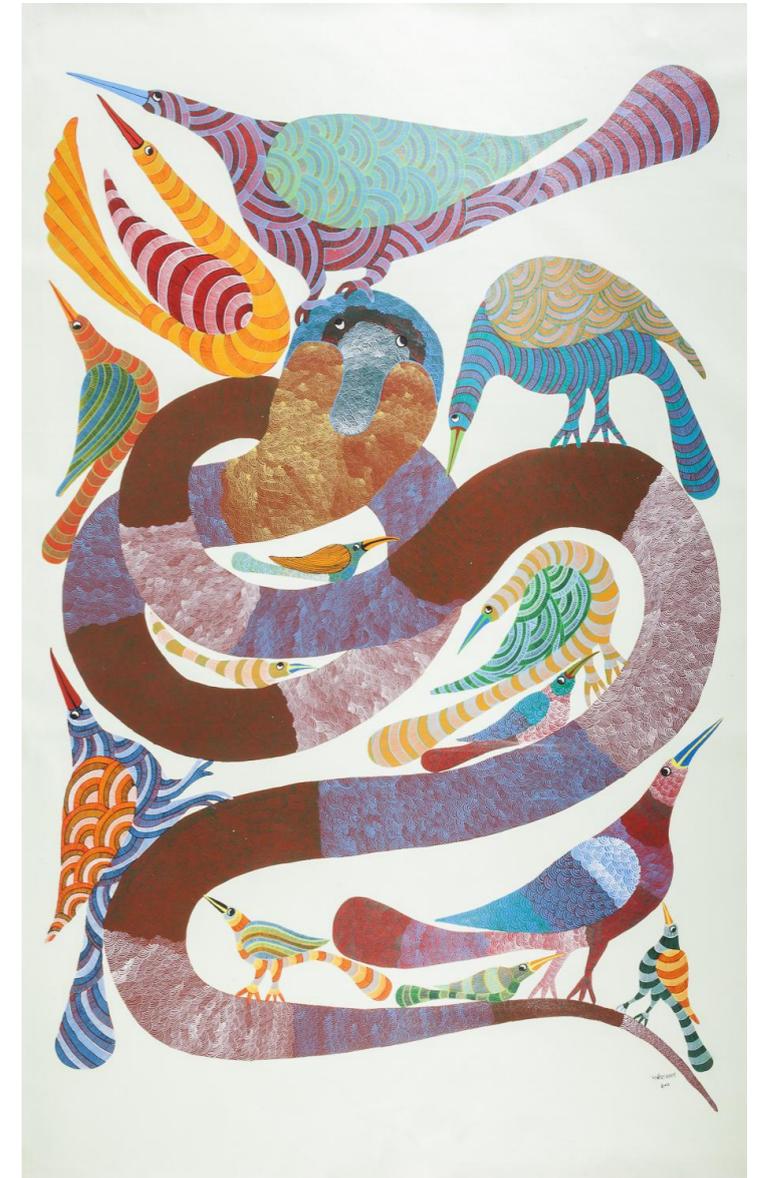
Today, the 'Jangarh Kalam' lives on through the work of many artists from his community who followed in his footsteps. Here are some examples from the MAP collection:



Nankusiya Shyam



Rajendra Shyam



Narmada Prasad Tekam



Try recreating this painting with your family and whatever props you can find around your house.

Here is an Instagram account that recreates famous paintings from museums around the world – have a look for some inspiration!

Send us photographs of everything you create, make and do. We'd love to see the amazing things you come up with!

You can tag us at [@mapbangalore](https://www.instagram.com/mapbangalore), DM us on Instagram or email it in to us at education@map-india.org



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