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■■Madhubani Art■■

The Madhubani or Mithila paintings of Bihar are one of the most vibrant folk arts of the world. Using natural dyes/pigments and fingers, twigs, matchsticks, brushes and pens, it is an art form dominated by women, who use it as...



Madhubani Painting: Community - Temple, 2019, From the collection of: Dastkari Haat Samiti

...self expression and to reflect the mores of their society and region.

The form dates back to the Ramayana period, but was revived by WG Archer, an Englishman in the 1940s. It is divided into 5 distinct styles.



Madhubani Painting : Community - Temple, 2019, From the collection of: Dastkari Haat Samiti

The skills are passed from mother to daughter, the decoration of the kohbar(the newly weds room) being the culmination of a lifetime of learning the art. Thereby, it makes sense that overweening themes are love & fertility, accompanied by religious motifs from Sanatan Vedic Culture.



Madhubani Painting of Bihar: Community - Painting on houses, 2019, From the collection of: Dastkari Haat Samiti

Madhubani has traditionally been painted on mud walls but in recent years, artists such as Sita Devi and Ganga Devi have made paper /canvas works that stand individually as art.



Their interpretation of western themes such as the Twin Towers, the Arlington Cemetery and roller coasters are worth appreciating. Artists such as these are now collected in Japan and the USA, where the Asian Art Museum held a special showing.



Madhubani Painting of Bihar: Community - Ranjit Paswan's family, Mahanava Devi, 2019, From the collection of: Dastkari Haat Samiti

The artist Rambharos Jha has published a book called Waterlife(Tara books) where he explores the marine world using the Mithila idiom.

A certain amount of design work inspired by Madhubani has happened in apparel, home and accessories.

