

Phad painting of Bhilwara, Rajasthan

■ RUPALI RAJVANSHI AND MEENU SRIVASTAVA

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See end of the paper for authors' affiliations

Correspondence to :

RUPALI RAJVANSHI
Department of Textile and Apparel
Designing, College of Home
Science, Maharana Pratap
University of Agriculture and
Technology, UDAIPUR
(RAJASTHAN) INDIA

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Phad painting is a beautiful specimen of Indian cloth painting which has its origin in Rajasthan. The Phad paintings of Rajasthan are basically the cloth painting which is done on scroll of cloth known as "Phad".

The Rajasthani Phad (sometimes spelled Par) is a visual accompaniment to a ceremony involving the singing and recitation of the deeds of folk hero deities in Rajasthan, a desert state in the west of India. Phad painting is a type of scroll painting. The smaller version of Phad painting is called Phadhye. The oldest Phad painting available belonged to late 19th century or early 20th century.

Themes of the phad painting:

The Phad that display the heroic exploits of gods and many Rajput warrior are generally of five kinds namely, Pabuji, Devenarayan, Krishna, Ramdal (Ramayana) and Ramdeji, of these the most legendary and popular is that of Pabuji, who is considered a demi god in Marwar, even today.

Phad paintings is done by family of painters of Bhilwara in Rajasthan. The themes, usually depicting historic tales of Rajput chieftains are painted on long cloth lengths. The outlines of the paintings are first drawn in black and later filled with colours. In regards the nature of this art, it may be said that among the various schools of art e.g. Ajanta, Mughal, Kangra, Kishangarh, Bundi, Nathdwara, Rajput etc., which have more or less qualities in common, Phad painting is something unique and appealing in its own way.

The main theme of Phad painting was to illustrate the heroes of Goga Chuhan, Prithviraj Chauhan, Amar Singh Rathore, Teja ji and many others were illustrated on the Phadas in the earlier times but today the stories from the life of Pabuji and Narayandevji are primarily depicted. While, Phadas display the stories of Ram Krishnadala, Bhainsasura and Ramdev.

The legends are painted on long rectangular cloths that may be 35 feet long by 5 feet wide for Devnarayan Phad and 15 feet by 5 feet for Pabuji-ki Phad (Fig. 1 and 2).

