

Transcending Spaces: Exploration of *Birud Katha* of Aipan Art of Uttarakhand

Amit Saxena
Independent Researcher

Abstract—The Aipan folk pictorial art is practiced and transmitted intergenerationally by the women of Kumaon, Uttarakhand. Distilled from the symbiotic relationship with the hill environment, it has a confluence of paintings, traditional songs, and embedded folk stories, that emanate ritual processes, oral expressions, and visual symbolism. *Birud Katha*, a folk story embedded within the *Durbashtami* Aipan painting is connected to the family rituals for prosperity, childbirth and welfare of children, and overall harmony within the household. When painted by the womenfolk, it unravels like an artistic performative act, with local dresses, songs, dialect, actions, cuisine, and festivity which forms cultural memories across generations, and caters to the rich palate of Indian aesthetics.

This paper, a case study integrating performance theory approaches, explores *Birud Katha*, by examining it for its spatial visual connotations, interconnections with the environment and the intangibility associated with its transmission viz-a-viz the domain of knowledge and practices concerning nature and universe. The study explores how *Birud Katha* transcends physical spaces and mediums — from the frame of a painting to the domestic dwellings, from a stage dramatization of the story to a documentation film on its intangible heritage through visual- verbal interplay and examines it as a visual archive of the living cultural practice of Uttarakhand's ecology.

Index Terms—Aipan art, *Birud Katha*, Uttarakhand's ecology, spatial semiotics, Indian aesthetics, ritual performance, intangible cultural heritage.

I. INTRODUCTION

A Background Overview

Aipan, the folk pictorial art form, an integral part of decoration in Kumaoni household of Uttarakhand, have culturally specific characteristic symbol representations and patterns that correspond with various religious (Samskara) ceremonies connected with lifecycle rituals, like childbirth, birthdays

celebrations, 'Janeu' sacred thread ceremony (Yagyopaveet), wedding ceremonies, festivals, and other socio-religious rituals and events which are connected to family and community occasions. The development of these designs within the Aipan paintings are accompanied by traditional songs of the women, vedic chanting by the priests, conch shells, cymbals, and percussions like dholak. (Atkinson, 1882)

The Himalayan sensibilities, proximity to the nature, abundance of flora and fauna, and the typography has shaped Uttarakhand's ecology. The folklores, tales, and ballads have been the sources behind various Samskara songs (Geet) that the Kumaoni womenfolk sing while making Aipan. Considered as a domestic art, the intangible cultural heritage associated with it has transmitted intergenerationally, from the mother to the daughter and to the granddaughter. (Upreti, N.R., 1961)

The Aipan art can be classified into the following groups:

- 1) Floor decorations
- 2) *Bar-Boond* or wall patterns
- 3) *Jyonti*, *Patta* and *Thapa* or figure patterns
- 4) *Dikara* or clay images

The floor decorations are at the doorsteps primarily having designs of creepers or flowers, and at place of worship within the house where these are termed as *peeth*. The wall patterns are intricate geometrical designs in which white dots are made and these are connected to form figures like lotus, *chakra*, and other leitmotifs. The figure patterns have astrological, and mythological deities within the frame, and the clay images are of the Gods and Goddesses, primarily Lord Shiva and His family. (Figure 1) The primary feature to consider is that each Aipan leitmotif or classified

design has its own space within the household where it is drawn. Even the frame or surface may vary from cloth to paper, or, a wooden stool (*Chawki*). (Negi et. al., 2015)



Figure 1: Chawki and Dikare

Primarily Aipan designs are made on a surface having the base colour of red ochre (*Geru*) and on which figures and symbols are made using white rice paste (*Biswar*). Aipan motifs have a visual language of its own which has a vocabulary derived from religious, mythological, and social meanings. Among its diverse forms, *patta* has a visual narrative in its scheme which emanates from its two-dimensional framework. Natural colour dyes are used for painting these. The length and the width may include all the aspects and *Leelas* from the deity's life derived from the mythologies or local folklores, but the depth is embodied within the mind of the beholder due to accompanying rituals, songs, actions, and collective ethos of the tradition bearers. (Upreti, Kamla, 1987) *Birud Katha* stands out for its narrative and immersive nature. (Figure 2)



Figure 2

The folk story, *Birud Katha*, is embedded within the Durbashtami Patta. On examining the figure 2 above

the folk story is situated at the intersection of visual and oral traditions. (Upreti, Asha, 2024)

The folklore goes that a King of the Kumaon region during one of his sojourns notice some village women washing various lentil seeds at a rivulet. On enquiry, they tell him that they are preparing for the ritual of creating a garland from the leaves that will sprout from these seeds, colloquially known as *Birud*. That garland is worn during the ritual by the mothers for the welfare of their family members and children. And the garland is also worn by a woman who wishes for a child. The King gets elated by this knowledge as he had seven sons and seven daughters-in-law but none have been able to conceive. On returning to his palace, he informs them to follow this ritual with absolute faith and piety. But except the youngest daughter-in-law the others could not follow the ritual properly. (In another version of the folktale the King talks about the ritual to his seven 'wives')

In time, the youngest daughter-in-law gives birth to a boy. Out of jealousy, other women conspire to send her to her mother's house far away saying that her mother is very ill and needs to see her. The youngest daughter-in-law trusting her child with the other women leaves for her mother's house. On reaching there she is stunned to see her mother all fine and realizes that she has been deceived by the other daughters-in-law. Her mother gives her a handful of mustard seeds saying that on her way back she must keep on sowing these seeds and if these sprouts immediately then it is a sign that her son is still alive. Meanwhile, the other women had already done the heinous act of drowning the child in a well. When the young woman reaches near that place, she stops near the well for quenching her thirst. As she bends in the well to fetch water, the young child grabs the garland of *Birud* that his mother is wearing and comes out of the well.

This story is narrated during the making of this Aipan patta by the womenfolk to each other, to the newlywed wives, family members, and children who all are present during this ceremonial occasion. As the entire story may not be painted on the surface, a few short images denoting the various scenes are drawn. (Upreti, Asha, 2024)

It is simultaneously an illustration and a performative act accompanied by recitation, singing, and ritualised actions, transcending the spatial framing of the painted surface.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The scope of research on facets of Aipan art has witnessed a steady increase but maximum research is on its design aspects with descriptions on the associated rituals and songs (Joshi, 2014; Negi, 2020; Upreti, 2024). The narrative layers of Aipan paintings like the Durbashtami patta having the *Birud Katha* opens a new vista of spatial visual exploration. This paper as a case study examines this gap by referring to the theory of space (Lefebvre, 1991), performance theory (Schechner, 2003), and notions of Indian aesthetics as evolved from the praxis of the *Natyashastra*.

One of the lateral aspects of the study is to explore the visual art as a source for developing performance. Aipan may be two-dimensional in its delineation but the depth is created by the associated rituals, songs, folk stories, attire, craft work, and the animated surroundings teaming with the household. It is not just art but is a narrative evolving from the frame. A space is created as ritual has the essence of performance. (Schechner, 2006)

The study aspires to collate vital literature and research been conducted as a review compilation along with documentation work done on Aipan so a relevant academic discourse is obtained for future reference on the intangible cultural heritage of Uttarakhand. It will attempt to analyse Aipan art through *Birud Katha* in relation to the nature and ecology, and how the space created within the painting and outside may have a scope for contemporary adaptations for other mediums of presentation.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature on Aipan art, in general, has been able to collate written documentation of an erstwhile oral tradition. Aipan however continues to be transmitted from one generation to other through the medium of observation. A youngster, a girl or a young wife, observes the making of the Aipan art and joins in singing ritual songs and enacting the rituals. Available literature focuses on styles and embedded motifs, theorizing ritual contexts, and modern variations as well. (Baral and others, *D'source*). Interestingly, the earliest ethnographic observations and documentation can be traced to the *Himalayan Gazetteer vol 2 & 3*. First published under the title 'The Himalayan

Districts of the North Western Provinces of India,' forming Vol XI of the *Gazetteer N.W.P. Allahabad 1884*, it chronicled a new perspective then on the customs, beliefs, traditions, motifs, way of living etc of the Himalayan region. As an ethnographic documentation it focused on the Himalayas and the culture and the society associated with it, and along with other art traditions, it documented various styles of Aipan art practiced then by the various communities of Kumaon, Uttarakhand.

Census of India 1961, Volume I, Monograph Series, Part VII-A has a brief chapter chronicling the 'Folk Art of Kumaon' (Upreti, N.R., 1961). The book provides a brief description and various styles of the folk pictorial art of Kumaon, Aipan. The cultural ethos and beliefs associated with these motifs and designs and how these are a part of auspicious occasions and festivals of the region are concisely discussed.

In *Kumaon ka Itihaas* (In Hindi) (Pandey, Badridutt, 1937) the History, Cultural Traditions, Tribes, Dialects, folk and traditional arts, folk media of Uttarakhand region are given in detail. It is to be noted that pre-Independence there was no Uttarakhand or Uttar Pradesh. The country was divided into princely states or United Provinces was there. The book chronicles the history, topography, geography, and cultural traditions in sequential order about the region.

In *Kumaon Ka Lok Sahitya* (Joshi, Dr. Krishna Nand, 1971), the book provides detailed cultural history of the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand. Lot of collection of religious songs, festival, and agrarian songs, Samskara songs, folk stories, and folktales have been provided in Kumaoni dialect along with Hindi translations. However, the book does not provide innate details of Aipan paintings, designs, and embedded folk stories and the *Birud Katha* was not documented as well. It does provide scope to explore the visuals, and symbols which the regional songs have. These may provide an entry into finding possibilities to seek theatrical aspects in terms of visualization.

In *Kumaoni Paaramparik Roop Vidhaan: Aipan evam Sanskar Geet* (In Hindi-Kumaoni - Upreti, Asha, 2024), the book extensively documents various ritual songs associated with the Aipan art. The songs, originally in Kumaoni dialect, have been translated in Hindi rather a gist of these songs is given in the book. There is a possibility to study the lyrics, lines, and brief stories and episodes that these ritual songs intrinsically

have. *Birud Katha* is documented in it. There is a significant gap in time of the folk tale's documentation and the classification of literature, i.e., from a Monograph Series in Census report published in 1961 (See Figure 3) to a book published in 2024, transcending in a way the continuum of its practice. From one generation to another generation, the art and its observable nuances have been transmitted.

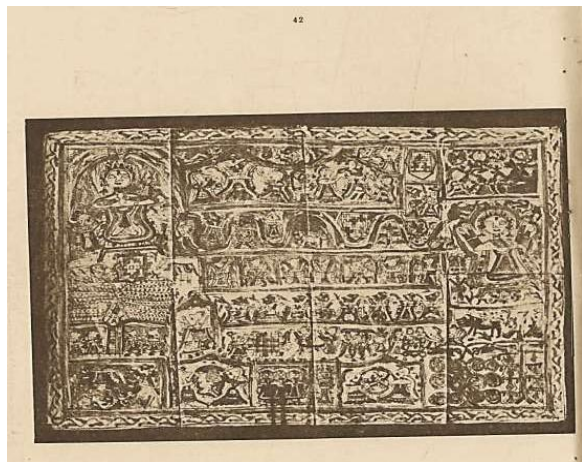


Figure 3 (Birud Katha painted as a part of the Janmashtami patta)

Aipan designs have been explored through new perspectives to counter 'escalating demands of newness by customers requires modification in the fashion industry.' Correlating fashion with dress and attire is vital when *Aharya* is explored while working on evolving the costume design of a stage production. Delving further in the traditional usage of raw material for Aipan making - *Geru* (simple ochre) colour and rice paste majorly used for floor patterns, and vegetable colours for image patterns. The Aipan designs are sporadically being used in textile designing through applications on various surfaces for screen printing, block printing, and embroidery.' (Monika Negi and others, 2017)

The art has transcended from the traditional space or surface to newer surfaces as design and trends grow and cater to new expressions. With changing timelines and day-to-day life becoming hectic, the detailed procedure in preparing the raw material for making Aipan is transforming into deploying of synthetic materials like colours varieties like acrylic, fabric, postal, etc., and fevicol is used as a substitute to rice paste to obtain white colour. This study explores all realms that provide texture to an art work which has performative qualities. *Birud Katha* as a folk tale

drawn within an Aipan painting seems like a static, site-specific art form that marks a physical space, seeks in-depth spatial analysis.

Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (English Trans., 1991) added a dimension to a space by negating its neutrality and amidst many aspects is also representational replete with motifs, symbols, shared stories and myths, practiced rituals and art-oriented expressions identifiable with communities who inhabit that space. Another interesting dimension is that the art of Aipan is matrilineal, practiced within the family and in specific community (Kumaon region) and have innate connection with the Himalayan relief features. In the present times, of rampant urbanization, migration from the hills, settlement of the diaspora in the cities and towns in the plains have led to modifications in the continuity of the tradition and digital reproduction of the art work for quick access. Theatre and performance have been explored beyond the confined space of stage and included open areas within the vicinity of human dwellings. Courtyards, fields, open air theatres, even roads have been utilized as a performance space. Moving beyond stage design and conventional acting styles, rituals, ceremonies, and everyday behaviour have permeated in the structure of performance. (Schechner, 1988). *Birud Katha* inadvertently transitions multiple spaces providing scope to explore semiotic surfaces. This paper builds upon both art-historical and anthropological sources to bridge that analytical gap.

The *Natyashastra* has explored stage dynamics and performance from an aesthetical viewfinder. The Indian Aesthetics has shaped its contours utilizing the *Rasa* theory as crystalized in the dramatic treatise. The XVI Chapter documents the concept of *Chitrabhinaya* in which the varied and abstract, the Nature and the emotive states, the animals and the flora- fauna, seasons, relief features, and complexities of life find a way of visual enactment utilizing the *Angika*. (Ghosh, 1951) Studying pictures, paintings, sculptures, varied art work, and other creative arts have always been a part of the teaching pedagogy in Dramatic studies.

IV. THE METHODOLOGY – CASE STUDY ORIENTED

The methodology is designed to include ethnographic field observation, documentation, and visual analysis

of Aipan related paintings, songs, and the folktale, and consolidating the review of literature to interpret *Birud Katha* at various levels – photographic, written, and audio-visual.

Field Work

The primary area is Kumaon region of Uttarakhand where the practice of Aipan art is significant. To further condense the geographical zones for observation based on the cultural impact, Almora was considered for the following reasons:

- Almora is considered as the Cultural Centre of the Kumaon region
- Continuity of Aipan practice
- Various households have the Aipan paintings as private collection
- Guidance of senior practitioners like Smt. Asha Upreti, Smt. Saroj Pande
- Accessibility to Kumaon University, Almora Museum, local bookstores etc.
- Possibility to document the seasonal festivals

Data Collection

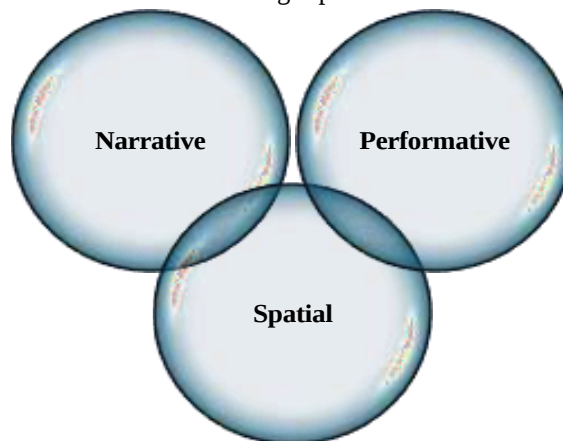
- Through naturalistic Observation: Attendance at *Janmashtami* festival in the field area when the local variant festival *Durbashtami* is also celebrated in Almora, attending functions at households, observing preparation, and implementation of the related Aipan designs
- Unstructured talk and Interviews: include conversations with senior women of the household as tradition bearers
- Visual Documentation: photographs of *Birud Katha* Aipan
- Archival Research for enhancement of Review of Literature: It includes streamlining tangible resources like Aipan paintings, folk art documentation, collation of regional language books, monographs, survey reports etc.

Analytical Approach

Visual data generated through the painting were expanded for assimilating symbols, spatial placement, narrative sequence for dramatization of folktale, AV documentation for converting into a documentary, and evolving a Descriptive Inventory of *Birud Katha*.

The Conceptual Framework

In the context of performance theory, exploration of an art work, in this case, the *Birud Katha* folk tale as a part of the Durbashtami Aipan painting (Figure 2) is examined at the following aspects:



Ritual Narrative: Aural and Visual

The folklore is told during the festival of Janmashtami, celebrated as the birth of Lord Krishna. In Uttarakhand the festival takes a regional hue and the local beliefs and rituals merge within the main festival. In the Kumaoni dialect of Uttarakhand, the traditional song speaks about the women addressing each other to assemble in the courtyard to celebrate this festival by keeping a religious fast known as *Satthu-Aathu ka vrat*. The fast is kept not only by not eating during the specified period but also by preparing an earthen pot in which 5 different lentil and gram seeds are sown. These are tied in a cotton cloth and kept within the house temple. (Figures 4) When these germinate over the short period during the festival, it is considered as an auspicious sign that just like these seeds flowered may the families, the children, and the household members also flourish. As a symbol of fertility, the grass from the courtyard or the farms is utilized to prepare a garland which is worn by the women as a ritual during the festival. Symbolic miniature dolls of the Gods, Shiva and Parvati, are prepared from the vegetation.

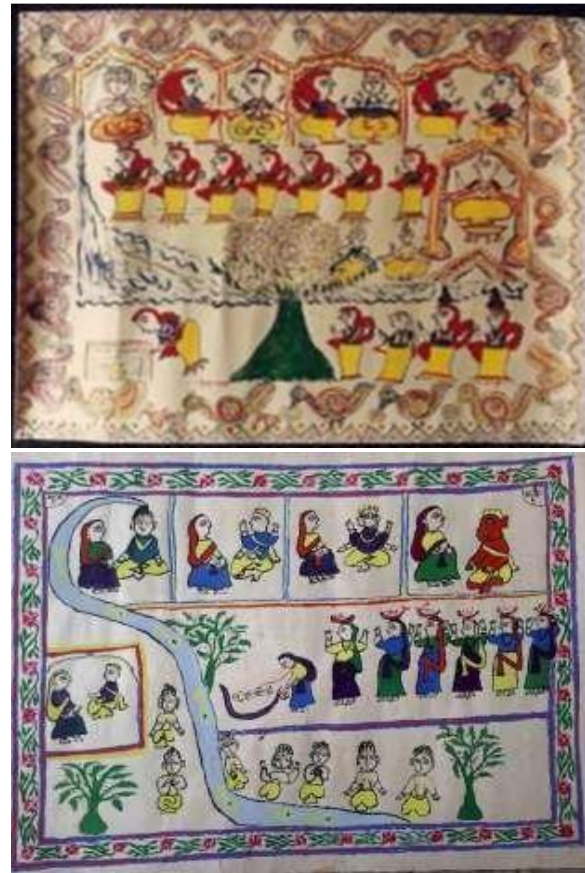
This becomes part of the ritual followed. (Asha Upreti, 2024) As this song and the procedure of the religious fast is transmitted orally it forms a ritual that shapes the shared cultural memory.



(Figures 4)

The rituals, the processes, the custom associated with the religious fast are mostly fixed, in which making the *Birud Katha* embedded Aipan painting is only one part. However, the narrative of the tale is not strictly linear. There are slight variations in the tale described on page 3. In another variation the King informs about the *vrat* to his seven wives, quite a difference from the first version in which the King informs his seven daughters-in-law. In some variations, the specific episode as drawn in the painting is standalone or in some is part of the Janmashtami patta in which episodes from Lord Krishna's childhood mythical episodes are drawn. (Plate 3, N.R. Upreti, 1961, Page 12)

Variations in the Aipan paintings depicting *Birud Katha*



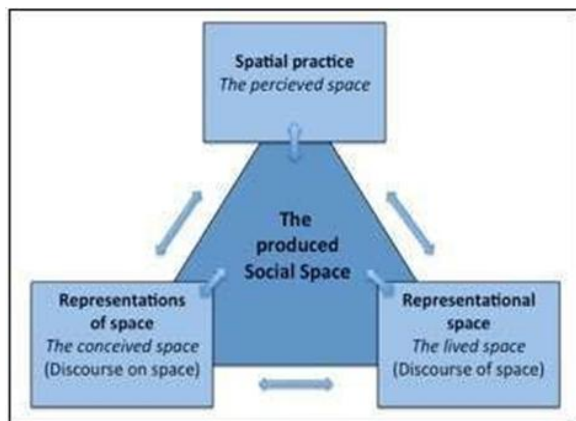
(Figures 5: *Birud Katha*, from the Aipan collection of Asha Upreti, Almora, Uttarakhand)

V. SPACE AS A STORY

The paintings convey a series of moments, emotions, movement, or a scene that becomes a step to a story. There is a notion of 'socially produced' associated with the space. (Lefebvre, 1991) A society or a community attach a significance to a space through their beliefs, rituals, and as an information transferred generation to generation that conditions a person to attach gravitas to a space. The space signifies a 'lived practice,' and have shared memories and experiences that re-emerges as the participants in the ritual reassemble there. The paintings above (figures 5) are drawn again during the ritual or exhibited again if a certain painting is handed down through generations as an heirloom. The figure 2 painting was made in 1993. There has been a felt emotion attached with it as it was explored during this research. The spatial triad as propounded by Lefebvre reflects through the exploration of *Birud Katha* as embedded in the painting.



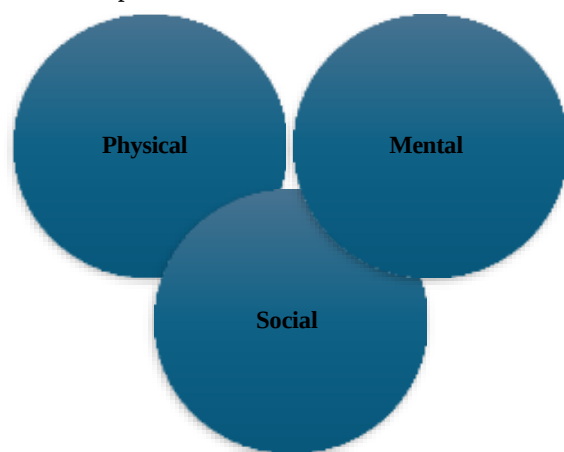
Artist: Late Smt. Hira Upreti, Almora, 1993



Lefebvre's The Spatial Triad

Figure Credit: Simon Briercliffe

Space and its production: Lefebvre's Conceptualization
Day-to-day practices and perceptions Representations
and social practices



Birud Katha embedded in the Aipan painting is a

story, narrated as an oral expression and painted to come alive within the frames on a canvas of cloth. It in a way outlines, for a perceiver, how the space may be experienced. Not just as a piece of art but as a living space.

The layers within the storyline of *Birud Katha*: Beyond the Two-Dimensionality



The Gods (Shiva-Parvati, Vishnu-Laxmi, Brahma-Saraswati, Ganesh-Riddhi-Siddhi) Celestial Bodies at Top right-left corners (Sun & Moon), River Ganga



The Saptrishis, The Kalpvriksha



The Seven Women of the folktale depicted going for the Ritual



Two different episodes from the folktale

Episode on Right: The King informs about the ritual for Childbirth

Episode on Left: When the youngest saves her newborn

from the well where he was drowned by the other jealous daughters-in-law. The newborn catches hold of the garland worn by his mother and comes out. This garland is made of leaves and grass.



The local flora inspired from the Uttarakhand Hills, the creepers and the two small plants above the line are *Kukudi-Makudi*, a mythical flower plant that grows in the high hills. The seemingly two-dimensional painting has transcended from the limitations of its frame to expand into larger connotations. The acknowledgment given to the Nature, the celestial entities, the depiction of the Gods as people dressed in common attires and almost having no embellishments point towards the domain of the Intangible Cultural Heritage i.e., knowledge and practices concerning nature and universe. There is a folk-oriented blend of Hindu cosmology and local ecology seeped in rituality, creating a conceived space by intermingling metaphysics with association of environment and local surroundings. (Lefebvre, 1991). There is a balance drawn between the human, flora, and fauna. (Dr. Krishna Bairathi, 1992)

During the celebration of Janmashtami festival when the Durbashtami Aipan having the *Birud Katha* embedded within is made the household transcends into a happening lived place where families, relatives, neighbours, and acquaintances assemble and conduct the rituals, sing *samskara* songs, draw aipan designs, partake food (*Prasad*), make conversations, recall shared experiences, and the space becomes animated with many activities. It is almost akin to theatre of memory. The physical space, through Aipan and its cosmological symbolism, invites the gods, ancestors, and overall positivity. A community-space is produced by simple acts of collective praying, and conducting rituals, within an Aipan ornated courtyard or living room, it provides a living quality to the spatiality. The Aipan motifs become like a 'spatial text' that are inscribed on the walls, the thresholds, or the canvas (can be paper or cloth).



Figure 6: A Kumaoni Household being prepared with Aipan art from the collection of Smt. Asha Upreti, Aipan Scholar



Figure 7: A Kumaoni Household adorned with Aipan art from the collection of Smt. Asha Upreti, Aipan Scholar



13. कपड़े पर हाथ से आंकृत 'जन्माष्टमी पट्ट'

Figure 8: 'Janmashtami Patt' 1992

Source: *Kumaon ki lok kala, Sanskriti aur Parampara*, Dr. Krishna Bairathi

VI. THE PERFORMATIVE ANALYSIS

Art has emerged from the distillation of life. Sourced from life's impressions and experiences, it grows into an artistic expression when cultural-specific notions are introduced. Performance as it emerged from time

immemorial is not confined to a limited space but includes day-to-day activities, rituals, practices, and certain actions which followed for a long period becomes ceremonies. Aipan's ritualized practices are understood as actions with both, a cultural embedding, and a spiritual permanence. (Gudrun Frommherz, 2010)

Richard Schechner's *Performance Theory* (1998, 2003) has established a concept about behaviour while exploring ritual. Behaviour is particularly important to develop characterization for acting as the next area of transcendence of the *Birud Katha*. He stated that the first theatres were like ceremonial centres and the cultural spaces; performance happens on a kind of spectrum ranging from ritual and play to theatre and everyday interactions.



In relation to exploring *Birud Katha* – Aipan art:

Restored behaviour is equated with repetition. Transmission of knowledge intergenerationally is also a part. Aipan art is practiced during festivals and auspicious occasions related to life cycle. (Figure 9)



Figure 9: A Kumaoni Household celebrating a Lifecycle Ritual From the collection of Smt. Asha Upreti, Aipan Scholar

There are cultural precedents attached with rituals. Every time a householder follows the rituals and draws the Aipan, she is following a code which she has observed happening for a long time. It was observed during the research that elder women also were there to guide. There was a constant dialogue happening amongst the 'participants' during the Durbashtami ceremony. It was akin to re-enactment of behaviours and patterns embedded and codified in the shared cultural memory.

For an actor enacting a role, the idea is to notice inherited gestures which are a by-product of a certain codified action, behaviour, or assimilation. Aipan is a blend of ritual and art. For a theatrical production it can be a case for study in terms of preparing a space, as done during ceremonies and festivals, by a drama troupe for their play to happen. The art is drawn on walls, on thresholds, courtyards, and within the house which makes the space a canvas in which, nature, everyday environment, and sacred performance merge. The spectrum of performance transcends between ritual, play, and art by enhancing the performance continuum (Schechner 2003). The quotient of transformation evolves as not only the space of the household transforms, the participants in the ritual ceremonies find themselves alleviated. Younger generation look up to the elder ones. The identities transform during the rituals; an ordinary corner becomes sacred. (Victor Turner, 1982)



Figure 10: An Aipan Painting on the Wall of a House

Source: *Kumaon ki lok kala, Sanskriti aur Parampara*, Dr. Krishna Bairathi

Participants, including guests, enter this decorated space, are subject to an immersive experience as a collective transformation. Schechner's adoption of Turner's concept of liminality (state of transition/in-

betweenness), where participants in rituals transition between social roles and renewed identities (Victor Turner, 1982; Harry Wels, and others, 2011). There is an aspect of ritualization of behaviour which may be noticed in Aipan making and related ritual. The raw materials are diligently prepared, i.e., the colours and mediums; the canvas is selected (can be paper, cloth, wall, or a surface on floor); purity and cleanliness are maintained; and *Mantras* are recited. The traditional dresses are worn (see figures 4 & 9) by women. The overall aesthetical sense may vary from one household to another, or, the scale of ceremonial celebration or implementation of ritual may differ economically, but each does follow few defined codes. There is a sense of performative attached to it as the festivity and ritual is not individually done. A group or a community essence is there. With each participant transient emotions come into play. But the superobjective, like in a play, remains the same for all i.e., to participate in the rituals and complete these properly as the fruit in the end is prosperity.

VII. THE THEATRICAL PRESENTATION – *BIRUD KATHA*

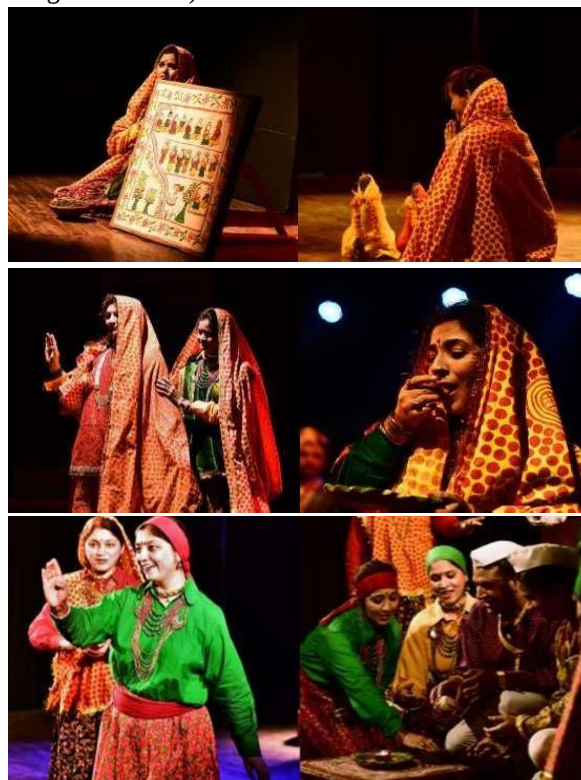
The research transcended to exploring a stage production on *Birud Katha*, the folk tale embedded in the Durbashtami aipan as may be witnessed in the figure 11 below. It was a production formed during a theatre workshop conducted by a cultural organization, Divya Diksha centre for Performing Arts (DDCPA) in 2017-18. Over the time, the organization has staged it in various places.



Figure 11

The play was titled *Vasundhar*, which are the white-coloured lines in Aipan symbolizing continuity. Out of the various tales woven in the plot of the play, one part was based on the folktale based on *Birud Katha*. A narrator, a young man of the modern world who has migrated from the hills to the big cities, returns to his abandoned house in his remote village. Over there he reminisces the old tales he used to hear as a child from his mother. The play tried to weave in the social problem of migration faced by Uttarakhand state. The original story from the folktale transcended into having a modern issue operate as a lens through which the past is revisited. In *Birud Katha* (page 3) the youngest daughter-in-law saves her infant son, thrown by the other jealous women of the household, from drowning in a well. In the play, this episode is shown as a parallel to the young man returning to his village in the end. It is like a ‘rebirth.’

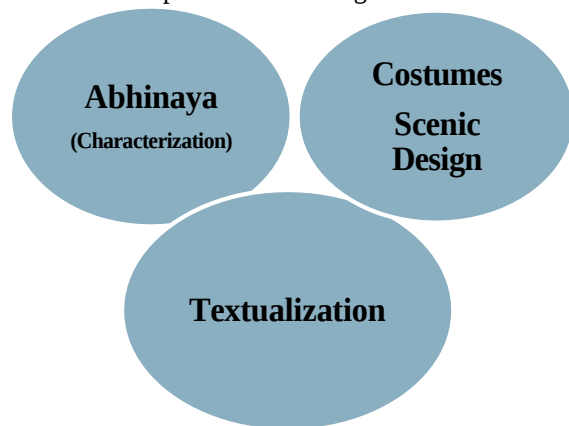
In the play another version of the folktale was used in which the King narrates the procedure of the religious fast to his seven wives (the other version is of seven daughters-in-law).



Figures 12

The concept of *Anukarana* (to follow) is predominant in the art of drama. The Indian aesthetics is based on

the cyclic movement of life. Cosmic sensibility is an integral part. In the *Natyashastra* the opening of the text is based on the celestial beings meeting the God of Life (Brahma in Hindu mythology) asking for an activity that will not only channelize the creative energy of all beings but also is a source of entertainment. And interestingly, the above conversation is narrated by Sage Bharata (the ascribed writer of *Natyashastra*) to other senior sages who have enquired from him about the origin of the 5th Veda, i.e., the *Natyaveda* (Shastra) (Ghosh, 1951). Aipan designs have infused Cosmological aspects within its motifs. *Natyashastra* focuses on creative re-imagination and representation of life as a dramatic presentation. The *Birud Katha* incorporates various aspects of interpretation of life. There is generation of *Bhava*, and evocation of *Rasa* associated with the art. In the *Birud Katha*, the other six daughters-in-law try to drown the infant out of jealousy. They as 'characters' undergo transient emotional state of anger and hatred. But the beholder, or the person watching, or listening to the tale may feel a state of horror, or, a sense of pity for the infant, and a sense of disgust for the unholy act committed by the women. The theatre troupe DDCPA in its production has blended the *Lokadharmi* aspects in creating a performance style to explore the multilayers of *Birud Katha*. Figures (11) may be revisited to explore the following:



Birud Katha has dramatic elements and primarily it has a tale embedded within. There is stock characterization of women, but the issue is very central to social stigma, i.e., not able to produce a child, an heir to kingdom. The emotions are relatable. In the characterization, the artistes did not present all seven wives, in fact, the tale was presented through two wives symbolically.

An experimentation was done. The jealousy felt by the elder wives was presented in a nuanced way. In fact, there was a struggle shown when the seniormost wife first tries to strangle the infant but is overpowered with motherly love for a few minutes. She then decides to throw the infant in a well.

The *Angika*, *Aharya*, and *Vachika* (Rangacharya, 1999) emanate from the interpretation of *Birud Katha* on stage. The production has incorporated the vocabulary derived from the folk dances of Uttarakhand (*Chhapeli*, *Chanchari*) and the Samskara songs related to the Durbashtami aipan of which the folk tale *Birud Katha* is the core part. The costumes, ornaments, headgears and set design were related to the Pahadi motifs of the Kumaon region. An interesting devise was the usage of the Durbashtami aipan during the enactment. The narrator is shown looking at the painting and reminded of the tale which his mother used to tell him. From the narration the tale unfolds on the stage. The figures from the paintings start coming to life. Characterization unfolds. The painting transcends from inanimate state to animate. Performing arts is one of the domains of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) along with the oral expressions. One major feature of this transcendence of *Birud Katha* from the canvas to the stage is the amalgamation of various domains of ICH:

Domains (Designated by UNESCO 2003 Convention on Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage) - <https://ich.unesco.org/en/intangible-heritage-domains-00052>

1. Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
2. Performing arts;
3. Social practices, rituals, and festive events;
4. Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
5. Traditional craftsmanship.

Birud Katha embedded within the Durbashtami aipan encapsulates all the above-mentioned domains of ICH.

VIII. THE FILM AESTHETICS – *BIRUD KATHA*

A synergy of art and film aesthetics brings forth wider accessibility and possibility of shaping a visual narrative. With the ephemeral quality of performing arts, films as a medium prolongs the visibility of an

artwork that may be viewed at a limited stage or period, and transforms assimilation of intangible into tangible components. To expand the point, when an aipan painting is made accompanied by women singing a related Samskara song it may be viewed and experienced by a limited few at that time. But with a film the repeat visibility improves along with the documentation of specific rituals, actions, songs, and the processes that may be obtained through observation only. The interpretation of the art may transcend further when art theory and film aesthetics merge. (Yiwei Ji, 2024)

For research various films based on the integration of paintings in a film narrative were explored.

1)The University of Texas at Austin's Centre for Applied Cognitive Science produced a documentary film, 'Indian Miniature Painting: The Process of Spiritualization Through Artistic Activity and Training,' directed by Cristine Legare. In an article published by the University dated January 30, 2024, it spoke about the need of the future to preserve the deep traditional craftsmanship and knowledge embedded in the miniature paintings and how the 'film is a compelling reminder of the pressing need to retain the cultural, religious, and spiritual roots that define communities.' The creative team behind the documentary film focused on the 'opportunity to study cognitive and cultural co- evolution.'

2)Tiware, Rajesh & Frommherz, Gudrun (2004) *God's Own Art – The Aipan Paintings of the Himalaya*. Mumbai: 98point4 Film and Media. Documentary details:

The film is based on more than 10 hours of raw footage shot on location in India. It examines the history of Aipan painting, featuring original artists, local researchers, and both historic and contemporary artifacts.

3)The Paintings of India - The Art of India, Doordarshan (Uploaded on Prasar Bharti Archives Official YouTube in 2014)

The film explores the artistic traditions of India, Ajanta Ellora, Mughal miniatures, and even the southern traditional paintings. The film explores the concept of spirituality, self-discovery, and alternate reality. Various Indian art historians have been interviewed in the film.

4)The Paintings of India - 2000 Years of Paintings, Doordarshan (Uploaded on Prasar Bharti Archives Official YouTube in 2014)

The film explores a panoramic journey of Indian paintings from the pre-historic times to the modern era. It comes the entire spectrum of paintings from various regions of the country.

5)Painting of India - The Delicate Beauty of Miniature, Doordarshan (Uploaded on Prasar Bharti Archives Official YouTube in 2014)

The film traces the history of Indian miniature painting traditions

6)Paintings of India - Exuberance of Life, Doordarshan (Uploaded on Prasar Bharti Archives Official YouTube in 2014)

The film focuses on the religio-spiritual aspects of the Rajasthani painting traditions

7)Aipan - Ritualistic Folk Art | Devbhoomi Kumaon | Uttarakhand | Episode 8. Prasar Bharati Archives (Uploaded on Official YouTube in 2024)

The film chronicles the Aipan art and related symbols and motifs.

The detailed research included watching many such films as mentioned above. It was observed that a pattern of film narrative was followed in which there is an anchor and there are talks been included of various art historians. For an art work to transcend beyond set patterns, the visual narrative may aspire to break away from rigid conventions and fixed canvases.

The film on *Birud Katha* was an attempt to explore a new vocabulary for film narrative. To transcend from the usual film making techniques and plot development, the film explored an eclectic mix of the following:

1)The Durbashtami aipan painting with the painted *Birud Katha* (2-dimensional painting)

2>Select photographs of the play, *Vasundhar*, with *Birud Katha* dramatized with actors

3)Narration of the tale, along with the essence of the art work focusing on the interrelation of life, divine, and the contemporary documentation



The film narrative transcended from the usual way of documentary film making idioms and carved a fresh approach wherein the painting itself did the ‘visual talking.’ There was no anchor rather a voice over narration was there which could be related to the story telling method used while reading a tale. The visuals may appear static as photographs of the stage production were utilized. This was to achieve the essence of watching a still image with the concept of movement left for the watcher/viewer to assimilate. Visual and perception which were hitherto considered as distinct are now getting increasingly intertwined based on individual perspectives. (Zhou Yulin, 2023)

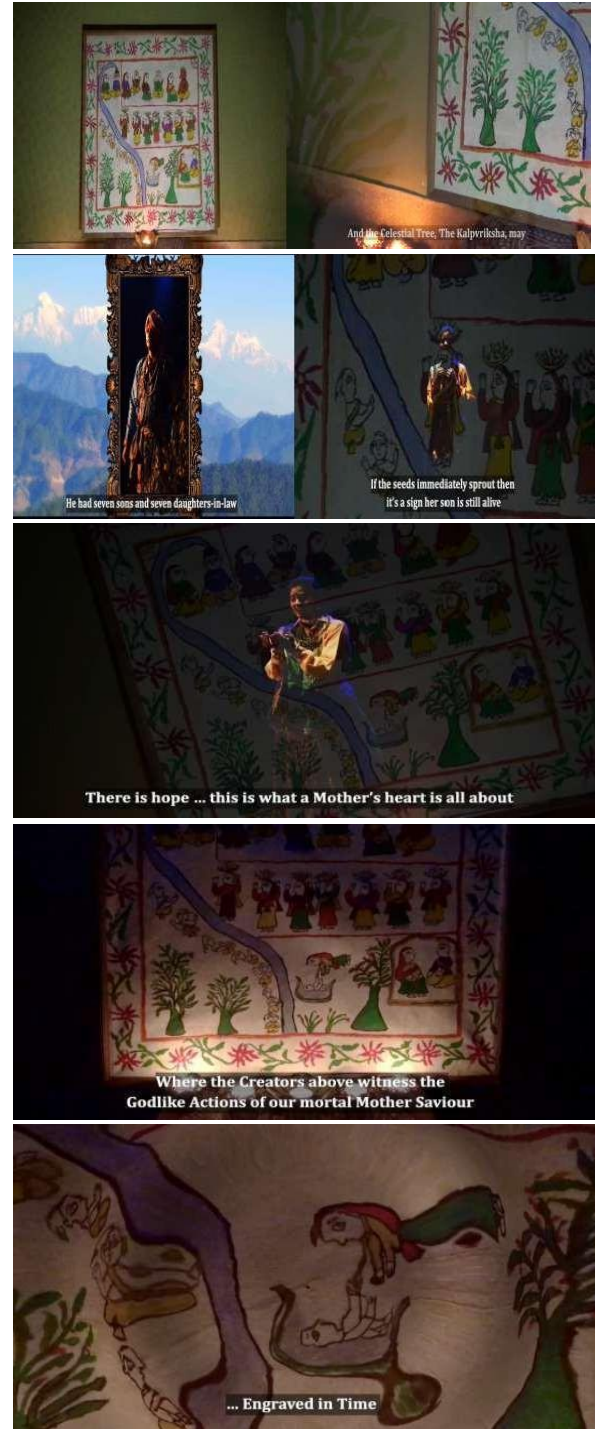
In the book, *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue*, author Robert Johnston (2020) writes about a two-pronged approach to assimilate transcendence by a viewer:

- Towards a sacred self
- Human possibility of exceeding the limitation

Individual expression does shape a visual narrative but at the crux of any approach is the fundamental desire to make the viewer contemplate. (Robert Johnston, 2020)

The film on *Birud Katha* keeps the focus intact on the painting only. Having actors perform the tale would have led to simplification of features of a painting by introducing recreation or deploying art design. The experimentation is not limited to personifying an art work by substituting with actors. There are certain features as symbols and motifs that are supernatural like reference to mythical *Kalpavriksha*, the river Ganga flowing from God Shiva's tresses, the mystical *Kukudi-Makudi* plant that grows somewhere in the high Himalayas and so and so forth. Replicating these with real time objects or personification may lead to permeation of other design motifs or associations. E.g., the *Kukudi-Makudi* plant of Uttarakhand has not been

photographed or described. Google search will lead to description of one plant named *Shindal Makudi* which is claimed to grow in the Maharashtra region only. Such diversions may lead to unclarity in art design for a film. Therefore, the film on *Birud katha* remains focused on the painting and the visuals that may be derived from taking various shots of the painting and its embedded ‘scenes.’ (See figures 12 below)



IX. THE THEORETICAL ASSIMILATION – CONCLUSIONS DERIVED

Art derives its salient features from the foundation of tradition in which it is embedded. (Walter Benjamin, 1935) It is not that difficult to construe that certain influences and associations do permeate be it societal, cultural, or ecological. Walter Benjamin in his essay, *Work of Art in the Age of mechanical Reproduction*, discusses the origin of art first in the realm of magic and then subsequently religious. It may be considered as follows:

Transcendence of Art: Magical → Religious → Traditional

From a creative state of origin, it (art) leads to emergence of a state of awe (in the beholder), and acquires a certain degree of respect owing to the themes of Gods, nature, or having a confluence of the macrocosm and microcosm. With time rituals are formed while replicating that art and thus a tradition evolves. The live presentation (theatre) in which the audience gets a direct communication with the subject on stage is replaced by the camera for the film. Various shots, angles, camera movements and extreme closeups may make dilution of the ‘suspension of disbelief’ which a live act has the possibility in its fabric.

In the stage production as opposed to the film production done by the stakeholders while exploring *Birud Katha* an observation was noted that for the stage performance actors were needed whereas in the film closeups of the episodes drawn within the painting were the shots. (See figures 11 and 12 above) Two aspects that found a basis for transcendence are:

- 1) Establishment of a ‘point of view’ of watching the art and how it differs from medium to medium
- 2) An attempt to ‘isolate’ an aspect or feature of art for analysis that may differ from medium to medium

While watching a painting, or a stage presentation based on a painting, and a film based on the painting all produce variations in the point of view of watching the art-subject. (Walter Benjamin, 1935) The possibility of isolating a particular nuance of the art-subject for analysis also varies from medium to medium. The ephemeral quality of a live show is not found in watching a film if the access to that film is open. However, with *Birud Katha*, it is not conducive to

explore it any of the mediums without the accompaniment of associated rituals, songs, and community actions. The making of the Durbashtami aipan painting having the said folk tale embedded is practiced in its ecology accompanied by music, songs, and unhindered revelry. The stage presentation which necessitates having umpteen rehearsals, repeated actions of doing the rituals, and following the quotient of time and place, will have actors, narrators, and performers presenting the story. Film may do away with acting but without the songs playing in the background and having rituals as a part of screen-action may bring forth the inclusion of songs and background score. Literature and the music accompanied by oral traditions becomes integral to the three mediums.

Dr. Umer Hameed in his seminal research, *Aesthetics Series: From Painting to Film* (2024) discusses the descriptive theory in art and how the notion of ‘representation’ in art is not to digress towards ‘representationalism’ as it may hinder the value and layered approach of comprehension. He has quoted the idea propounded in *Art and Illusion* (Ernst Gombrich, 2000) that art is not to produce the exactness but to ‘create a convincing impression’. There are further impressions in this research that aspires to conclude that painting may not have a point of view as there is movement to imagine while watching a painting but after a certain time the space may consolidate the notion of the image being static which is starkly different from the dynamic movement in the film visuals. A film visual frame when dissected is a series of images when played fast gives a sense of dynamism to it.

On observation of the experimental film on *Birud Katha* an attempt was made to explore the ‘montage effect’ which the painting version has intrinsically (see figure 2) within its frame. The Aipan artists spoke about how knowing the *Birud Katha* folktale makes them visualise the scenes that they paint on the surface. Various versions of the painted folktale have been documented for this research (see figures 5) and the first impression does provide a kind of uniformity in visualizing the scenes. Further in-depth observation provides slight variations in making the figures, usage of colours, delineating the contours of the characters drawn and the factors played by the different surfaces on which these were drawn (cloth, paper, or the wall).

On similar ground, the stage version will have different point of view seeping in when the related characterization of the folktale will be evolved. A different team may have different interpretation of the folktale on stage. They may or may not incorporate live music or keep the actual painting on stage as may be noticed in the photographs included in the research (see figures 11). It was observed that this device of having the painted folktale on stage along with the dramatization of it by the actors may generate an alienation effect i.e., the Bertolt Brechtian approach to performance making referred as the epic theatre theory. In the stage version of *Birud Katha* presented as a part of the play, *Vasundhar*, the major theme is to question the social problem of migration from the hill state of Uttarakhand and how the Aipan art acts as a representation of nostalgia. The protagonist reminisces the folktales like the *Birud Katha* which his mother used to narrate during his childhood. To create a sense of objectivity the aipan painting was kept on the stage to highlight the social matter.

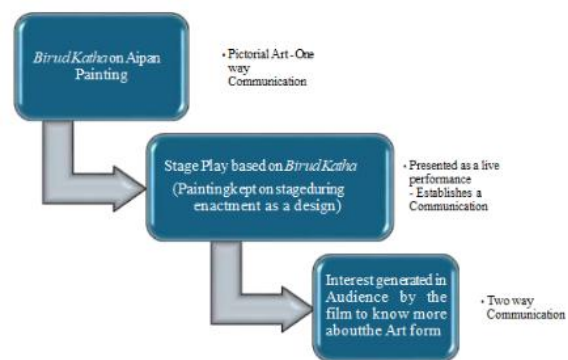
An art form or a medium transcends many a creative level of assimilation when it does not merely record or document but aspires to 'represent' by special approach synonymous to the medium at hand. (Umer Hameed, 2024). Representation in art is like a way to achieve a desired effect. The exploration of *Birud Katha* is on the realms of space, the surface, performance, and the narrative which hinges on having familiarity with the folk tale. For stakeholders this familiarity is akin to their intangible heritage, the knowledge transmitted through generations, but for the uninitiated, descriptive and translatory approach, as incorporated in the stage and film version, is implemented.

From the viewpoint of Lefebvre's (1991) Spatial theory, *Birud Katha* as a shared folktale establishes a social space in which the domestic household, courtyard, and community area transcends into a ritual architectural space. Adorned with symbols and motifs, the area gets demarcated for exclusive space for 'doing' and 'conducting' the community rituals. Even the singing of related Samskara song is synchronized by the participating womenfolk. From the vantage point of an observer there is a performative quality in the atmosphere and the ritual being performed in the backdrop of the hill environment gives a subtle grandeur to the setting. The performance theory

envisaged by Schechner (2003) has expanded on the ritual being able to create a space where the participants connect with the activity with their own emotional state but gradually amalgamating into one shared experience. The play version of *Birud Katha* transcends into this unification of emotions as a desired effect envisaged by the performers, designers, and the other participants. The film version has the confluence of art theory and film aesthetic emanating from its fabric (Robert Johnston, 2020).

On deeper analysis of the folktale and its picturization as a painting, the concept of *Anukarana*, as delineated in the Indian Aesthetic theory, comes into play. The painting does not imitate what is narrated in tale. There is certain iota of abridgment that goes into the picturization owing to the limitation of the surface area on which *Birud Katha* is made. the stage version has expanded the oral expression of the tale by introducing dialogues and the process of *Abhinaya*. The cultural troupe had spoken about the interest generated by the audience on the history of the painting as the same has been kept on the side of the stage during the enactment. A dialogue was created in acquiring more information about the aipan painting which is vital in dissemination of the intangible cultural heritage of the art form.

There was added another level of transmission of the cultural memory and transcendence of the story further. The narrative transmission happened at various levels during the stage play.



The film version does enhance the scope of documentation of the cultural heritage. But the ephemeral quality behind a live art does diminish as the film has a certain permanence attached to its fabric. A film can be edited, shortened, or modified into another film format but the story captured will remain the same. The impermanence of a 'live and felt moment' is not there. The 'forever' aspect which the film has does

not relate to the memory which gets embedded in the mind.

The production Company behind the film, Amurta Films, shared their experience of audience feedback from its screenings in a few short film festivals stating that the viewpoints of the viewers centred on the possibility of amalgamating visuals, and photographs of the stage version. The film is shared by the Asia InCH Encyclopedia and Archive, an initiative of Craft Revival Trust, which is an in-depth encyclopedia of the ICH of traditional arts, crafts, and textiles of India

and 7 other countries across the South-Asian region. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzmIEmgHvYg>)

The explanatory tone behind the film was noticed by the viewers. As the film narrative focused on the description of the *Birud Katha* folk tale embedded within the Durbashtami aipan painting it presented an objective approach being taken in the film narrative.

Birud Katha – Transcendence of the Folktale in Mediums and Spaces



The safeguarding and transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) has within its ambit the role of documentation through films. Performing arts including plays is a domain of the ICH along with oral expressions, social events, rituals, and traditional craftsmanship. All these along with ICH domain of knowledge and practices concerning nature and universe blends within Aipan art and crystallises within the *Birud Katha*. The transmission of knowledge and the cultural memory happen inter-generationally and within the community as well. The research explored the transcendence of one such aipan painting depicting the folktale at multilevel i.e., from the spatial perspective as well as the medium of dissemination as well. The exploration keeps the focus on the sanctity of the ritual heritage, beliefs, and the associated cultural-specific identity with due involvement of the stakeholders. The focus on the visual verbal interplay must align with the cultural aspects as the core of the transcendence is the evolution of critical thinking in exploring the embedded dramatic actions of people.

X. FURTHER POSSIBILITIES – LIMITATIONS TRANSCENDING INTO RECOMMENDATIONS

The research as a case study explored a visual expression, *Birud Katha* embedded within aipan painting *Durbashtami* of Kumaon region in Uttarakhand, and researched the spatial, aural, and the performative contexts. The transcendence of the

spaces associated with the folktale (be it a surface like cloth, paper, or wall, a household, or a community courtyard) were juxtaposed with the mediums as well (the canvas, the stage, and the film). The everyday actions were considered for intrinsic performative essence. There is transformation felt in the rituals, motifs, symbols, the dresses, etc. while attempted on the stage. The oral expression aspired to find disseminative layers when converted into a film. There is potentiality in furthering the scope by diversifying such research into other artforms as it may enhance related pedagogical aspects. Aipan art has a diverse range of traditional designs, patterns, and motifs which are accompanied with Samskara songs and have embedded folk idioms and tales. With focus on weaving within the educational curriculum inputs on India's ethnicity, heritage, and culture the research may act as a preliminary reference case for further exploration. In rapid homogenization of culture, there is potential to document oral expressions and heritage. Along with it the visual narrative, symbols, and representation of nature and ecology is observed from a different perspective when multilayered approach vis-à-vis mediums is utilized.

One limitation which may be countered in further extensions of research is observing and documenting the process of making the painting and the perspective that is kept when it is about picturization of an embedded story. The present research aspired to cover the transcendence of the tale and mapped through various spaces and mediums. The making process

which is exclusive to each art form is not specifically codified in the case of Aipan art. There are leitmotifs that are kept in mind and have been verbally shared or merely observed during making of the painting during the festival in a household. Another recommendation is to delve into the quantitative approach as well by including participation of willing art, drama, and film schools. Besides the stakeholders and the practicing community other entities, experts, scholars, and primarily students may get involve in exploring the integration of art with drama and film.

A basic integration with film documentation was explored in the research. The limitation opens the floor for a recommendation that to explore deeper immersive narratives and contemporary trends of life and technology interface, be it the virtual reality or the augmented. There is scope for cultivating an interdisciplinary research avenue in which the artists, film makers, researchers, technologists, software developers can be invited to collaborate with the stakeholders, and communities. The limitations of this research indicate towards this interdisciplinary approach to cultivate the convergence of Indian art with immersive visual narratives.

REFERENCES

- [1] E. T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, vol. III, part II. Allahabad, India: Government Press, 1882.
- [2] E. T. Atkinson, *Himalayan Gazetteer*, vols. 2–3. Natraj Publishers, 1973, reprint 2014.
- [3] P. Alperson, Ed., *The Philosophy of the Visual Arts*. Oxford University Press, 1992.
- [4] K. Bairathi and K. 'Satyendra,' *Kumaon ki Lok Kala, Sanskriti aur Parampara*. Shri Almora Book Depot, 1992. ISBN: 81-900086-9-2.
- [5] W. Benjamin, "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction," translated by H. Zohn, in *Illuminations*. New York, NY, USA: Schocken Books, 1969.
- [6] G. Currie, *Image and Mind: Film, Philosophy and Cognitive Science*. Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- [7] G. Frommherz, "Art of decay and eternity: Ritualization in Aipan practice," 2010.
- [8] M. Ghosh, *The Nāṭyaśāstra Ascribed to Bharata*, vol. 1. Calcutta, India: Asiatic Society, 1950.
- [9] E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*. Princeton University Press, 1960.
- [10] U. Hameed, *Aesthetics Series: From Painting to Film*. 2024.
- [11] H. Wels, K. van der Waal, A. Spiegel, and F. Kamsteeg, "Victor Turner and liminality: An introduction," *Anthropology Southern Africa*, vol. 34, no. 1–2, 2011.
- [12] R. Johnston, "Transcendence in film: An ongoing issue," *Journal of Religion & Film*, vol. 24, no. 2, Art. no. 12, 2020. Available: Journal of Religion and Film Article
- [13] K. N. Joshi, *Kumaon Ka Lok Sahitya*. Bareilly, India: Prakash Book Depot, 1971.
- [14] H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell, 1991.
- [15] M. Negi, A. Rani, R. Bala, and A. Singh, "New perspective in textile designing with AIPAN design through tie and dye technique," in *A Treatise on Recent Trends and Sustainability in Crafts & Design*. Jaipur, India: Indian Institute of Crafts & Design, 2017. ISBN: 978-93-86724-21-2.
- [16] N. Carroll, *Philosophical Problems of Classical Film Theory*. Princeton University Press, 1992.
- [17] B. D. Pandey, *Kumaon ka Itihaas* (in Hindi). 1937.
- [18] A. Pant, *Ritual Arts of the Central Himalayas: A Study of Aipan Traditions*. Almora, India: Himalayan Cultural Centre, 2019.
- [19] V. F. Perkins, *Film as Film*. Da Capo Press, 1993.
- [20] V. Raghavan, *The Aesthetic Theories of India*. Madras, India: Annamalai University Press, 1978.
- [21] A. Rangacharya, *The Nāṭyaśāstra: English Translation with Critical Notes*. New Delhi, India: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1999.
- [22] S. Salman, "The alienation effect as a communication tool: Analyzing 'The French Dispatch' film," *Anemon Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 705–716, 2024. Available: DOI Link
- [23] R. Schechner, *Performance Theory*. Routledge, 1988.
- [24] R. Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. Routledge, 2006.
- [25] V. N. Shah, *Aipan Cultural Motifs of Kumaon*. Nainital, India: Consul Printers, 2006.
- [26] V. Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York, NY, USA: PAJ Publications, 1982.

- [27] A. Upreti, *Kumaoni Paaramparik Roop Vidhaan: Aipan evam Sanskar Geet* (in Hindi-Kumaoni). 2024. ISBN: 978-81-965657-5-6.
- [28] K. Upreti, *Kumaon ki Sanskriti Va Kala* (in Hindi). 1987.
- [29] N. R. Upreti, *Folk Art of Kumaon. Census of India 1961*, vol. I, monograph series, part VII-A, 1961.
- [30] R. Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, chap. 1, 2023.
- [31] Yashoda, “Bharata’s Natyashastra: A comprehensive study,” *IJCRT*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 2320–2882, 2020.
- [32] Y. Ji, “Artistic alchemy: Exploring the fusion of art theory and film aesthetics in visual storytelling,” *Herança*, Jan. 2024.
- [33] Z. Yulin, “Transcultural vistas: Window metaphors in painting and film narratives,” in *Proc. 5th Int. Conf. Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts*, Paris, France, 2023.
- [34] National Institute of Design, Bengaluru, “Aipan – Uttarakhand, Ritual Floor Painting, Design Resource.” Available: Dsource Aipan Resource
- [35] OWASP Foundation, “Census 54342_1961_KUM.pdf.”
- [36] “Symbolism in Aipan Art,” Rooftop Blog. Available: Rooftop Blog on Aipan Art
- [37] R. Tiwari and G. Frommherz, *God’s Own Art – The Aipan Paintings of the Himalaya*. Mumbai, India: 98point4 Film and Media, 2004.
- [38] *Indian Miniature Painting: The Process of Spiritualization Through Artistic Activity and Training*. Austin, TX, USA: Centre for Applied Cognitive Science, The University of Texas at Austin.
- [39] *The Paintings of India – The Art of India*. Doordarshan.
- [40] *The Paintings of India – 2000 Years of Paintings*. Doordarshan.
- [41] *Painting of India – The Delicate Beauty of Miniature*. Doordarshan.
- [42] *Aipan – Ritualistic Folk Art | Devbhoomi Kumaon | Uttarakhand | Episode 8*. Prasar Bharati Archives.