

PURULIA REVISITED : Some Glimpses

Between October 2016 and February 2017, we visited more than 60 Santal villages in North Purulia, documenting their amazing wall art which they create primarily for their harvest festival Sohrai. The final output of this project was a film and a report. This was done with the support of Anthropological Survey of India. In March 2018, we returned to Purulia, armed with the Santali version of our film, “Sohrai Likhan” and a photo album for each of these villages. Our goal was to screen the film in as many villages as possible. We did over a period of five days between March 10th and 14th, covering about 20 villages, across Raghunathpur I, Para, Neturia, Santuri, Kashipur and Hura blocks.

The pleasure on their faces as the artists watched themselves on screen was truly rewarding. And they were also delighted with the photos that we had taken back for them. Our objective of documenting and disseminating their magnificent wall art would not have been complete without this final step – of taking it back to the creators themselves. Almost in unison, the women pledged to continue with their art and promised they would decorate their walls even better next year. We shall certainly go back.

Many, many thanks to Anthropological Survey of India for their unstinting support all the way! And to our team: Saheb Ram Tudu (camera/ Santali translation & voiceover), Dhritiman Das (camera/edit), Moinak Bose (camera/sound), Ronit Biswas (camera) and Bimal Baskey (local guide). Saheb, an integral part of our Santal projects, and our subject expert, first introduced us to his village in Bhurkundabari in Purulia in 2015. This was the starting point of our wall art documentation plans. Bimal Baskey and Laxmikanto Hembrom provided invaluable assistance during this trip.



Banshraya village



Bundla village



Distributing sweets to the children



Dhagora village



Dhagora village



Panrasol village



Ghutgarya village



Ghutgarya village



Latulbaid village



Muchkunda village



Shugnibasha village



Tilgora village, Hura



Setting up at Bhurkundabari



Kashiberya village



Posing for us after the screening, Joradih village