



Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation,
Department of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra



Warli Painting

Experience Warli Villages

📍 Palghar District | Maharashtra

Cultural Tourism Destinations



Discover the Living Heritage of Maharashtra

Maharashtra is a vast mosaic of cultural landscapes, where ancient cave carvings coexist with a vibrant, living tribal heritage. Among these, the districts of Palghar and Nashik stand out as cultural sanctuaries, where the forested Sahyadri ranges cradle the ancestral traditions of the Kokna, Mahadev Koli, and Warli communities.

The Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation, in collaboration with local communities, invites you to experience Palghar and Nashik as living cultural landscapes. From the quiet poetry of Warli painting to the powerful presence of Bohada masks, from the intricate artistry of bamboo craft to the enchanting rhythms of song and dance, each expression carries the memory of the land and its people. This brochure shares on Warli painting—a distinctive visual language rooted in ritual, ecology, and everyday life.

Step beyond the familiar to discover the hidden cultural gems of these regions, and engage directly with tradition bearers. Here, culture is not a spectacle, but a shared experience—where people, place, and practice come together to reveal the living soul of Maharashtra.



The Warli Chronicle

Recognised with a Geographical Indication tag in 2014, Warli endures as living heritage, where line becomes story, and land, people, and life move as one. Practised by the indigenous Warli community, its beginnings remain unwritten, yet its lines echo a lineage reaching back to the 10th century A.D., carried through ritual, memory, and shared time.

Traditionally painted by women on village walls during rituals and social gatherings, the form has evolved to be embraced by both women and men today. Drawn on earthen walls with white rice paste, Warli speaks in elemental forms—circle, triangle, and square—unfolding stories of labour and leisure, birth and marriage, myths, festivals, and changing worlds. Though it now travels beyond mud walls to paper and canvas, the art remains rooted in community rhythms.

The Heartland of the Tradition

Palghar is the birthplace of Warli painting—a cultural heartland where the art still lives and breathes. In villages like Ganjad and Bapugaon in Dahanu, and across Jawhar and Talasari, artists continue to practise and share this tradition. Here, visitors can step into the world of Warli, witnessing an art form that is not preserved in museums, but carried forward through everyday life.

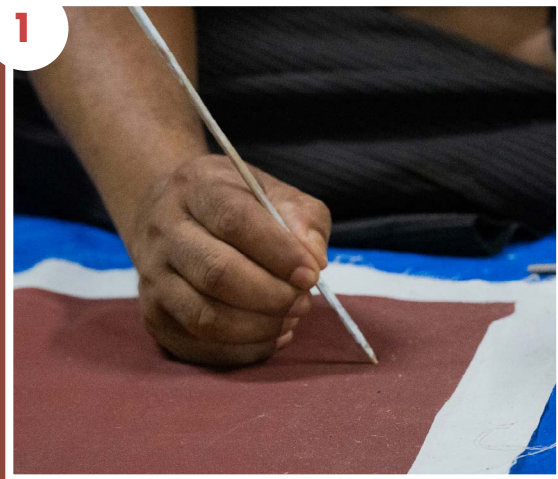


Guardians of the Legacy

The journey of Warli art from a seasonal ritual to a globally recognised movement is inseparable from the legacy of the late Padma Shri Jivya Soma Mhase. Hailing from Ganjad, Mhase was the visionary who, in the 1970s, carried Warli from village walls onto paper and canvas, revealing the line and dot as universal expressions of the human spirit.

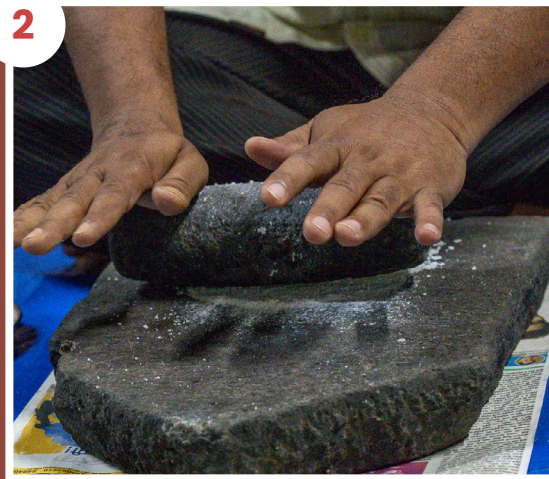
The Alchemy of the Process

1



Surface Preparation: Surfaces are treated with a mixture of cow dung and red mud (ochre) to create a textured, earthen background.

2



Pigment Preparation: The white pigment is a decoction of ground rice paste mixed with water and a natural gum adhesive.

3



Tool Crafting: Brushes are not purchased; they are fashioned from chewed bamboo sticks or palm thorns to achieve the characteristic fine lines.

4



Geometric Mapping: The artist begins with the central motif (usually the Chawk or a tree), building the narrative outwards.

5



Human/Animal Forms: Figures are created by joining two triangles at the tip—an ingenious representation of the torso and pelvis—to denote movement and life.

6

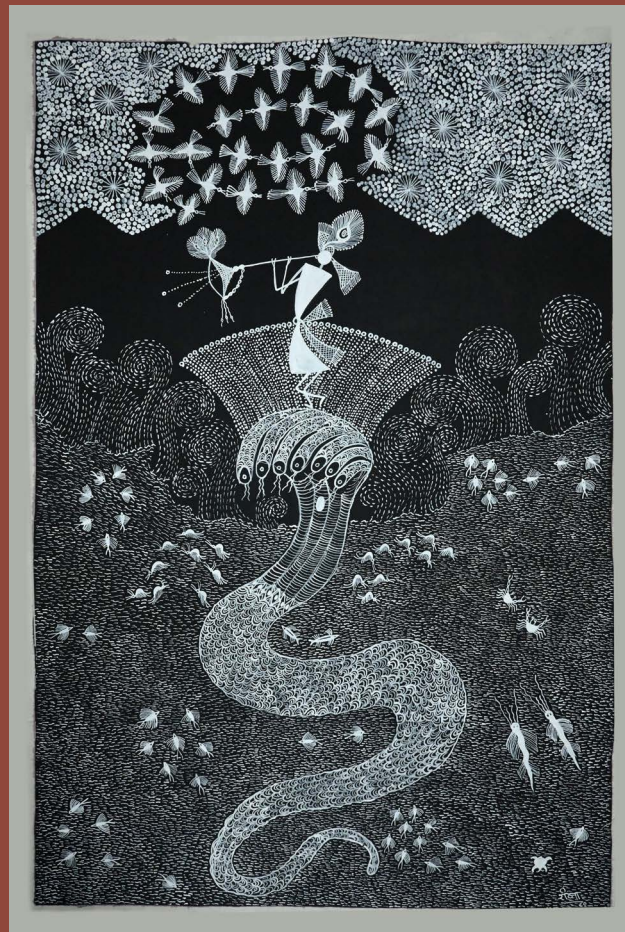


Finishing: The work dries naturally, bonding the rice paste to the mud surface.

Themes

Warli art speaks through a minimal visual language of three forms—circle, triangle, and square. These forms unfold narratives of agriculture, fishing, birth, marriage, festivals, myths, legends, and everyday life.

Myths and Legends



Artist: Reena Valvi

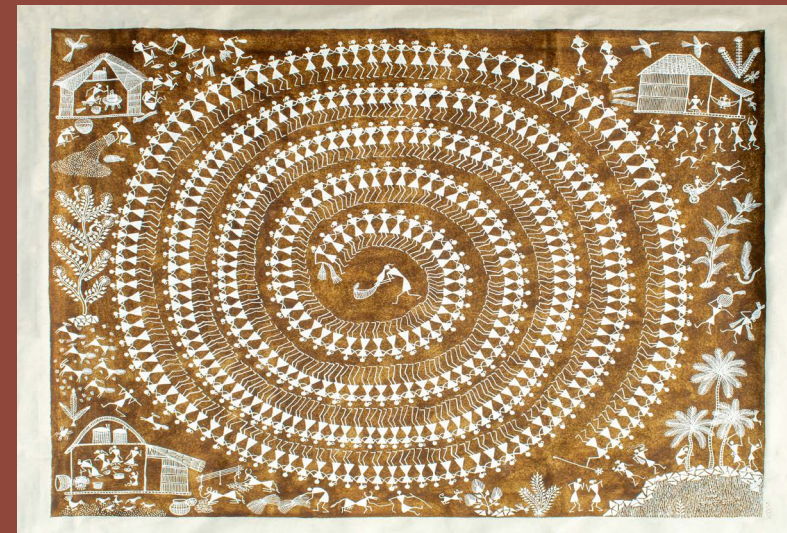


Artist: Shantaram Gorkhana

Cycle of Life Events



Artist: Rupesh Gorkhana

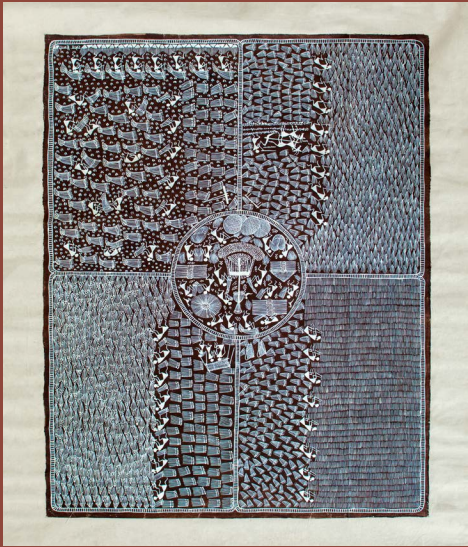


Artist: Kusum Kharpade

Poetics of Everyday Life



Artist: Ramesh Hengadi



Artist: Ramesh Hengadi

Contemporary Creations



Artist: Ganesh Vangad



Artist: Darshana Rupesh Gorkhana

Beyond the Mural:
Contemporary Applications

While rooted in murals, Warli art now adapts to modern mediums such as home décor, lifestyle products, and artistic commissions, ensuring its survival in the global market.



Miniature warli house



Serving tray



Handmade book



Tarpa instrument
souvenir



Storage box



A Living Museum of Palghar

As you explore this cultural landscape, begin your journey at the Palghar Lok Itihas Sangrahalaya—a living museum at Gholwad that offers an introduction to the region's rich heritage. Housed in a historic school building dating back to the 1880s, it brings together the diverse cultural expressions of Palghar through thoughtfully curated displays.

Visitors can explore Warli painting alongside Bohada masks, bamboo craft, traditional Tarpa instruments, and folk music and performance traditions. The museum also features sections on local Parsi heritage and renowned artists of the region, along with everyday objects from rural life—many generously contributed by community members.

More than a repository of objects, the Sangrahalaya is a space of memory and continuity—where stories of the land and its people come alive. Located about 15 km north of Dahanu, Gholwad is well connected and has its own railway station.



Navigate & Connect

Travel time from Mumbai to Dahanu is 3-4 hours by rail or road.

- Ganjad: About 22 km southeast of Dahanu on the Dahanu–Jawhar Road.
- Bapugaon: About 35 km northeast of Dahanu, via Kasa Naka.

Artists	Contact
Kishor Mhase	8975391497
Anil Vangad	8087980681
Shantaram Ghorkhana	8087972762
Ramesh Hengadi	9226193016
Vijay Mhase	9503440082
Pravin Mhase	9011622110
Ganpat Balu Dumada	8317278393
Sanjay Parhad	9049343532
Anita Mhase Dalvi	8975700822
Rajesh Vangad	9421625728

Experience Warli in a Day

- Visit Gholwad museum
- Travel to Ganjad
- Meet artists
- Hands-on workshop
- Local meal
- Purchase art

Visitors can experience coastal beauty, relax by serene shores, and enjoy immersive stays in charming farmhouses amidst Palghar’s tranquil rural landscape.



Celebrating Continuity

Warli painting thrives as a living tradition, celebrated through village festivals like the Mateechya Rangacha Sammelan, where master artists and emerging learners exhibit together. These gatherings sustain continuity, with children and youth learning directly through workshops—carrying forward tradition while exploring contemporary expressions.

Upcoming ICH festivals
Surgana, Nashik - 2-4 October, 2026
Jawhar, Palghar - 3-4 October, 2026





"The circle is the sun and the moon; the triangle is the mountain and the pointed tree. Without these, there is no life, and without life, there is no art."

– Proverb of Warli Community

Explore the Living Landscape of Warli

Visit Warli villages where walls speak softly and stories unfold in circles and triangles. Meet artists in their homes, learn the rhythms of their craft, and witness narratives take shape.

Engage through immersive craft residencies, collaborate with artists, and explore pathways for craft innovation.

For designers, architects, and buyers:

- Commission site-specific murals
- Acquire original Warli paintings
- Develop collaborative design projects
- Curate ethical corporate gifting
- Participate in artist-led workshops



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more about Warli



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ich@maharashtratourism.gov.in