

Name of the Element: Phad: Scroll Paintings and Their Narration, Rajasthan, India.

Community/ies: Artists of Phad painting belong to Joshi lineage of Chipa'cloth printers and dyers in the state of Rajasthan, India. Another community associated with the Phad painting is the Bhopas (priests) of local deities, whose narratives are depicted on the scroll. Bhopas who sing the story of the local deity Devnarayan are from the Gujjar community, whereas Bhopas who sing the story of the deity Pabuji are from Rajput and other communities.

Region: Phad paintings are made in Bhilwada district of Rajasthan. The singers who narrate the stories depicted in Phad are scattered across Rajasthan – in Bhilwada district, Ratanpura in Hanumangarh district, Devmali in Ajmer district etc.

Brief Description: Phad is an approximately 30 feet long and 5 feet broad painted scroll, which depicts stories of epic dimensions about local deities and legendary heroes. The local priests - the Bhopas, render these stories musically. Phad when not in use is kept folded in the village shrine or in Bhopa's house. Bhopas carry these scrolls on their shoulders from village to village for a performance, where they unfold the scroll and display it fixed on to a bamboo frame in an open area. Phad represents the moving shrine of the deity and is an object of worship. Some of the most popular and largest Phad belong to local deities Devnarayanji and Pabuji. The performance takes place at night and Bhopi (priest's wife), lights up a lamp to make the images visible. Stories of Devnarayanji are rendered with the accompaniment of the musical instrument called Jantar'; and a two-string instrument called Bana accompanies the epic of Pabuji.