

Folk art of
Madhubani

"Madhubani" the "Forest of Honey" is the Mithila of the epics. The land of Sita.

It consists of groups of villages in the Darbhanga district of Bihar.

This is the land where Vidyapati lived and sang of the loves of Krishna and Radha.

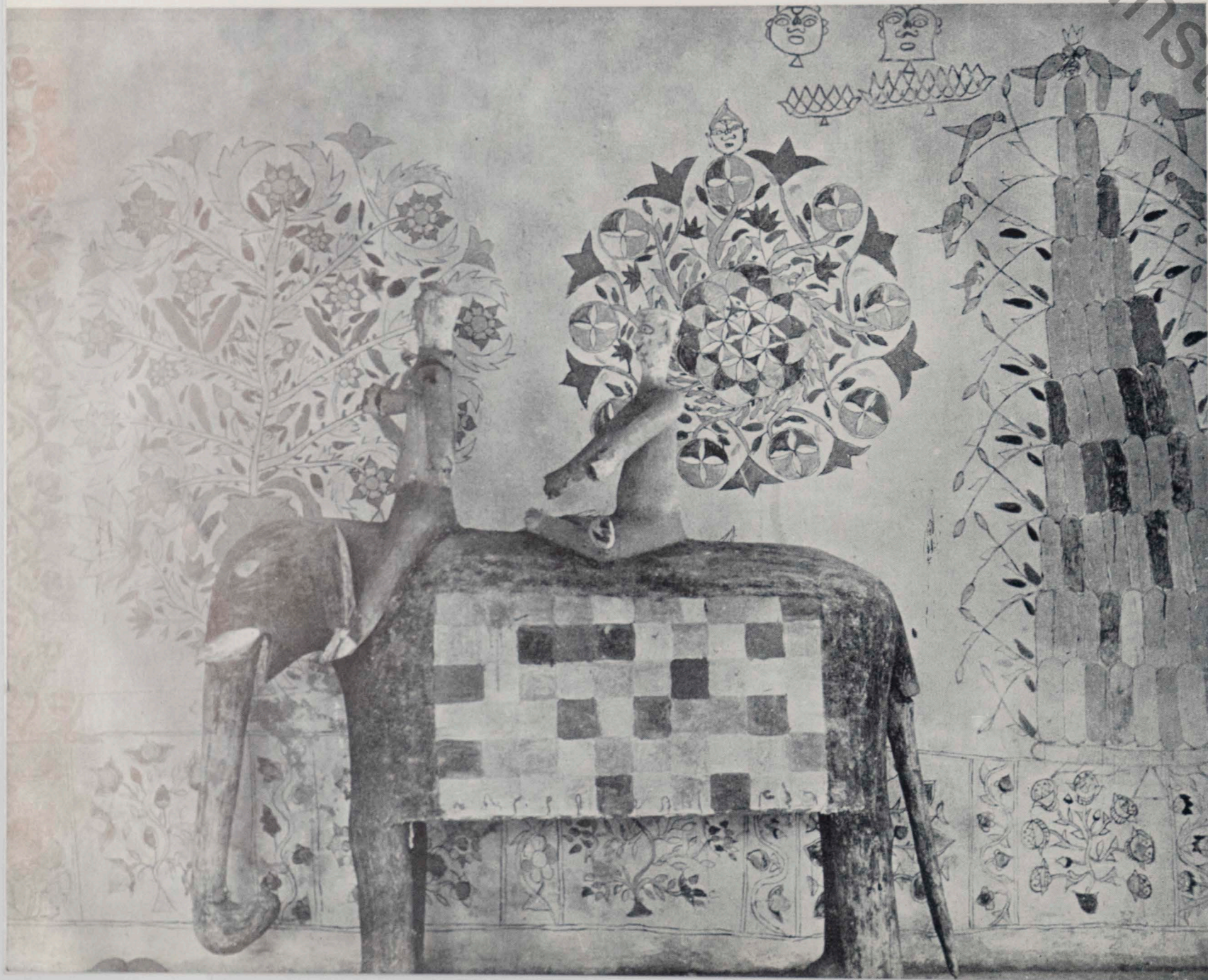
Maithili women on auspicious occasions at the time of festivals, at marriages and at births, paint "aripan" dhuli chitras or dust paintings on the mud floors of their huts—geometric and highly stylized, these paintings are open astrological charts—a storehouse of ancient traditional knowledge. They also paint in rich earth colours, reds and yellows and indigo blues, lyrical paintings of gods and goddesses—the eternal two—Rama Sita, Krishna Radha, Shiva Gowri—on their shrines and in the "Khowar", the innermost auspicious chamber of the house where bride and bridegroom first live and love. On the walls of mud plastered huts Krishna and Radha dance and everything quickens to life. The sun and moon bear witness. Terracota elephants, sikki baskets, embroidered quilts are also made by Maithili women—expressions of their rich understanding of colour and form.

Baked Terracota elephants—about 40" high—placed outside the village huts as guardians and auspicious omens



The cover page shows a couple, the embodiment of the Lord Shiva and his consort, Durga. Printed on heavy silk.

On the back cover Krishna is shown playing a flute on a tree. He is also known as the Divine Cowherd and is beloved of rural communities.



This photograph shows an elephant with proud riders. The glorious trees laden with parrots and exotic flowers give some idea of the fecund imagination of the artists



A close-up of Ganesh—the elephant god—son of Shiva and Parvati—attended by women. One holding a fan and other a flower. He is present at all Hindu Marriages





A bold, primitive and
extremely gay drawing of
Ganesh



Shiva with snakes—
the God of destruction
and dance



Krishna, with the flute, one of the many Avatars of Vishnu

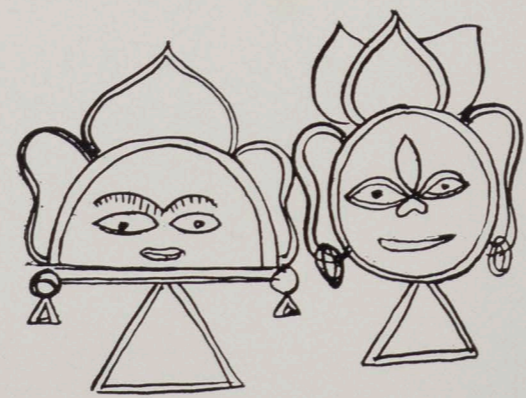


Shiva, the ascetic with Krishna, Gopis and the sacred bull



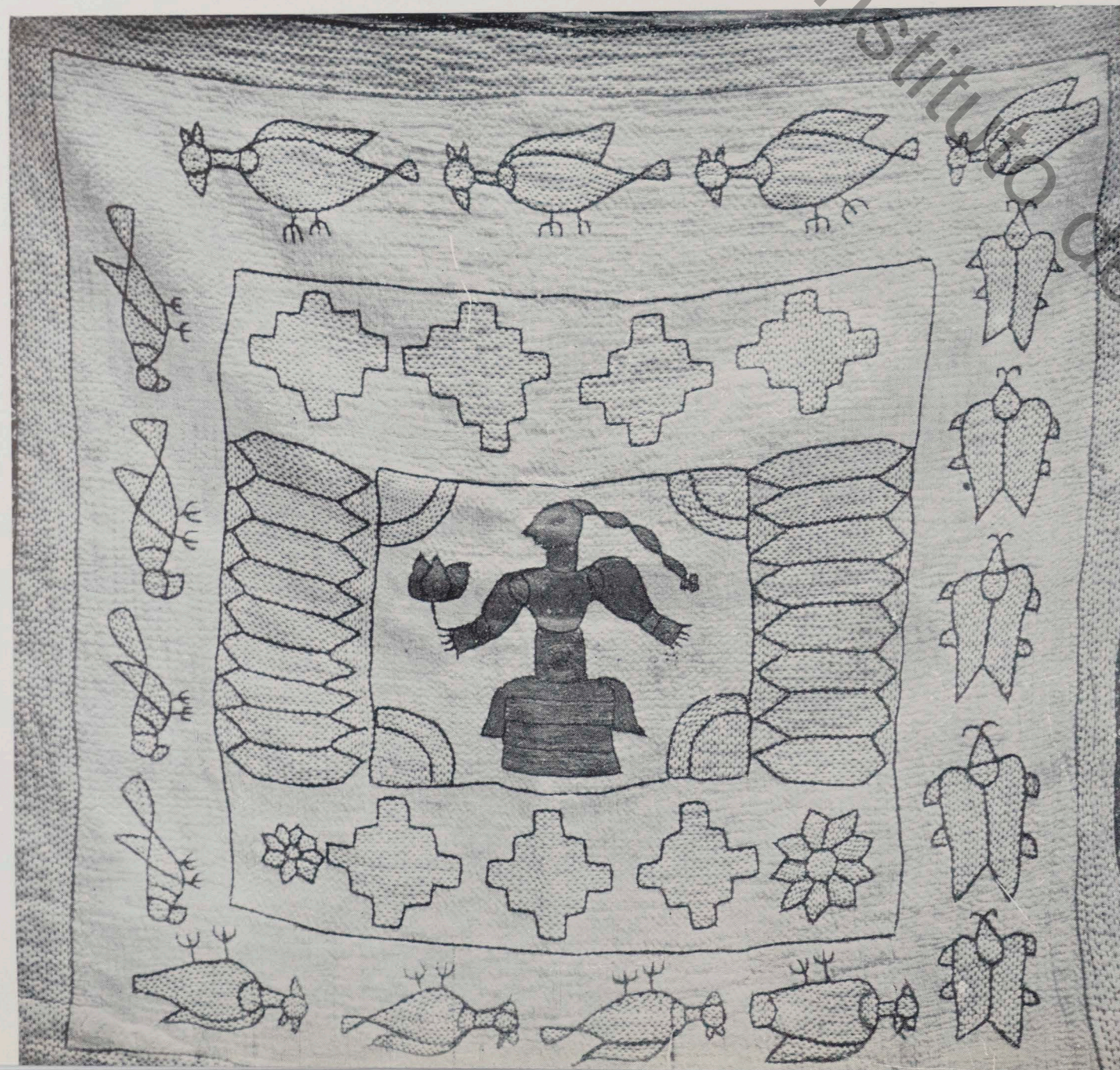


Ras Leela—the circular dance of the Divine Cowherd, the Lord Krishna



Krishna and Radha—lovers

A Kantha
stitched covering
made from old cloth



Krishna among the
trees in a forest

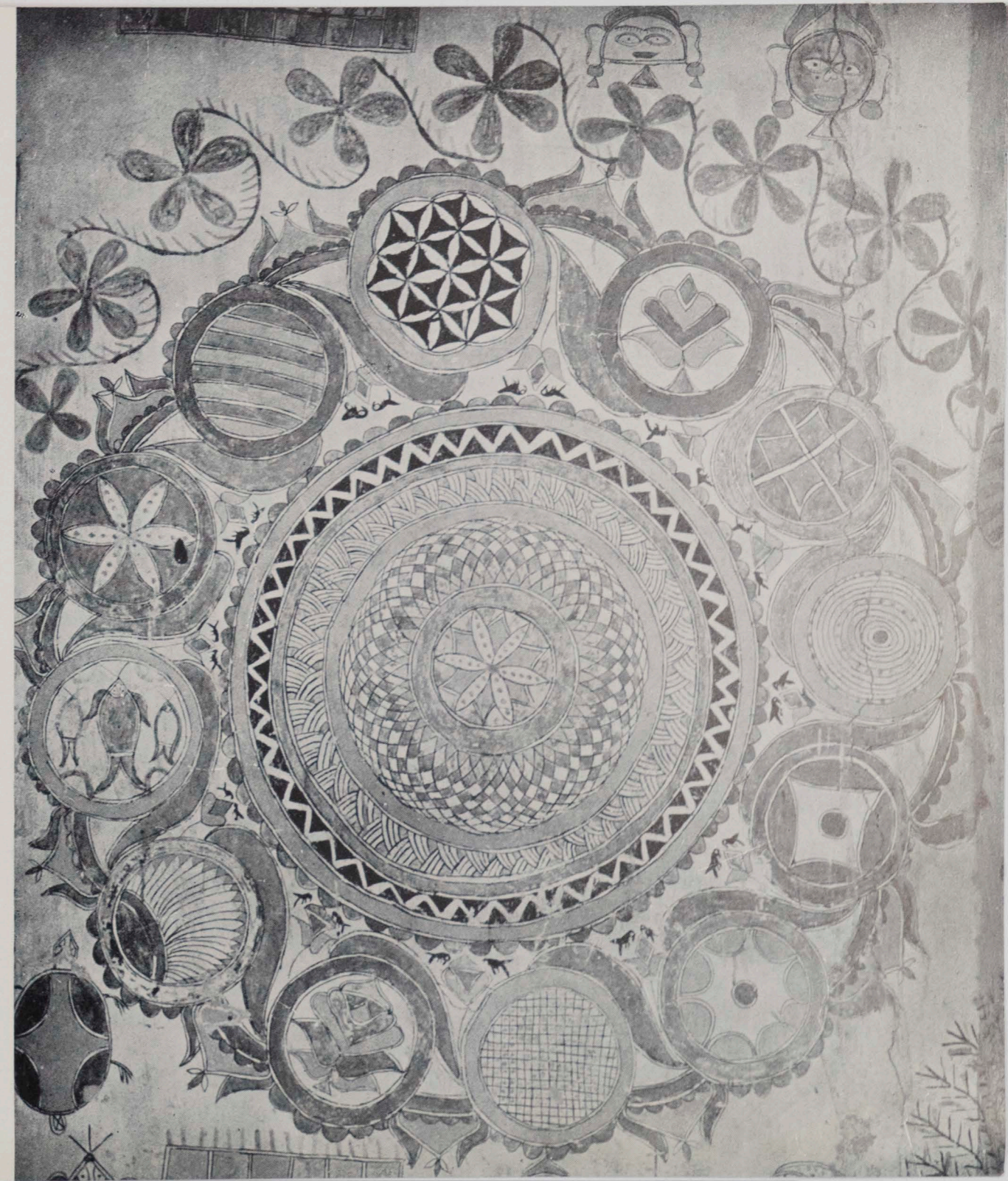




Rows of mythological figures



A decorative panel



instituto de



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