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Revival of Gond Art in Contemporary Fashion

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Abstract: This paper examines the potential for interpreting Gond art in contemporary fashion through a proposed linen dress decorated with acrylic fabric paint and outline-focused hand embroidery. Gond painting is associated with the cultural traditions of Gond communities in central India and is widely recognised for its narrative subjects, nature-related imagery, rhythmic lines, dots, and repeated marks. The study considers how selected visual characteristics can be translated into a wearable design while maintaining respect for the cultural context from which the art emerges. The research is planned as a practice-based design study supported by secondary literature, visual analysis, motif development, material trials, garment planning, and documentation of the making process. The proposed design uses linen as the base fabric, acrylic fabric paint as the painted medium, and hand embroidery to reinforce selected outlines. The study will investigate design placement, visual balance, legibility of motifs, comfort, and practical considerations such as paint handling, fabric response, and care instructions. These are proposed areas of evaluation, not completed findings. Published research on Gond art, its changing materials and contexts, and its role in contemporary cultural communication informs the literature review. The dissertation distinguishes published evidence from the student's design decisions and any future observations. Since the project is at the planning stage, no experimental results or claims of successful performance are reported as facts. The expected contribution is a documented design framework for exploring a culturally informed Gond-inspired garment and for identifying questions that should be tested during prototype development.
Keywords: Gond art, contemporary fashion, linen, fabric painting, acrylic fabric paint, hand embroidery, indigenous art, practice-based research

I. INTRODUCTION

Gond painting is not simply a decorative pattern system. It is connected to cultural experience and storytelling, and its subjects may include animals, plants, landscapes, folklore, everyday activities, and spiritual ideas. Thamanna and Subramani (2023) discuss Gond paintings as a means of communicating everyday life and indigenous philosophy. Such research suggests that a design study should look beyond surface appearance and ask what the motifs communicate and how their cultural setting should be acknowledged. The present dissertation does not claim to represent every Gond community or every regional style. Gond communities are diverse, and individual artists develop distinctive approaches. The design work will therefore use documented references, record the source of visual inspiration, and

avoid presenting a newly created fashion motif as an authentic traditional motif unless its origin has been verified.



Gond art: A broad term used here for visual-art practices associated with Gond communities; specific motifs and practices should be attributed to documented sources or artists.



Contemporary fashion: Fashion design developed for present-day use and contexts, including current garment forms, materials, and styling.



Motif: A recognisable visual element or form used as part of a composition.

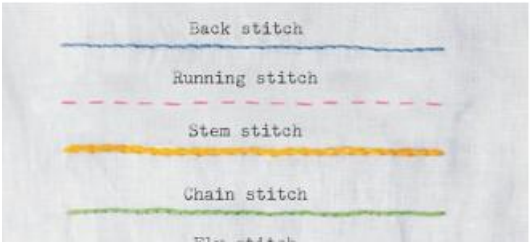


Repeated marks: Dots, lines, dashes, or similar units repeated to create texture, rhythm, direction, or emphasis.

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Acrylic fabricpaint: A paint product formulated or labelled for use on textiles; the selected product's instructions must guide application and heat-setting.



Outline hand embroidery: Hand stitching used primarily to trace or emphasise selected motif outlines rather than fill large areas.

Practice-based design research: Research in which the development and documentation of a designed artefact form part of the method of inquiry.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Gond Art: Cultural and Visual Context

Arur and Wyeld (2016) examine the cultural significance of Gond art and note that materials and subject matter have changed over time while relationships with traditional techniques and religious contexts remain important. Their work is relevant because it cautions against assuming that a change in medium necessarily removes cultural meaning. It also supports the need for further research into how Gond art is understood and represented in wider contexts. Thamanna and Subramani (2023) analyse Gond paintings as indigenous communication and discuss how works can represent everyday activities and philosophy. Their article describes visual storytelling and the use of multi-hued, dot-based techniques. For the proposed dress, this literature supports analysing motifs as part of a visual narrative rather than treating dots and lines as isolated decoration. Bora and Sakshi's study, "Knowledge of Gond Art in Mahakoshal Region," examines knowledge related to themes, signature patterns, design, motifs, colours, media, and institutions involved in promotion (Bora & Sakshi, 2017). Its focus is useful for framing motif research and for reminding the designer that regional knowledge and local context matter when selecting visual references.

2.2 Motifs, Dots, Lines, Dashes and Repetition

Dots, lines, dashes, and repeated marks can produce texture, rhythm, direction, and contrast. In the context of Gond painting, these marks may contribute to the internal patterning of animals, birds, plants, and other subjects. A fashion designer can study how such elements

are arranged, but should avoid assuming that every repeated-mark pattern is uniquely or universally Gond. Specific examples must be connected to identified artwork or published analysis. For design development, a motif-analysis sheet can record the source image or publication, subject, dominant line direction, type of repeated marks, colour relationships, and intended transformation. The sheet should distinguish direct observation from interpretation. If a motif is simplified for stitching or painting, the revised form should be described as a design adaptation.

2.3 Gond Art in Contemporary Media

Research on contemporary Gond painting describes movement across media and audiences. Arur and Wyeld (2016) consider contemporary materials and cultural significance, while Rana (2025) discusses the journey of Gond painting and women artists from tradition to modernity. Rana's research is particularly important because contemporary change is not only a stylistic issue: it is also shaped by access to markets, technology, social position, and artists' opportunities.

2.4 Indigenous Knowledge, Authorship and Cultural Respect

Cultural references are not neutral raw material. A motif may carry associations with a community, a story, a place, or an individual artist. Ethical design practice requires accurate attribution, care with sacred or restricted imagery, and awareness that a community is not a single voice. The student have preferred sources that identify artists and explain the context of the work rather than relying only on anonymous images circulated online.

The dissertation will maintain a reference log for every source information used in the research and design stages. Each entry include artist or maker when known, title or description, date if available, publication or collection, URL or page number, and the intended use. Where permission is needed, the record well state whether permission has been requested and received.

2.5 Tribal Art and Contemporary Fashion

Singh, Dubey, and Rana's article on Bhil, Gond, and Baiga attire and regional Indian fashion trends considers how tribal aesthetics, textile heritage, craft, and sustainability relate to contemporary fashion (Singh et al., 2024). This provides a broader fashion context, although its scope includes several communities and should not be treated as a study exclusively about Gond painting or the specific linen dress proposed here. The fashion application of a cultural art form can be approached through silhouette, placement, scale, colour, surface texture, and construction. A successful design translation is not only a question of adding a print to a garment. It must consider how the body changes the composition, how seams interrupt a motif, and how decoration affects comfort and care.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The project is planned as qualitative, practice-based design research supported by secondary-source review and visual analysis. The design artefact—the proposed linen dress—will serve as a practical outcome through which decisions about motif translation, surface application,

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and garment composition can be examined. The written dissertation will document the reasoning behind the design rather than treating the finished dress as proof of every cultural or technical claim.

Type of Work

The work combines a literature-based study of Gond art with a proposed design-development process. It is not currently an experimental study with completed results. Material testing will become an empirical component only after samples are prepared and observations are recorded. The report must distinguish the planned method from actions actually completed.

Sources of Data

Secondary data will include academic journal articles, peer-reviewed conference papers, books or catalogues from reliable publishers, museum or cultural-institution material, and artist-authorised information where available. Search results and social media posts can help locate material but should not automatically be treated as authoritative sources. The source record should capture author, year, title, publication, DOI or stable URL, and access date where required by the source type.

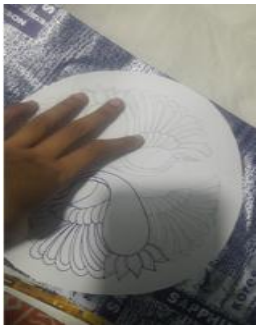
Primary project data



own sketches



photographs of sample trials



observations during painting and embroidery

Measurements S (Small) M (Medium) L (Large)

Bust 34 36 38
Waist 28 30 32
Hip 36 38 40
Shoulder 13.5 14 14.5
Armhole 15 16 17
Neck width 2.5 2.5 2.75
Front neck depth 6 6.5
Back neck depth 2.5 2.5 garment measurements, construction notes
The fabric is measured and cut according to the required body measurements.
The front and back bodice pieces are cut separately.
The neckline and armholes are finished with fabric facings for a neat look.
Shoulder seams are joined and stitched securely.
Side seams are joined, maintaining proper fitting around the bust and waist.
The skirt is cut in an A-line shape to create a gradual flare towards the hemline.
The bodice and skirt are attached together at the waistline.
A concealed zipper is attached at the centre back for easy wearing.
The bottom hem is folded and stitched neatly.
The garment is pressed to achieve a clean and finished appearance.
Finishing details:
Neat inside seam finishing.
Proper neckline and armhole finishing.
Even hemline.
Secure stitching and comfortable fitting.
Final ironing and quality checking.

IV. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Design Brief

The project, Revival of Gond Art in Contemporary Fashion, aims to bring traditional Indian folk art into modern clothing through a creative combination of textile painting and contemporary garment design.

The selected garment is a simple, elegant A-line linen dress in an off-white shade. The dress provides a minimal and natural base for showcasing the beauty of Gond-inspired artwork.

A twin-peacock motif, developed using traditional Gond-style patterns, will be hand-painted on the upper right side of the dress, just below the bust area. The placement creates an attractive focal point while maintaining the simplicity and elegance of the garment.

The main objective is to preserve the visual identity of Gond art while making it suitable for modern everyday and occasion wear.

4.2 Design Inspiration and Theme

The selected twin-peacock motif represents beauty, grace, harmony and the richness of Indian artistic traditions. The detailed feathers, repetitive lines, dots and curved patterns give the motif a distinctive visual identity.

The contemporary interpretation combines this traditional artwork with a minimal linen dress.

Main sources of inspiration:

Traditional Gond paintings and their decorative patterns.

Peacock feathers and natural forms. Indian folk-art heritage.

Organic textures and simplicity of linen.

Contemporary minimal fashion.

Design concept: Traditional Indian artwork presented through a modern and wearable silhouette.

4.3 Motif Development

The selected motif is a pair of beautifully illustrated peacocks arranged in a symmetrical composition. The design uses flowing curves, decorative feather patterns, fine lines, dots and repeated shapes.

The motif is inspired by the visual language of Gond art and is adapted for application on a contemporary garment.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Status of Evidence at Planning Stage

At the present stage, the confirmed project decisions are the topic, the intention to use linen, the use of acrylic fabric paint intended for fabric, a dress as the garment type, and outline-focused hand embroidery using repeated marks such as dots, lines, and dashes. The cultural background and research context are supported by the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The following remain to be established through practical work: the final dress silhouette; the selected artwork references; the exact paint and thread products; the final motif scale and placement; the behaviour of paint on the chosen linen; the effect of embroidery on fabric tension; the construction time; and the final garment's comfort and care performance. These should not be described as results before they are observed.

5.2 Proposed Analysis of Material Trials

When trials are completed, the student should compare samples using the same observation categories. For paint, these may include sharpness of dots and lines, evenness of coverage, visible bleeding, drying behaviour, surface feel, and response to the care method actually used. For embroidery, categories may include contour clarity, stitch consistency, thread tension, and visible fabric distortion. The student should report what was observed, not what was expected. If one sample appears clearer than another, explain the conditions under which the samples were made. If a test was informal, describe it as an informal observation. If the result is inconclusive, state that limitation rather than choosing a preferred conclusion without evidence.

5.3 Proposed Design Evaluation

The final garment can be reviewed against the objectives set in Chapter One. The review should consider whether the design uses a documented visual reference, whether the adaptation is clearly distinguished from the original source, whether the paint and

embroidery work together visually, and whether the placement fits the garment structure. If a reviewer questionnaire is used, report the number and type of respondents, the questions asked, how responses were recorded, and the limitations of the sample. Do not invent a percentage or imply that a small convenience sample represents all consumers. If no external feedback is collected, the chapter can present a documented self-evaluation and acknowledge that broader user evaluation remains future work.

5.4 Discussion in Relation to Objectives

The literature review supports the view that Gond art has cultural and visual significance and has adapted to new media and audiences (Arur & Wyeld, 2016; Rana, 2025; Thamanna & Subramani, 2023). The proposed garment design asks how selected visual principles can be translated into fashion without claiming to represent the entire tradition. The discussion should connect each practical observation to the appropriate objective and to relevant literature. A strong discussion will also identify tensions. For example, increasing visibility through fashion may create opportunities for cultural recognition, but visual borrowing without attribution may simplify or misrepresent a living art practice. Likewise, a visually attractive sample may still present practical concerns if the paint changes the hand of the fabric or if embroidery distorts a panel. These questions should be addressed through evidence gathered during the actual work.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper proposes a practice-based exploration of Gond-inspired visual elements in a contemporary linen dress using acrylic fabric paint and outline hand embroidery. The literature reviewed shows that Gond painting is discussed as a culturally meaningful visual practice, a form of storytelling, and an art form that has developed across media and contemporary contexts. The research also indicates that artists' experiences and the conditions surrounding cultural production should remain visible in discussions of modern adaptation. At the planning stage, the dissertation can conclude that a structured design process is appropriate for the stated aim. It cannot yet conclude that the selected materials are durable, that the dress is comfortable, that the technique is commercially viable, or that viewers prefer the final design. Those conclusions require the prototype and supporting evidence.

6.1 Recommendations

- Use well-documented visual references and record artist attribution wherever available.
- Treat Gond art as a living and diverse tradition rather than a generic decorative style.
- Test the selected paint and thread on the actual linen before decorating the dress.
- Follow manufacturer instructions for paint preparation, curing, heat-setting and care.
- Use outline embroidery selectively and record its effect on the fabric.
- Document the design process with dated photographs and a reflective diary.
- Clearly separate published research, proposed methods, personal design decisions and actual findings.

- Seek guidance or permission when using identifiable contemporary artworks or culturally sensitive imagery.

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