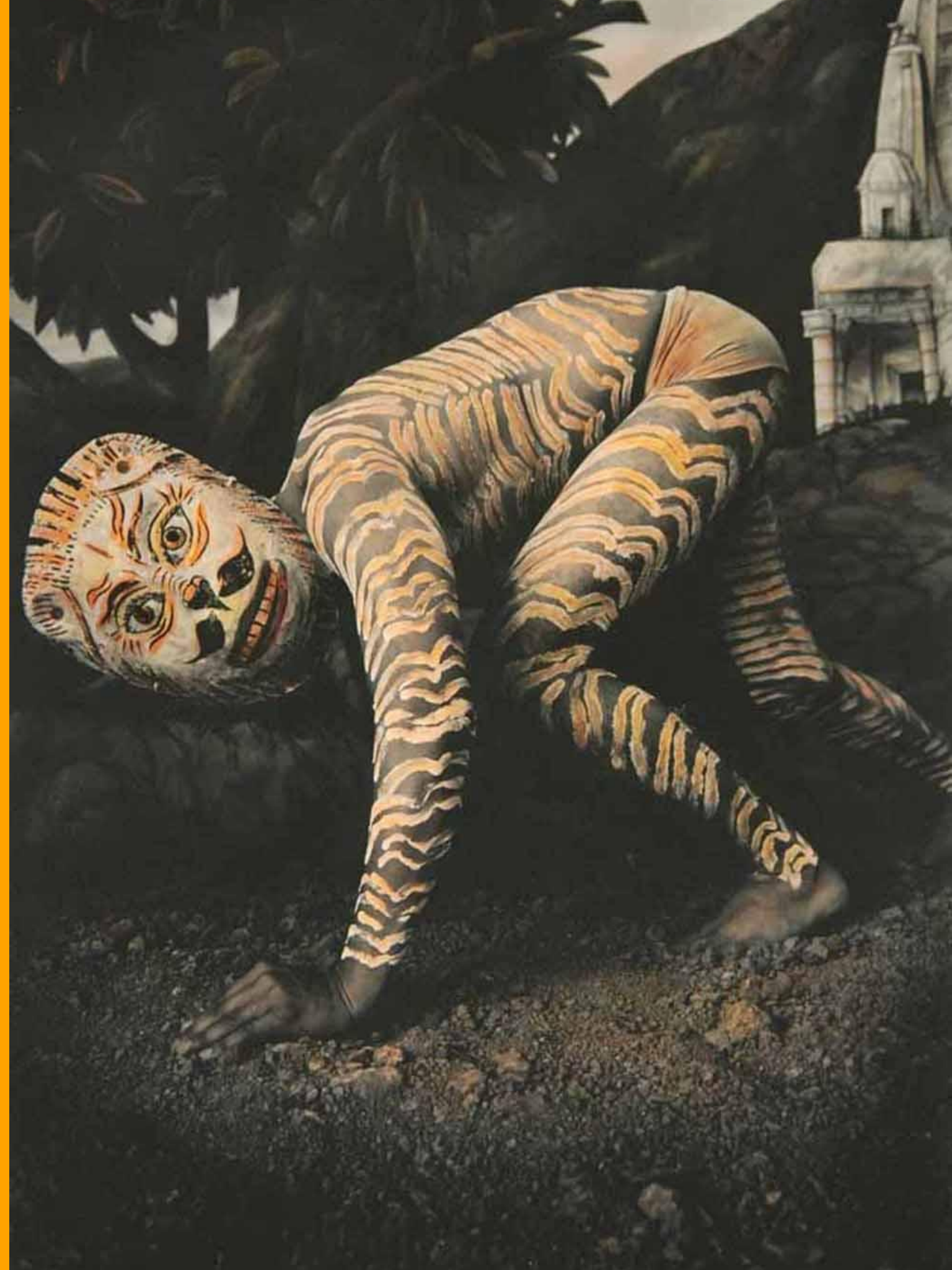


MAP DISCOVER

# WORLDS OF WONDER II

Collaborative works of  
Waswo X. Waswo



Waswo X. Waswo is an artist with an interesting name, who makes equally interesting art.

He is an American who now lives in Rajasthan, India.

**THINK.**

Why do you think he chose to move to India and make art involving the people and places of his adopted country?





Do you find his name unique? It is composed of one name reproduced twice, joined by a third component.

**THINK.**

What do you think the X stands for? And what different meanings do you think his name could make, if it:

- were an alphabet?
- were a symbol?
- were a numeral?

WASWO

X

WASWO

At birth, Waswo was given a different name, but he chose to be known by this name, because he felt this one suited him better.

**EXPRESS.**

If you could rename yourself anything you liked, perhaps highlighting your personality better, what would that be?



While in India, Waswo came across an artist called R. Vijay. Vijay's ancestors made miniature paintings for kings in the old days and he continues to follow in their footsteps, painting miniatures as souvenirs and collectibles.

Waswo quickly became friends with R. Vijay and together they began to make some unique works.

### **EXTEND.**

Do you know what the word miniature means? If you do, can you guess anything about these paintings from that name?





## ART SPEAK!

Paintings made in the many royal courts of India from the 9th to around the 18th century are broadly called **miniatures\***.

Despite the name, they are not all tiny and can vary in size. However, they are known especially for their intricate details – often very very tiny or miniature details. They're also known for the use of natural ingredients to make colours, brushes and paper.

## LEARN MORE.

Read more about miniatures and see some really old ones [here](#)!

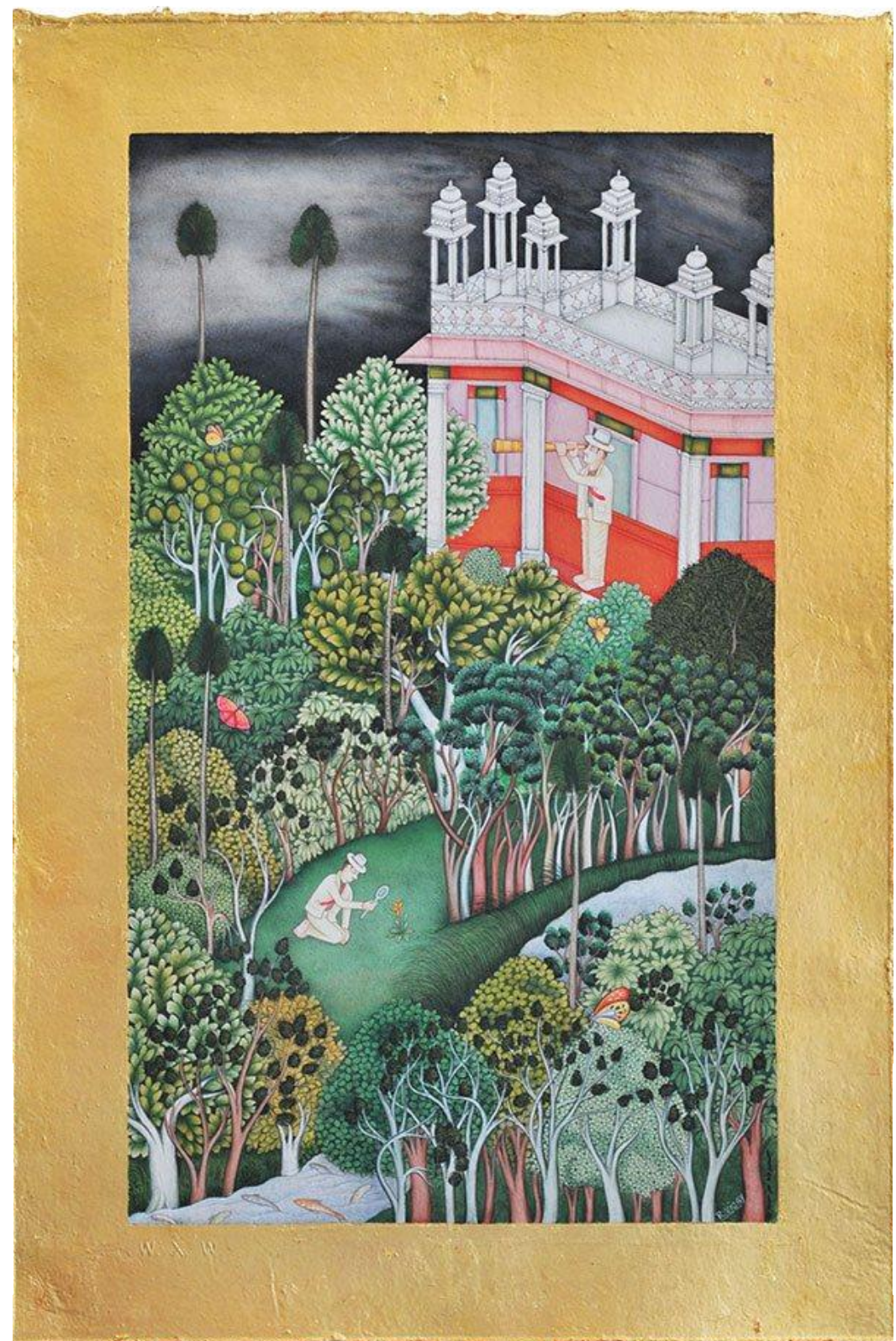


\*The word miniature means very small.  
It's commonly used in shortened form – mini.



## COMPARE AND CONTRAST.

The miniatures that Waswo and R. Vijay made were in the style of the old miniatures but did something slightly different. Look carefully at one of each here and try to answer the questions that follow.



(Right)  
Courtesy of  
Gallery Espace,  
Delhi



## COMPARE AND CONTRAST.

Try putting down your answers based on what you can remember first, before you go back and take a second look. See how much you can recall!

What are the similarities one can spot between the two paintings?

*Hint: Focus on the landscape (the trees, the skies, etc)*

What about differences between the two paintings?

*Hint: Focus on the figures (the birds, animals, and humans)*

Did you notice the borders?

What similarities or difference do we see there?

One element in particular can tell you which painting is an older miniature painting, and which is Waswo's more modern work.

Can you find it?





If you looked carefully, you might have seen a man wearing a suit and hat – obviously from more modern times. He appears in all the paintings that Waswo and R. Vijay make.

Can you find him in this one? What other features do you notice about the man?

Who do you think he might be?

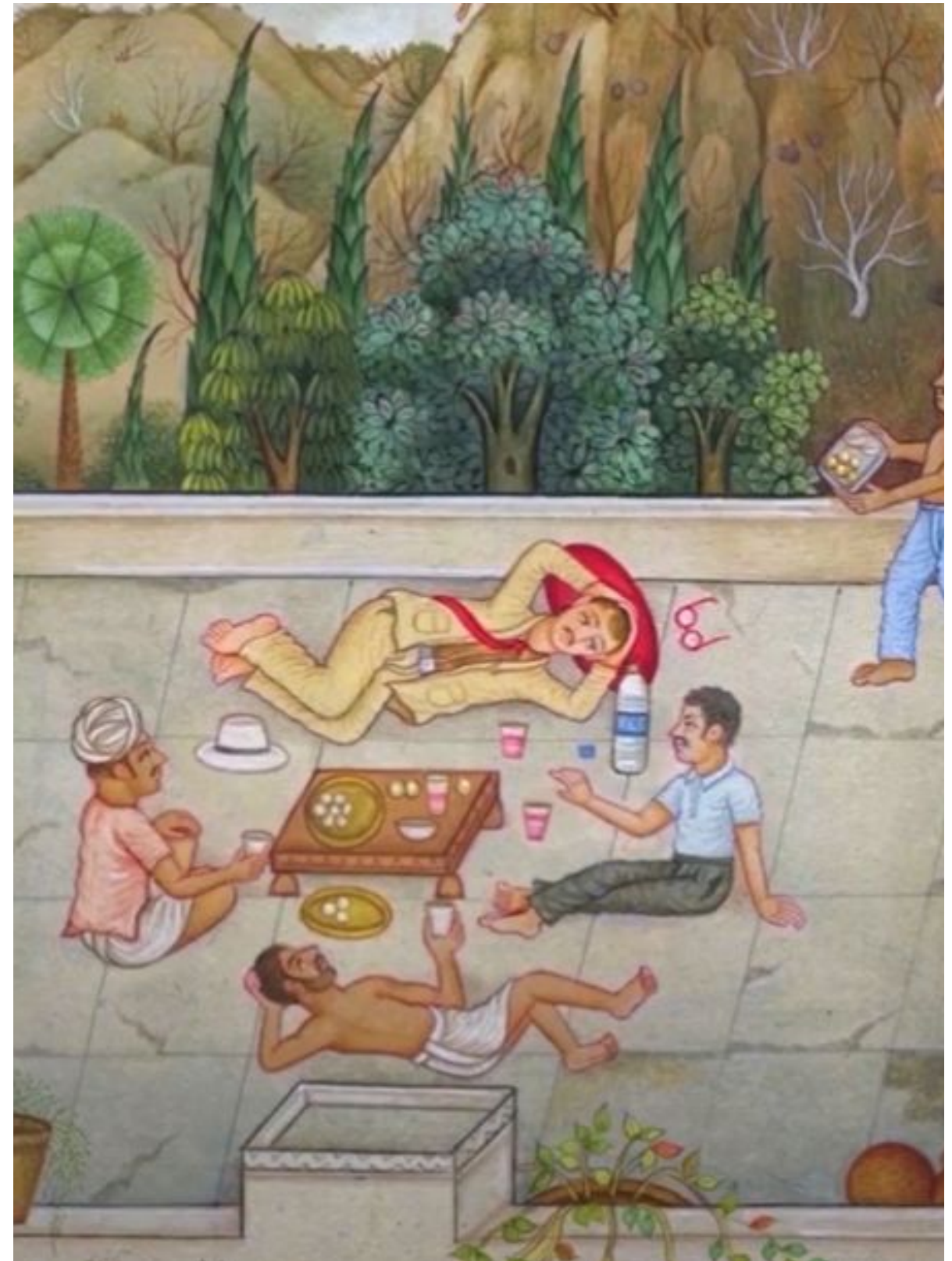
Image: Official website of Waswo X. Waswo  
<http://www.waswoxwaswo.com/>



This little man is, in fact, a representation of the artist himself! What he wears and how he looks is inspired by the real Waswo. By using the same representation over and over in all his paintings, Waswo has made sure that his *avatar* is well recognised by the viewers too.

## **EXPRESS.**

How about creating a version like this for yourself? Add physical features, outfits and props that make you unique. You can also depict this figure posed in a way that represents you best.





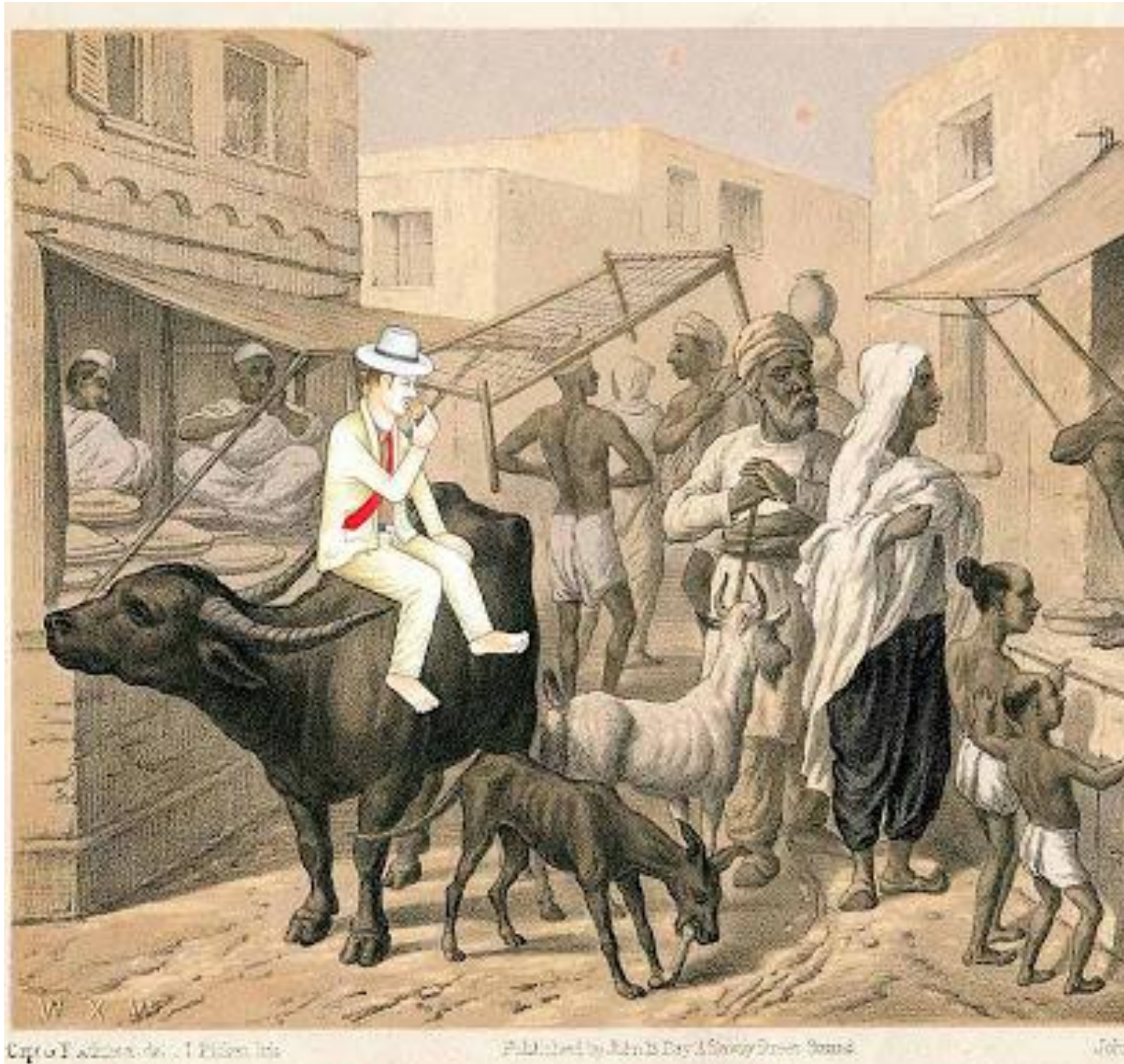


Image: Official website of Waswo X. Waswo  
<http://www.waswoxwaswo.com/>

Sometimes, instead of creating new paintings, Waswo places himself inside already existing ones.

Here, you see him seated on a buffalo inside in a 19th century print – almost like he has travelled back in time!

Check out our **MAP Activity Sheet** for an art activity that lets YOU travel back in time!





Waswo also began to make art with some of his other friends, including someone called Rajesh Soni whose speciality was creating **painted photographs**.

### **ART SPEAK!**

Painted photographs refer to black and white photographs that have been coloured or painted by hand. This is an artform that came into fashion a little after the arrival of the camera in the 19th century.

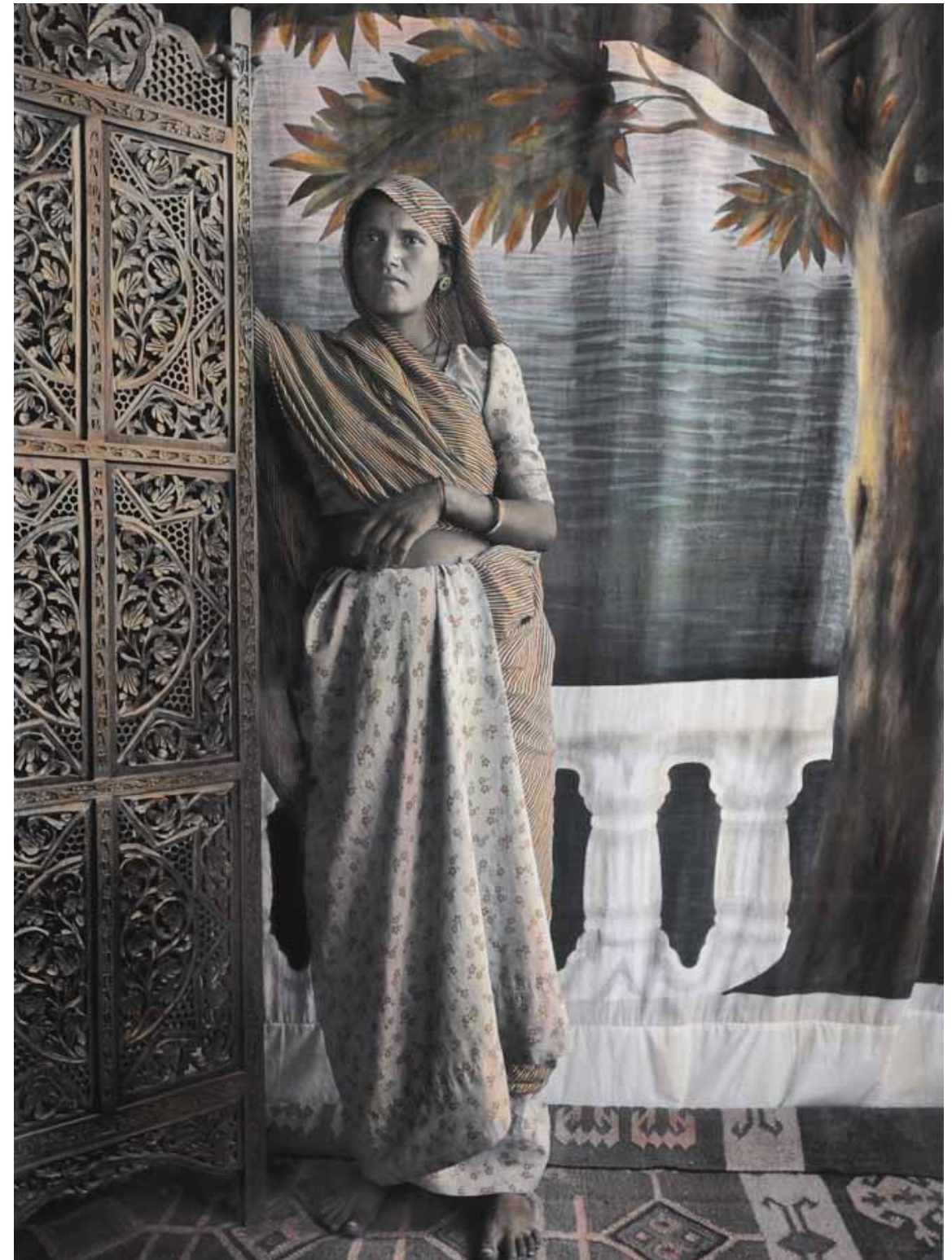
Can you spot the traces of paint in this example of a painted photograph from the 19th century?



Waswo set up his own photography studio at home and invited people to get their pictures taken.

In his studio, people could pose with props of different kinds and in front of backdrops hand-painted by his other painter friends.

Can you spot the painted backdrop here? Can you guess what material it is made of?





Here is a little behind the scenes from one of Waswo's shoots. Can you see the full backdrop now? See how it looks in the final painted photograph on the right. Can you break down what was added and what was removed from the shoot to the final artwork?

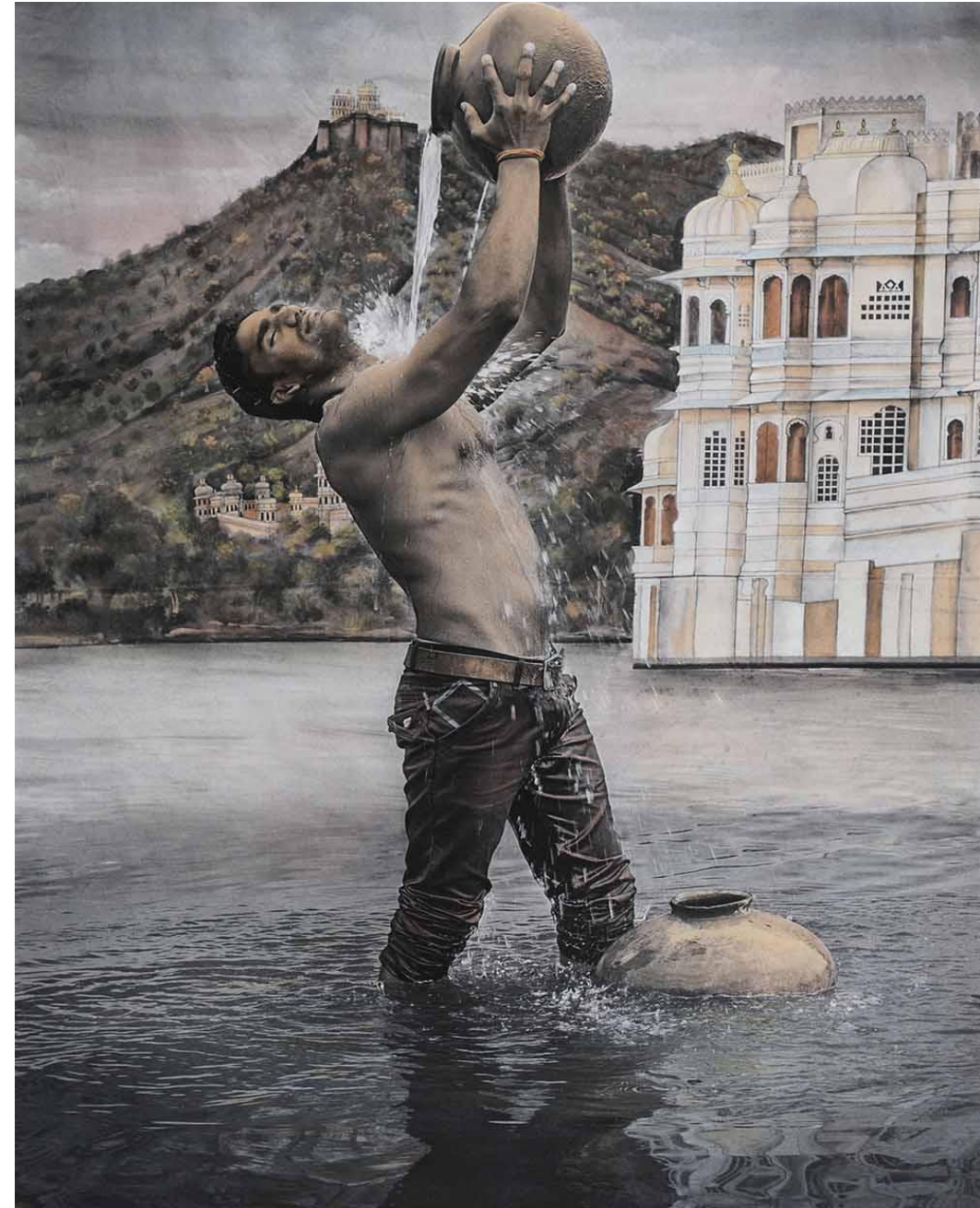
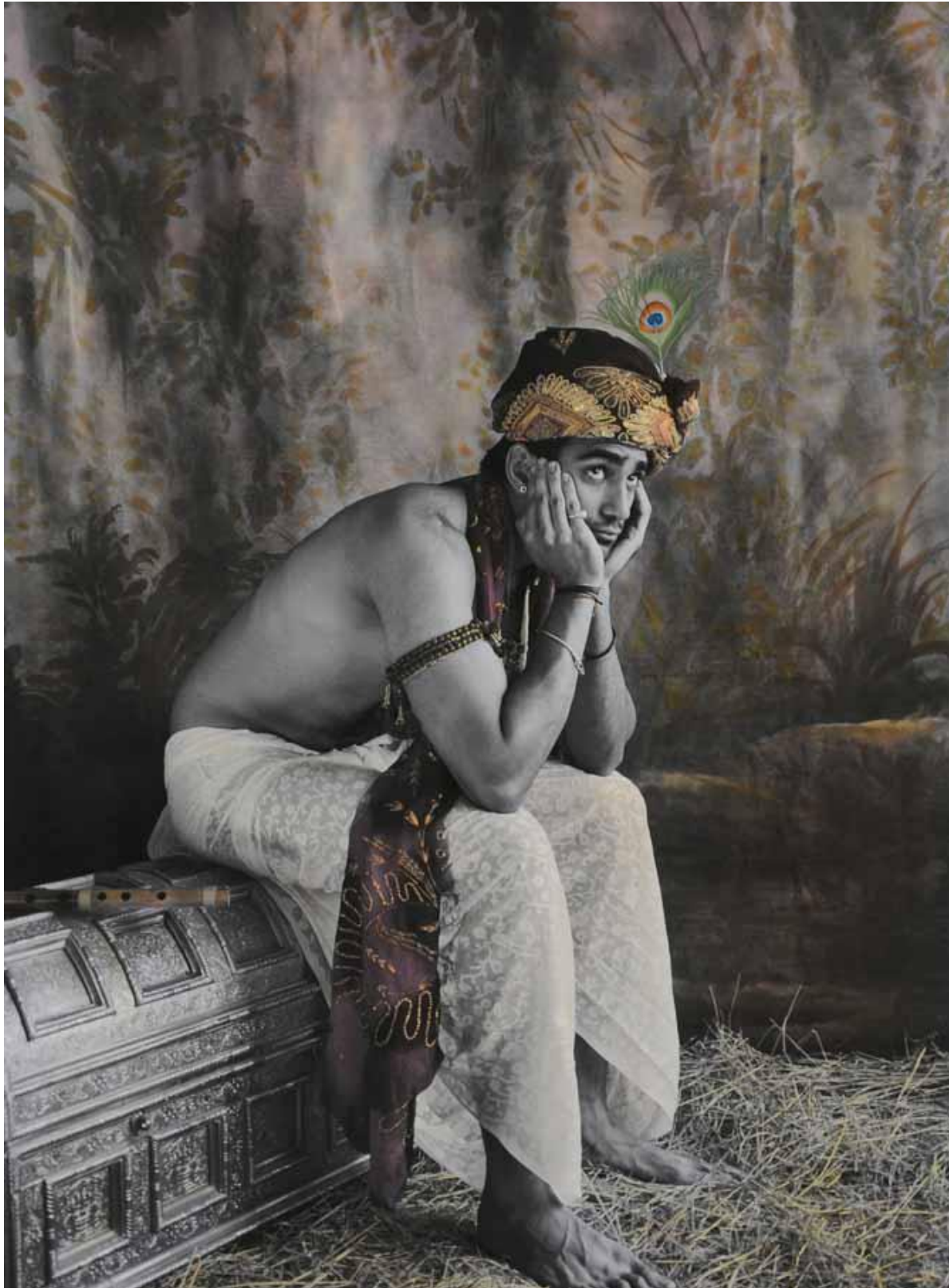


Image: Official Website of Waswo X. Waswo





These photos were first made in black and white and then hand coloured by Rajesh Soni.

## **LOOK CLOSELY.**

Can you spot which sections are coloured in this image?

Who do you think this person is portraying?\*

What do you think they are trying to say with this pose?

Do you think they decided to pose in this manner by themselves, or was it Waswo who chose the pose? Why do you think so?

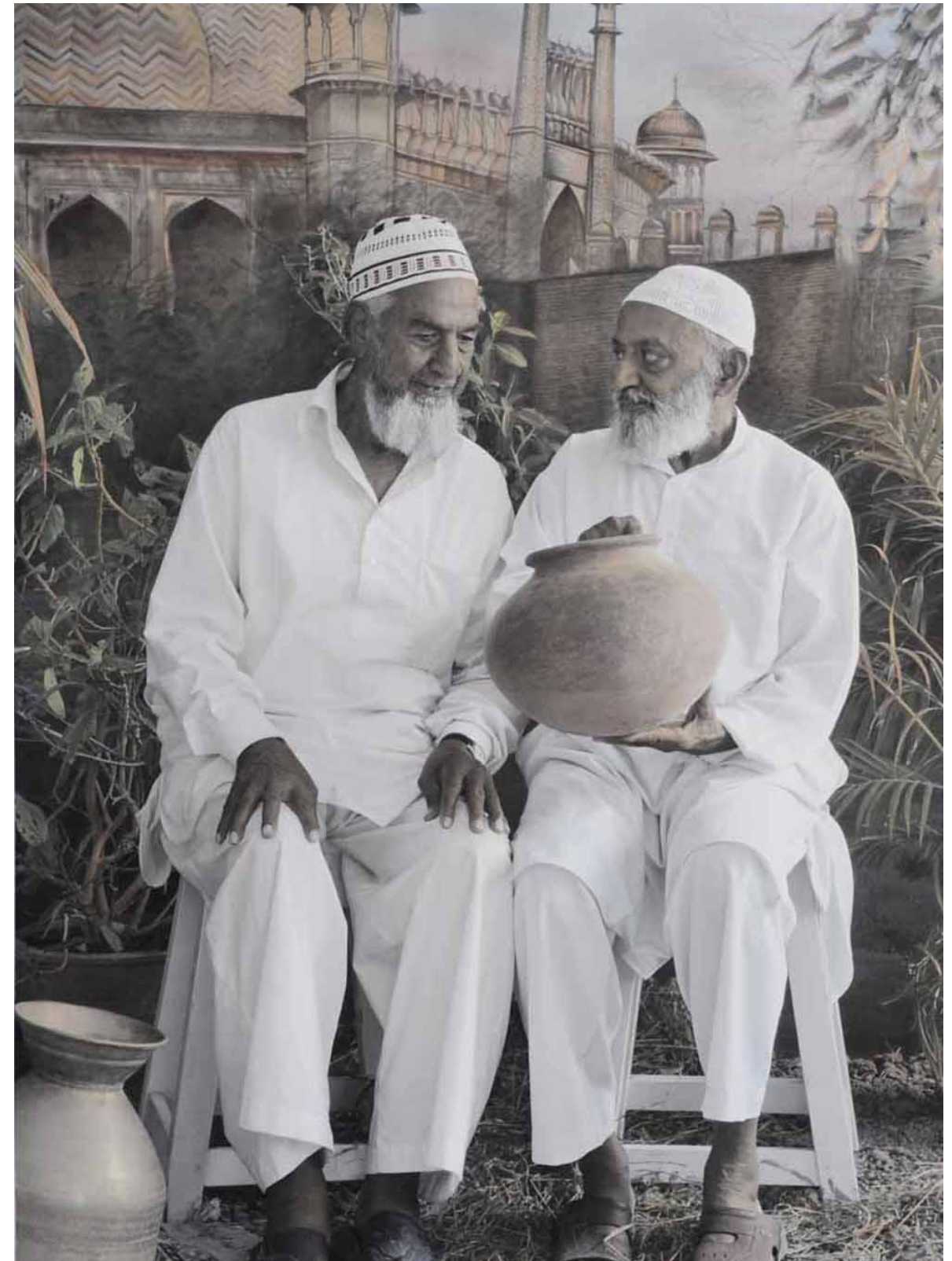
\*This person is portraying Krishna the Hindu god identified by a peacock feather in his head.



In his studio, Waswo gets a lot of help from his friends and fellow artists. It's a little like the making of a film, where a team of many people have different roles – from directors and actors to set designers.

Similarly, in Waswo's studio there is a director, there are painters, models or sitters, other helpers and the post-production artist, R. Vijay, who gives the final touches.

Want to see how hard it is for yourself? Play a game of creative collaborations with your friends!





## GAME TIME!

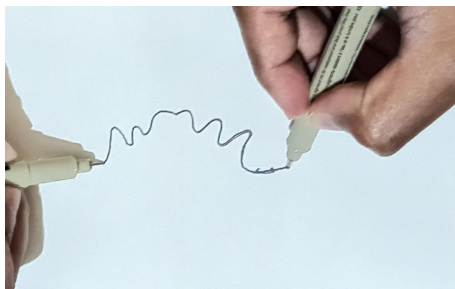
Try this game of synchronised drawing with a partner. You will need a sheet of **paper**, two **black markers** and one **partner**.



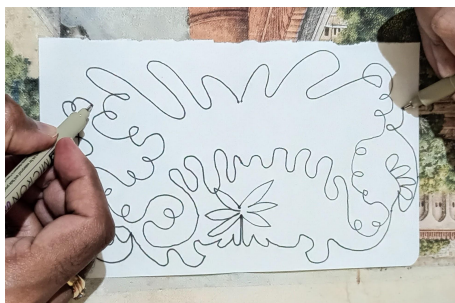
Fold the paper in half. Assign one half of this to yourself and the other to your partner.



Take one marker each and place it in the centre of the paper. Exactly where the fold is, so that the tips of your pen touch.



Starting from this point, take the lead and begin drawing a continuous line on your side of the paper while your partner replicates the same line on the other side (like a mirror image).



Continue drawing as your partners replicates. Imagine silly shapes and see what funny results you end up with! Take turns to lead. If you had fun with this, you can also try colouring it, and make it harder by instructing them through clues to find the right colour.







Waswo models himself in his studio too! You can see him in this detail, or zoomed-in piece, of a painted photograph.

Do you remember seeing him as an artwork a few images prior? What medium was that made in?

## **REFLECT.**

A self-portrait is a representation of the artist that they made themselves. Why do you think artists make them?

In the case of this image, if one person took this photograph and another painted over it, and a third made the backdrop, can we still call it a self-portrait?





## LOOK CLOSELY.

Here's the complete photograph.

Who is the second figure in the photograph?

What can you tell about the figures from the image?

What kind of feeling or mood does the photograph evoke?





This composition by another famous Indian artist, Ravi Varma, was the inspiration behind Waswo's interesting 'double self-portrait'. If you didn't notice it, go back and look carefully. You'll see that both the figures in the photograph are Waswo, with different outfits painted on top!

## REFLECT.

Why do you think Waswo chose to make this self-portrait in this way? What possible meanings do you think it can have? What can you learn about Waswo by looking at it?

Head to our **DIY Guide** to stage a playful portrait like this yourself!



Waswo continues to live in Rajasthan, create art and even write about his artistic practice and his friends.

Recently, he released a new book called *Karkhana: A Studio In Rajasthan*, which is about his life in Udaipur and his many collaborations with artists that live in the city.







Portrait of a royal woman, c.1884  
Attributed to Raj Rupan  
Opaque watercolour  
and gold leaf on paper  
H. 25.5 cm, W. 17.6 cm  
PTG.01161

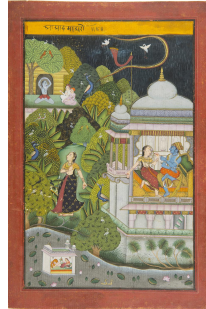
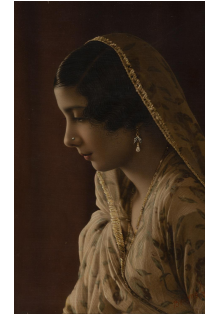


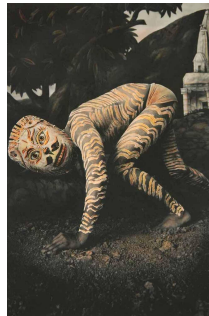
Illustration from the Barahmasa, 19th  
century  
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper  
H. 28.5 cm, W. 16.8 cm  
PTG.01040



Portrait of a young lady, 19th century  
Broyne & Co., New Delhi  
Hand-painted photographic print  
H. 28.4 cm, W. 21.2 cm  
PHY.01757



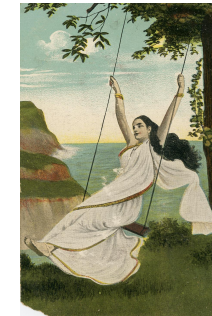
A Woman with a Folding Screen, 2007  
Waswo X. Waswo  
Hand coloured pigment print  
H. 45.5 cm, W. 30.5 cm  
PHY.07439



Night Prowl, 2008  
Waswo X. Waswo  
Hand coloured pigment print  
H. 60.5 cm, W. 40.5 cm  
PHY.07431

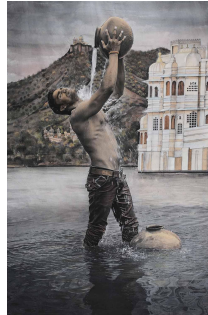


Episode from the story of Sohni and  
Mahiwal, 18th century  
Unknown Maker(s)  
Pigments and gouache on paper  
H. 36.2 cm, W. 22 cm  
PTG.0635

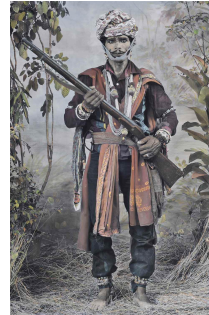


Mohini, Early 20th century  
Unknown Maker(s)  
Chromolithograph  
H.14 cm, W. 8.8 cm  
POP.00725

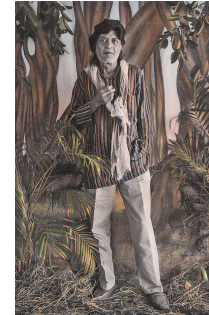




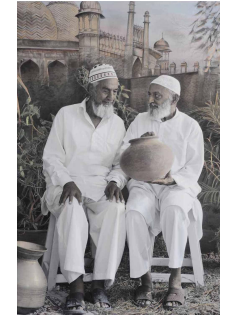
A monsoon shower, 2015  
Waswo X. Waswo  
Hand coloured pigment print  
H. 60 cm, W. 40.5 cm  
PHY.07427



Gauri Dancer #11, 2013  
Waswo X. Waswo  
Hand coloured pigment print  
H. 45 cm, W. 30 cm  
PHY.07535



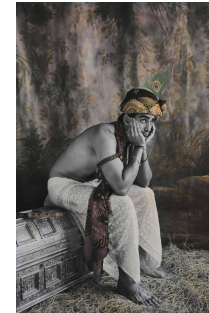
Sri Ram, 2015  
Waswo X. Waswo  
Hand coloured pigment print  
H. 60 cm, W. 40.5 cm  
PHY.07427



A Secret Between Friends, 2010  
Waswo X. Waswo  
Hand coloured pigment print  
H. 46 cm, W. 30.5 cm  
PHY.07554



Swinger, 2013  
Waswo X. Waswo  
Hand coloured pigment print  
H. 91 cm, W. 127 cm  
PHY.07457



First Incarnation the Ninth,, 2009  
Waswo X. Waswo  
Hand coloured pigment print  
H. 91 cm, W. 61 cm  
PHY.07539





**MAP**

Museum of Art  
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Bangalore 560 001, India

[map-india.org](http://map-india.org)

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