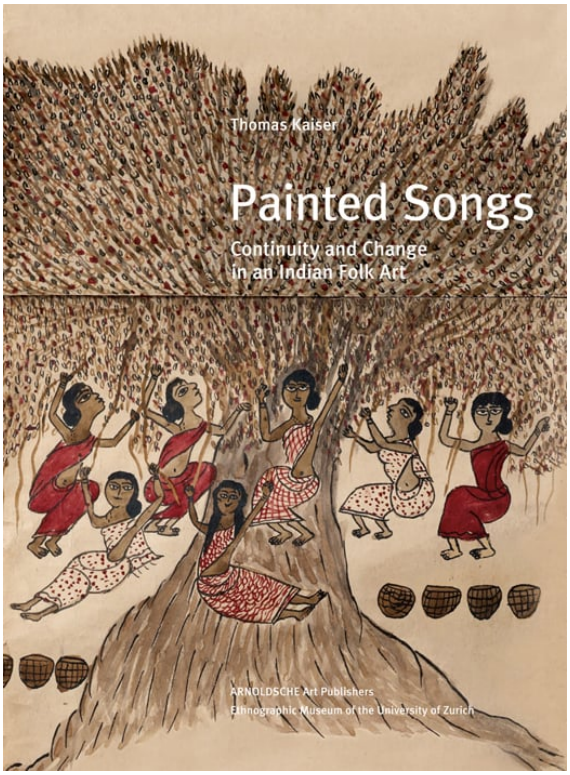
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Painted Songs

Continuity and Change in Indian Folk Art

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- A fascinating overview of change and continuity in Indian Folk Art
- A presentation of around 120 painted picture scrolls, mostly from the second half of the 20th century

For over 2000 years artists travelled throughout India, using painted picture scrolls to spread stories from the great Indian epics, as well as a wealth of stories about regional Gods and heroes and moral tales, amongst the most illiterate rural population. In the hands of the painters and singers, the picture scrolls became a portable cinema, projection screens for mythical knowledge and an incentive to listen to the songs whilst looking at the scrolls. In the same way that other oral art forms have dwindled and lost significance, the picture scroll artists also lost their public and their income. However, in the east of India – in West Bengal and Jharkhand – two closely related but distinctive picture scroll traditions have been upheld: the patua and the jadopatia. Political changes, technical innovations and social turmoil brought both these traditions face to face with the necessity to develop new survival strategies too. Accompanies an exhibition at the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich, Switzerland, from 30th August 2012.

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