

International Reception of Mithila Painting and Heroization

Constructing Women (Painters) Figures in Yves Véquaud's Writings

Hélène Fleury, University of Paris-Saclay / Center for
South Asian Studies (CEIAS)



Exhibition *Magiciens de la terre*, 1989, catalog *Les Magiciens de la terre*. Baua Devi : Snake Goddesses

Mithila or Madhubani Painting

Ritual and art forms practiced in northern Bihar and Nepalese Terai by women of different castes, derived from wall paintings made during celebrations and rites.



Home of Kalpna Singh, Madhubani, 2002.



Representation of Krishna on a hut, Dusadh Toli, Jitwarpur, 2002.



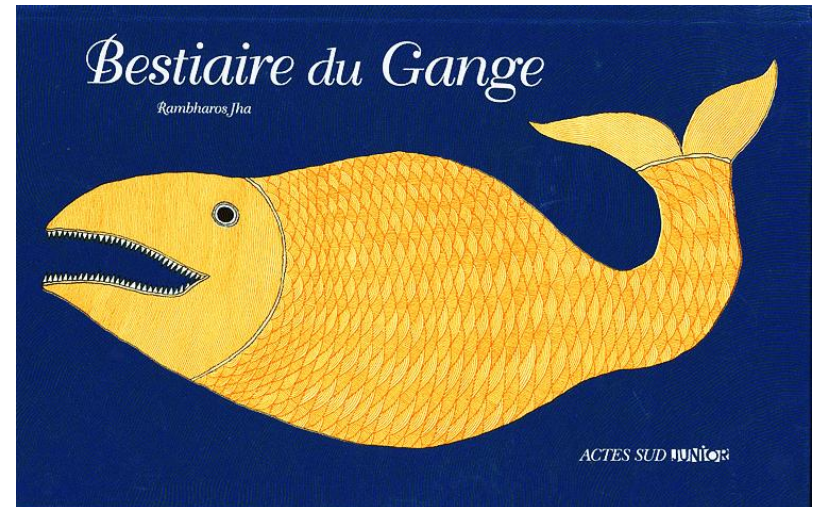
Figure of Naina-jogin. Wall Painting Detail, Ganga Devi, Crafts Museum, New-Delhi, 1989 (In J.Jain, *Ganga Devi*, 1997)

Changing Mithila Painting

Shift from a ritual visual practice to an individual creative expression: recognition of individual identity and creativity of the artists. For long, an essentialized conception focusing on authenticity, anonymity and timelessness obscured these shifts.



Woman painter on a gandhian desk, Jitwarpur,
January 2002



Publication by a man-painter Rambaharos Jha, of an
album composed of illustrations inspired by the
aquatic world, 2011

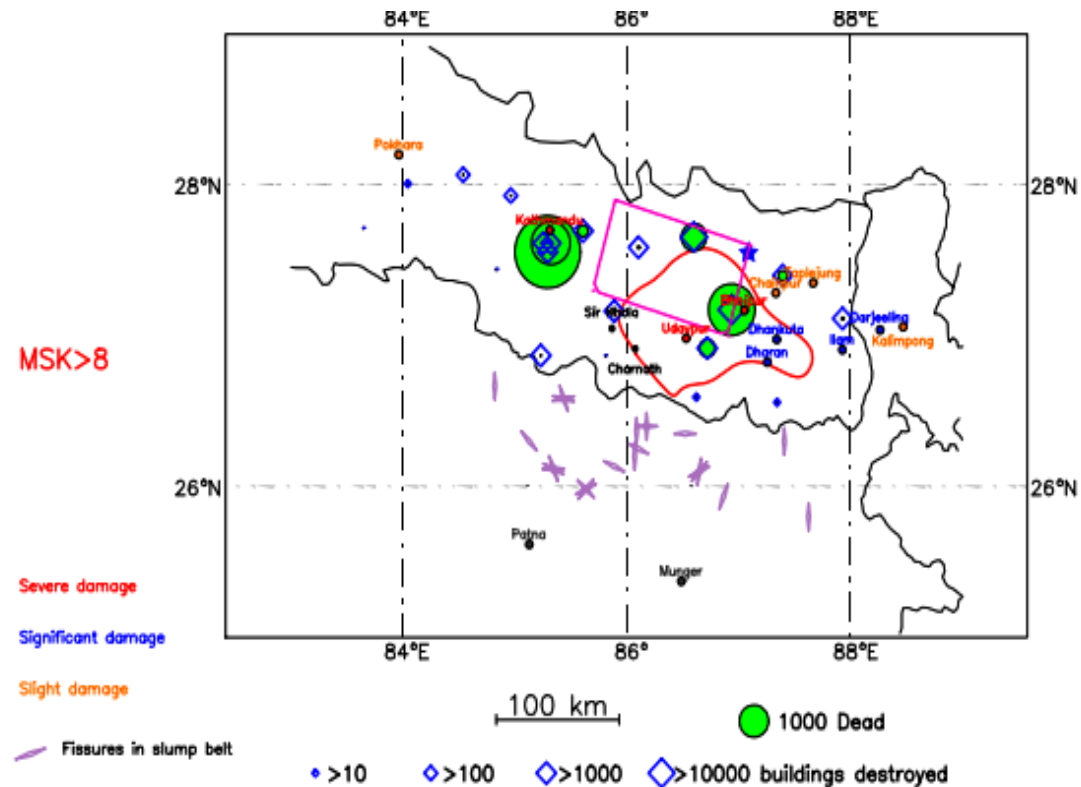
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Bihar-Népal Earthquake, 15 January 1934



F. Perrier, map according to
Soma Nath Sapkota's diss. (2011)



William Archer (1907-1979)

Art historian and curator, he was sub-divisional officer in Madhubani in 1934. He publishes in 1949 the article "Maithil Painting" underpinned by dominant movements in the Post-War Anglophone world: universal aesthetics, based on psychoanalyze, surrealism and an organic vision of art.



Sir William Rothenstein, *William Archer*.
National Portrait Gallery. London



William Archer 1976, in India (*India Served and Observed*, London 1994)

The stylistic distribution per castes

Colored style of Maithil Brahman women



Linear style of Kayasths women



Bright fanning, Household of Sabhapati Das, Maithil Kayasth, :
Photograph of W.G. Archer, published 1940, British Library

Scene of the day, villager picking flowers. Leela Devi,
Kayasth, Rashidpur, 2002.

The Godna Painting



Relief decoration with elephant Jitwarpur, Dusadh District, 2002.



Illustration by M. Parikh & B. Kulkarni, 1984



Painting woman on a gandhian desk, Jitwarpur, 2002.



Chano Devi, 1999, Hervé Perdriolles Coll.

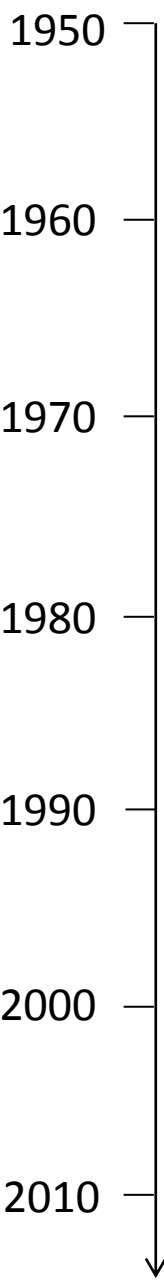
USA

United Kingdom

France

Germany

Japan



1931-
1977...
Archer

Phase I

USA

United Kingdom

France

Germany

Japan

1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
2000
2010

1976-2000
Owens,
Szanton
&
sphere of
influence

1969-81...
Véquaud,
Luneau,
Segarra,
Saucet &
sphere of
influence

Phase II

1973-1988
Moser-
Schmitt

1982
Hasegawa,
Mithila
Museum

USA

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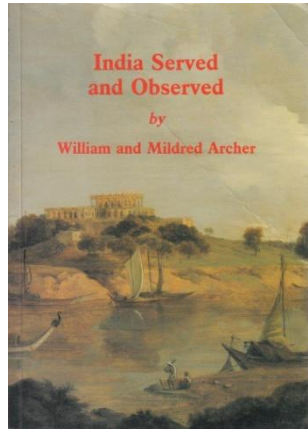
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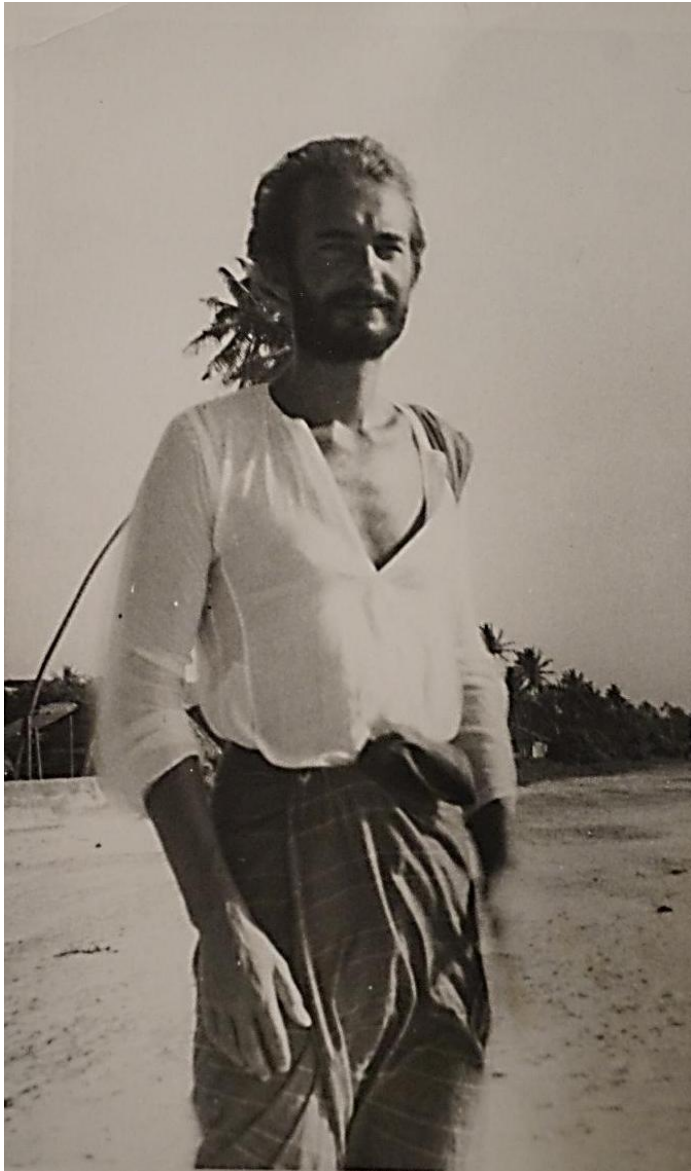
1994

Phase II



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Yves Véquaud (1938-2000)



Yves Véquaud 1971 in Ceylan (Jacques Doucet Library, Collection Marcel Arland)

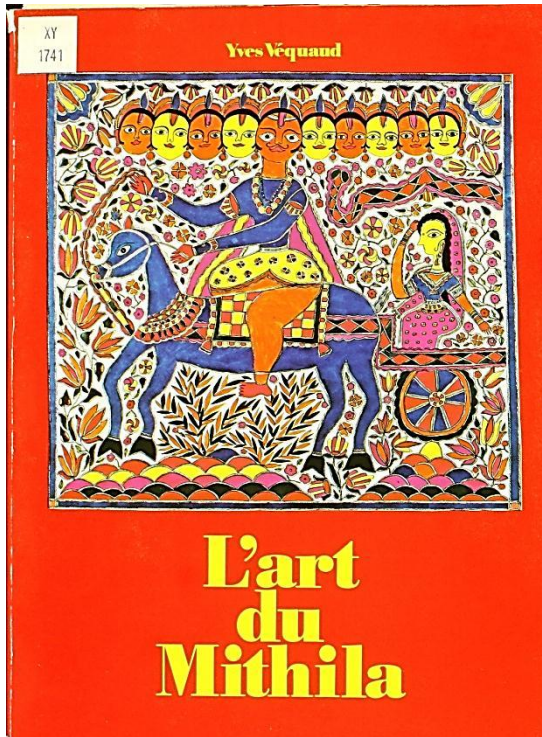


Yves Véquaud & Sita Devi, 1970s, Ranchi, Madhubani, India

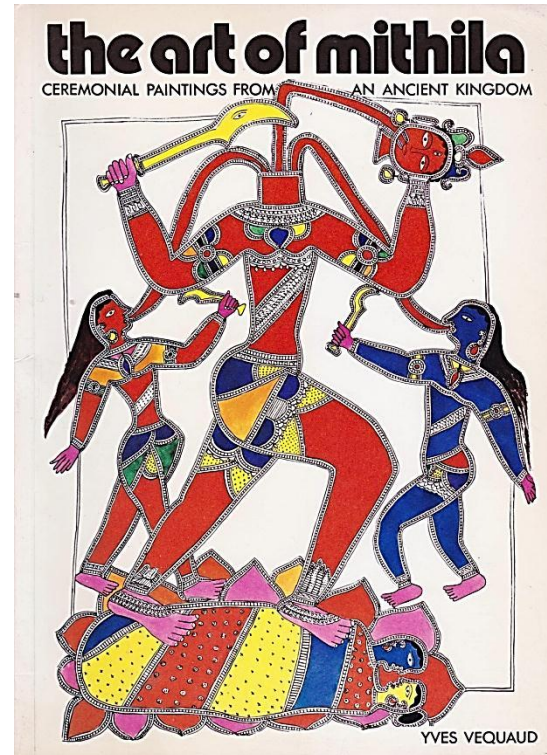


Yves Véquaud (left) & Baua Devi

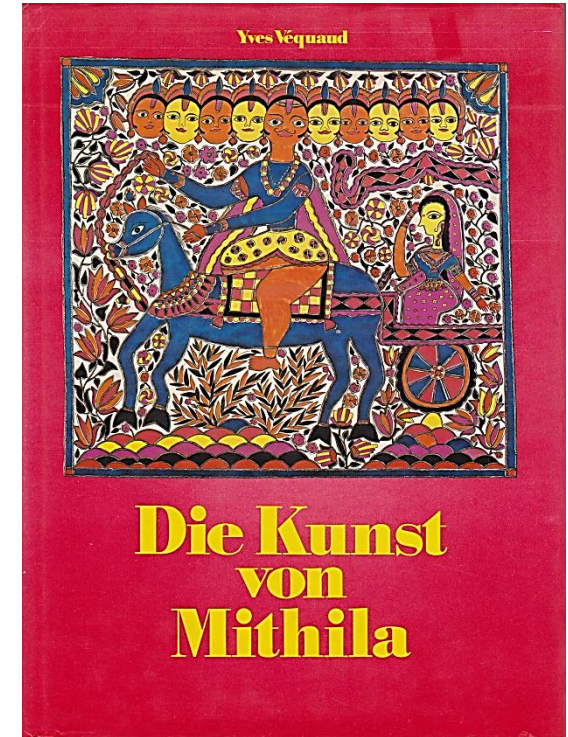
Yves Véquaud, *The Art of Mithila*



French edition, 1976



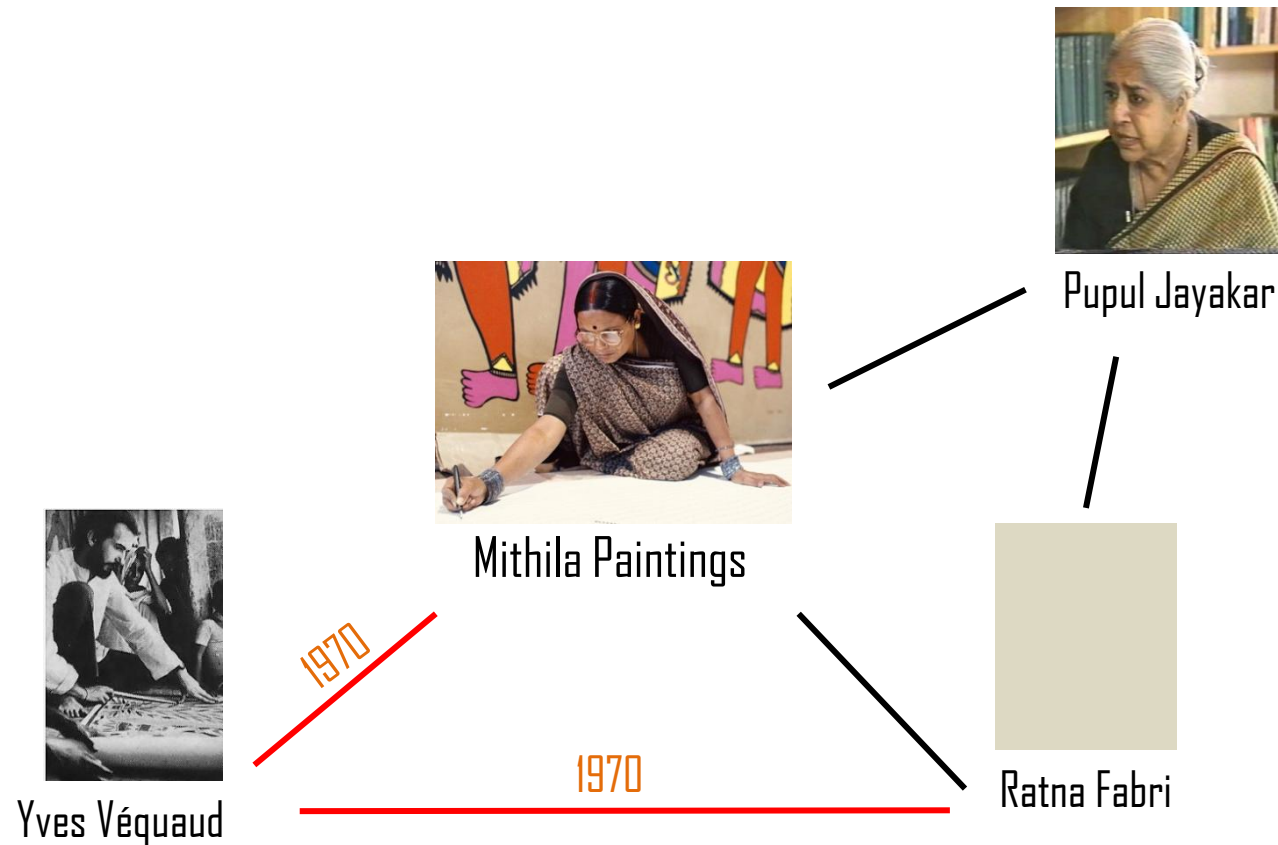
British edition, 1977



German edition, 1977
Genève : Weber

1970

Cultural Network around Mithila Paintings



1970

Cultural Network around Mithila Paintings

Indira Gandhi



Pupul Jayakar



Mithila Paintings



Yves Véquaud



Ratna Fabri

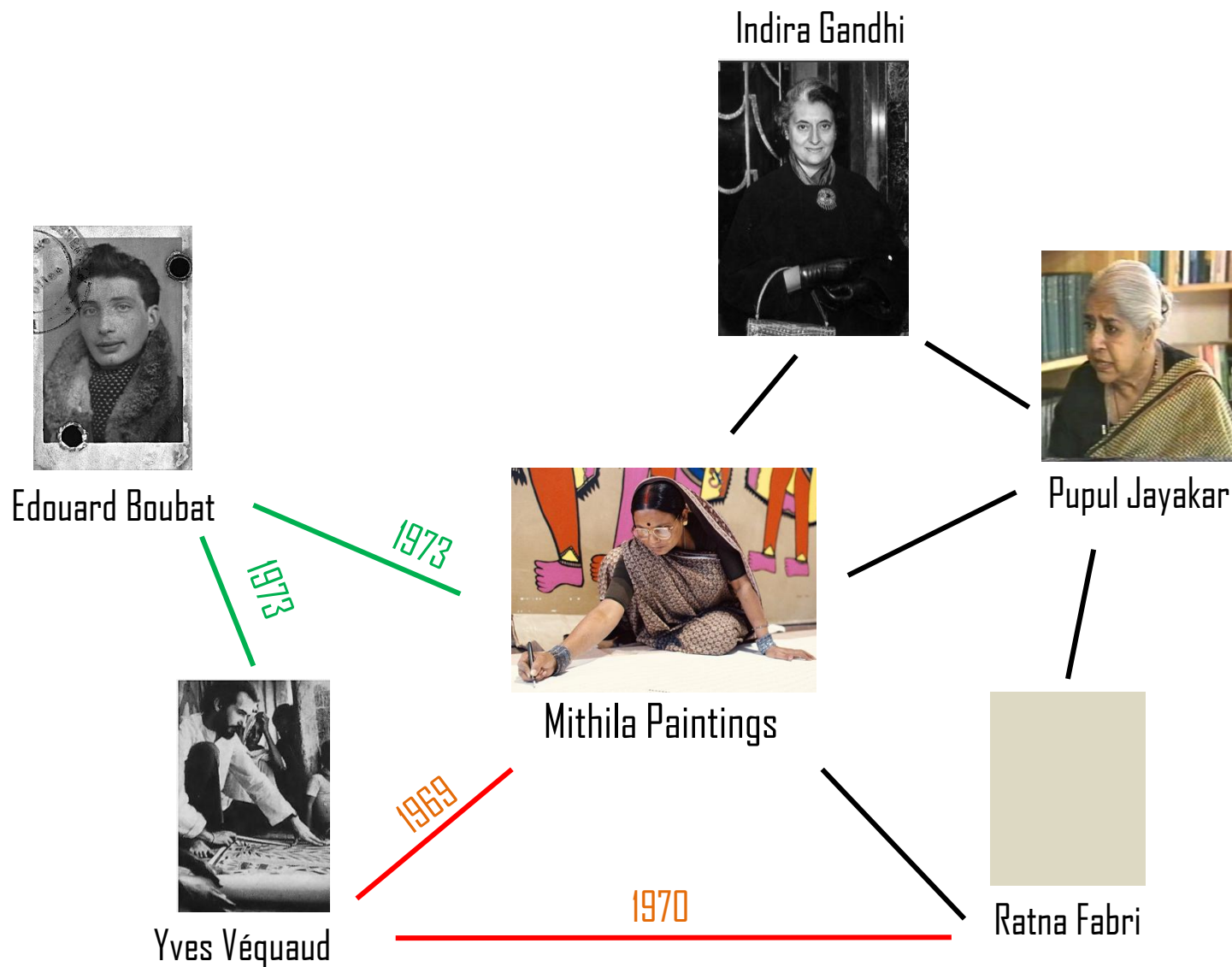
1970

1970



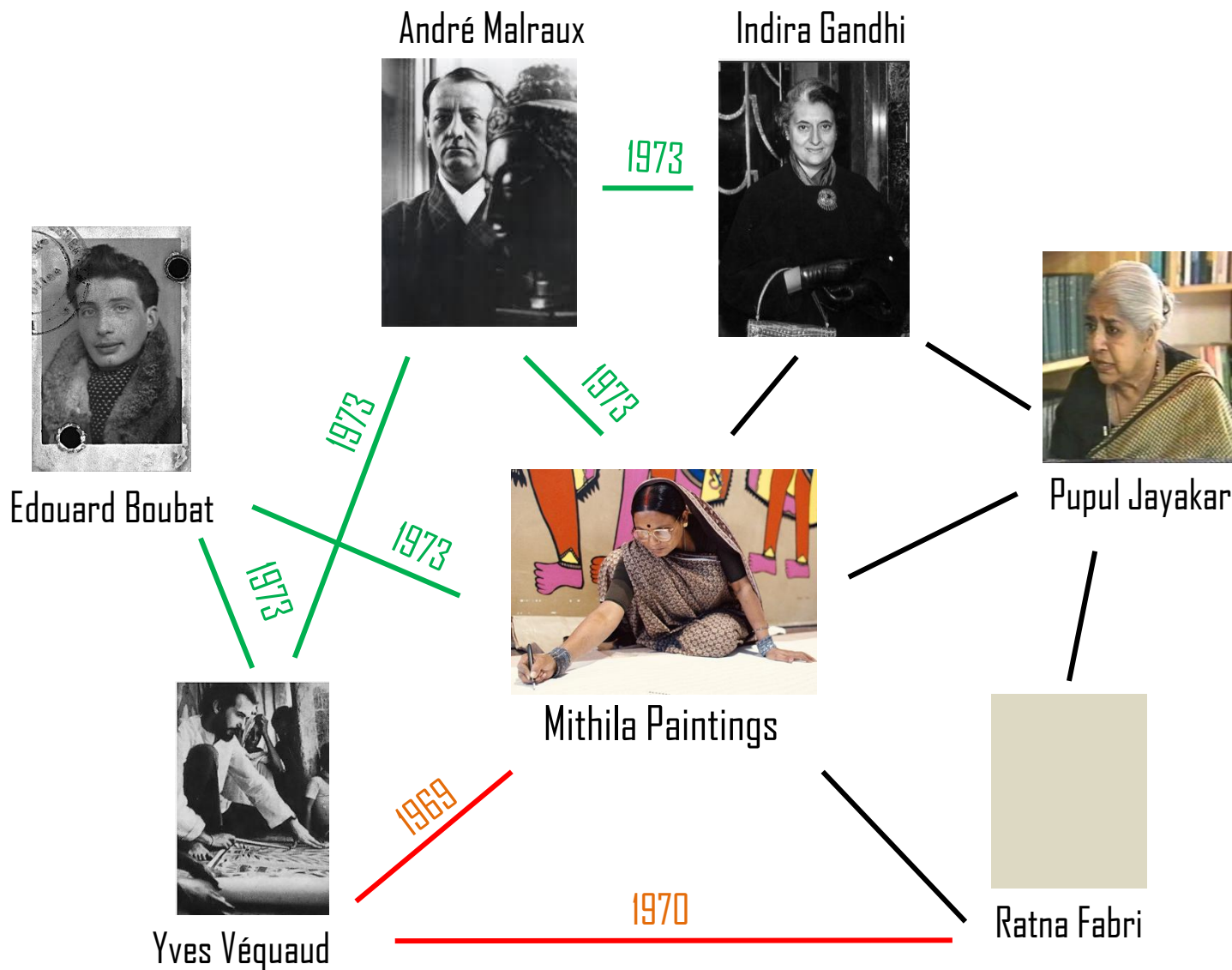
1973

Cultural Network around Mithila Paintings

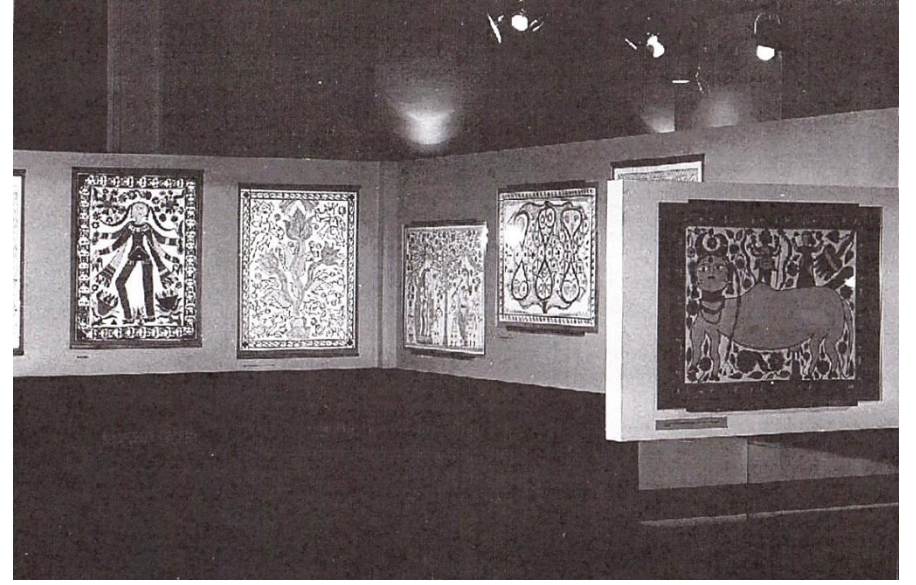
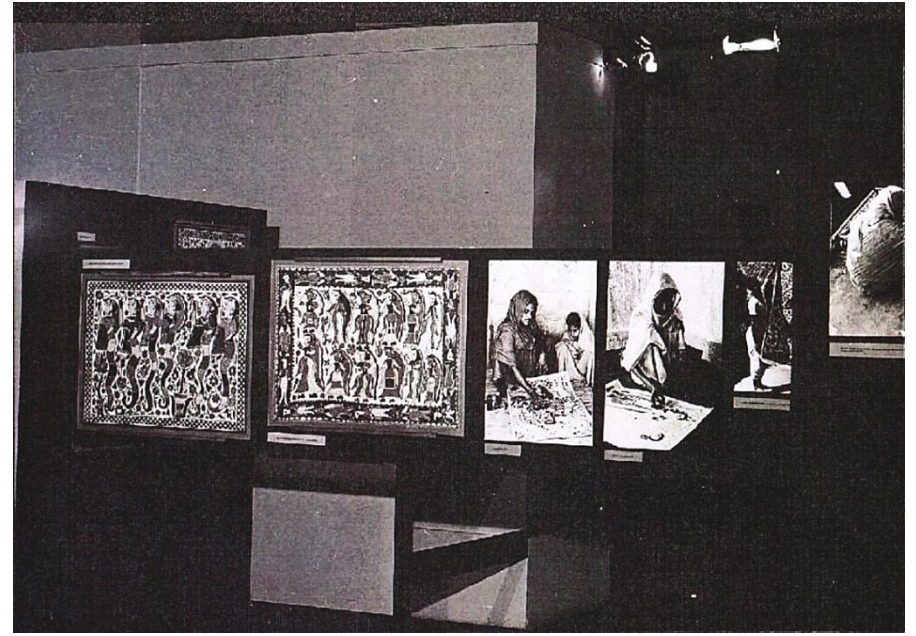


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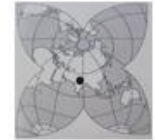
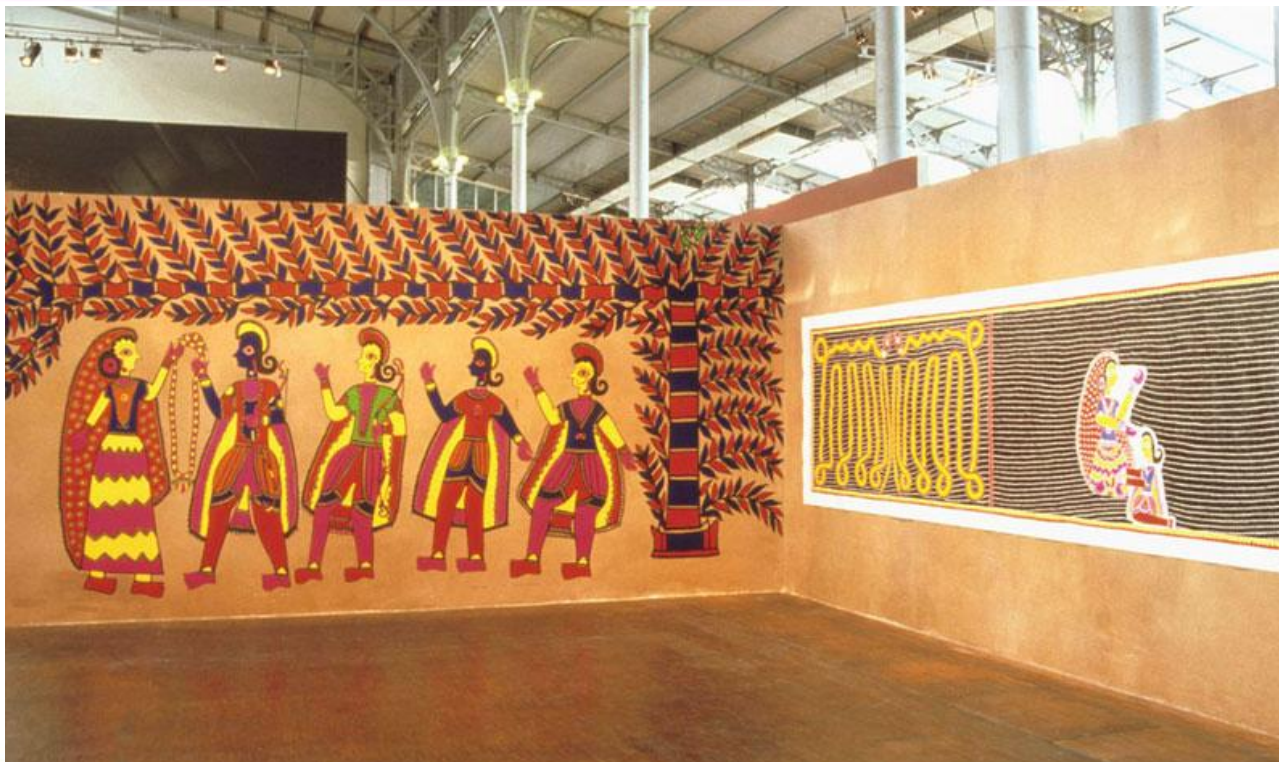
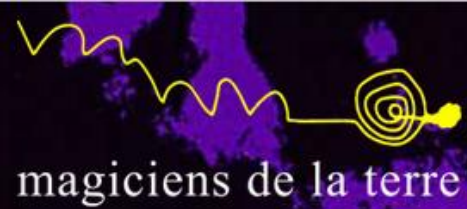


1st Exhibition, Paris, Musée de l'Homme, 1973



Magiciens de la Terre, 1989

Paris, Centre G. Pompidou & Grande Halle de la Villette



[Plan du site](#) [Mentions légales](#) [Crédits](#)

Bawa Devi : *King and Queen Story and a River inside*, fresco / *Snacks*, acrylics

Véquaud's network in Spain around bullfighting (1959):

Jean Cocteau, Orson Welles, Ernest Hemingway, Luis Miguel Dominguin, Paco Camino...

Jean Cocteau & Pablo Picasso with Luis Miguel Dominguin, 1959

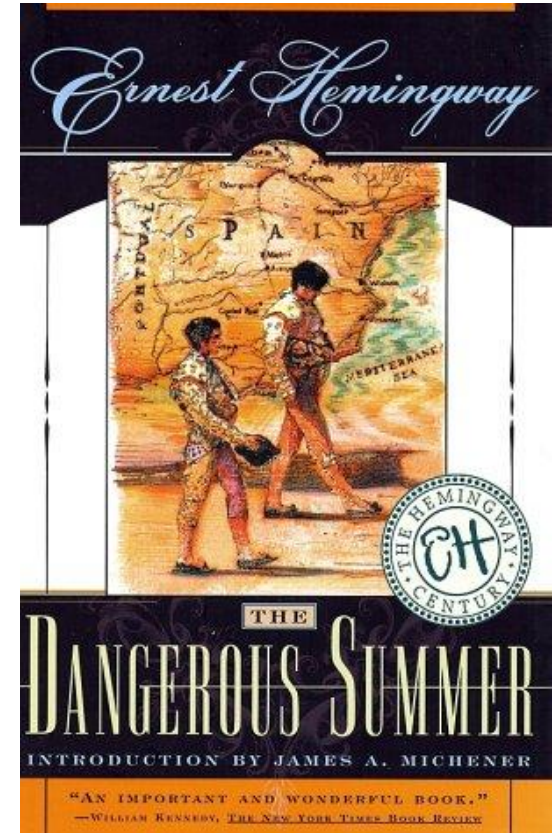
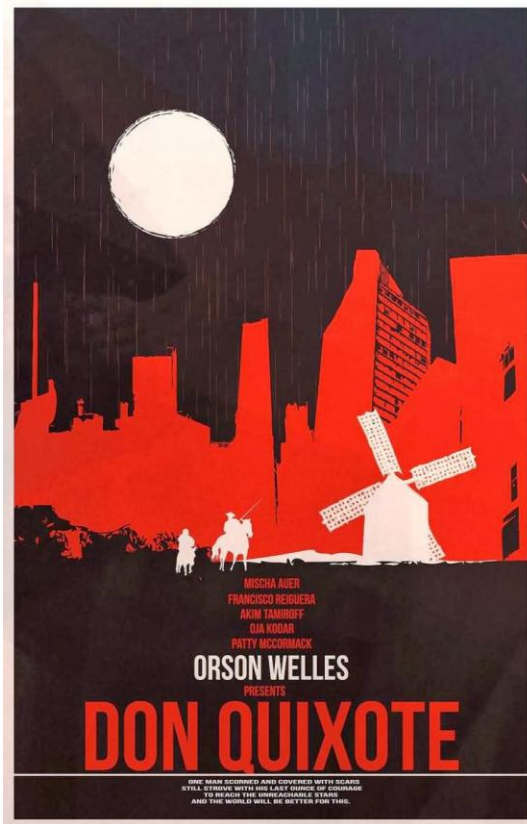


Luis Miguel Dominguin, corrida, feria of Nimes, 1959

Paco Camino & Luis Marin, Albe 1959.

Véquaud's network in Spain around bullfighting (1959):

Jean Cocteau, Orson Welles, Ernest Hemingway, Luis Miguel Dominguin, Paco Camino...



Welles' rushes for his unfinished *Don Quixote* with Yves Véquaud

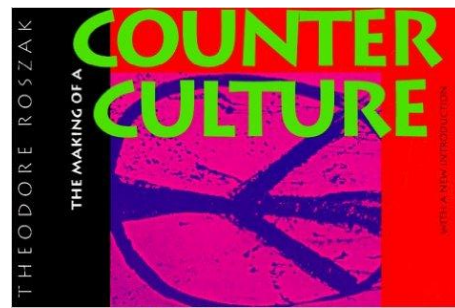
Hemingway's essay *Dangerous Summer*, published in *Life*

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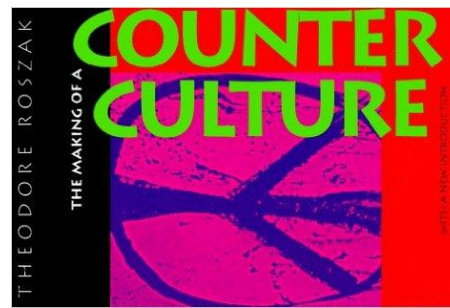
un orme. On devient mendiant, sadou, pourquoi pas!
Savez-vous que je suis hippie? Des Français - qui ne savaient
pas mon nom m'ont désigné ainsi:
- Mais si, le hippie français - avec la barbe!
Qu'est-ce qui un hippie? Un jour, un prêtre catholique du
Kerala m'a demandé
- Etes-vous hippie?
- Mon père, qui appelez-vous un hippie?
- Eh bien... n'est-ce pas... ils fument du hashish. Et les filles,
quand elles n'ont plus d'argent, se font prostituées.

Véquaud to Marcel Arland, 9 March 1971

(Jacques Doucet Library, Collection Marcel Arland)



Mainstream	Counter-Culture (Margins)
Technocracy, expert regime	Organic community, holistic view, ethnic diversity. Unicity between human and non human world. New improvised institutions. Spontaneous creation
(Neo)-liberal ideology	Neo-Marxist critic (Marcuse)
Industrial city	Arcadian commonwealth (utopia), links with Art & Crafts movement
Industrial society	Back to the land movement, ecological concern, life in harmony with nature
Traditional familial cell: nuclear family	Identity crisis, generational gap, free love
On the job	On the road
Bourgeois ethic & conventions	Idealism, freedom, self-expression, enjoyment
Disenchantment, Mass consumer	Re-enchantment, psychedelic experience, opening of the "doors of perception"
Judeo-Christian religion	New pansacramentalism
Western modernity coherence	Sacred understanding of reality
Patriarchal society	Women's liberation. Gender issues
Violence, war	Non-violence, peace movement (Vietnam War) , Ahimsa, (Gandhi)



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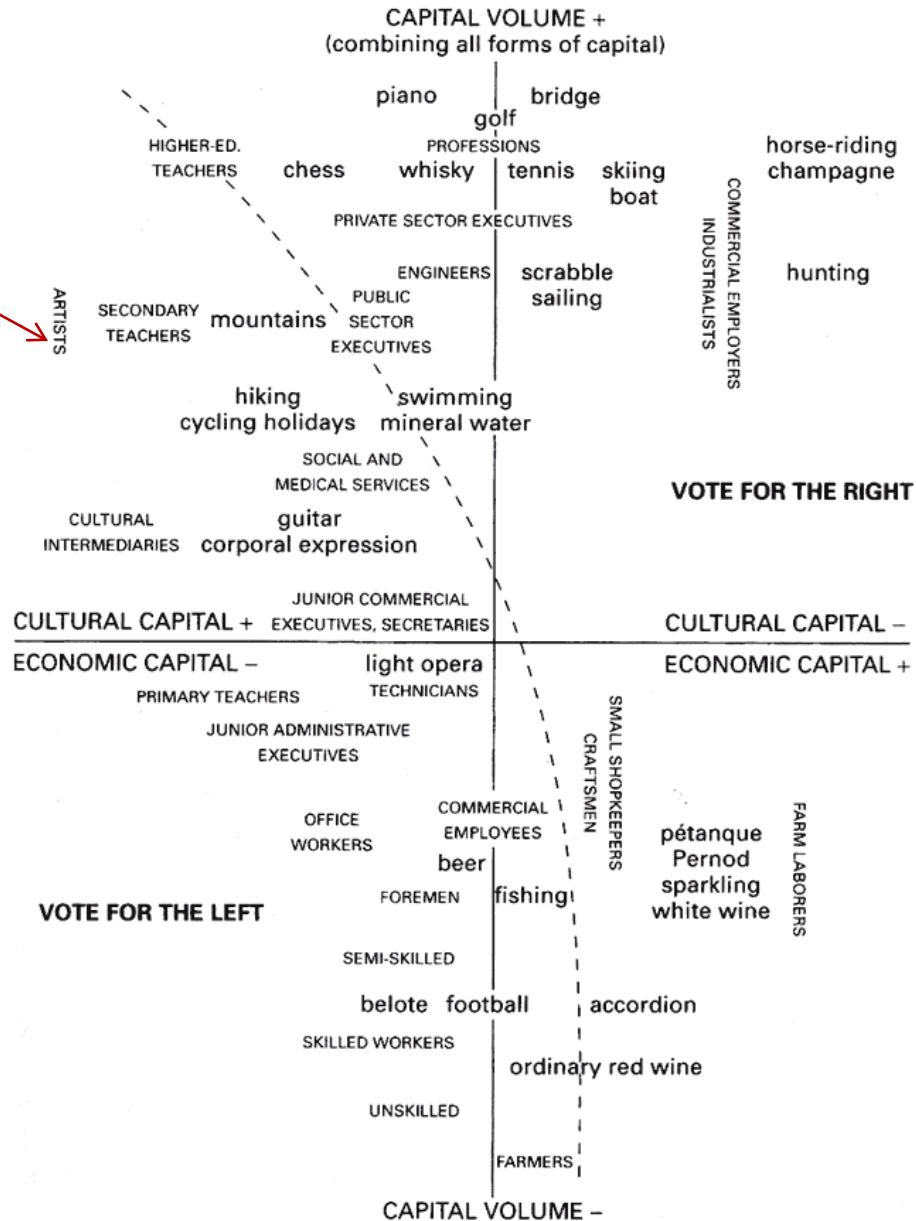
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Véquaud and the Bohemia (Bourdieu, Heinich)

Véquaud's Bohemia



Cultural capital +
Economic capital -



Vequaud's "economic world turned upside down"



Artistically reinterpreting aristocracy :
"without nobiliary particle but with a
name, without noble birth but with a gift"

Yves Véquaud 1971 in Ceylan

(Jacques Doucet Library, Collection Marcel Arland)

Vequaud's "economic world turned upside down"



Yves Véquaud 1971 in Ceylan

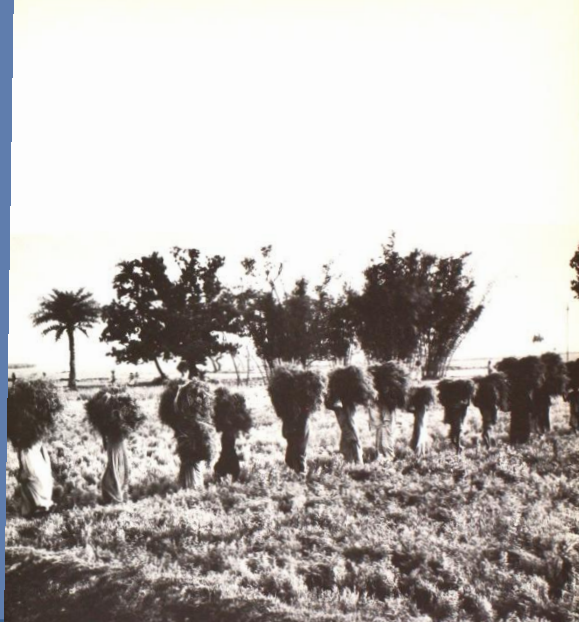
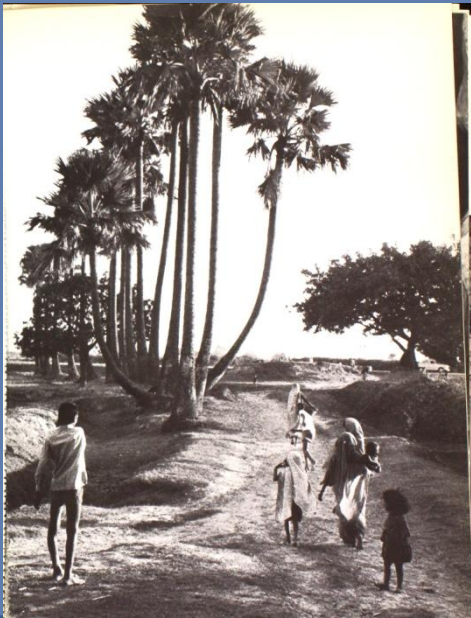
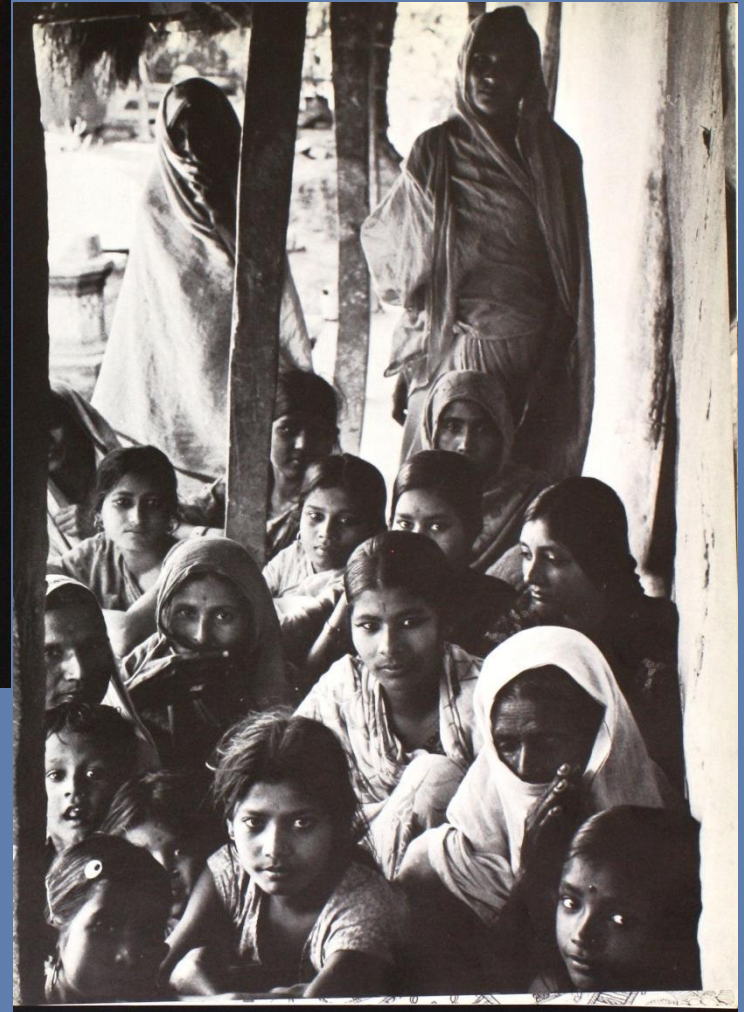
(Jacques Doucet Library, Collection Marcel Arland)

"without nobiliary particle but with a name, without noble birth but with a gift"

Investing a new nobility : that of Maithil artists : preference for the entertaining "bucolic walks which lead [him] from morning to evening to [...] huts with walls covered with frescoes" to "the very civil company of the Noble Lord"

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The Maithil Village: as communitarian Utopia



Scenes of village life, Edouard Boubat, *L'Art du Mithila*, 1976

“men often do nothing else than keeping their lastborns on the knees”

the creative painters “create masterpieces of which our greatest artists would be jealous (...) In West, one can count on the fingers of one hand the painting women who shine through their art. Here two hundred, three hundred women make marvels (...) in India the example is not rare of societies where women are more powerful than in ours”.

Véquaud 1973: 85.

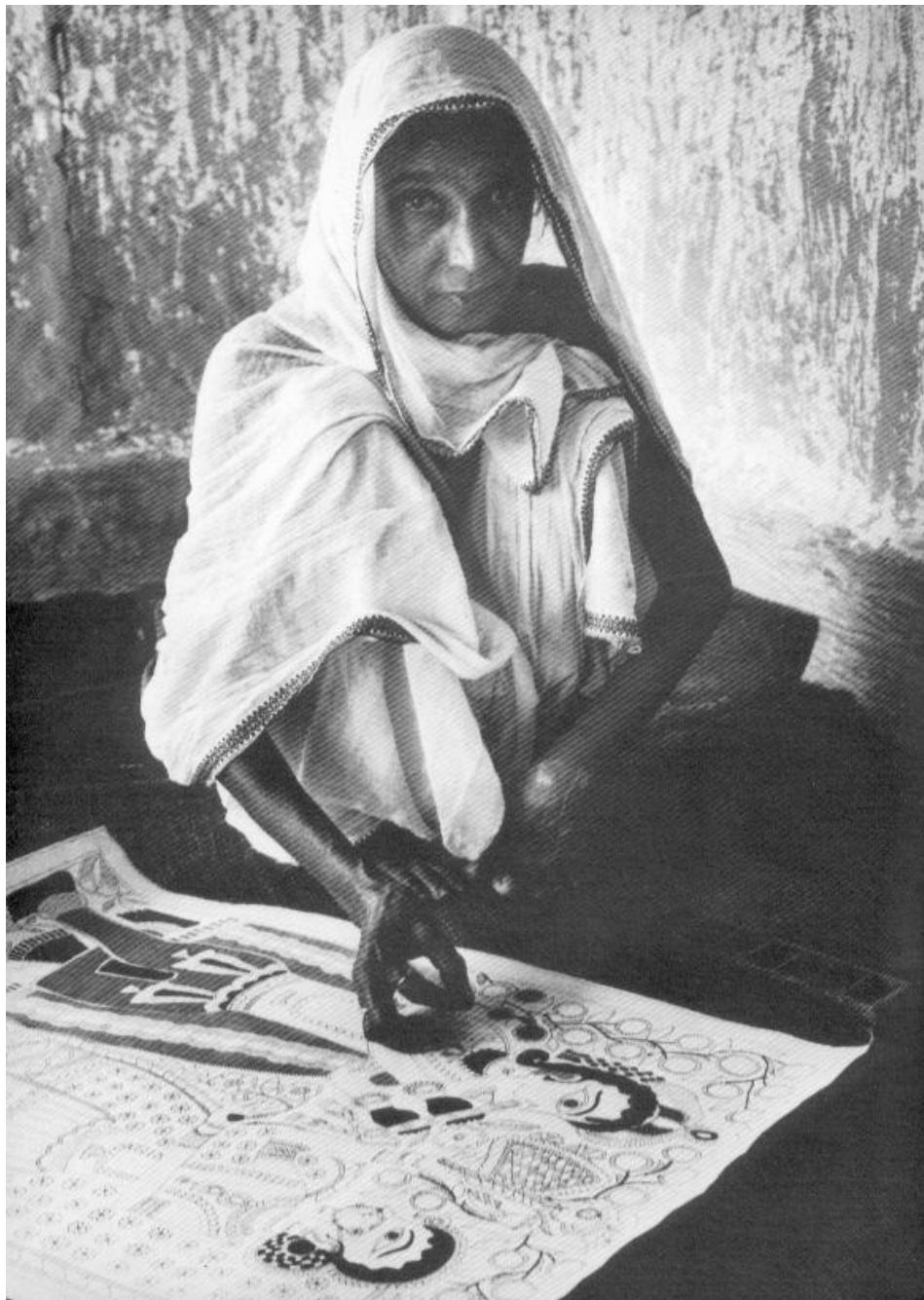


Mithila Painters, Edouard Boubat, *L'Art du Mithila*, 1976

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**A sadhu with Maithil painters. Photographed by Georges Luneau
Collection UCAD, extracted of Mithila exhibition, UCAD, 1975**



Sita Devi "appears to him as a saint", withdrawn from the world, "in a refuge of inner peace and trust that nothing could disturb. Braque and Rouault, already old, should have known what she knows".

Y. Véquaud, *Atlas*, 1973

Sita Devi photographed
by Edouard Boubat

Conclusion



Snake Goddesses, Baua Devi – The Art of Mithila, 1977.

USA

United Kingdom

France

India

Japan

1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
2000
2010

1976-2000
Owens

Szanton
1996
Brown-Heinz
1999
Val Davis
Wadley ...

1931-1977...
Archer

1969-81...
Véquaud,
Segarra,
Luneau,
Saucet ...

1996...
Perdriolles,
Schawen,
Le Coz...

Since
1990s
Jain, Rekha,
Shekhar
Singh,
Jha,
Garimella,
S. Singh...

1982
Hasegawa,
Mithila
Museum...

Phase III

2008 Black

Thank you!



Snake Goddesses, Baua Devi- The Art of Mithila, 1977.