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Elusive Heritage Transformations: A study of Bengali Patuas and Patachitra of Bengal

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The Patachitra style of Bengal is one of the oldest surviving traditional art styles in the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent. In Patachitra, the painted image contains the narratives of the folk deities, mythologies, folklores of Bengal, executed by the Patua clan. The contemporary Pata painters are renowned for inculcating various perceptible attributes in their art works apart from the practice of antiquated traditional technicalities mastered through generations. The aim of this research study is to focus on these successively altering and visually intriguing attributes in the traditional Pata Paintings and to point out the fact that the contemporary Pata painters gradually receding themselves from the performativity of the oral narration which is an integral part of the Pata painting. To support the main discourse, the paper will draw an elaborative comparative analysis between two distinct examples of the Pata Paintings, among which one was based on the traditional theme while the other was created on the contemporary theme, by highlighting on their thematic, iconic and semantic conceptions.

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Dr. Ritwij Bhowmik is an Assistant Professor and the Convener of the Fine-Arts Discipline at the Department of Humanities & Social Sciences (HSS), IIT Kanpur, India. He was a DAAD research fellow at the Department of Asian and Islamic Art History, Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies, University of Bonn in 2017. He has participated in various national and international exhibitions and conferences and received awards such as Chinese Govt. Scholarship 2008-2009, the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Award Grant in 2005 and the Golden Bamboo Scholarship by *National Chiao-Tung University* in 2012 & 2013.

