



WOW! explores Cheriyal --a place famous for its scrolls, masks and dolls, which not only makes for a great long drive on the highway, but is also a good destination to shop for hand painted gifts and artifacts....



Masked Magic

An hour away from Hyderabad, is the village of Cheriyal in Telangana, where the famous Cheriyal Scrolls are made. These canvas scrolls made from khadi are hand painted in a style unique to the local motifs and iconography. Characterized by a dominance of the color red in the background, these brilliantly-hued artworks even received their Geographical Indication Status in 2007.

Painted in panels as a narrative, they are like comic strips from the past, depicting scenes and stories from Indian mythology and epics. Distinct in their style, they convey the age old Indian traditions and customs in a beautiful and engaging manner. Originally used by the village bard as a visual aid to go with his stories and ballads, these scrolls have all but vanished with today's more mainstream ways of storytelling and entertainment.

The traditional Cheriyal Scrolls were sociologically and culturally significant in the past for their use as a tool for educating villagers. From a scroll that once had up to 50 panels, they have now come down to a single panel, as these artists adapt to its modern use as wall art.

Also coming from Cheriyal, are masks and dolls modelled along similar themes from ancient Indian mythology and folklore. These masks range from small ones painted on coconut shells to large pieces molded in cement. Some of the artists

from this village have even had the honor of transferring these masks into 10 feet wall murals in Nagpur, for the President's visit last year.

Now, there are very few artists practicing this traditional art form, with Cheriyal being the last village standing that continues to produce these scrolls and masks; and there are only three artist families left.

These scrolls when framed, make for gorgeous gifts. So if you are looking at exclusive or corporate gifts with that

characteristic touch of Indianness, you know where to go.

GETTING THERE: Ideal for a short road trip, Cheriyal is 54 kms from Hyderabad and can be reached by road in less than an hour-and-a-half on NH 44.

LUNCH: Make a pit stop at any of the *dhabas* in Kompally to refuel.

CONTACT: N Ganesh. He is a government recognised artist who conducts workshops and also supplies his works to Lepakshi.

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