

## **Artform: Aipan Art**

Aipan is a visually captivating folk art form practiced by the women of Uttarakhand, particularly in the Kumaon region. Traditionally, Aipan adorned the floors, walls (especially puja rooms and entrances), and courtyards during religious and cultural ceremonies. It is believed to invite good fortune, ward off negative energies and evil spirits, and invoke divine blessings. This art form is characterized by its intricate geometric patterns and symbolic motifs inspired by nature, such as the sun, moon, stars, flowers, leaves, and depictions of deities. These motifs often represent auspiciousness, fertility, prosperity, and protection from evil. Traditionally, Aipan is created using rice flour paste, mixed with natural pigments like turmeric, sindoor (vermilion), and geru (ochre). The designs are usually drawn freehand without any sketches or stencils, showcasing the artist's skill and creativity. This allows for intricate designs to be created directly without prior sketching. Aipan art not only beautifies spaces but also serves as a cultural symbol, connecting generations and communities through its rich visual language. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, Aipan art holds spiritual and ritualistic importance, acting as a blessing for the household and its inhabitants.

## **Artwork: Saraswati Aipan Chowki**

"Saraswati Aipan Chowki" is a stunning example of Aipan art, created by the distinguished artist Kusum Pandey. This artwork is a visual representation of seeking blessings from Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of wisdom, knowledge, and the arts. Traditionally, these chowkis are created during auspicious occasions related to education, such as a child's 'Aksharambh Sanskar' (initiation into learning to write) or during Basant Panchami, a festival dedicated to Saraswati. The intricate patterns and motifs in the "Saraswati Aipan Chowki" reflect the rich cultural heritage of Uttarakhand, with symbolic representations that invoke wisdom, academic success, and artistic pursuits. The artist's use of traditional techniques and natural pigments brings out the vibrant and intricate details of the artwork, making it not only a feast for the eyes but also a deeply spiritual and cultural piece. Located at Bharat Mandapam Spot No. 30, this artwork stands as a testament to the enduring beauty and significance of Aipan art.

## **Artist: Kusum Pandey**

Kusum Pandey is a trailblazer in the world of Indian Fine Arts, notably as the first woman artist from Uttarakhand to be honored with the prestigious Lalit Kala National Akademi Award. Her journey in the realm of art is marked by passion, dedication, and an unyielding commitment to the cultural heritage and natural beauty of India. Born and raised in the picturesque state of Uttarakhand, Kusum Pandey was always surrounded by nature's splendor, which deeply influenced her artistic inclinations. Her early fascination with the natural world is evident in the meticulous detail and vibrant life she brings to her work. She pursued her formal education in art at the College of Art, Delhi University, where she obtained her Master's Degree in Printmaking Graphics. Her academic journey was not just about mastering techniques but also about finding a voice that could resonate with

the environmental and cultural ethos of her homeland. Kusum Pandey's career is a testament to her versatility and profound connection to the themes of nature and heritage. Over the years, she has showcased her work in numerous national and international exhibitions, each time drawing audiences into the delicate interplay of colors, forms, and textures that define her art. Her ability to capture the essence of natural landscapes and the intricacies of ecological diversity has won her acclaim and admiration from art connoisseurs and environmentalists alike. Beyond her notable achievements, she has also been instrumental in organizing several international and national art camps and workshops, fostering a community of artists who are passionate about exploring and preserving natural heritage through their work.

**Location:** Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

