



# birds and animals in Indian art



activities and trails

My name:.....

Age:.....

Who have I come with.....  
.....

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Animals and humans have been companions for centuries. Indian art is nearly 5000 years old and in so many thousand years, Indian artists have depicted animals, birds and insects in many imaginative ways. Animals are sometimes shown as friends sometimes inspiring humans with their good deeds and sometimes displaying heroic acts. In many ancient cultures animals have become great companions of Gods and Goddesses as they ride on them.

In this book you are about to discover some beautiful sculptures in stone which will show you how different types of birds, animals and beasts have found place in Indian art.

This is an activity book. You can read this book when you get back home but before that you need to go through 7 galleries on the ground floor of National Museum to spot these beautiful animals and birds and discover more about them.

Remember to go with your parents or friends so that you do not get lost. In every gallery there are seats and benches where you can rest when you feel tired but do try to finish the trail before you go home.

Enjoy your visit!

how to use this book

This is the first corridor of National Museum. You are about to spot two very unique animals here. Look at the picture below, there are snakes. Can you find this sculpture?

1



Now see the label of this object and write it here in your own handwriting

Now look more carefully. Do you know where the snake begins and where it ends? Complete the drawing below if you can....



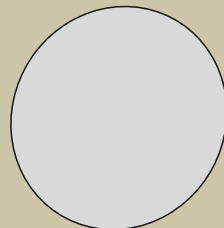
This is *Kartikeya*. He is very brave and is often considered the God of battles.

Can you identify the bird he is sitting on?

Don't miss the feathers of the bird in this sculpture, it might give you the hint!



Are there more sculptures of *Kartikeya* in this corridor? Can you count them and write the total number of *Kartikeyas* in this corridor?



Now cross the corridor and enter into the Harappan Civilization Gallery to your left. As you enter, to your right is a wonderful image of this object. This is often called the Pasupati Seal. Pasupati means 'The King of animals' and a seal is a stamp that important persons and merchants used during trade.



3

This unique object belongs to Harappan civilization which is 5000 years old. Other objects from the Harappan civilization are also kept in this gallery.

Now can you find the actual object? Are you surprised with the size of the object? Is it

1. Very large?
2. Medium Sized?
3. Very small?

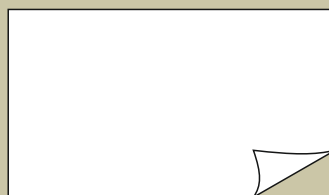
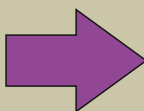
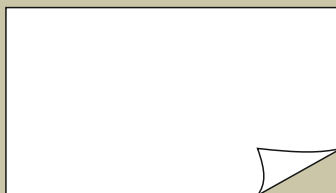
Look around the gallery and find this masterpiece!

It's a bull, with its eyes closed and its loose skin hanging under its neck. Bulls were used in Harappan times for agriculture. Taking care of animals, feeding them and bathing them was very common.

4



If you have spotted the bull, you can look into the case and identify many other animals. Can you name three more?



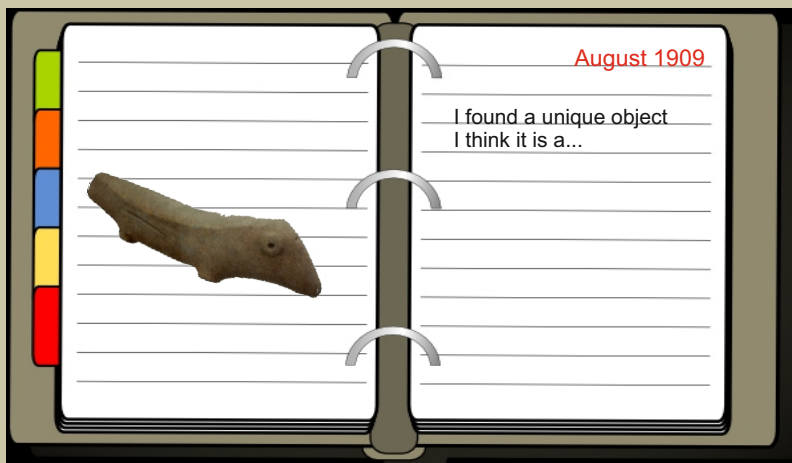
Can you try to draw the bull from the other side with your imagination? There are some hints on the left.

Identify this animal. Here is a hint. You met a long snake in the first gallery. This animal is known to fight and defeat snakes!



Never mind if you were not right. Actually when these objects were found by archaeologists, even they did not know what they were. They thought hard and imagined what they look like.

If you were an archaeologist and you found this beautiful object, what would you name him? Does it look like some other animal to you?







6

Now that you are very experienced in spotting animals, let's do something different.

Leave the Harappan gallery behind and enter into the 'Maurya, Shunga, Satvahana Gallery'. Do these words sound familiar to you? Well...never mind if not.

Look carefully at the sculpture below. It shows many birds and beasts. Can you identify them?

Hey, but look closely, there is a hidden story. This is the story of the *Suvanna Karkata Jataka*. Jatakas are a set of 547 stories around Buddha and his many lives and teach us the virtues and vices of life.

This sculpture has two sides. Do you see any other animal on the other side?

What is it?

.....  
.

**You can read the *Suvanna Kakkata Jataka* here:**

Once upon a time there was a village called Salindiya in India. A Bodhisattva was born there in that village in a farmer's family. When he grew up he settled down and worked on a farm.

One day he had gone to the field with his men, and giving them orders to plough he went to a pool at the end of the field to wash his face. In that pool there lived a crab of golden hue, beautiful and charming. The Bodhisattva went down into the pool. When he was washing his mouth, the crab came near.

Then he lifted up the crab and taking it laid it on a cloth: and after doing his work in the field he put the crab again in the pool and went home. From that time when going to the field he always went first to that pool, laid the crab in his garment and then went about his work. So a strong feeling of confidence arose between them. They became friends.

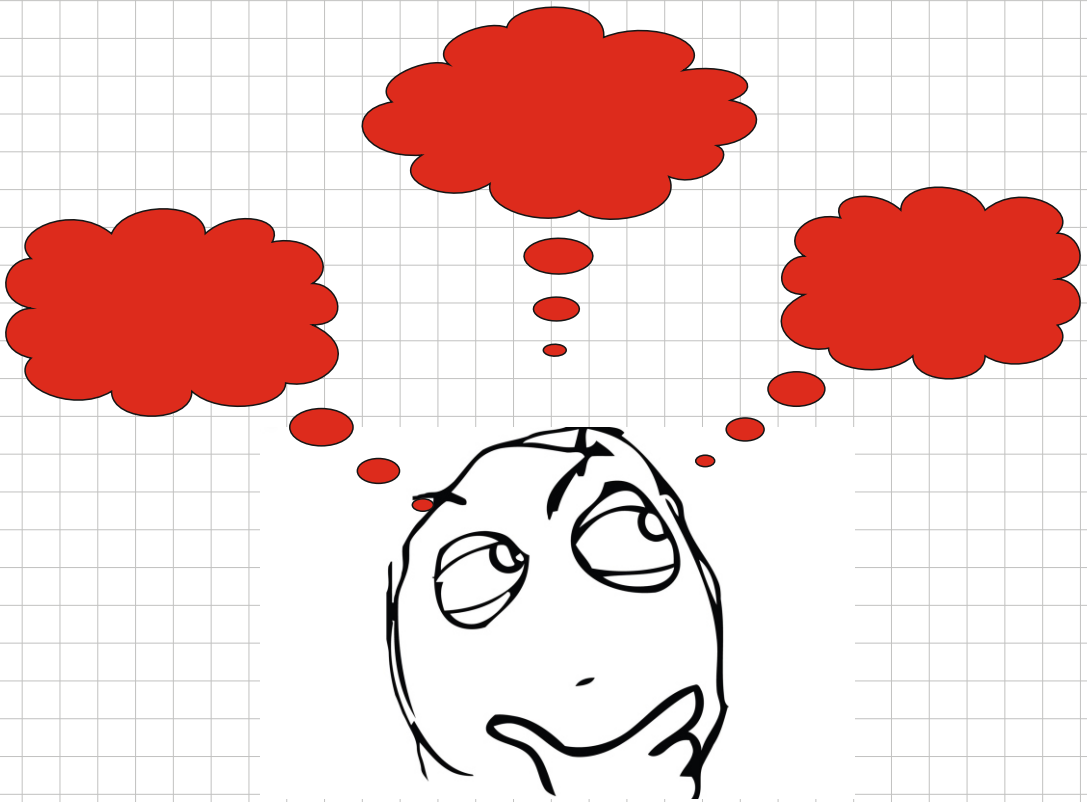
A she-crow in a nest saw the Bodhisattva and wanted to eat his eyes.

The crow hatched a plan and asked his friend, the snake to attack th Bodhisattva so that he would die. Next day the snake laid waiting for the his coming, hidden in the grass, by the boundary of the field where he came.

The Bodhisattva entering the pool and washing his mouth felt a return of affection for the crab, and embracing it laid it on his garment and went to the field. The snake saw him come, and rushing swiftly forward bit him in the flesh of the calf and having made him fall on the spot fled to his ant-hill.

The crab saw this and leaped on the snake and as the crow came near he also tightened his claws on him. This way he avenged his dear friend the Bodhisattva.

This is a lovely story about friendship and loyalty.



I am a humped bull. I am almost 2000 years old. I was found in South India in Kondapur.

Can you spot me in the gallery?  
I have other animal friends with me, can you list them and write them above?



8



# 7



Look at this beautiful relief carving. A relief carving is like a painting in three dimensions. It shows a royal procession of a king on a grand elephant.

encircle, which one of the following words describe the elephant best?

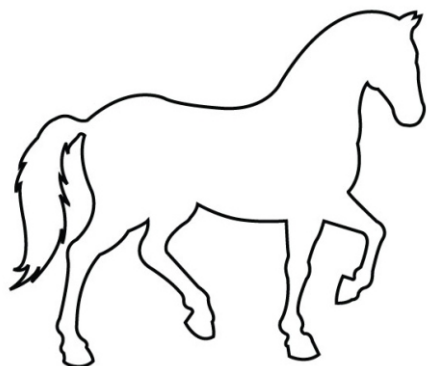
angry graceful  
intelligent energetic  
calm lost  
strong



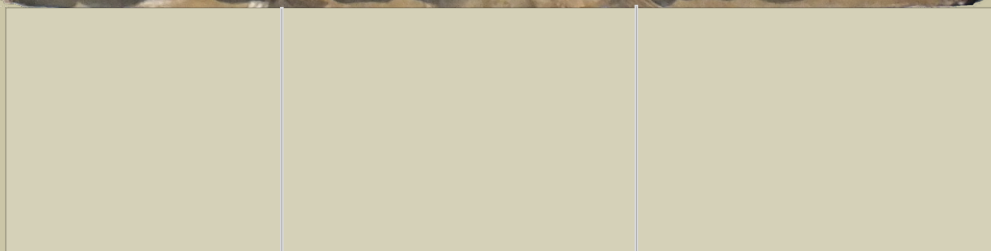
Spot this sculpture. It shows a beautiful horse. Horses are known for their strength, energy and obedience. They make great companions for humans. In ancient times, horses were used by kings and royals to travel long distances. They were decorated beautifully with silk and velvet cloth and were well taken care of. This horse is trotting. Trotting is a slow bouncing movement of the horse which shows its grace and energy.

Now draw a decorative saddle on this horse!

Do you know who I am?  
Read the label and guess my name



Look at these leaping lions. Can you spot the sculpture? Can you draw another line of leaping lions below? Many lions at the bottom of the relief panel make a pattern.



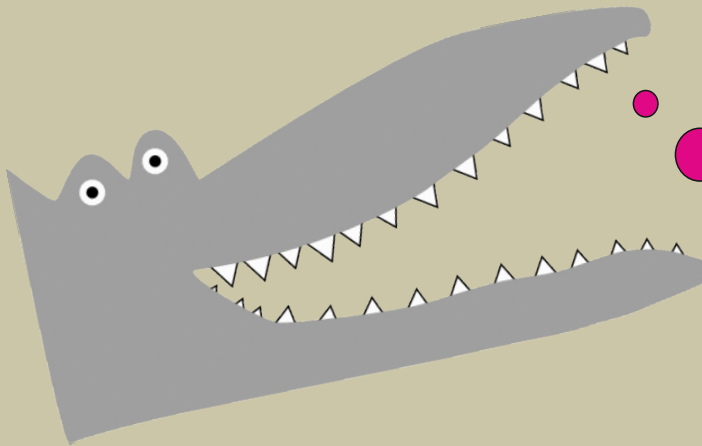




Animals have also been mysterious creatures. Artists and sculptors have often created imaginary animals. For example look at this stylized crocodile. It is called a *Makara*.

Can you count how many teeth he has?

There is another stylized dragon-like animal shown in this panel, can you find it, In fact someone is riding it?



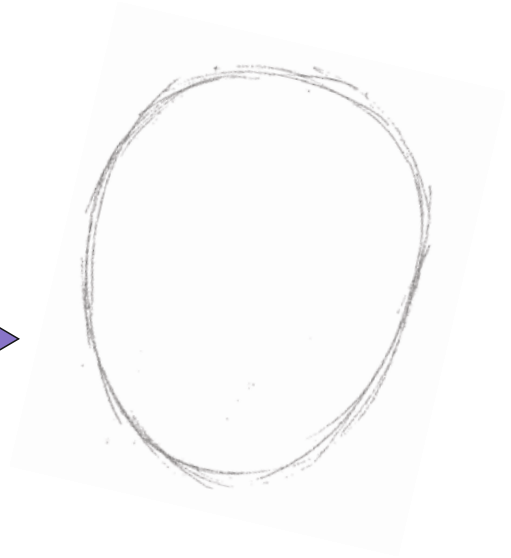
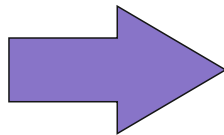
how many  
teeth?



# 12

Do you know the mouse is associated with which Hindu God? Find the sculpture and write down the name of the God.

Now can you see the head of this God and draw him here?





A calm and quiet bull is sleeping here. He is very relaxed. Spot this sculpture and tell us which God is riding it?





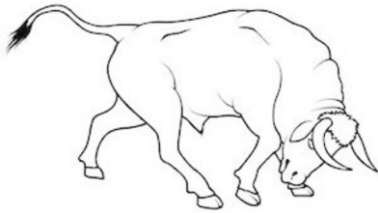
14



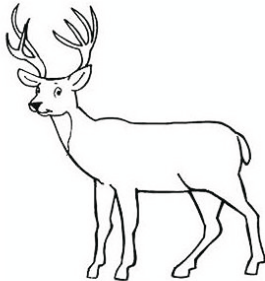
This is the unique Goddess *Yogini Vrishanana*. She is a *Yogini*. *Yogini* is a word that has come from the word 'Yoga'. Her head is not human and resembles a common animal.

Is it one of the animals shown below? Encircle the correct one.

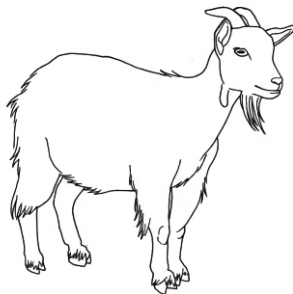
Also match the following animals with their attributes to know what kind of a Goddess *Vrishanana* is.



**Calm**



**Powerful**



**Meek**

Snakes are dangerous but when they are shown with Gods they can take beautiful forms such as this one. This is a sculpture of *Parsvanatha*, one of the Jaina Tirthankars. He is protected by a snake hood on his head resembling an umbrella.

Now can you colour this designer snake umbrella on your own?





**You will have to look very carefully to find this sculpture and the parrot and if you do. This is a difficult one, so look hard and everywhere!**

**And give yourself a huge applaud if you find it in less than 3 minutes!**

There are two animals in this sculpture. Both of them are mixtures of two more animals. These kind of animals are called Composite animals. Guess their composition below

# 17



Is this

- a. Bird + Lion
- b. Cat + Snake
- c. Lion + Pig

Is this

- a. Lion + Dog
- b. Donkey + Snake
- c. Lion + Horse



# 18

We are in the  
Buddhist gallery.  
Can you find us? If  
you find us, look  
on the other side  
of us and tell us  
what you see?  
Can you draw it  
below?



# all that you saw today

1. **Lintel showing Haragauri,**  
Pratihara, 8<sup>th</sup> Century AD,  
Abaneri Rajasthan, Stone,  
NM Acc number: 69.133
2. **Kartikkeya  
(God of War, Son of Shiva),**  
Late Chola, 12<sup>th</sup> Century AD,  
South India, Granite Stone
3. **Pasupati Seal**  
2500 BC,  
Harappan Civilization
4. **Bull**  
2500-2000 BC  
Harappan Civilization
5. **Mongoose**  
2600-2000 BC,  
Harappan Civilization,  
Dholavira
6. **Pillar showing Suvanna  
Karkata Jataka,**  
Sunga, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC,  
Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh,  
Sandstone, NM Acc no 68.162
7. **Railing Cross Bar showing King  
on Elephant**  
Sunga, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC,  
Mathura, Uttar Pradesh,  
Sandstone, NM Acc no 50.167
8. **Great Renunciation of Buddha**  
Satavahana, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC,  
Pitalkhora, Maharashtra,  
Sandstone, NM Acc no 67.183
9. **Humped Bull**  
Satavahana, 1-2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD,  
Kondapur, Andhra Pradesh,  
Teraccotta (Baked Clay)
10. **Stupa Slab showing  
garlands, pots with lotus  
flowers, Triratnas and lions**  
Ikshvaku, 3-4<sup>th</sup> Century AD,  
Andhra Pradesh  
Greyish limestone  
NM ACC no: 50.19
11. **Tympanum showing  
worksippers**  
Kushana, 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD,  
Kankali Tilla, Mathura, Uttar  
Pradesh, Stone  
NM Acc no J.555
12. **Ganesha**  
Pala, 10<sup>th</sup> Century AD, Bihar  
Stone, NM Acc no: 60.1300
13. **Nataraja  
Sena Perid, 11th Century AD  
Eastern India  
NM Acc no: 75.563**
14. **Yogini Vrishanana**  
Pratihara, 10-11<sup>th</sup> Century  
AD, Lokhari, Uttar Pradesh,  
Stone, NM Acc no: M/13.20
15. **Parshvanatha,**  
Chola, 11<sup>th</sup> Century AD  
South India, Stone, NM Acc  
no: 59.153/177
16. **King Narsimha worshiping  
Jagannatha,**  
Eastern Gange, 13<sup>th</sup> Century  
AD, Konark, Orissa, Stone,  
NM Acc no: 50.182
17. **Leogryph,**  
13<sup>th</sup> Century AD, Odisha  
Stone, NM Acc no: 80.218
18. **Medallion**  
Sunga  
2nd Century AD, Bharhut  
Madhya Pradesh, Stone  
NM Acc 80.751

# Tell us how you found this activity book

It was Informative

☐

I had Fun

☐☐

I want to do more  
activities.

☐

I know a little more about  
birds and animals in Indian  
art now!



I am  
.....  
yrs old

tear from here and leave it at the Museum reception







## Birds and Animals in Indian Art

This activity book and trail gives you the chance to look for some of the most beautiful sculptures in Indian art that show animals, birds and beasts. You will be looking at examples from as old as 5000 years and walking your way through pages of history..

All rooms in this trail are on the ground floor starting from the first corridor and ending with the Buddhist Art Gallery.

Time: 45 minutes

Suitable for: 10+ years

Access: Buy your ticket and this book at the reception and enter into the first corridor. To complete the trail follow instructions in the book. Make sure you have a pencil and eraser with you!



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