

Talking Points: Chhau masks

A collection of sources to explore Chauu masks in performances.

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Chhau Masks

Chhau dance is a semi classical Indian dance with martial and folk traditions. It is found in three styles named after the location where they are performed, i.e. the Purulia Chau of West Bengal, the Seraikella Chau of Jharkhand and the Mayurbhanj Chau of Odisha.

The dance ranges from celebrating martial arts, acrobatics and athletics performed in festive themes of a folk dance, to a structured dance with religious themes. The costumes vary between the styles, with masks being used to identify the characters.

The stories enacted by Chhau dancers include those from Indian literature.

Find out more about the “Craft of Accessorising for Chhau dancers” and “How the Craft of Mask Making Transforms the Dancers” with Google Arts and Culture.



Click on the image above to find out more about Seraikella Chhau Dance.

Questions to Ask Children

How do the masks make you feel?

How do you feel watching parts of the performance?

How would you describe the colours?

What kinds of materials are used to make the masks?