

Suwa Devi



Suwa Devi is the most important Kalbelya dancer from to the Nat community of Jodhpur. The kalbelya dance (from kali, « black ») is inspired by the attraction of the cobra (naga). The jogi nats, disciples of Gorakhnath (an Hindu Saint from the 10th century), are deeply related to the gypsy communities of Europe.

With a simple rustle of their garment or a single movement of their foot, Jogi women announce the destiny of the gypsy woman whose life is given over to dance and dancing, just like the God Shiva, carried away by the movement of his wanderings through the cosmos. The Jogi of Rajasthan, formerly magicians and snake charmers, semi-nomad musicians of Hindu belief take us back to the origins of the Rom (gypsies).

Suwa Devi she has secured recognition for the dance known as kalbelya. In former times this dance was performed before a snake, the divine being of the Jogi magicians. So the dancer has to imitate the cobra, turning round and round with infinite suppleness, producing the same hypnotic fascination as a snake.

The voices of the Jogi women mingle in unison with the strident sound of the double clarinet known as pungî. The pûngî (literally, a « tube ») resembles the Langa's muralî, except that it has an additional air chamber made out of wood or a hollowed-out gourd, but the musician still uses the continuous blowing technique (naksasi).