The process of becoming a part of a globalized world has made India as a nation worry about what makes it culturally unique. Since the beginning of its relationship with Britain folk artists in particular have been directly connected to cultural preservation efforts in India. The impetus to preserve this uniqueness usually falls on rural folk cultures, whose traditions change more slowly because they have less access to modernizing influences. The problem with idealizing the static nature of folk art is that it keeps the artists from improving their lives, at the risk of abandoning their work to seek out other economic opportunities. Through the historical example of the folk painters of West Bengal, called patuas, this paper aims to show how the preservation of folk art depends on striking a balance between adapting to remain relevant and therefore economically viable to a given culture, and preserving a connection to its historical roots. By explaining how patua painting, also called patachitra, has navigated the cultural shifts of the last two centuries and survived, I hope to demonstrate the complicated relationship India has with its own artistic history, and how folk artists can continue to make their livelihood off of their traditional craft. Patachitra, in its many forms, proves that the best hope for folk art is preservation through adaptation.