

Design Resource

Elephant Jali Work

Wood Carving

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and
Rakshitha

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/elephant-jali-work>

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2. Tools and Raw Materials
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Introduction

Jaipur, in Rajasthan is well known for the wood carvings. The art of wood carving is still surviving here mainly due to the royal patronage. Jaipur of Rajasthan, also uplifts the tradition of Elephant jali carvings. It is one of the major indigenous crafts of Jaipur. Teak-wood is mainly used for most of the wooden crafts done here.

The term 'jali' or 'jaali' means net or mesh work made from wood, stone or metal. Jali work is a delicate hand carving craft. It is presented in different sizes, shapes and designs. Most of the times the jali work is made of geometric shapes or floral designs on the animal figures and on the buildings. But as most commonly the geometric designs are easy to carve, these shapes are used for designing the elephant jali work. The jali work/mesh work is initially used in architecture abundantly as a stone jali work. They are made on doors and windows as a screen. This is mainly done for the ventilation purpose. Jali work was one of the important parts of architecture in northern and north-western India since long time. It flourished well at the time of Mughals. These stone jali works are seen on different architectures of India and they are most inspiring and fascinating. The jali screens of stone are done on two types of stones.

They are (1) Sandstone (red and yellow variety) and (2) Marble.

Some examples of jali work that are used in the forts of Rajasthan, Gujarat and other places in northern India are:

Taj Mahal which is intricately designed by marble jali work, Agra, Uttar Pradesh;

The Mausoleum of Saint Salim Chisti at Fatehpur Sikri, Uttar Pradesh;

Humayun's Tomb at Delhi;

Adalaj step well at Ahmedabad, Gujarat;

Bibiji mosque at Ahmedabad, Gujarat;

Sidi Saiyad mosque at Ahmedabad, Gujarat;

Junagarh Fort at Bikaner, Rajasthan;

Lodurva temple at Jaisalmer, Rajasthan;

Mehrangarh fort at Jodhpur, Rajasthan;

Patwon-Ki-Haveli at Jaisalmer, Rajasthan and others.

The main purpose of including the jali work in the building architecture was not only for the beautification of constructions, they also served as an air conditioner for the buildings by keeping the vicious sunlight out and allowing the cool breeze to blow inside and outside of the building.

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These jali works were also often used as screens that helped to keep the privacy for ladies by which women inside could see outside but not the reverse. The intricately designed carvings would also create a subtle play of light and shadow in the interior, creating an illusion. These jali designs are also used for interior decorations of the building along with the exterior. Here they were used as the partition walls as well. The pillars, door frames and roof beams were also used for creating the art of jali works. These marble jali works in Jaipur are very graceful and charming. The best quality timber, oak and kadam trees are used for making jali substances. Between these days jali work is also done on peacock statues, horse statues and many wooden boxes with ornamental designs and etc.

In Jaipur, elephant jali work is done by the group of artisans who are self-taught artists. They are in this field for 35 years. These artisans make elephant jali work from the kadam wood. A set of 2-3 small sized elephant jali work is done per day, whereas it takes a week's time to craft a big size jali work for them. These wooden elephant jali works are delicately crafted by the experienced artisans of Jaipur.



Intricately carved wooden elephant jali statue.

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The detailed designing is done on the wooden elephant statue.



Buffing is been done to the Elephant jali work.



The step-by-step process of making the wooden jali elephant.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Some of the tools and raw materials used for making elephant jali work are:

- **Wood:** It is the raw material used for making elephant jali work.
- **Saw Tool:** It is used for cutting the wood.
- **Chisel:** The tool which helps in chiseling the wood.
- **Hammer:** Used in carving the wood.
- **Power Tool with the Micro Drill Bits:** This helps the carving process to get easier by connecting it to the power connection.
- **Buffing Machine:** This is used in the buffing process, which helps in polishing and spreading the color evenly on the product.
- **Batti:** A Rectangular solid form which is a mixture of clay and wax used in buffing process.
- **Powered Color:** It is used to enamel the products.
- **Polish:** Polish gives the glossy effect to the product.
- **Brush:** This is used for applying the polish proportionately on the product.

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Wood is the raw material used for the elephant jali work of Jaipur.

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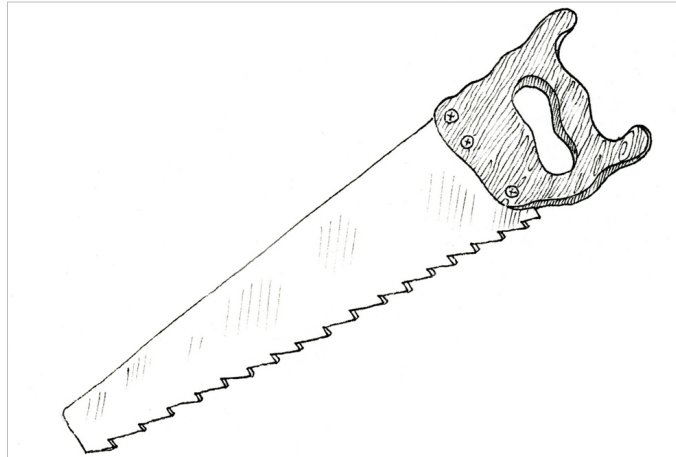
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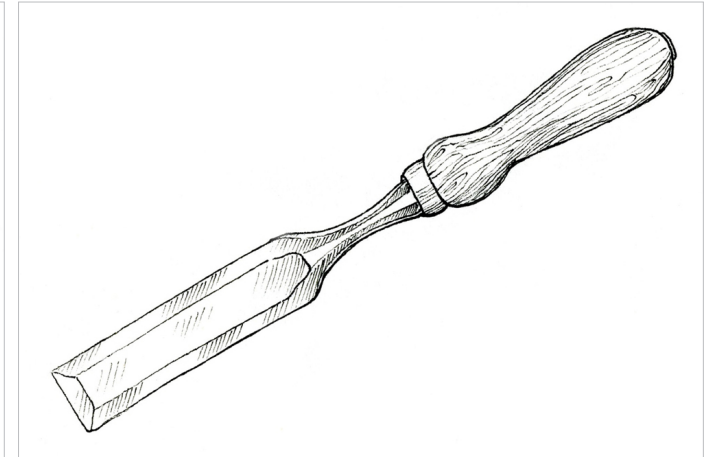
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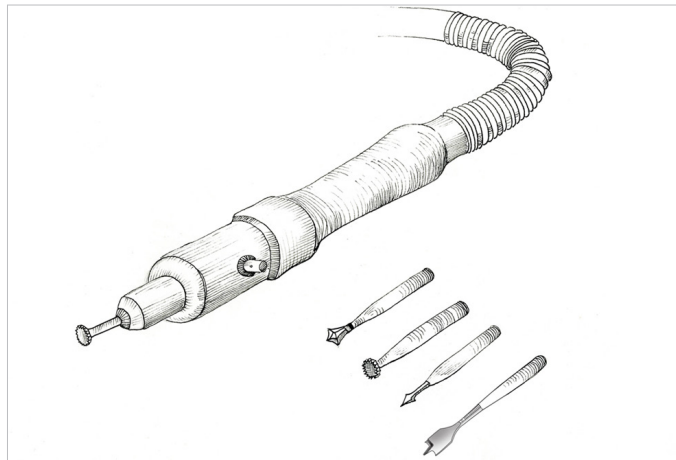
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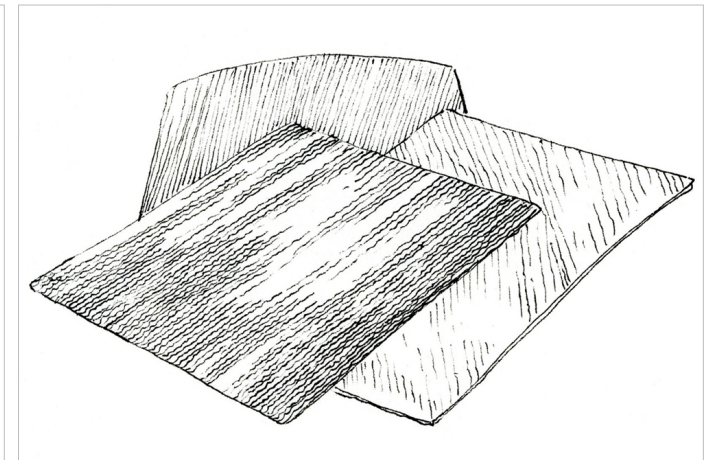
Saw is used for cutting the log.



Motor of the power tool used in elephant jali work.



Emery sheet is used in smoothening the rough surface of the wooden elephant jali work.



Chisel is used in carving the wood.

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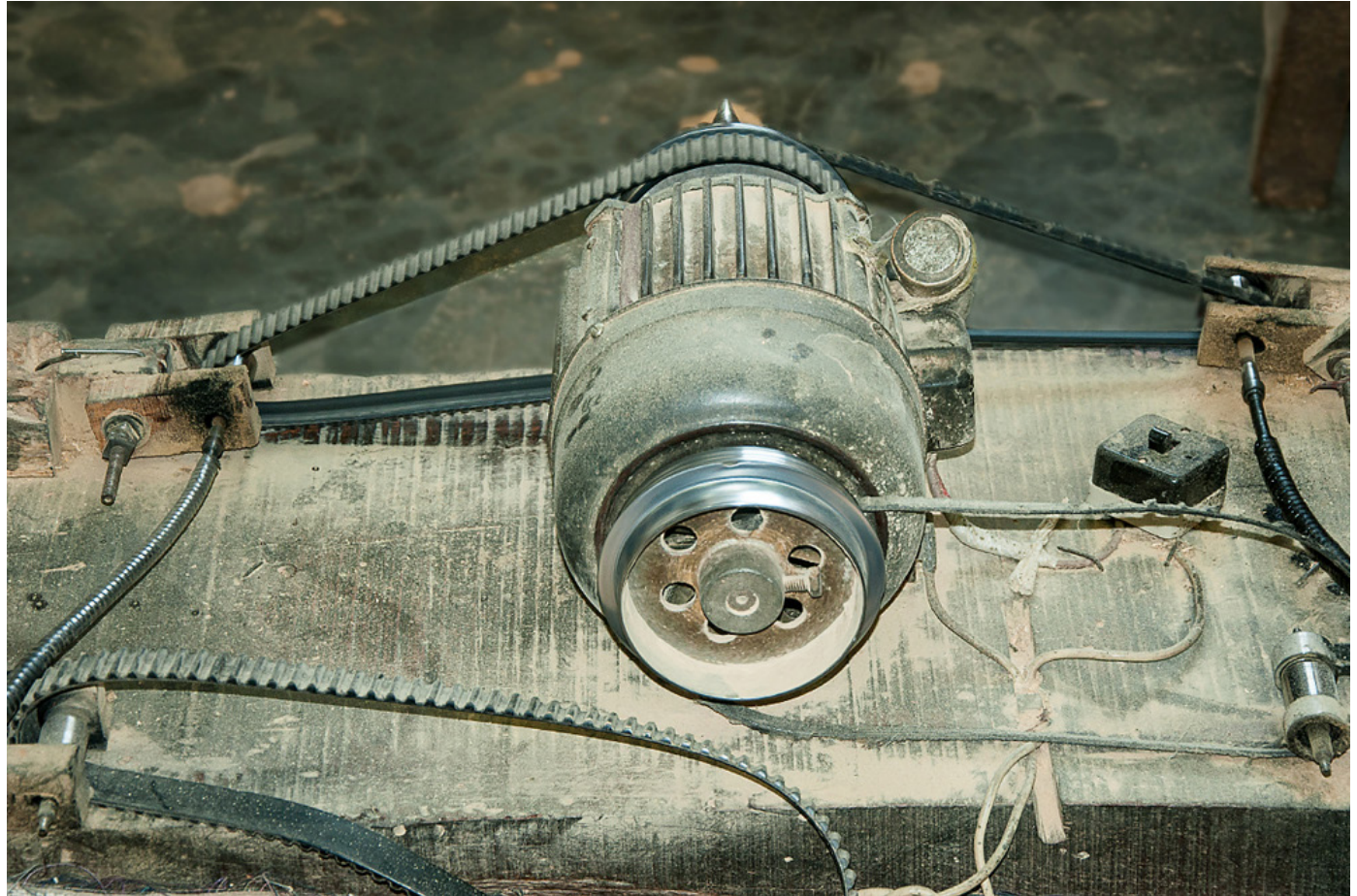
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Power tool along with the drill bits used in drilling/piercing the holes on the wood to make elephant jali work.

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Making Process

Elephant jali work is a hand carved delicate art. The other name for elephant jali work is 'elephant undercut work'. Jali work was majorly done on stones in olden days but now-a-days jali works are done on wood as well.

The artist buys the seasoned wood of Neolamarckia cadamba, which is also called as Kadam wood in general. This wood is used for elephant undercut work, as it is available in local markets of Jaipur. The process of making elephant jali work begins by marking the measurements on the wood by using the marking tools and then it is cut by using the saw tool and sizing it accordance to their need. The jali artist draws the design of an elephant on the wood and chisels it to get the rough shape of an elephant. Later it is made numerous holes on the elephant figure by using the power tool with different micro drill bits at every step. These drill bits are swappable from the power tool. Initially spade bit is used to mark the exact location on the figure, where the hole has to be made. Later the centre punch drill bit is used to make the holes. Through these holes, the gouge drill bit is inserted to scrap out the wood and hollowed out from within, wherever the necessity is. The specialty of this elephant jali work is, the baby elephant is crafted inside the big elephant. The outer shell of the statue is retained the same and the detailed hand carved jali work is made. Then the design of the holes and the designs between the holes are finely made, using the micro circular saw bit. In the next level the rock cross drill bit is used for detailing the shape of the eyes and ears of the elephant. After shaping the detailed designs on the elephant jali, emery sheet (that is rolled and attached to the power tool) is rubbed all around the elephant idol. By this process the semi finishing is done.

In the next level the rectangular solid form of wax and clay mixture (batti) is rubbed to the buffing head of the buffing machine. And then the powdered color is dusted onto the elephant jali idol and the idol is buffed well all around through the help of buffing head. Later the polish is manually applied by the toothbrush on the elephant jali idol evenly and buffed again. So that the fine polishing is made/given for the idol and the elephant jali work is completed.

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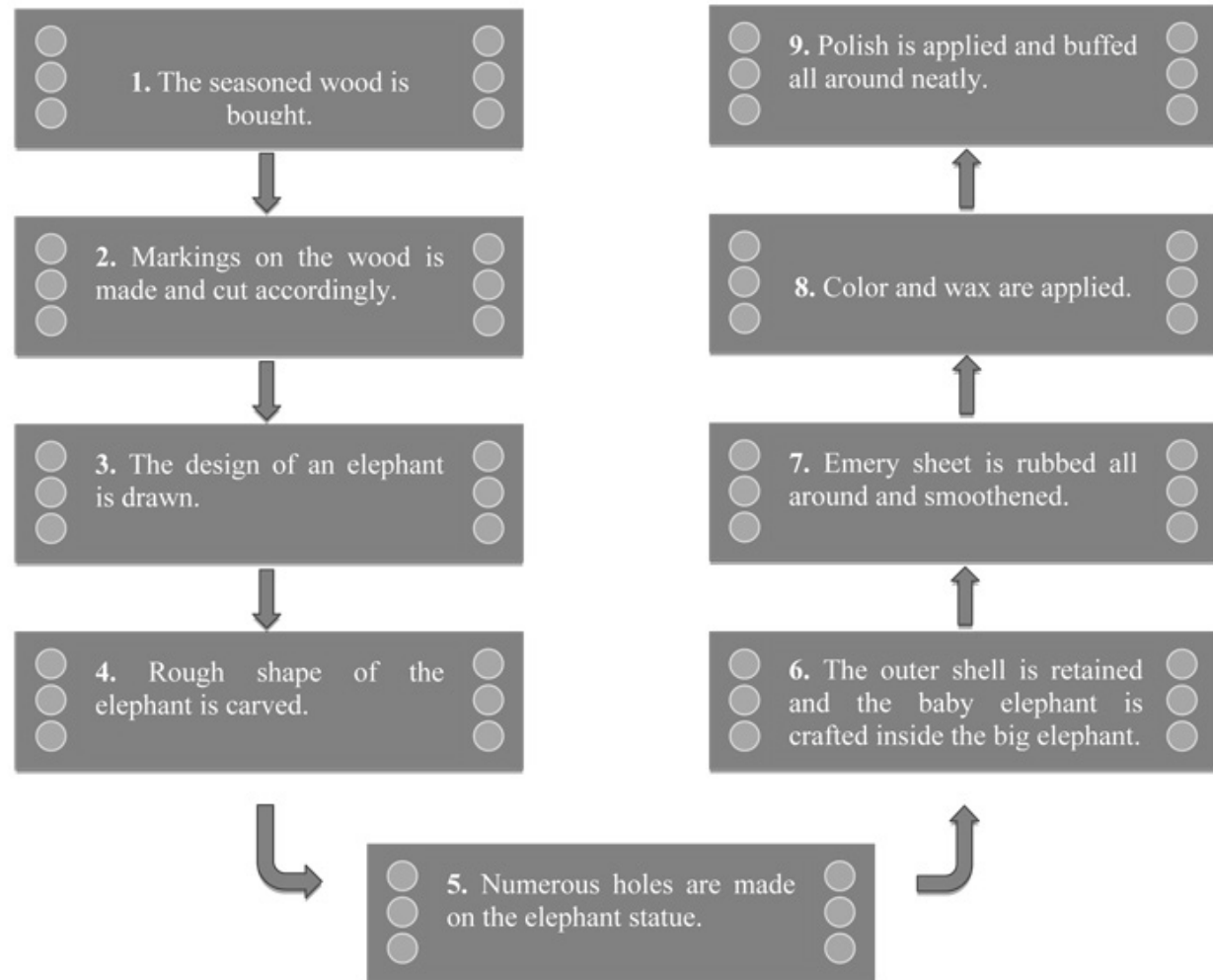
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Flow chart



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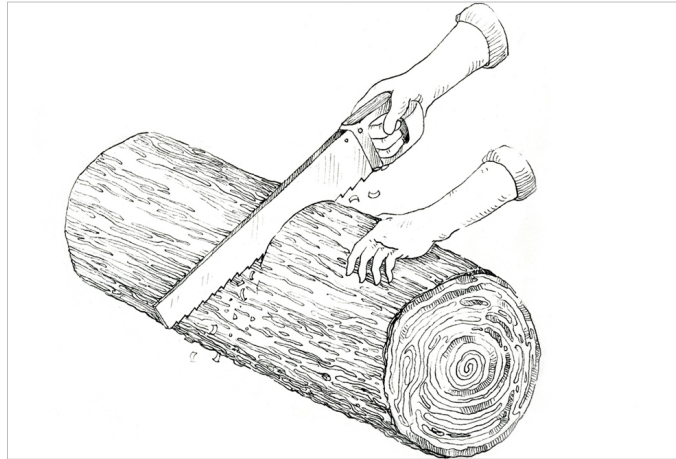
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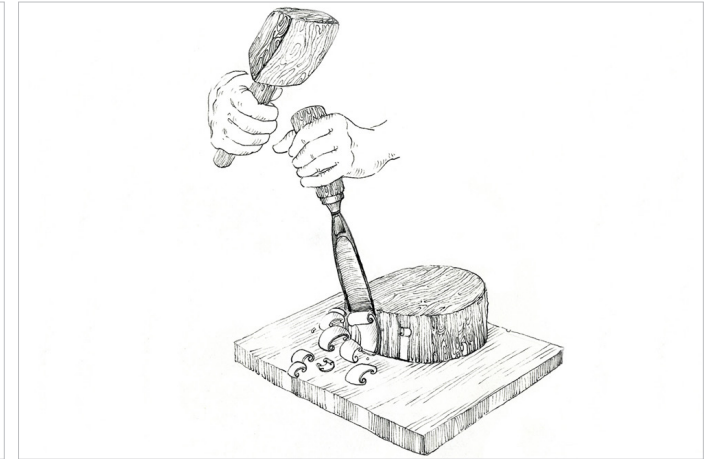
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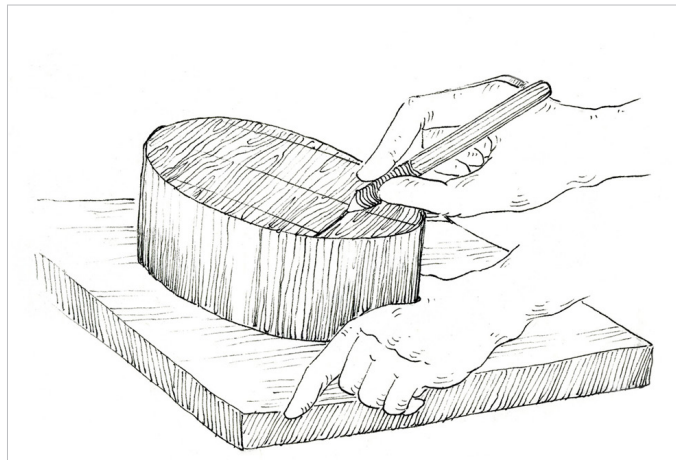
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Initially wooden log is cut using saw tool.



Wood is chiseled to the size of the requirement.



The markings are made on the wooden piece in pencil.



Later according to the markings, Elephant shape is carved.

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On the Elephant statue using the drill bit, points are made to carve.



By applying more pressure the initial level of holes are made on the elephant statue.



With the sharp edged drill bit the holes are made.



Using the gouge drill bit the inside portion of the wooden elephant is scraped out.

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Then with the help of the micro circular saw bit the holes are given the final finishing for the design.



The space between the holes is filled with the designs.



Eyes of the Elephant statue are carved.



Emery sheet is then rubbed all over the statue to smoothen the rough surface of the wooden Elephant jali.

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Artisan then applies the polish on the statue.



The close up of applying the polish to the wooden jali Elephant.



Later the statue is buffed all around to make the polish spread evenly.



The stunning handmade wooden Elephant jali statue is then ready to be sold.

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Products

Elephant jali work of Jaipur are hand carved royal statues, made up of kadam wood. The detailed carved designs on all the sides of the statue uplifts the beauty of Indian art. These undercut elephants are very attractive and captivating the appearance for their gorgeous carving patterns. They can be used for enhancing the decor of the homes and office as they are cost effective too.



Jali Elephant statues are well polished that give a smooth shiny effect and kept for the sales.

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These Elephant jali figures are crafted in single wooden piece.

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Specialty of the beautifully handcrafted jali Elephant is the big Elephant has another baby Elephant inside it, which is created by the artisan.

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