

Design Resource

Leaf Art Painting - Warangal

Peepal Leaf Painting

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and

Amulya S.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Contact Details



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introduction](http://www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/introduction)

Introduction

Leaf painting is one of the beautiful art forms which originated in Kerala, India. In Ancient times leaves were one of the clothing substantial which in later decades became the first writing material to be used before paper was invented. Leaf is been the essential raw material for human beings from the ancient time till now. Leaves are the source for many aspects of life like food, medicine, fiber, pest controlling, bio-degradable plates, and many more. Palm leaves were one of a kind which were used to write inscriptions and to do miniature paintings in olden days. The artists from Kerala, India implemented in using peepal leaves and banyan leaves to do the paintings.

Peepal tree is a divine tree, it is said that Buddha attained enlightenment while meditating under this tree. Hence it is even known as the Bodhi tree. The leaves of the peepal tree is heart shaped and have a long narrowing tip at the end. Peepal leaf's scientific name is *Ficus religiosa*. The leaf itself gives a pleasant view and it develops a beautiful unique textured canvas for the artists to express their art with the brush. Painting on the leaves are very delicate work of art which requires a lot of patience and the best creativity which depicts a good craftsmanship and excellence.

Peepal leaf painting has been treasured in India's heritage from ages. This art is been practiced in various places in which Bal Swamy from Ghanpur near Warangal, Telangana is one amongst them. The artisan from his childhood days used to practice art and was very keen about arts and crafts. He got influenced from Father Colombo who resided in RCM church, Warangal who practiced leaf painting. Bal Swamy took up this form of art as his hobby when he was in class nine, which gave him joy and happiness. He joined Father Colombo trustee. Father Colombo was helping him in improving the art and in getting the foreign commercial orders which helped him financially. Since there were many Christians residing in that region the common leaf painting cards theme was on Christmas and Easter. The other themes were on mother and child, scenery and many more.

1. **Introduction**
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Contact Details

Design Resource

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www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/introduction

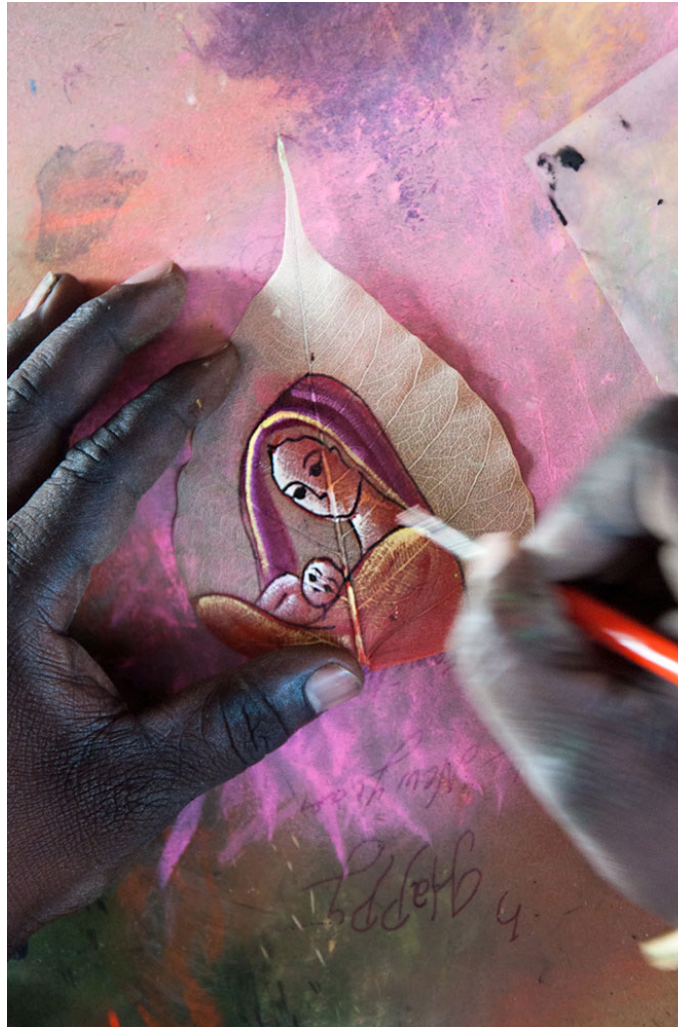
1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Contact Details



The lovely theme of mother and child is being depicted/painted on the leaf.



Even the torn peepal leaf is utilized maximum, for the painting.



Completely painted leaf along with its sketch.

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www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/introduction

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Contact Details



The unfinished work which is yet to be painted and finely detailed.



Different stages of leaf painting, from the empty skeletal of leaf to completed painting on leaf.



Most talented leaf painting artisan of Warangal.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw materials required for leaf art painting of warangal:

- **Dried Leaves:** Peepal leaves which outer layer is removed and dried.
- **Water:** Water is used in soaking of the leaves and to remove the outer layer.
- **Bowls:** Bowls are used to soak the leaves in the water.
- **Tooth Brush:** Tooth brush helps in removing the outer layer of the leaves.
- **Oil Paints:** Paints which are used for painting on the leaves.
- **Kerosene:** A chemical liquid mixed with paints to get a proper constancy to paint.
- **Brushes:** Number zero brush for drawing on the leaf with black paint. Number two and four brushes for filling colours to the drawing and to give outline to the leaves.
- **Polythene Sheet:** Polythene sheet is used as a palette to mix the paint.
- **Flat Wooden Board:** The surface needed to support the leaf while painting.
- **Florescent Colour Pigment:** Colour powder is used to give outlines to the leaves which is mixed with kerosene.
- **Plastic Pouch:** Pouch used for preserving the leaves.

1. Introduction

2. **Tools and Raw Materials**

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Contact Details

Design Resource

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. **Tools and Raw Materials**
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Contact Details



A special technique is used for removing the outer layer of the peepal leaf and only the veins of the leaf is retained. This skeletal leaf is used for painting.



Oil paint is a kind of slow drying paint used on leaf for painting purpose.

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/tools-and-raw-materials>



Painting brushes of different sizes are used for painting on the leaf.



Some fluorescent pigments which are not water soluble are also mixed with kerosene and used in leaf painting.



Kerosene is used for mixing with the oil paints to thinner paint.

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Contact Details

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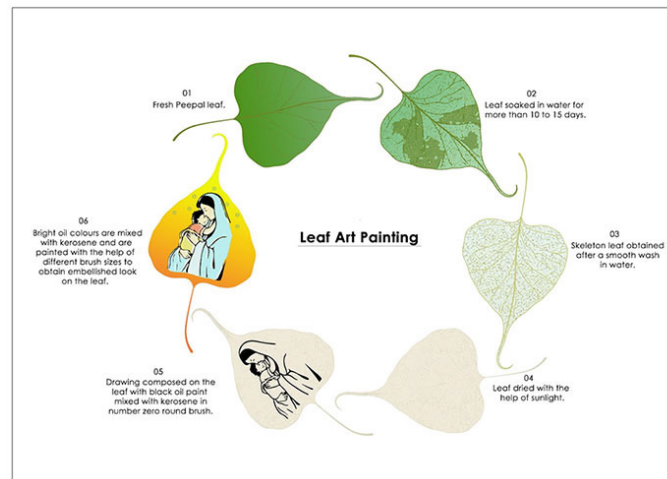
<http://www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/making-process>

Making Process

This art form needs lot of patience, delicacy and concentration. The leaves which are used for painting are usually peepal tree leaf or banyan tree leaf. Firstly the leaves are pluck from the tree and is been segregated in varied sizes. Then leaves are soaked in a bowl of water for about ten to fifteen days. Purpose of soaking the leaves is to remove the outer layer of the leaves. Leaves are transferred from one to many bowls of water to sustain the whiteness of the veins and to avoid the decaying of the leaves. After the leaves are completely sunk, it is been washed under soft flowing water with the hands and tooth brush very cautiously. This process needs to be done with very much patience. The outer surface of the leaves is washed off and the skeleton leaves are obtained which is in half white in colour. The skeleton leaves are kept for dry under the sunlight. Leaves after dried under the sun, it sustains some strength for itself which helps in holding the paints. Leaves are then packed and kept in a plastic pouch to avoid any kind of damage or dust.

Leaf is only painted with oil paints rather than other paints to get the lustrous effect. Further painting is done on the leaves with paints mixed with kerosene which gives out a good effect. First the leaf is kept on a flat broad to give support. Then it is composed with a drawing which is done with the help of number zero brush and black paint mixed with kerosene. The artisan chooses mother and child theme to draw. The artisan is so skilled and confident that he drew the figures free hand. Then bright colours are mixed with kerosene and is used to fill the drawn figure with number two to number four round brushes. Colours have been painted with the sense of colour composition. After painting completely, the leaf is given an embellished look by giving a bright florescent colour outline.

Flow Chart:



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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Contact Details



The outer layer of peepal leaf is removed and only the veins of the leaf is retained for painting purpose.

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<http://www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/making-process>

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. **Making Process**

4. Products

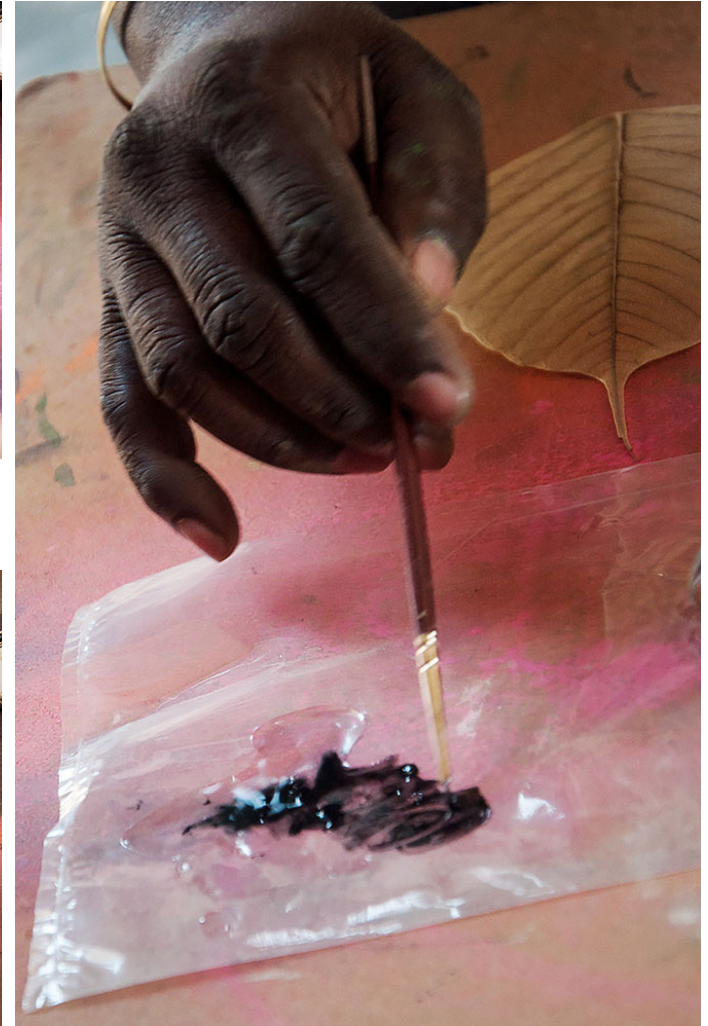
5. Contact Details



Black oil paint is used for the initial sketch.



Kerosene is also used in appropriate proportion to black oil paint.



Later, the black oil paint and the kerosene is mixed well to thinner the paint.

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Contact Details



A rough sketch is made on the leaf according to the theme.

Design Resource

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/making-process>

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. **Making Process**

4. Products

5. Contact Details



The close-up of the detailed sketch.



Colorful oil paints are mixed with kerosene according to the idea/need.



These colors are neatly painted/applied on the sketched area.

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Contact Details



In the next level the fluorescent pigment is also mixed with kerosene as it is not water soluble.



This fluorescent color is then applied on the leaf as a border.



The desired theme is completely painted on the peepal leaf.

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<http://www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/products>

Products

Greetings are made to share joy and happiness. The cards are filled with a lot of love and creativity. Leaf painting is an art to be shared about. This craft varies from each other with the theme depicted. Painting can be hanged on wall with a frame around or it can be just a greeting card. The leaf measures are of palm size. Customized orders are been taking by the artist from the foreign clients.

This beautiful craft is priced according to the design painted on it.

Prices vary from Rupees 25 to 40.



Some of the leaf paintings which are done for the occasion of Christmas and new-year.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. **Products**
5. Contact Details

Design Resource

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/products>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. **Products**
5. Contact Details



Intricately drawn Christ on the peepal leaf.



Mother and child is the most commonly used theme for leaf painting.



Christ is the main focus of these paintings as they are done on the occasion of Christmas.

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/leaf-art-painting-warangal/products>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. **Products**
5. Contact Details



Baby Jesus is uniquely portrayed.

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. **Products**
5. Contact Details



Series of paintings based on Jesus of different situations/stages.

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. **Products**
5. Contact Details



Most commonly used themes of birds and animals are also painted on leaves.

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. **Contact Details**