

Design Resource

Marble Stone Carving - Varanasi

The Skillful Crafts in Stone

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Ranjitha M. C.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/marble-stone-carving-varanasi>

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Introduction

Varanasi is also known as cultural capital of India. Whereas Varanasi has its unique culture and also known as Banaras or Kashi. Kashi Vishwanath temple is the most famous Hindu temple and it is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas. Varanasi has its own distinctive style of stone carving. Stone sculpture is an old and unique method of giving shape to the rough natural stone. The tradition of stone sculpture has started from 3200 BC and continued to the present era. There are several types of stones, which are mainly used for sculpture, are granite, limestone, sandstone, marble, soapstone, alabaster etc., Sculptors choose marble as their first choice because of its white shining surface, easy to work and it becomes hard and dense with age. White marble is a semi-transparent glass like stone, which permit light to penetrate into the stone resulting in the classic waxy look. Marble is one of the unusual stone hence it is expensive than other types of rock used in sculpture. Some of the world's most famous sculptures are produced from marble.

The marble sculptures are very famous in all over the world. The stone art is much common in every state of India. In India most of the marble sculptures are employed for sacred purpose. The creative artwork of marble sculptures allows admirable style and designs of best artistry that are accomplished with quality. Indian marble sculptors are recognized for refined proportion that is attained in the figures and the elegant designs in the architecture with the evenness.

Rajasthan is one of the marbles producing state in India. Marble sculptures not only long-lasting but they are classy and sophisticated as well. White marble is not only used for sculptures but also for building monuments. The 7th wonder of the world, Taj Mahal of Agra built by a great Mughal emperor Shah Jahan and the Supreme Court building was constructed by using several different types of marble and Temples of Dilwara in Mount Abu are the best examples.

Mr. Arun kumar sharma, a well-known senior artisan who learnt this sculpting technique from his ancestors. His grandfather has started marble carving at 1934. Mr. Sharma was interested in marble carving from his childhood. Initially they start with the clay modeling and then POP (plaster of paris) model is taken as a reference to carve marble. The price of the stone depends on the quality and the marbles are mainly brought from Rajasthan.

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Shirdi Sai Baba idol made of white marble stone.



Most charming durga idol of marble.

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Artisan working on the marble stone portraiture.



Artisans concentrating on the carvings of nameplates.

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Experienced artisans of marble stone carvings.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw materials required for Marble Stone Carving:

- **Ganga Mitti (clay):** Its used to build 3D model for reference.
- **POP (Plaster of Paris):** POP is mixed with water for mold casting.
- **Pottery Tools:** To detail the clay model.
- **L-shaped Scale:** To measure the stone according to the required size.
- **Customized Tools:** An improved tool for marble carving.
- **Riffler:** Its used to form details such as folds of clothing, hair, side lock etc.
- **Buffing Machine:** To remove the unwanted marble chunks.
- **Hammer:** To sculpt the stone by striking tools.
- **Batti:** A piece of stone to rub and smoothen the marble sculpture.



A block of marble used for carving portraitures and idols.



Hammer used while chiseling the marble stone.

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Small sized chisels that are used for detailed carvings.



Motorized cutting tool used for cutting marble stone.



Professional rotary tool is used to give depth and shape to the marble idols.



A tool that is used for checking the bevel and carvings of marble stone for its alignment and accuracy.

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Plaster of Paris is used for taking the mold of the portraiture.



Compass is used for measuring the dimensions.

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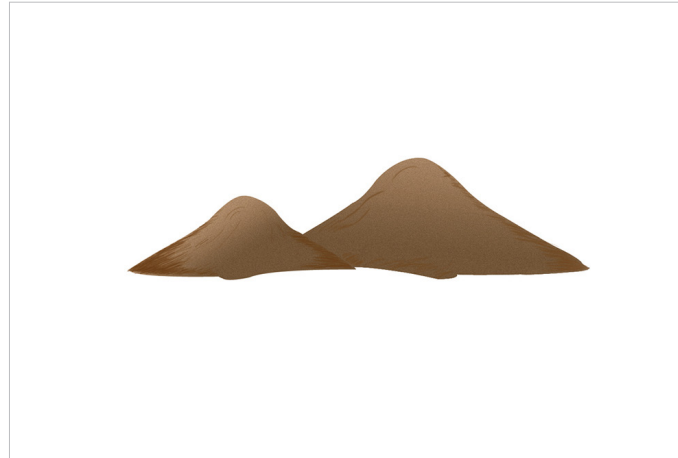
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Clay is the basic material used for preparing a reference model.



Smooth stone bits used for polishing the marble stone idols.

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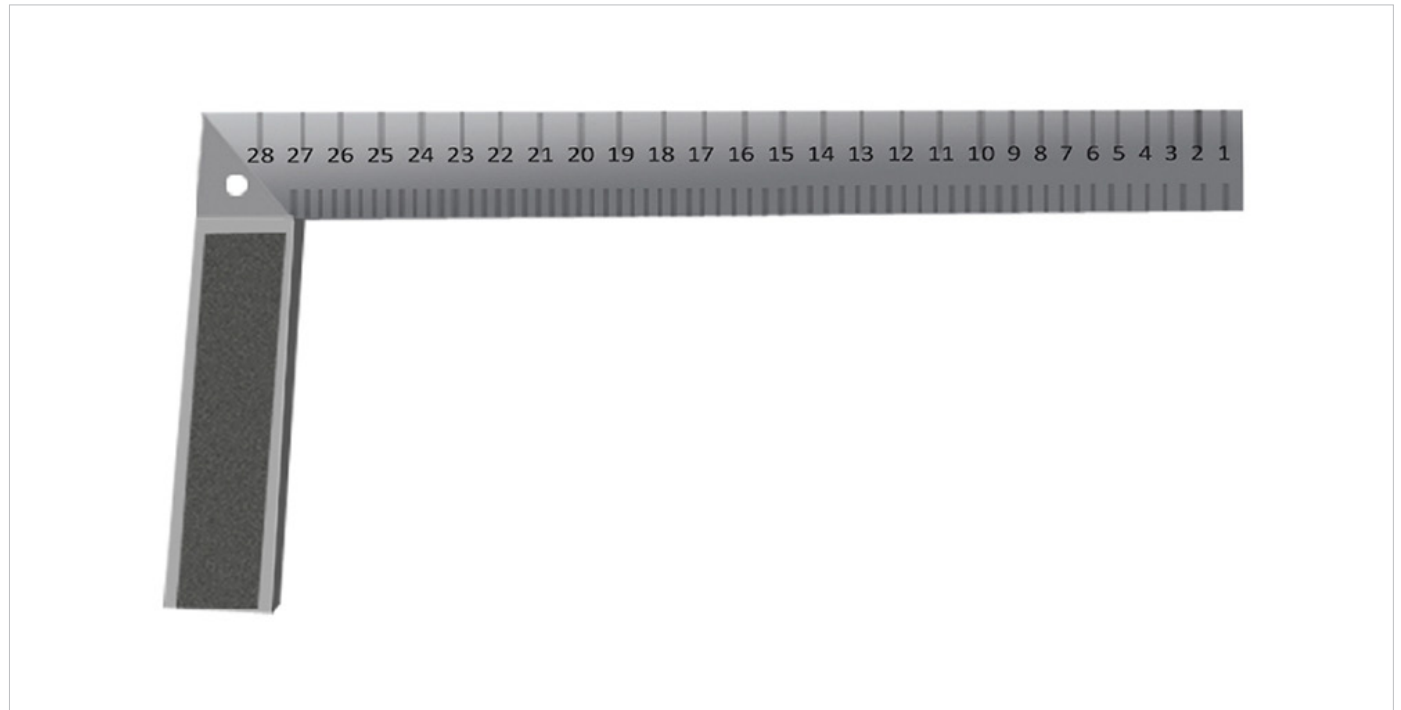
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L-angle scale is used for measuring length and breadth of the marble stone.

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Making Process

Marble stone, Ganga mitti and POP (Plaster of Paris) are the basic raw materials. Initially artisan draws the required copy on white paper and then starts with clay modeling according to the model reference and required size. Ganga Matti (clay) is used for clay modeling by checking whether it is useful or not. Artisan details the clay model by adding and removing extra clay. The clay model will be done in 3 to 4 days by not letting it to dry. Then the mixture of POP (plaster of Paris) and water (1ltr of water and 2kg POP) is applied to the detailed clay model to get a mold and then the liquid POP is poured to the 3D mold for POP model.

The marble stone is measured using L-shaped metal scale and marked with a pencil. Then the rough shape is given to the marble by removing large unwanted marble chunks using buffing machine and pitching tool according to the reference (POP model). Artisan starts to chisel out the stone by placing the point of the pitching tool against a preferred part of the stone and strikes the hammer with controlled strokes. Once done with the general rough shape, artisan uses other tools to refine the rough figure. The claw chisel is used to create parallel lines in the stone to add texture to the figure. At this stage artisan mark the removal area with a pencil and generally maintains a thinner stroke.

Gradually the sculptor changed the rough stone block into general shape of the statue. Detailing the sculpture requires dedication and patience. At this stage artisan starts detailing the sculpture using customized tools and riffer. Polishing is the last process of marble carving. Marble polishing stone called 'batti' which is available in local market of Varanasi is used to polish the marble sculpture. Artisan rubs the batti by pouring water to the sculpture to get a neat finish. Marble has the capability to take a high polish. Finally the polished sculpture is washed with clean water. Artisan start to paint the sculpture with the customer's interest. Enamel or oil based paints and round brushes are used to paint the sculpture.

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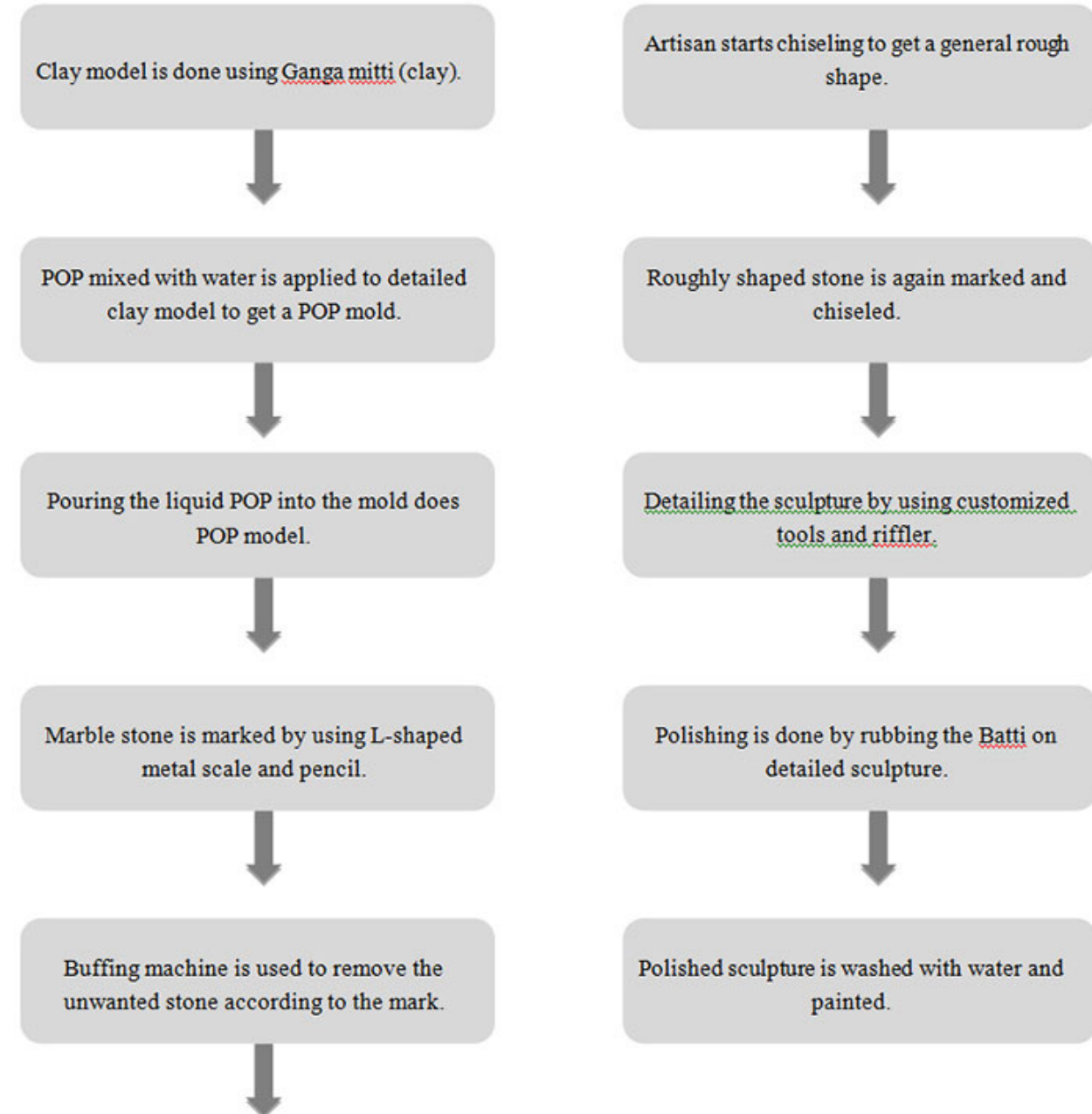
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Flow Chart:



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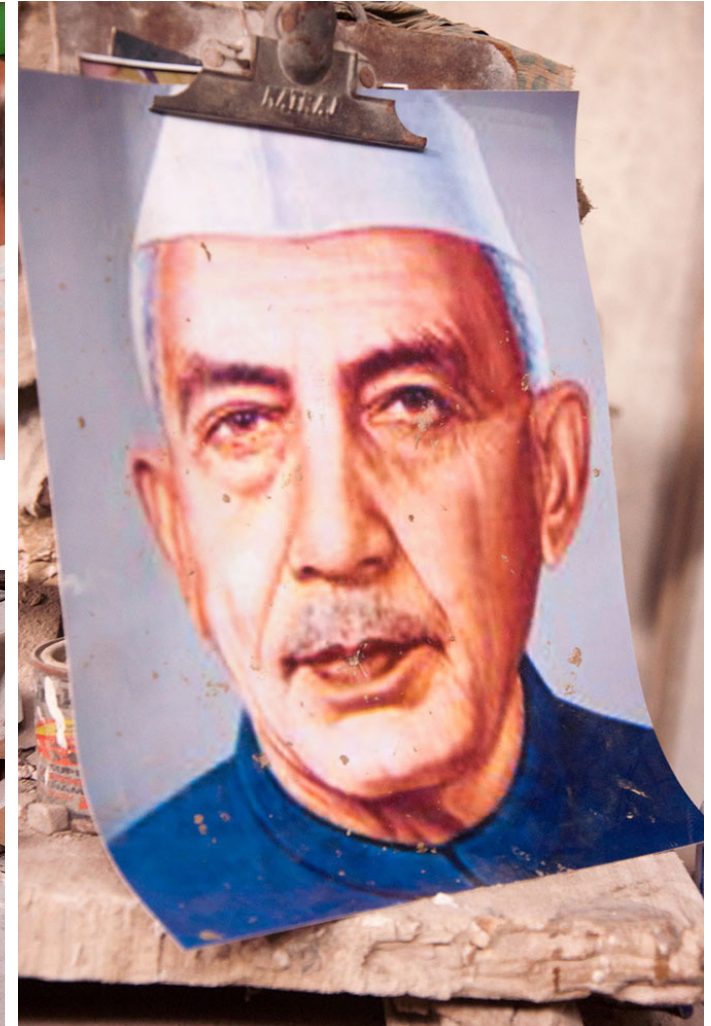
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According to the reference the clay model is prepared.



Once the clay model is finalized, according to the requirement the marble stone is selected.



To make a marble stone portraiture or an idol initially a reference photo is taken.

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On the selected stone of marble the markings are made.



As per the markings the initial layer of marble stone is cut.



A glimpse of artisan's work.

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Preliminary rough details of the idol are made using motorized cutting tool.



Basic carving of the idol is cross checked with the reference image.

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Then the detailed feature's measurements are taken from the plaster of paris mold.



According to the measurement detailed features are drawn on the marble idol.



The drawing on the idol is again double-checked with the reference mold.



Fine detailing of the features are made.

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Marble sculpture is then verified with reference idol for the overall appeal.

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By using the motorized tool shaping of the sculpture is made.



Smooth finishing is given to the marble sculpture as a final procedure.



Intricately carved marble idol is organized for sale.

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Products

Marble is also known as Royal stone especially prized for fine art sculpture. Marble is very admirable stone because of its brilliant white in colour and easy to carve. Mr. Arun Kumar Sharma, a renowned artisan who has 30 years of experience in this field. Apart from marble they use cement, sandstone and soapstone for sculpture. The size of the idols, which is made by the artisan, is from one foot to 6 feet. The group of artisans also makes traditional god and goddess's idols, marble name boards and relief sculptures that depends on the order placed by costumers.



Magnificently carved marble idol of Lord Ganesh.



Marble sculpture of Goddess Lakshmi.

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Beautifully colored Goddess Durga idol of marble stone.



Graceful statue of Goddess Lakshmi.

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Unique idol of Panchamukhi Shivling made of marble.

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