Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
introduction

Introduction

Mask-making is a skill that has been creatively practiced by artists in Orissa for a long time. The state has a history of folk theatre also known as 'Jatra'. The performing artists use masks based on their characterizations. These are made of papier-mache and cowdung, because in India, cows are an important part of daily life and considered sacred. Their dung is used as a base for a variety of artistic creations that build a hidden bond between the animal and the observer. Lord Jagannath and his triad were the only themes made initially but increasingly faces of other gods and goddesses and mythological characters are being made too.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/place

Place

The Heritage village of Raghurajpur is located 10 kilometers away from Puri (in Orissa) on the southern bank of the river Bhargavi, surrounded by tropical trees that give it the identity of a real Indian village. The air in Raghurajpur breeds artistry. It has a community of artisans who produce different varieties of handicraft items like pattachitra paintings, Ganjappa cards, palm leaf engravings, stone carvings, papier-mache masks and toys etc. And the exhibition of these colorful artifacts on the verandah of each artisan's house transforms the entire village into a living crafts museum.

Map of Raghurajpur.

The Heritage village of Raghurajpur.

The tropical trees of Raghurajpur.

Walls of houses painted by the artists who live here.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
place

The Heritage village of Raghurajpur.

Walls of houses painted by the artists who live here.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
place

The Heritage village of Raghurajpur.

The Heritage village of Raghurajpur.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
place

Electric pole in the village.

Srikhetra Maharana's house.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

People

Raghurajpur's leading painter, Jagannath Mahapatra has been instrumental in establishing Raghurajpur as the village of exquisite artists. Amongst other craftsmen who are exquisite at their work are mask-makers Srikhetra Maharana and Kumudini Maharana. They specialize in non-theatrical masks (ones that don't have cut-outs for eyes or nose) inspired by Hindu gods and goddesses. There are other mask-makers in the village too. Usually the women prepare the masks with cow-dung or paper-pulp and the male artists paint the features on them.

Kumudini Maharana.

Srikhetra Maharana's son.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
people

Srikhetra Maharana.

Srikhetra Maharana with his son and daughter.

Srikhetra Maharana's daughter at work.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
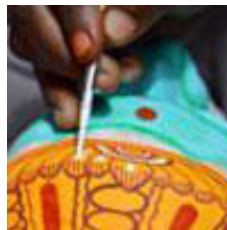by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/process

Process

Papier-mache is used in a variety of craft items including masks, toys and globes - all of them made in the same way.

Papier-mache

Cowdung

Painting

Packaging

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/papier-mache

Papier-mache

Paper, waste cloth and different kinds of natural fibers are soaked and then beaten into pulp. This forms the skeleton of any mask. To get these to stick together, a gum is made with 'imli ka beej' (tamarind seeds) by heating the powder (of crushed seeds) in water. This gum also gives the mask strength and protects it from termites. Layers of paper pulp are coated over the die (or sample mask) to give the desired shape. This is then left to dry in the sun.

'Imli ka beej' (tamarind seeds).

'Imli ka beej' (tamarind seeds).
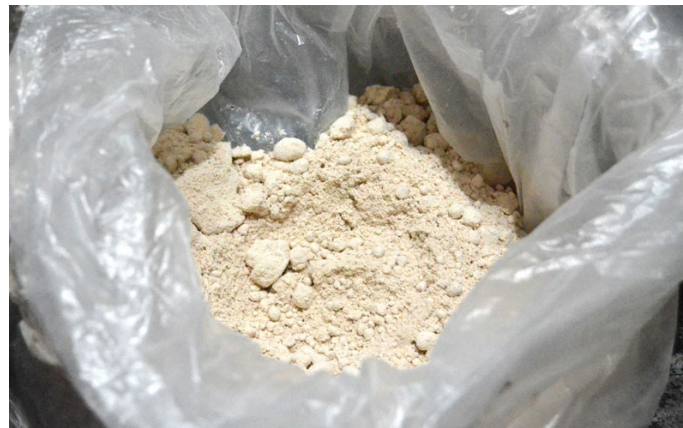
Crushed tamarind seeds.

Crushed tamarind seeds being mixed in water and heated.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/papier-mache

Tamarind seed paste being heated.

Tamarind seed gum.

Paper pulp being layered with gum to make it take the shape of the die.

Paper pulp being layered with gum to make it take the shape of the die.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/papier-mache

First layer of paper is removed from the die.

First layer of paper is removed from the die.

First layer of paper is removed from the die.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Cowdung

Cow-dung (or sometimes other bio-waste) is added for making the body and reinforcement of the mask. It is layered on top of the paper pulp. Sometimes, another coat of paper and cow-dung is done to make the mask even stronger. Spreading cow-dung on the layer of paper results in a medium that is extremely malleable, having the possibility of being molded into countless forms. While wet, the dung can be chiselled or shaped with a knife to add facial features on the mask like eyes, nose, lips etc. This is then left to dry in the sun before it is coated with a mix of chalk powder and tamarind gum.

ACowdung being coated on the layer of paper.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/cowdung

Cowdung being coated on the layer of paper.

Water used to make the cowdung more malleable.

Cowdung being coated on the layer of paper.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/cowdung

Cowdung being coated on the layer of paper.

Cowdung being coated on the layer of paper.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/cowdung

After being sun-dried, another coat of paper being done on the cowdung.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

After being sun-dried, another coat of paper being done on the cowdung.

After being sun-dried, another coat of paper being done on the cowdung.

Facial features being chiseled out.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/cowdung

Facial features being chiseled out.

Facial features being chiseled out.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/cowdung

A wide range of masks.

A wide range of masks.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/cowdung

Masks left to dry in the sun.

Mask left to dry in the sun, changing color of the cowdung being evident.

The die and the mask made from it.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/cowdung

Several stages of the mask.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Painting

The final form of the mask is painted in bright colors, beginning with lighter colors and progressing to the dark. These are either procured from the nearby markets or made at home. Red is the most expensive of them all - costs approximately fifteen thousand rupees per kilogram - and black is the cheapest because it is made at home with kaajal (soot). Traditional details like earrings, nose-ring and headgear make these masks characteristic of Orissa.

The masks are coated with a mix of chalk powder and tamarind gum .

Yellow color being diluted a bit.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/painting

Color being mixed well.

Srikhetra Maharana at work.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/painting

The first color, yellow, being painted on the mask.

The first color, yellow, being painted on the mask.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Half-finished Hanuman, a Hindu god.

Half-finished Hanuman, a Hindu god.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/painting
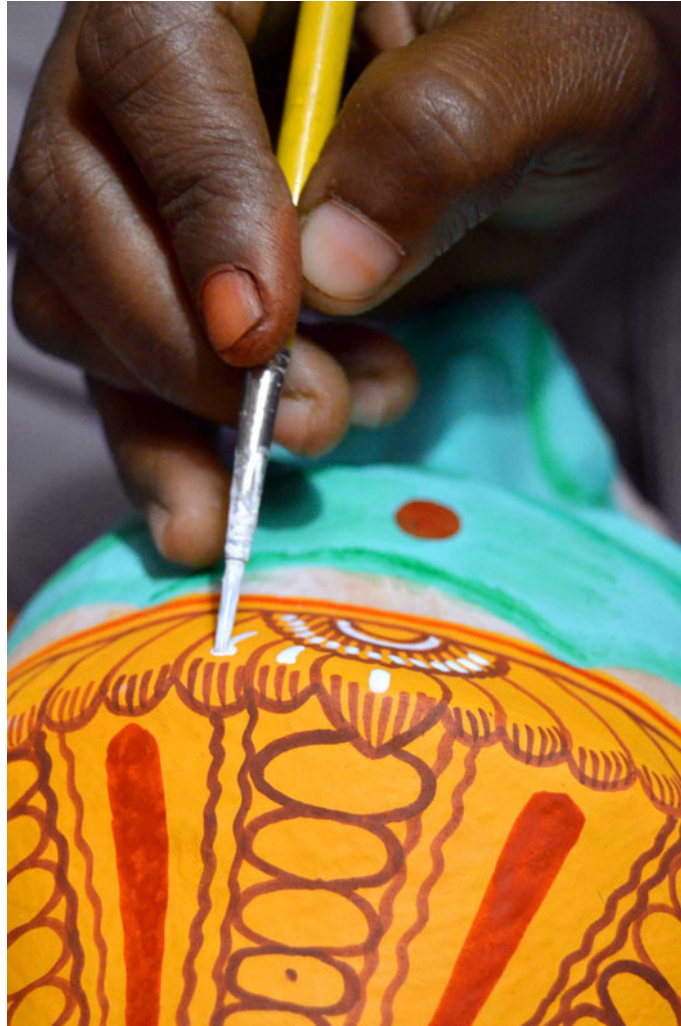
Headgear of the mask being detailed.

Eyebrows of the demon mask being made.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/painting
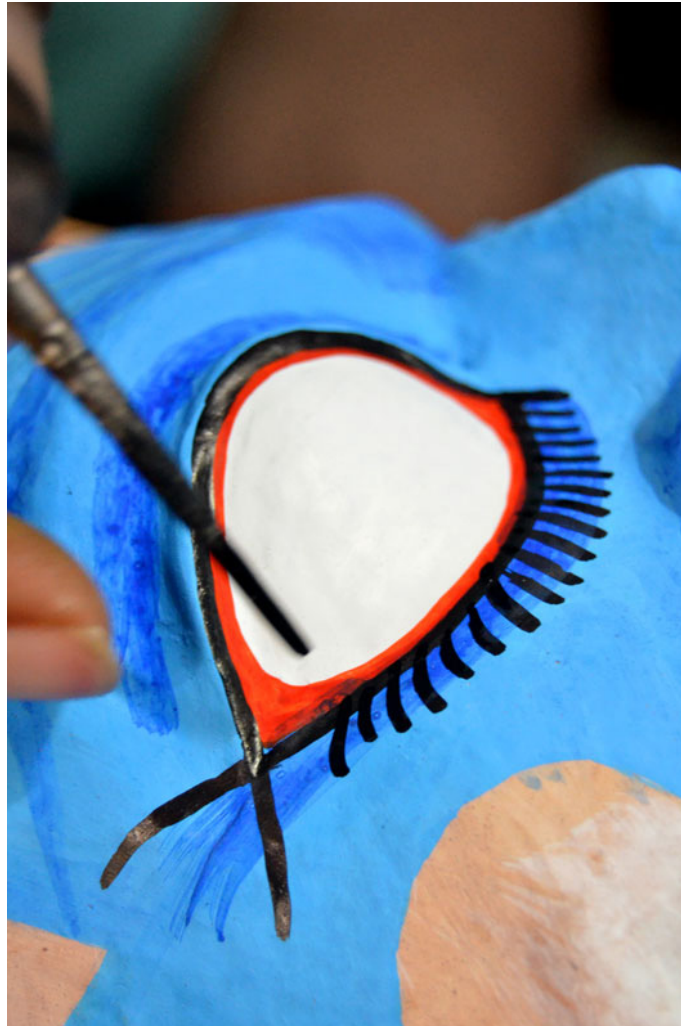
Eyelashes of the demon mask being made.
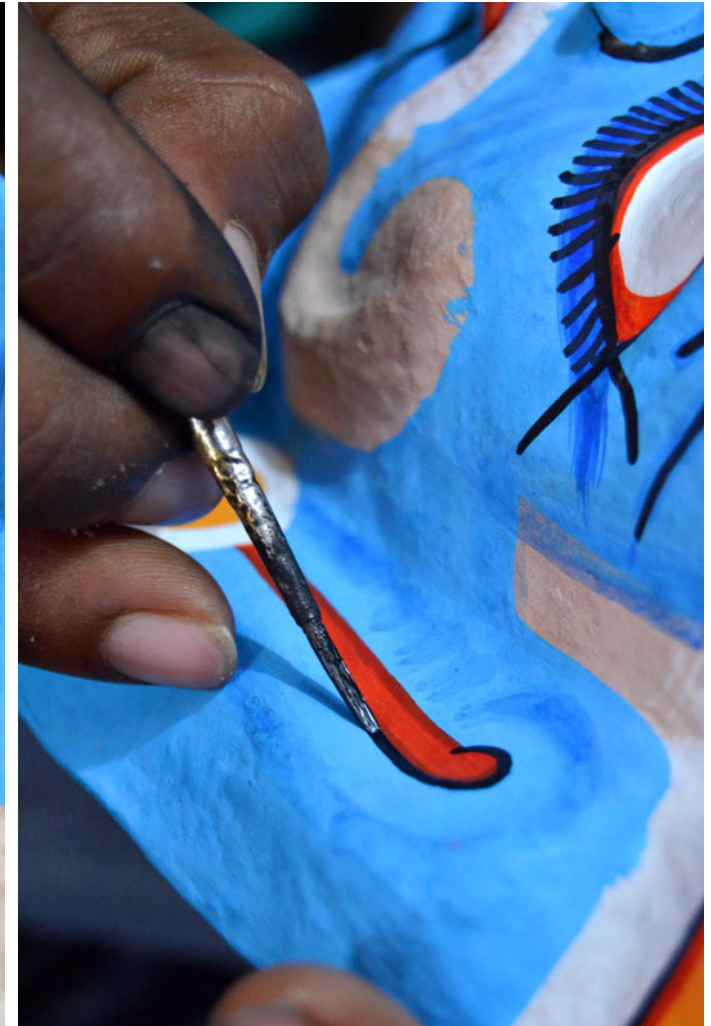
Ears of the demon being made.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/painting

Eyes of the demon being outlined.

Half finished goddess.

Stages of painting the mask, the last one isn't complete yet.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
process/packaging

Packaging

The masks are stacked on top of each other, keeping a sheet of newspaper in between. The forms fit well on each other because of the principle of negative and positive space. These are then stored in cardboard boxes or hung outside the house for visual display, looking inviting enough for the tourists that pass them by.
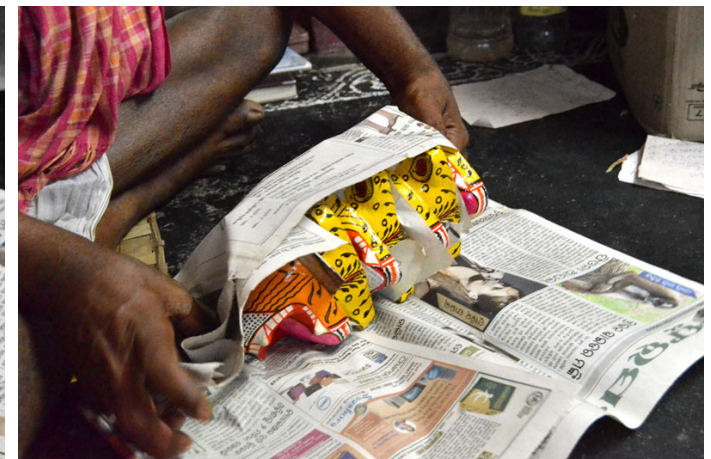

Srikhetra Maharana maintaining his inventory.

Masks being stacked, one on top of the other.

Newspaper sheets being inserted between the masks.

Masks being packed for storage.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Products

The range of masks includes ones of Hindu gods and goddesses, especially Lord Jagannath, the focus of any art-ists' life in Orissa. Other products include handbags, toys and door hangings. These have immense demand in the market because they are not only aesthetically beautiful but strong and durable as well.

Mask of a Hindu goddess.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/products

Lord Jagannath with his brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra.

Mask of a tiger.

Mask of a Hindu god.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
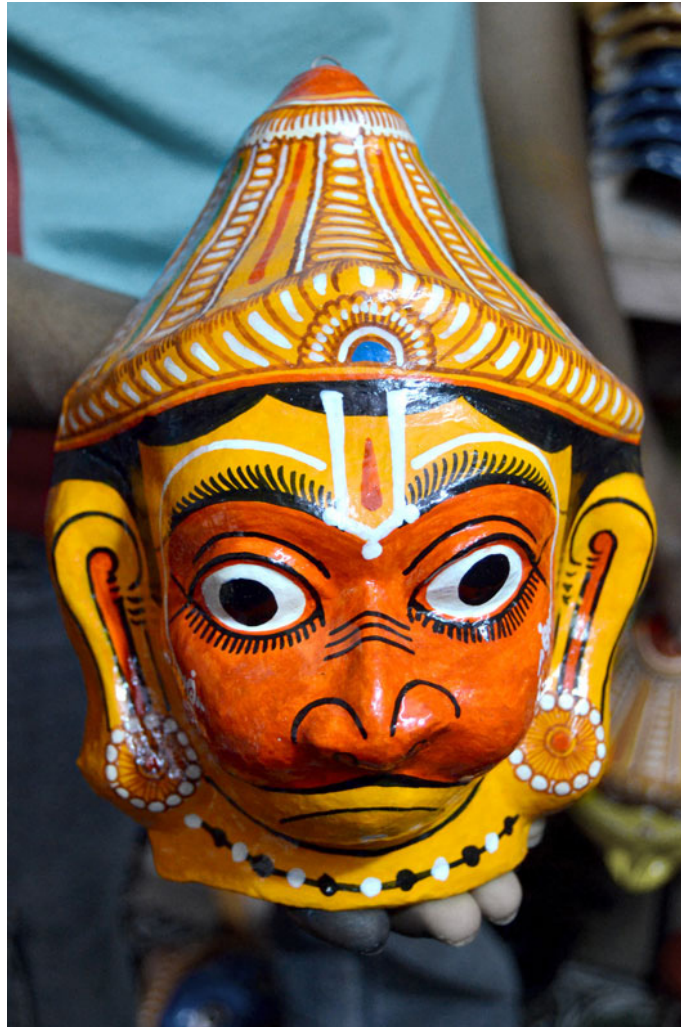products

Mask of the Hindu god Hanuman.

Demon mask.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
products

Mask of a Hindu goddess.

Mask of the Hindu god Ganesha.

Design Resource

Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Mask of the Hindu god Ganesha.

Visual display outside the craftsman's house.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/products

Mask of a tiger.

Mask of a tiger.

Design Resource
Masks of Raghurajpur
Papier-Mache and Cowdung Masks
by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/masks-raghurajpur/
contact-details

Contact Details

This documentation was done by Sakshi Gambhir, M. Des., IDC, IIT Bombay.

You can get in touch with her at sakshigambhir[at]gmail.com

You could write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

• **Keshab Handicrafts:**
Name: Srikhetra Maharana
Mobile: 9938142846

Helpdesk Details:
Co-ordinator
Project e-kalpa
Industrial Design Centre
IIT Bombay
Powai
Mumbai 4000 076
India
Phone: 091-22-25767820/ 7801/ 7802
Fax: 091-22-25767803
Email: dsource.in[at]gmail.com