

Design Resource

## Modern Applique Work - Puri, Orissa

A Traditional Patchwork

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and  
Ranjitha M. C.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/modern-applique-work-puri-orissa>

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## Introduction

Puri is a sacred land of Lord Jagannath that is recognized by several names from the ancient times and also known as Srikshetra. Puri has been selected as one of the cultural cities for Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) plan of Government of India. In Rigneda, it is revealed as a place named Purushaman-dama – grama that means the place where the creator divinity of the world – Supreme deity worshipped on an altar or mandapa was deified near the coast and devotions offered with Vedic chants. As time passed the name got changed to Purushottama Puri and then abstracted as Puri, and the Purusha comes to known as Jagannath. Hence the name Puri Jagannatha and it is believed that Lord Jagannath is an avatar of Lord Vishnu. The Puri city is famous for its annual chariot festival or Rath Yatra.

Applique work is a traditional patchwork that has a long history in Odisha. The term applique is derived from the French word appliquer, which means 'to put on' or applied or things that has been applied. This applique work is normally dependent on some bright colours that is red, white, black, yellow, green and blue etc. The artisans skillfully stitch the traditional motifs like animals, birds and flowers on fabric. Modern applique art form mainly inspired by the religious in nature and it is closely connected with religious traditions. Applique is nothing but surface design, which is used to embellish a garment or product. The famous Rath Yatra awnings on the chriots are adorned with elegant applique motifs and colours that were authorized centuries ago. As per tradition, the colours of the canopies are predetermined. The Taladhawaja (chariot of Balabhadra) has a bright red and black canopy. Lord Jagannath chariot called Nadigosha has bright red and yellow canopy and Subhadra called as Pad-madhwaja or Darpadalana has bright red and black canopy.

Modern applique art is a unique technique by which the enhancing effect is gained by superposing pieces of coloured fabric on basic fabric in predetermined layout and sequence, the patch edges are sewed. The applique work is normally done by hand. In olden days applique work was confined to the Darji (tailor caste). Initially the designs are traced on the cloth and then patterns are sewed. Finally embroidering will do the detailing. In applique work there are two different categories such as Traditional Pipli applique work and Modern applique work. Modern applique work is nothing but traditional patchwork mainly based on daily life and religious festivals with less embroidery work where as traditional applique work is based on the traditional aspects and decorated with traditional embroidery designs using mirrors.

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The designs on handbags are of contemporary lifestyle.



Wall hanging made of applique work.



Glimpse of modern applique work.

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Portrayal of Radha Krishna.



Skilled artisan setting the pieces of fabric with the motif of applique work.



Artisans those who are skilled in crafting applique work.

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## Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw materials used for modern applique work:

- **Cotton Fabric:** A basic material for applique work.
- **Cotton Thread and Needle:** To join the patterns and for embroidering.
- **Tracing Sheet and Pen:** Used to trace the required design on fabric.
- **Scissor:** To cut the traced patters and to remove extra threads.
- **Iron Box:** To press the applique work to remove wrinkles.



Iron box is used for ironing the final product.



Pen is used for tracing out the sketch for applique work.

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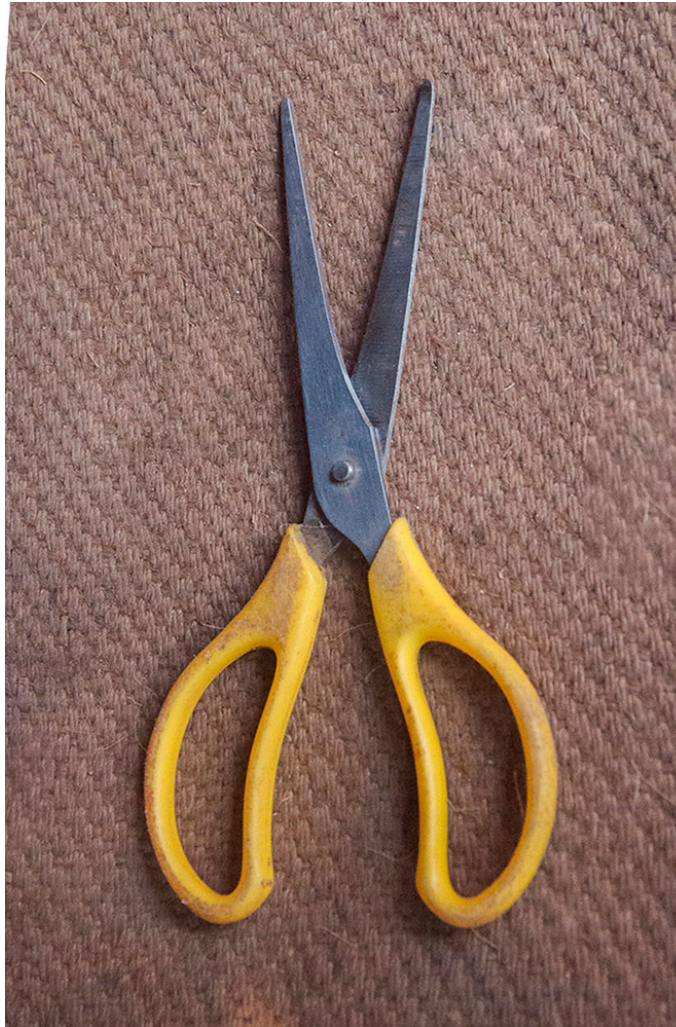
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Scissor is used for cutting the excess fabric and thread.



Cotton cloth is cut as per the motifs and prepared a product of applique work.



Needle and thread is used for stitching the cut pieces of fabric to the base cloth.

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Quora cloth is used as the base fabric for applique work.

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## Making Process

A modern applique work signifies to a needlework where designs or representative scenes are created by attaching small pieces of clothes to a large piece of bright or contrast colour fabric. Modern applique work is mainly based on three elements such as stitches, strips and patchwork. Whereas chain stitch (chikana) is normally used for applique work but other stitches like hem stitch, running stitch, tag stitch, stem stitch etc., are also used. Different styles of strips (pattti) are used to make applique work such as flower motif (phula patti), plain strip (sadha patti), right-facing cone pattern (nahara patti), wavy strip (gula patti), diamond-shaped strip (khandiyali patti), square strip (chauka patti), swan strip (hansa patti) and clubs strip (chidiya patti) etc. Applique work motifs include trees, creepers, leaves, flowers, birds, animals, fish, celestial bodies and symbols etc. The raw materials are purchased from local market of Puri and some materials are from Kolkata and Bombay through dealers.

Primarily required design is drawn on cloth and patterns or designs are traced by placing the tracing sheet in-between the clothes. The dotted line shows where one piece overlaps the other and other marks signify the position of embroidery stitches for decorative purposes. Before starting the applique work process, the base cloth is cut and prepared for stitching. Then the selected patterns are cut and placed on the base cloth according to the selected theme. Minimum 10 to 12 layers of clothes are tagged to cut the traced patterns. The patterns are tagged blindly, which holds the patterns in position. The hemming stitch is used to stitch patterns on the base cloth, where the edges are turned in and then stitched to get a neat finish. The colour of the thread depends on the fabric colour. Once done with the hemming stitch, artisan starts with the embroidery work for detailing. The lining is stitched at the backside of the base cloth. Finally ironing is done to remove wrinkles and to get a neat finish.

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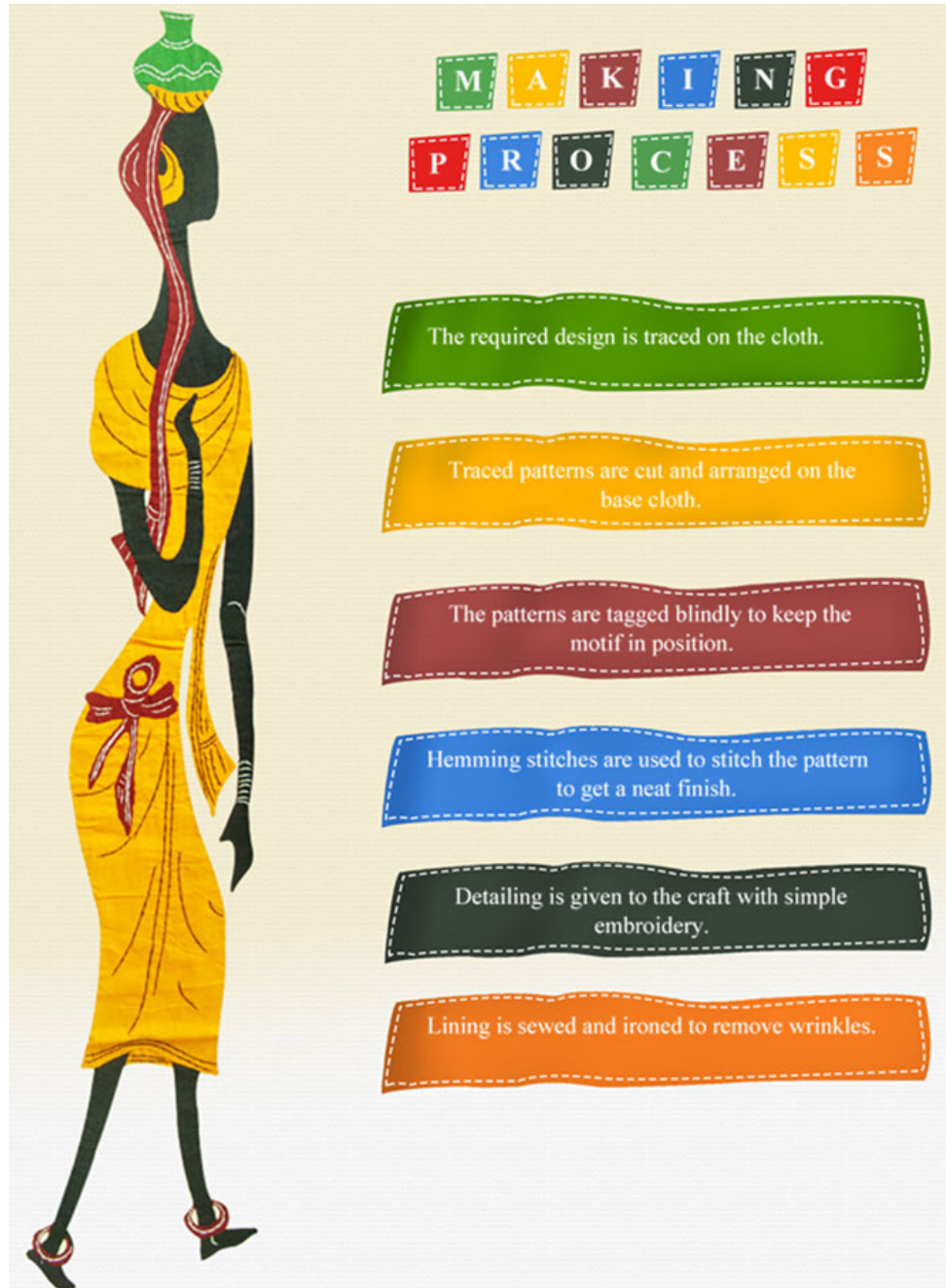
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Fabric of appropriate color is selected for the work.



Fabrics are spread one on the other and designs are sketched to prepare the stencil.



Impressions are made on the cloth underneath using stencil.

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Then the multiple fabrics are held together, one below the other and stitched, for the grip purpose.



Glimpse of the entire fabric on which the imprints are made.



As per the design the fabrics are cut.

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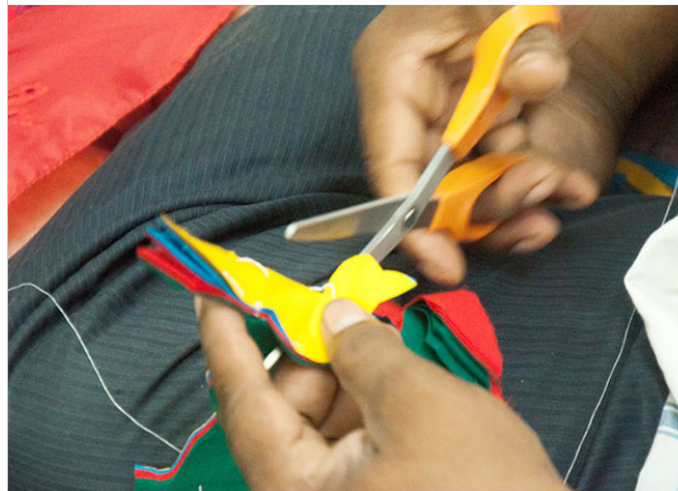
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Close-up of multiple fabrics being cut as per the design.



Preview of fabric cuttings made according to the motif.

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These small designery fabric bits are placed on the base cloth.



As per the theme entire fabric bits are neatly arranged.



Artisan then initiates to stitch the entire fabric bits to the base cloth randomly.



Close-up of the stitch that is made.

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Entire theme is bounded on the base cloth with a single random stitch.

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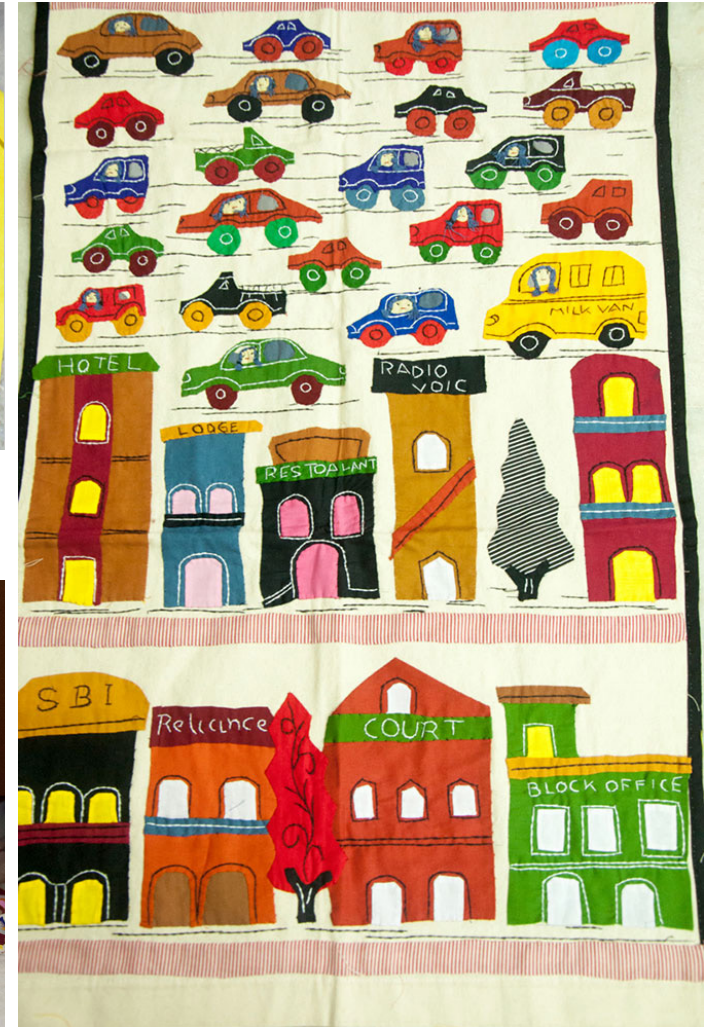
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On the next level every fabric bit is precisely sewed as an outline to the base cloth and then the random stitch is removed.



Then the fabric material on which the applique work is made is neatly ironed.



And displayed at the store for sale.

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## Products

Modernization and market demand tremendously changed the applique products and patterns. Nowadays these Modern applique wall hangings, pillow covers, bedspreads, bags, umbrellas and party canopies have become quite famous and adorable in the urban market. Modern applique works are timeless, they elegance any settings like traditional as well as modern or art deco. The tradition fusions with modernity by signing the huge array of applique art stuffs. Mr. Devi Prasanna Nanda, president of Puri Creative Handicraft Society who started this implementing agency in 1980 and also explains that 90% of the employees who involved in this craft are women. The price for the craft will be depends on the size and design that starts from INR.30.



Example of an applique substantial.

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Applique work done on handbags using colorful bits of fabric.



Scenic view of modern city depicted through applique work.

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Artisan displaying the village scene.



Lord Ganesha is portrayed using the fabric pieces of minimal colors.



Buddha illustrated through applique work.

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Japanese warriors depicted on an applique wall hanging.



A theme of former family narrated on a wall hanging.

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A combination of different motifs put together to make a single wall hanging.

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## Video



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