Design Resource

Papier Mache Mask - Panaji, Goa

Crunched Paper Art

by
Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and Rakshitha
NID, Bengaluru

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/papier-mache-mask-panaji-goa

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

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

Introduction

The credits of inventing paper is gained by Chinese during Han dynasty of 2nd century AD. They in the later days developed the papier mache pulp. This technique spread to Arabs in Samarkand during the Chinese-Persian war in the 8th century. In the due course of time the technique of making papier mache pulp spread to Morocco and in 10th century it spread to France and Germany. Italians also acquired the knowledge of this technique and from Italy it spread to India and Persia. During 18th and 19th century craftsmen of Persia started producing plates, mirror cases, toys and pencil boxes using the technique of paper mache. These items were also produced by Indians for the decorative purpose by designing the small flowers and foliage in the Florentine style. Such designs were possibly introduced during the time of building 'Taj Mahal' in 17th century.

Papier mache was used as a commercial medium in the mid of 17th century for the first time by the people of France. They were inspired by Chinese and Japanese imports of the paper mache artifacts, to do so. Later in 1840s papier mache furniture became popular in France and in England, who were the chief producers of the finest pieces of paper mache furniture ever made. French also prepared the dolls heads using papier mache technique during 16th century and in the 18th century this idea spread across Europe to Germany and England.

The original term 'papier mache' means crunched paper but it is also used for referring the objects that are made of different types of paper construction including paper pulp, paper strips and paper sheets. It is spelled in many ways ranging from 'papier mache', 'papier machie' etc. The term paper mache is also used for the three dimensional objects that has a paper core. The art of making papier mache objects cherished worldwide for its unique sense of beauty and careful craftsmanship. Papier mache is an amusing and nice way to sculpt anything. It is the paper pulp mixed with glue (flour and water) that is moulded and dried to prepare the hard material which is later enameled for the decorative purpose. Mughal miniatures are one of the great inspirations for the Indian modern papier mache artists. Initially this art was introduced to Kashmir in India and Kashmiri papier mache artists used this technique for creating pen cases and pencil boxes. In later eighteenth – nineteenth century apart from Kashmir it spread to Rajasthan, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and other states of the country.

To prepare the three-dimensional sculpture and temporary sculptures like Carnival floats Paper mache technique is used for these large products. But for preparing these huge sculptures metal, wood and metal wires are used as the basic structure on which the paper mache is covered all around. Then they are sanded completely and painted to make it look attractive. These floats are often huge and the themes for these floats usually comprises of numerous props, characters and elements that are very scenic. These carnival floats accommodates masses of people and the mechanisms in them that also have movable parts and facial features and limbs of the character.

Italian float makers are often recognized as the best in the world for preparing the paper mache carnival floats.

But in contemporary world papier mache technique is used by the professional artists for creating the marvelous art works choosing papier mache as their chosen medium. Many schools and art colleges use papier mache as their friendly medium for art and design.

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

Artisan is busy making the paper mask at Goa.

Paper bits are stuck one after the other.

Paper bit is being soaked in water.

Painting of the mask is done carefully.

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

Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw materials used for the process of papier mache mask:

- **Clay:** Clay is the material that is used for preparing the basic model of the mask.
- **Newspaper:** Newspaper is used for preparing the papier mache mask.
- **Water:** Water is used for soaking the newspaper bits.
- **Plaster of Paris:** Plaster of Paris is used for preparing the mould for the mask.
- **Maida Flour:** This is used for preparing the glue.
- **Glue:** Glue is used for sticking the paper bits to one another.
- **Paint:** Paint is used for coloring the mask to give an attractive look.
- **Paint Brush:** Paint brush is used for applying the paint on the mask.
- **Waste Cloth:** Waste cloth is used for wiping out the extra glue.
- **Bowl:** Bowl is used for storing the water and glue.

Clay is the raw material used for preparing the model for papier mache mask.

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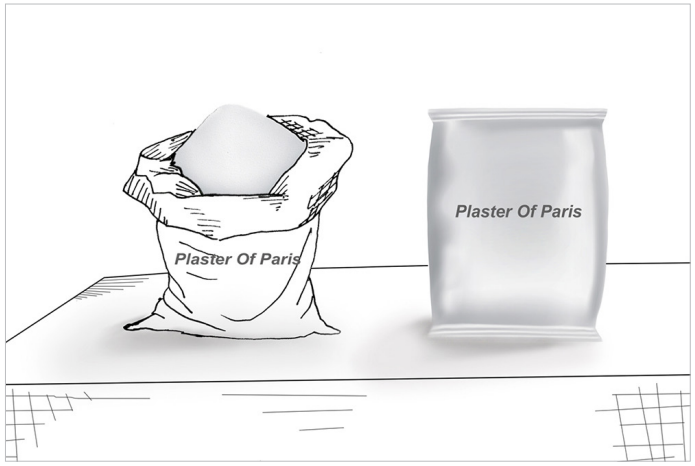
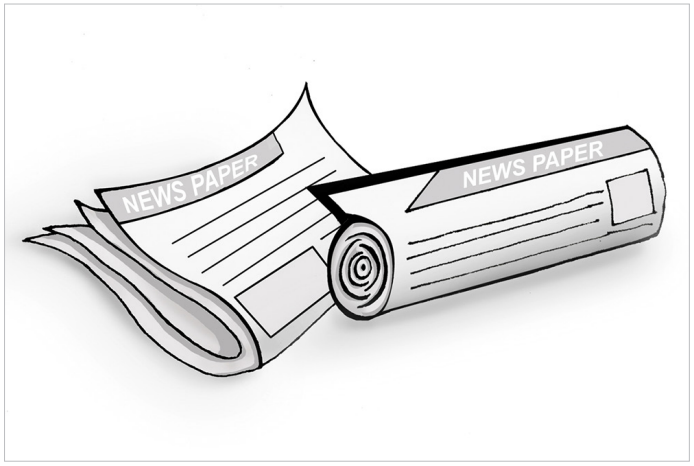
1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Plaster of Paris is the raw material that is used for making the mould of clay model.



Newspaper is used for sticking it on the POP mould.

Glue is used for sticking the pieces of paper on to the POP mould.

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

Water is used for soaking the paper.

Paintbrushes are used for painting and drawing the features on the mask.

Paints are used for beautifying the paper mache mask by applying them on mask.

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

Making Process

The process of making papier mache mask begins by preparing the clay model as the most fundamental startup procedure. Mud is mixed with water and kneaded thoroughly for making clay. This clay is used for preparing a model for the mask. Once the clay model is prepared and dried, the paste of plaster of Paris is applied on it and the moulding is done. After the POP moulding is dried, the clay model is removed/separated from the mould.

Once the mould of plaster of Paris (POP) is prepared, newspaper is shred into several strips and soaked in water. The number of newspaper strips depends on the size of the face/mask. These paper strips are applied one by one on the inside portion of the POP mould. Usually the horizontal wide strips are laid on the jawline and forehead regions of the mould and the longer vertical strip's on the nose region. After completing a layer of applying the paper bits on the mould, the dry newspaper bits/strips are stuck on the wet paper bits using the glue. This glue is also a preparation of the artisan. Maida flour mixed with water is blunt until the paste is smooth and reaches the gluey consistency. This paste is used as the glue here. By using this glue the multiple layers of newspaper strips are stuck one on the other by overlapping the each strip with a new one and pressed with the cloth to wipe out the glue that is excess and it is dried. After the layer of paper strips are dried, it is removed from the POP mould and the holes are made as the nostrils and other two holes are made in the eye region for the wearer to see. Later the paper mask is completely painted with acrylic colors and made attractive by giving the fine detailing of the features. Here the acrylic colors are most likely preferred for painting because they are thick enough to cover the pictures and words that are on the newspaper strips. Once the mask is dried it is sold according to the customer's requirement/need.

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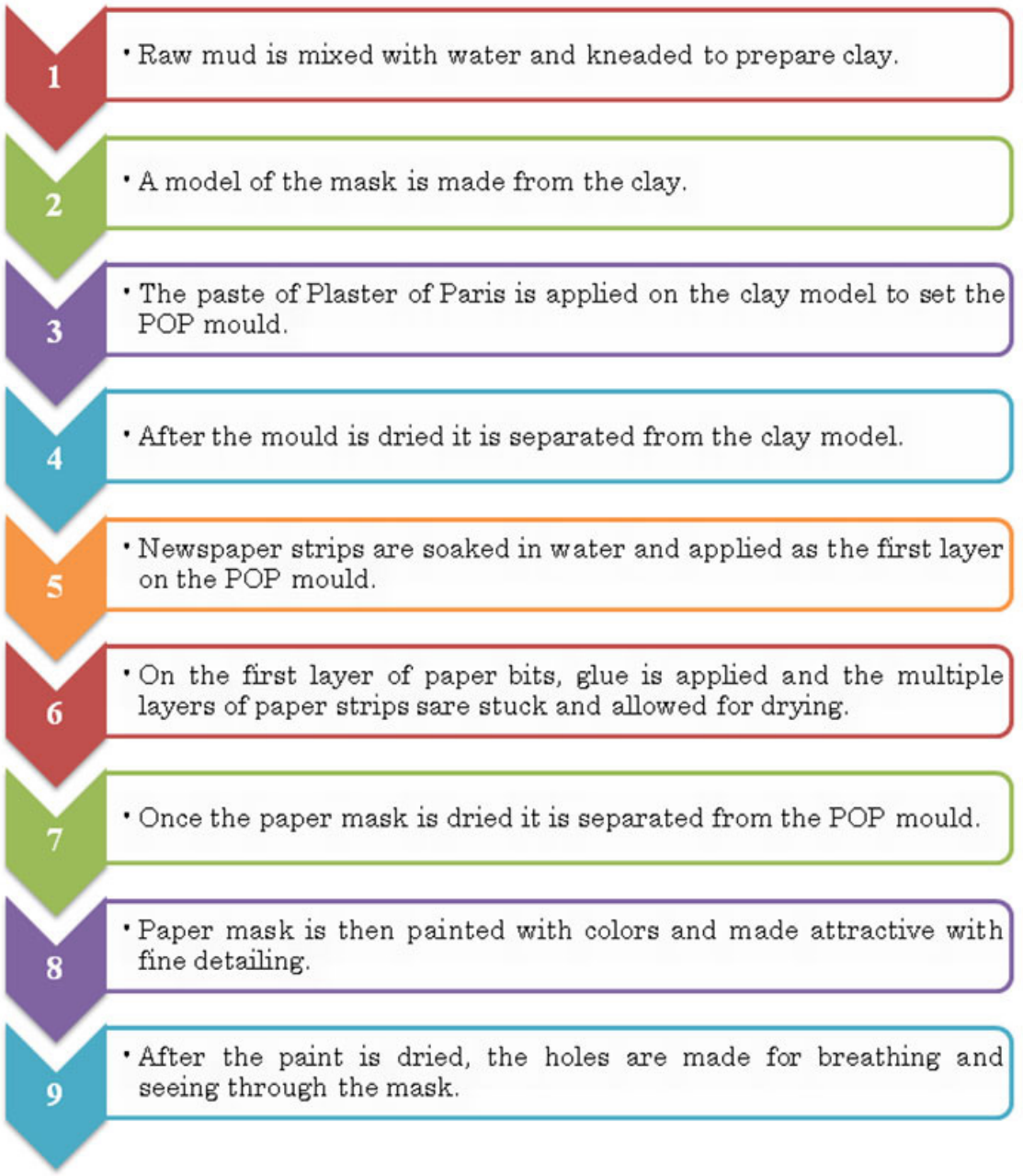
1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Flow Chart:



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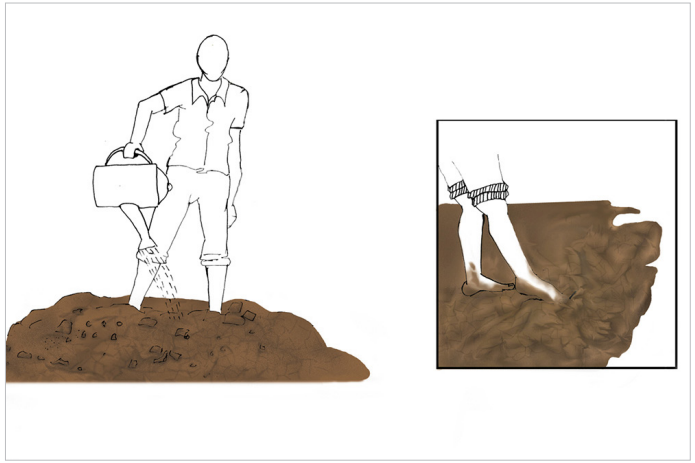
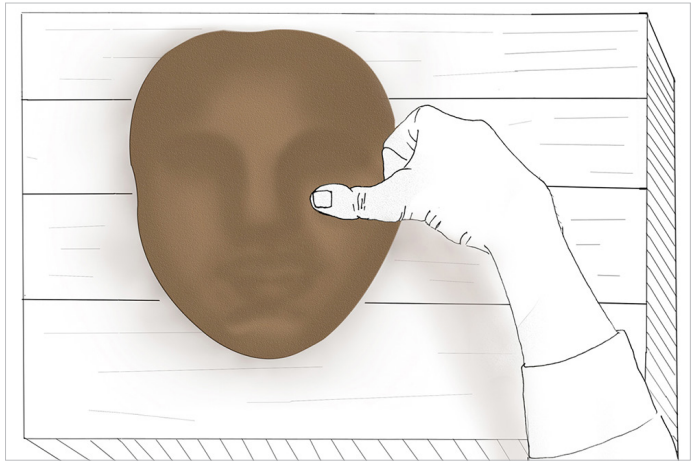
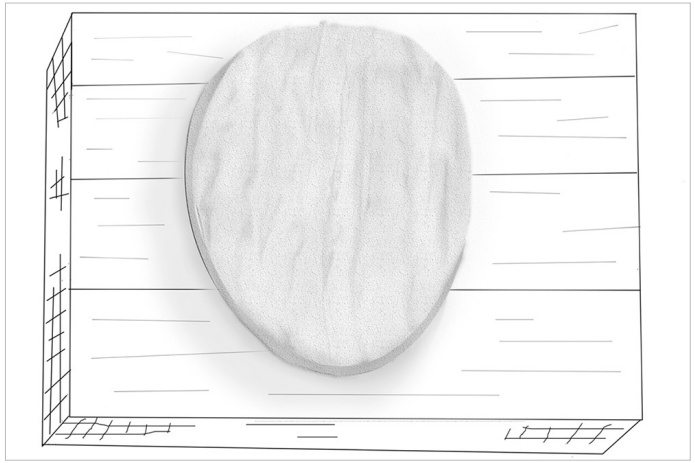
1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



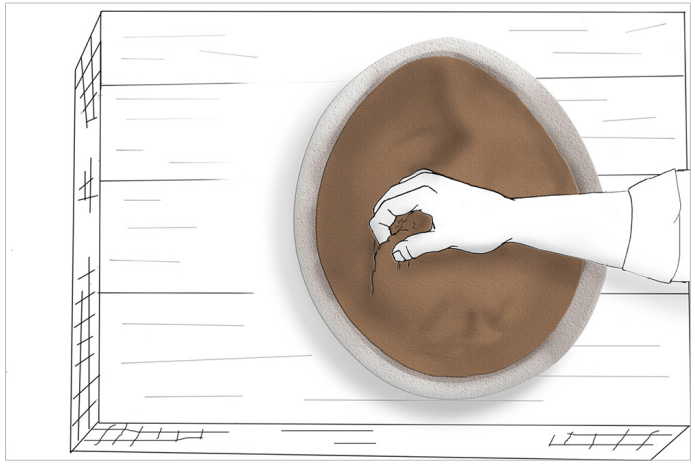
Raw mud is mixed with water and the clay is prepared.



A model of the mask is made from the clay.



Plaster of Paris is applied on the clay model to set the POP mould.



Then the POP mould is removed from the clay model.

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http://www.dsource.in/resource/papier-mache-mask-panaji-goa/making-process

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

And the pieces of paper are soaked in water.

These bits of wet paper is stuck on the POP mould.

The first layer of paper bits on the POP mould is put.

Then the glue is taken.

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

This glue is applied on the bits of paper.

Glue is spread equally all over the pieces of paper.

And then the glued paper bits are stuck on the POP mould as the second layer.

Using the cloth the pressure is applied and pressed on the mask that helps the paper to stick strongly.

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

The space is made for the nose region in the mask.

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

The paper mask is then allowed for drying.

Once the paper mask is dried it is separated from the POP mould.

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Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/papier-mache-mask-panaji-goa/making-process

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

Paper mask is then painted.

The initial coat of painting done on mask is allowed for drying.

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

Holes are made as the nostrils for the mask.

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

Then the detailing of the features is made by the paint on the mask.

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Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/papier-mache-mask-panaji-goa/products

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

Products

Papier mache objects are more fashionable now a days. It ranges from decorative objects to utility items and most often created are decorative boxes of different size and shape. Some of the utility items that are made of paper mache are hangings, latter racks, photo frames, trays, bowls, coaster sets and vases of innumerable shapes and sizes. Most commonly used papier mache for Christmas decorations in bell shape and ball shape, masks and many animal figures. Also now a days furniture items like stool and tables are in great demand. The best advantage of this paper mache technique is that they are of light in weight and the greatest attraction of this is, that they are beautifully painted crafts being the dark bright colors as the background, which are often admired by the people.

Papier mache mask is ready with the fine detailing on it.

Craftsman displays the usage of the mask.

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

Video

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

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