

Design Resource

Papier Mache Masks - Orissa

The Craft of Expressions on Paper

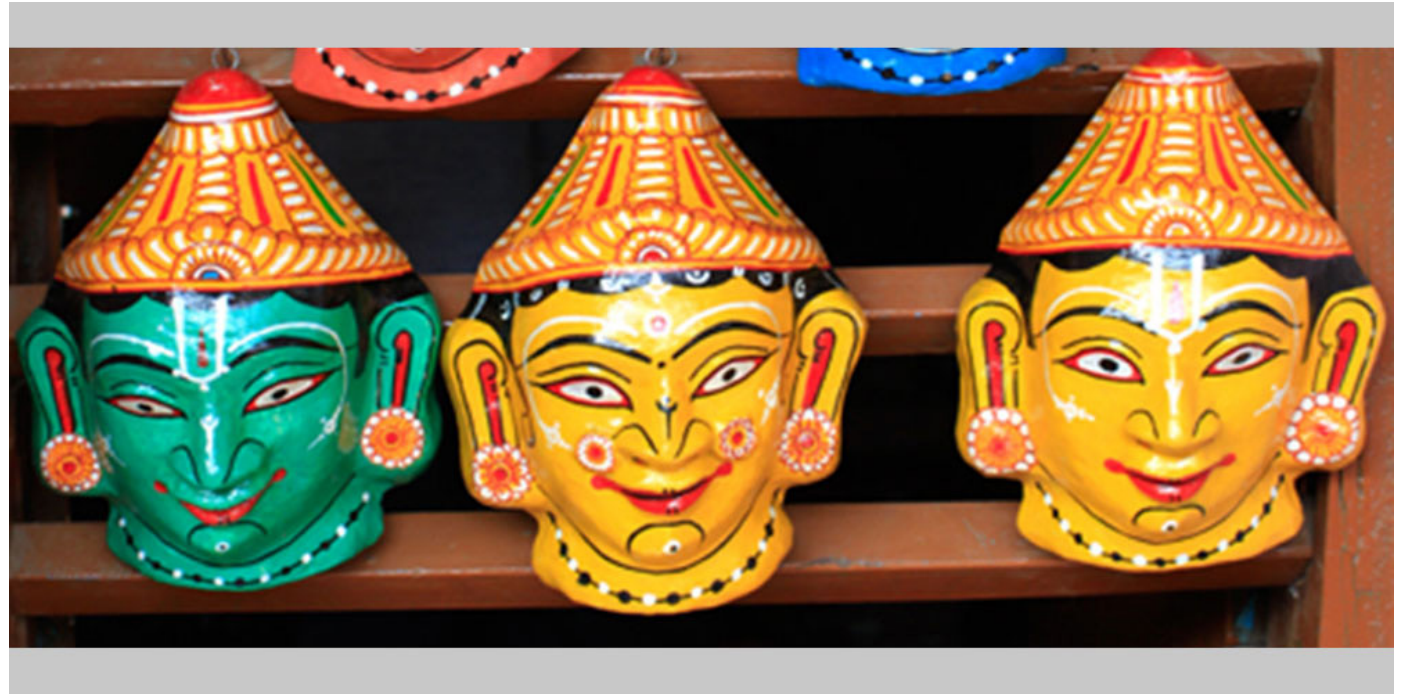
by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Mr. Antony William

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://dsource.in/resource/papier-mache-masks-orissa>



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Introduction

The rich heritage of Orissa is bestowed with the craft of moulding paper into a range of products including patachitra styled masks locally known as Mukha. The skill has been creatively practised by the craftsmen all over Orissa particularly in and around Puri. These masks are not only strikingly beautiful but sturdy and durable as well.

The history of folk theatre also known as Jatra in regional parlance has been a dominant influence on this craft. The characters of these Jatras are made of wood, sholapith and Papier Mache and are vividly painted to appear attractive. The characters are dressed according to the roles played by them and are controlled by strings. Based on the characterizations, masks are used by the artists. This has given rise to the art of making masks from special paper.

A convoluted procedure is followed to make papers for these items. Paper, waste cloth and different kinds of natural fibres are soaked and beaten into pulp. They are then mixed with a variety of seeds and gums for strength and as protection from termites for durability. The entire process results in a medium so malleable that it requires great skill to be moulded into countless forms. Various items like masks, toys and caps generate a lot of interest among the masses and the classes alike.

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Various parts of a product are sun dried for them to be taken to the next level in the process.



A vividly coloured parrot put up for a display made using the same process.

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An artisan applies clay on the mask to prepare it before taking it to the next stage.



Various kinds of exotic masks flaunting their bright colours and the perfect art of mask making.

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Making Process

Process - Papier Mache:

The artists use special clays and bio-wastes for strengthening and reinforcement of the articles. They have to be very careful while performing the work as the process involved is very tenuous and requires constant check at every point. The Patachitracraft is the mother source of this tradition. Mukha, masks are made using a mould of clay and newspaper. Paper and cloth rags are soaked and applied in layers with locally made gum on the mould. The finishing stage involves application of sawdust mixed with gum which is left to dry. After drying the figure is polished with sandpaper for a sleek and lustrous finish. The inspiration of Patachitra is evident in the use of natural colours and detailing of the figure's facial features. The colours are manufactured from natural objects like seashells and rocks. The characteristic features of the patachitra style such as outlines of the figure's eyes in red and black can be observed in the Papier Mache masks as well. Masks of deities, demons and animals are made for use in the local folk and classical dance and theatre performances. The figures and other products like dolls, pen stands and lampshades are fabricated in many sizes and designs.

Firstly the artists pick up waste papers of all sorts, waste cloth and many other items.

In the second step all the waste products are collected and put together in a very big drum for soaking.

Then, they are mashed together with the process of crushing and beating. The mediums used for longevity and durability are variety of seeds and gums to safeguard the pulp from termites.

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Various parts of the mask first made out of waste material are then dried under the sun naturally.



After the masks have been dried clay is applied on them to make them sturdy and durable.

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The clay laden masks are then dried again.

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After they have dried appropriately the masks are painted with vibrant and bright colours.

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Links

- [Craft Design in India](#)
- [Online Infomation Centre for Crafts](#)
- [Handmade in India](#)
- [Crafts Council of India](#)
- [Craft Mark](#)
- [Papier Mache - Art and Carfts of Orissal](#)
- [Papier Mache of Orissa](#)
- [Tribal Plaster and Papier Mache Handicarfts in Orissa](#)
- [Arts and Crafts - Handicrafts and Handlooms](#)

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This documentation was done by **Professor Bibhudutta Baral** and Mr. Antony William at **NID, Bengaluru**.

You can get in touch with Professor Bibhudutta Baral at [bibhudutta\[at\]nid.edu](mailto:bibhudutta[at]nid.edu).

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

Helpdesk Details:

Co-ordinator
Project e-kalpa
R & D Campus
National Institute of Design
#12 HMT Link Road, Off Tumkur Road
Bengaluru 560 022
India.

Phone: +91 80 2357 9054

Fax: +91 80 23373086

Email: [dsource.in\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:dsource.in[at]gmail.com)

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