

Design Resource

## Soft Toys - Sikkim

Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom

by

Abhey Singh

IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/soft-toys-sikkim>



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<http://www.dsource.in/resource/soft-toys-sikkim/introduction>

## Introduction

The Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom was founded in 1957 by Sikkim government in an effort to preserve and promote traditional arts and crafts. With time it evolved as a centre for sustainable development of the region focussing on utilising the traditional knowledge and human resources. In modern perspective the centre serves as a important tool for providing employment and self-reliance across the strata of society covering diverse region, income rang and education. The centre has now expanded to 32 training centres with 650 trainees and 13 production units. The head office is located in Gangtok, the capital city of Sikkim. It provides training in carpet weaving, handloom, thanka painting, handmade paper, wood-carving, cane & bamboo craft, soft toys and multi-crafts. Training period ranges from 2-4 years depending on the craft. After that the artisans can either work in the centre's production units or work outside on their own. In order to promote the initiative the government also gives stipend to the students.

Soft toys unit was established at Directorate of handicrafts and handloom in order to provide employment and income to people. It is not like the other traditional craft units at the Directorate of handicrafts and handloom as it doesn't cater to the domestic arts and crafts. The purpose of the centre is to take the institute towards self-reliance and economic stability. There are 225 trainees all over the state under this programme.



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[http://www.dsource.in/resource/soft-toys-sikkim/  
place](http://www.dsource.in/resource/soft-toys-sikkim/place)

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## Place

Sikkim is 2nd smallest Indian state located in the north-east India. Sikkim chose to remain independent when India got independence in 1947. In 1975 it became the 22nd state of India after a treaty with the then Prime Minister of Sikkim. Sikkim has been very successful in protecting its cultural heritage along with embracing the modern ethos. The state has a very diverse flora and fauna and occupy a special place in India for it.



Directorate of handicrafts and handloom head office at Gangtok.



Hoarding explaining the mission of directorate of handicrafts and handloom.



Mannequins wearing traditional tribal costumes.



Bamboo exhibition at directorate of handicrafts and handloom.



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Plaque installed in corridor of directorate of handicrafts and handloom.



Sales emporium which sell all the items produced at DHH, Gangtok.

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Inside the sales emporium at DHH, Gangtok.



Sales emporium selling wood and bamboo products.



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## People

Soft toys unit is recently established so not all the seats in the training as well as production unit are filled. It is slowly becoming a significant part of the institute.



Trainee learning at the training unit.

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Artisan finishing a soft toy at the production unit.



Trainees learning at the training unit.



An artisan working at the production unit.



Production unit at the soft toys unit.



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The instructor and head at the soft toys unit.

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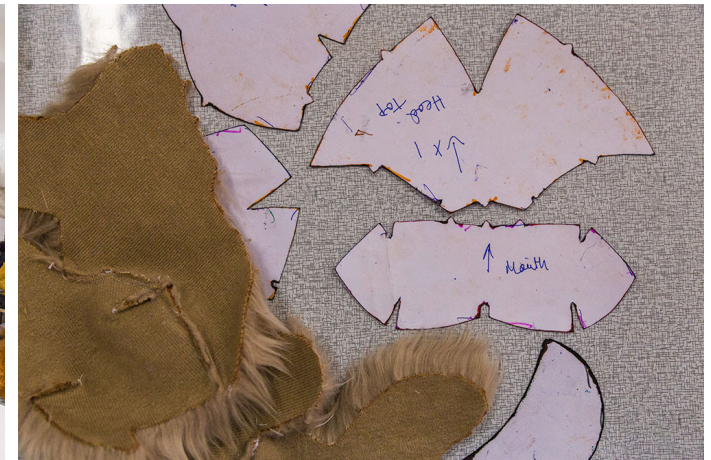
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## Process

Soft toys production process starts with design of the product on paper or a computer. A prototype is then created to test whether it is working or not. After iterating again and again the design is finalised. A mould is then constructed to produce the design at a mass level. The process of creating a soft toy involves cutting the parts, stitching, eyes, filling with cotton and finishing.



The store room at the soft toys unit.



The cutout prototype with cut fabric.



Sewing machine at the soft toys training unit.



Sewing machine table at the training unit.



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Stitching the individual parts.



Stitching the individual parts.



Artisans cutting different parts of the design.



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Artisans cutting different parts of the design.



Alternative way of cutting parts using heated wire frames.



Alternative way of cutting parts using heated wire frames.



Alternative way of cutting parts using heated wire frames.



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Alternative way of cutting parts using heated wire frames.



Cutting machine with frames for cutout.



Packing machine.



Putting eyes.



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Putting eyes.



Filling with cotton.



Filling with cotton.



Filling with cotton.



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## Products

The soft toys unit is still in its early years and hence you can see a lot of experimentation in the products. You can see products resonating with the local environment like red panda but still a lot has to be done to make the products unique and representation of the identity of Sikkim.



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## Contact Details

This documentation was done by Abhey Singh, M. Des. at **IDC, IIT Bombay**.

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See his work at [www.abheysingh.com](http://www.abheysingh.com)

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

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