

Design Resource

Art Plate

The crafts from Thanjavur

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral with Mr. J. Antony William
NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://dsource.in/resource/art-plate>

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



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Introduction

Thanjavur district is famous for various arts and crafts like 'Thanjavur dancing doll', 'Thanjavur paintings' and 'Thanjavur art plates'. The creation of the Tanjore metal plate is credited to Raja Serfoji II, the Maratha ruler of Thanjavur, who asked his royal artisans to create an object that would reflect the glory of his kingdom. Thanjavur Art plates are basically made with a combination of three metals. The metals like brass for the base plate and embossed copper and silver figures embedded on the same. Brass and copper are encrusted/blended on to each other to create this stunning piece of art.



A combination of three metals is embedded on the brass figure.



Brass plate is ready for designing works to be done on it.

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The striking effect of silver on the reddish copper background.



Artisans involved in working on art plate.



The traditional Thanjavur art plate.



Artisan engraving brass beads on art plate.

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The artisan explaining the processes involved in the craft



Group of artisans working on art plates.



The Famous Brihadeshwara temple of Thanjavur.

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Tools and Raw Materials

The traditional Thanjavur art plate is done by using various raw materials. Basic raw materials are copper, brass, bronze and silver. Base plate is made out of brass sheets, thin copper sheets and silver sheets. Asphalt is required for the base board. Glue is used for fixing the embossed metal motifs. Soapnut powder (locally called as shikakai) and tamarind paste is used for washing purpose.

List of other tools:

1. Hammers used for hammering.
2. Chisels used for chiseling.
3. Compass used for measurement.
4. Weight is used to place on the plate.
5. Coal used as fuel.
6. Cutting plair is used to cut/hold the metal.
7. Needle is used while working with the metal beads.
8. Forcep- metal holders used to carry the hot metal objects.
9. Bhatti- furnace.
10. A square metal solid box with grooves used to create metal circular beads used for decoration.
11. Brush made of coir is used while cleaning the metal plate.



Lac



The plate is pressed on the lac with the help of heavy weight.

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Different kinds of chisels.



Brass metal is the basic raw material.

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Hammer used to create the patterns over the plate.



Compass

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Forceps.



Different types of tools used in the process.

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Copper moulds and small chisels.



Copper and brass metal sheets used to create the beads.

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Silver is another important raw material used in decoration. Tamarind, soapnut, brush and coal.



Bhatti- machine used as a blower for burning purpose. Moulds made out of aluminum.

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Rubber sheet used to hammer the product.



Copper sheets used in designing.

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Work environment.

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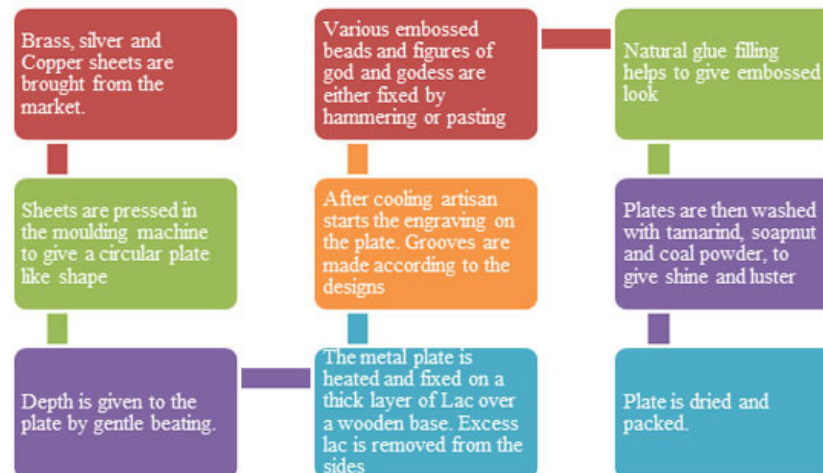
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Making Process

The unique metal work of Thanjavur consists of several stages such as shaping, engraving, embossing and final finishing. The Thanjavur art plate is mainly done on brass sheet, silver and copper. Initially, the sheet is pressed with the moulding machine to attain a plate like shape. The plate is then gently beaten with hammer - Suthiyal to obtain depth. Once it is beaten the metal plate is filled with burning charcoal and fixed on a wooden base over the lac. Due to heat generated by metal sheet, the lac melts and allows the plate to be fixed on it. The charcoal is removed and the plate is again pressed with heavy weight placed on it. The excess melted lac is removed and the engraving work is started on it. The artisan now starts the engraving work on the plate by marking the design which is to be carved by hammering. The center part of plate is decorated by circular bowl-shaped beads which are made of copper and brass. These beads are fixed on the plate through hammering process. Embossing work is done separately with thin copper and metal sheets. These sheets are placed over the moulds and gently beaten in to the grooves. Once the sheet takes the shape and design of mould, then it is filled with natural glue and melted. The glue filling is done to obtain embossed look. These designed silver and copper sheets are fixed on the brass metal sheet. The art plate is embellished in floral and Hindu mythological motifs. The plate is finally cleaned with a mixture made of tamarind, soapnut and coal powder to attain shine and luster. After washing, the plate is kept for drying.



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The art plate designed for corporates/companies on order basis.



The plate is being removed after the initial shaping process is complete.



Beating the plate with hammer to obtain depth.



Compass is used for accurate measurement.

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Charcoal is filled on the metal plate.



Lac is melted due to heat.

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The weight pressed on the plate for proper fixing.



The excess lac covered on the plate is removed.

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Engraving the rough design on the plate.



The metal sheet is punched to cut the small circular beads.



Artisan creating depth for metal beads.



Fixing the beads by hammering.

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The metal beads are fixed one after another on the engraved design.



Engraving the circles to fix the copper and silver motifs.

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The copper sheet is placed between the moulds.



A copper sheet with design on it is ready for embellishing.

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The excess copper sheet is cut.



The designed copper sheets are fixed to the art plate & excess is removed.

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Natural glue is melted and filled inside the carved sheet. Silver sheet is being fixed with glue.

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Final washing of metal plate.



Tamarind mixture bath enhances the shine.

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Soapnut bath.



Glittering plate are kept for drying purpose

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Products

The Thanjavur art plates are traditional, unique and ideal for souvenirs. These art plates are skillfully decorated with copper and silver sheets. The major motifs are influenced by flowers, deities and the art and architecture of famous Brihadeshwara temple in Thanjavur. The center circle of the plate is decorated in silver. The second circle has the sequence of motifs with the combination of gold and silver. The final or outer circle has almost series of repeated motifs. The decorative art plate can be used in home, office and hotels as wall decorator. These plates are also used to create wall clocks.



The art plate designed for corporates/companies on order basis



Gold, silver and copper glitters/used in fascinating motifs.

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Products and mementos with frame.



Typical art plates displayed for marketing.



Ashta Lakshmi - the traditional product which has images of goddess Lakshmi.

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suggestions and clarifications:

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