

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli>



1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Process
5. Products
6. Design
7. Contact Details

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/introduction>

Introduction

Historically Rajasthan is the land of kings, palaces, magnificent architecture and vibrant colors and also it is the largest state of India by area. Since ages people of this area have been involved in various activities and practices to amuse themselves or the royal families. These practices also developed due to the adverse climatic conditions and lack of natural resources. This encouraged people to take up traditional activities not only to entertain themselves but also to earn their livelihood. The tradition of puppetry is famous in many parts of India and in other countries too. These puppets differ from each other mainly in terms of raw material used, characters and stories/themes which provide the backdrop for the puppet show. In Rajasthan the puppet tradition is called Kathputli, where Kaath means wood and Putli means Puppet. Kathputli means a puppet made out of wood. However only the face and the upper body of puppets are made in wood rest is made using cotton and cloths. Kathputli's are string puppets controlled by strings which passes from the top of the puppets and manipulated by the puppeteer. These highly decorative handmade puppets are the source of age old tradition of narration of historical stories, myths and legends. The narrations were accompanied with music and dialogues delivered by the group members. Kathputli became one of the most important and well know performing arts of Rajasthan and it represents the tradition, customs and socio-cultural backdrop of the state.



Kathputli depicting village women.

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Process
5. Products
6. Design
7. Contact Details

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/introduction>



The puppets displayed for sale.



Facial expressions are drawn beautifully with oil paints.

1. Introduction

2. People and Place

3. Tools and Raw Materials

4. Process

5. Products

6. Design

7. Contact Details



New characters are introduced in puppetry fitting to the tastes of the modern time.



Faces of the puppets made in wood.

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/introduction>



The artisan performing with his puppet.



The master craftsman involved in decoration work.



Highly decorative and beautiful puppets are handled/manipulated using strings.



Dholak (drums) is used to add the music in the puppet show.

1. Introduction

2. People and Place

3. Tools and Raw Materials

4. Process

5. Products

6. Design

7. Contact Details

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/introduction>



Closer perspective of Kacchi ghodi (horse).



Simple puppets are available at an affordable prices in the local market.

1. Introduction

2. People and Place

3. Tools and Raw Materials

4. Process

5. Products

6. Design

7. Contact Details

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/people-and-place>

People and Place

Traditionally the artisans who were involved in making puppets belonged to the nomadic community called as Putli Bhatt or Nat. Nats are the performing artists who used to wander from village to village along with their portable theatres. They entertained gatherings by narrating the achievement of the heroes from mythological and social traditions. Though they belong, originally, to the Nagaur area in the Marwar region, they travel all through the country in order to exhibit their skills. Today these communities have settled in different parts of Rajasthan and are still practicing this age old tradition. In Jaipur there are around 5000 artisans involved in making puppets. In current times several other communities like Muslims and Sindhis are getting involved in it at different levels of either artisanship or as middlemen. Different countries have different forms of puppet traditions. In India itself puppetry is practiced in different states, differing in terms of raw material used, characters made and stories taken for narration. Rajasthan is the hub of Puppet tradition. The main centers of puppetry are Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Sawai Madhopur, Nagaur and Bikaner. In Jaipur, Kathputali is practiced by the artisans in Kathputliwalon Ka Mohalla.



The artisan showing the finished products.

1. Introduction
2. **People and Place**
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Process
5. Products
6. Design
7. Contact Details

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/people-and-place>



A boy singing and playing the dolak during the performance.



Manoj ji an artisan explaining about the craft.



Prakash ji, an artisan is involved in explaining about kacchi ghodi.



Master craftsmen in Kathputali making along with his work.

1. Introduction

2. **People and Place**

3. Tools and Raw Materials

4. Process

5. Products

6. Design

7. Contact Details

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. **Tools and Raw Materials**
4. Process
5. Products
6. Design
7. Contact Details

Tools and Raw Materials

• Tools:

Tools used in making of puppets are:

Basola (Hammer):

Hammers of different types are used at different stages of the making process. Big head hammers are used while carving the face and small head hammers are used for nailing.

Chorsi (Chisel):

Chisels of different shapes and sizes are used. Flat and big chisels are used for basic carving of the wood. Flat and small chisel are used to carve out the intricate portions like eyes, nose, ears etc. Round headed chisels are used for further intricate carving.

Sui (Needle):

For stitching women need needle. Needles ranging from small (1 inch) to big (4 inch) are used according to the requirement.

Sewing Machine:

For better finish and faster work performance artisans are now using hand operated sewing machines.

Scissor:

For cutting clothes, for making strings etc. artisans use scissors.

Files:

Small wooden files are used for finishing the face.

Aari (Hand Saw):

Small hand saw is used for cutting wood

Koochi (Brush):

Applying basic coat on the puppet women in the family mainly use koochi. These are made out of palm leaves.

Paint Brush:

Eyes, mouth and other fine detailing are done by paint brush. These brushes are bought from the stationary shops.

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. **Tools and Raw Materials**
4. Process
5. Products
6. Design
7. Contact Details

Whet Stone:

This is used for sharpening the tools.

• Raw Material:

Puppet making involves several kind of material which together make beautiful lively puppet.

Following are the raw materials used to make these puppets:

Wood:

Wood is used to make the face and the upper body of the puppet and therefore it is the most basic raw material in the process of puppet making. Artisans use seasoned Aardu wood or mango wood. Aardu wood is soft, light and low cost which makes it more preferred over mango wood. The wood is brought from the local market at a rate of Rs. 500- Rs. 600/Quintal. By using cutting machine the big logs are cut into small pieces of 7-8 inch length.

Decorative Clothes:

Artisans make two types of puppets- one is for selling and one which is used for performances. The puppets made for performance are decorated with highly ornamented new cloth. These cloths are brought from katla (place where cloths are sold).

Old Cloths:

Puppets which are made for selling are adorned with used and old cloths like sarees, and other materials. These cut piece are bought from the tailors.

Gotta (Ribbon):

Puppets are ornamented with bright shining gottas which are brought from the local market. The price ranges from Rs. 10/meter to Rs. 200/meter depending on the quality.

Paint:

The face of the puppets are painted with synthetic colors. Artisans use paints to paint the face. Main colors used in painting are White (for base of the face and eyes), Red (lips and Bindi for women) and Black (for eyebrows, hair and eyes)

Jewelry:

Small jewelries are used to decorate the puppets. These jewelries are made using beads, chains and different small shining bright items. The women of the house specially make these jewelries according to the need.

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. **Tools and Raw Materials**
4. Process
5. Products
6. Design
7. Contact Details

Chaan (Waste rags):

These are the brown colored waste rags which are used to fill the puppets. They are brought from the rug factories at a rate of Rs. 10- Rs. 20/Sack.

Nails:

Most of the jewelry, cloth, strings etc. are fixed to the puppet with the help of nails. Small nails with broad heads are used which are brought from the local hardware shop.

Thread:

Strong threads are used to stitch the cloths of the puppets and also to make the strings.

Waste Cotton:

Cotton is used as fillers

Regmaal (Sand paper):

Sand paper is used to smooth/polish the surface of the face. Generally, 60 and 100 number Regmaal is used to finish the surface.



A small wooden log is used for making puppet face.



The hammer is used to shape the wooden log.

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/tools-and-raw-materials>



Different types of chisels are used to carve the face.



Various tools are used to shape a Kathputli. Small hand saw is used to cut the wood and small chisels for detailed carving.

1. Introduction

2. People and Place

3. **Tools and Raw Materials**

4. Process

5. Products

6. Design

7. Contact Details



Whet stone or sharpening stone is used to sharpen the chisels.



Koochi is made out of palm leaves and used to apply the basic coat on the puppet.

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. **Tools and Raw Materials**
4. Process
5. Products
6. Design
7. Contact Details



Puppets which are made for selling are adorned with old clothes.



Ornamentation is done using bright shining Gotta (Ribbon).



Commonly used Gotta or ribbon.

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

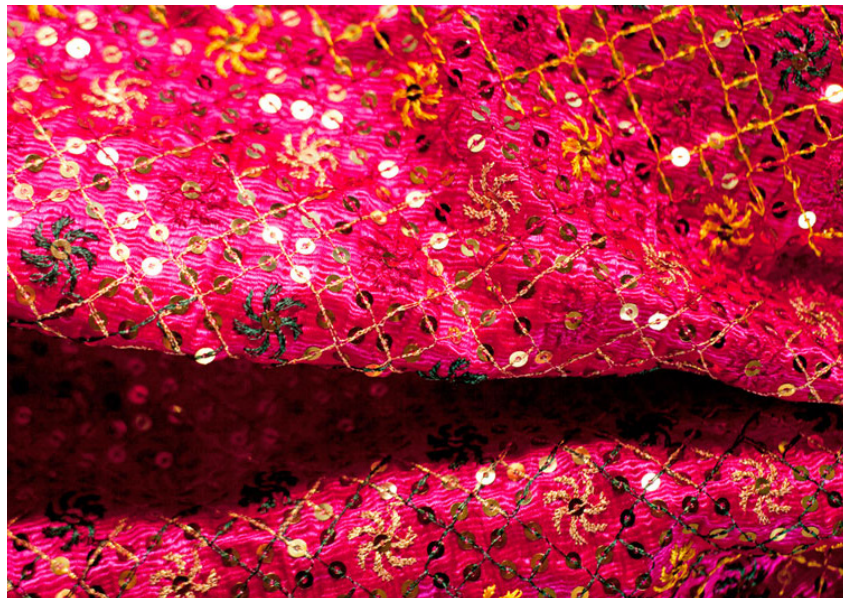
NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/tools-and-raw-materials>



Cotton is used for stuffing the puppets.



The puppets made for performance are decorated with highly ornamented cloth.

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. **Tools and Raw Materials**
4. Process
5. Products
6. Design
7. Contact Details

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/process>

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. **Process**
5. Products
6. Design
7. Contact Details

Process

The process of making puppet is very intricate and involves a lot of patience. The process is conducted by both men and women. In Jaipur the puppets made are of small size; with wooden heads, decorated with cloths and stuffed with chaan or cotton.

The making process can be categories into following steps:

- Making of the face
- Finishing
- Coloring
- Stitching
- Decoration
- Attaching of strings
- Performance

Making of the Face:

The puppet making process starts with the making of the face. Different characters have different facial structure and expression and are carved accordingly. This process is mainly done by the men and is called Chilaai. Craftsman, with the help of chisel and hammer painstakingly carve the face. The whole process takes around 3-4 hrs. Generally there is no difference in the face of the male and that of the female puppets. The puppets have no wooden hands and legs and these are made in cloth.

Finishing:

Once the face is made it is kept for drying, thereafter it is rubbed with the help of sandpaper and a then a coat of Plaster of Paris mixed with turpentine oil is applied on the surface of the face to fill the small holes on wood. Once it is dried it is again rubbed with sandpaper to remove the extra material and then touch wood is applied as the basic paint with the help of koochi and the face is kept for drying.

Coloring:

The dried face is finally coated with a pale white color matching to the skin color. The eyes are painted white, lips in red color and puppets depicting females are painted with red bindi on the forehead.

Stitching:

The decoration starts with preparing the cloths. These are hand stitched and stuffed with old cloths and rags. This is done mainly by the women. Puppets made for performances are decorated with great zeal. Women stitch cloths according to the nature of the characters. The one made for selling are decorated with cut pieces from

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/process>

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. **Process**
5. Products
6. Design
7. Contact Details

sarees. Male and females are dressed with dhoti and lenhga respectively made out of similar sarees.

Decoration:

Heavy embellishment is done on the puppets which are meant for performance. They are decorated with hand-made jewelry, instruments etc. to make them appear lively. These puppets are mainly sold as souvenirs and for this reason the female puppets have traditional gorla on their foreheads while the males have beens (Snake Charmers Flute) which depict the culture of Rajasthan.

Attaching of the Strings:

Since these are the string puppets; therefore attaching strings become the most important element of the puppets. Artisans use these strings to manipulate the puppets during performances. Proper location of the string is necessary for better maneuvering of the puppet's actions. Strings are mainly attached with neck, shoulders, hands, legs and head of the puppet. These strings are either looped with the fingers of the puppeteer or to a small wooden strip which is operated by the lead puppeteer. The string attached to the head also connects to the back. These strings are strong cotton threads which can bear the load of the puppets. Finally the highly decorative and beautiful puppets are ready to perform on different traditional and contemporary themes.



Seasoned wood is taken to carve the puppets face.



The outer layer of wood is removed initially.

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/process>



Face is carved by slowly removing the unwanted portion.



This process of carving is locally called as Chilaai.



Scraping is done to make the log surface even.



Detailing of the face are carved using a chisel and hammer.

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. **Process**
5. Products
6. Design
7. Contact Details

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/process>



The carved puppet faces are kept for drying.



Touch wood is applied to the face as basic coat.

1. Introduction

2. People and Place

3. Tools and Raw Materials

4. **Process**

5. Products

6. Design

7. Contact Details



These coated faces are allowed to dry.



The facial features are painted using red, black and white colors.

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/process>



The hands are made using old cloths and attached to the wooden body.



The ribbon is fixed to the puppet with the help of nails.

1. Introduction

2. People and Place

3. Tools and Raw Materials

4. Process

5. Products

6. Design

7. Contact Details



The clothes for the puppets are hand stitched.



Old cotton clothes are used to stuff the puppet's body.

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/process>



Legs of the male puppet are stuffed with cotton and stitched.



Male are dressed with dhoti which is made out of sari.



Lehanga is beautifully embellished with heavy embroidery work.



Female puppet is dressed with Lehanga.

1. Introduction

2. People and Place

3. Tools and Raw Materials

4. Process

5. Products

6. Design

7. Contact Details

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/products>

Products

Rajasthan puppets are famous all around the world. Therefore these become the major souvenir items for the foreign as well as the local tourists. The puppets are all imitations of the royal families and local rulers. Apart from the few main ones the artisans also make portraits of famous rulers like Shivaji, Maharaja Jai Singh, Maharana Pratap, Maan Singh, Amar Singh Rathore, Nawab, Soldiers, Gujjar women for their puppet shows. Animals like Kacchi ghodi, camel, elephant, hangings etc. are also made for the puppet show programmes. Traditionally the themes of the performances were based on the life of Prithaviraj Chauchan, Amar Singh Rathore, Maharana Pratap, Dhola Maaru, Heer Ranjha, Dhobi Dhoban and Raja Rani etc. Today with the change in time, new themes are introduced to uplift this dying art. The Kathputli puppets help in creating awareness for Polio, AIDS, Child Marriages, Dowry and many other social evils.



The Female puppet with traditional Gorla on forehead.

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Process
5. **Products**
6. Design
7. Contact Details

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/products>

1. Introduction

2. People and Place

3. Tools and Raw Materials

4. Process

5. **Products**

6. Design

7. Contact Details



The highly ornated Rani (queen) is ready for performance.



A traditional Rajasthani woman.



The puppet depicting anarkali (court dancer) and artisan skillfully operating the puppet with the help of strings.

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/products>



Heavily decorated Kacchi ghodi (horse).



The male and female puppets depicting the culture of Rajasthan.



The most commonly sold traditional Kathputli.



Sapera with beans (Snake Charmer's Flute).

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Process
5. **Products**
6. Design
7. Contact Details

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/design>

Design

The puppets are inspired from the culture and tradition of their respective regions. Puppets made in Jaipur are different from those made in Udaipur in terms of expressions, structure, clothing and accessories, and also in themes. Many times the stories also differ and are based on the legends of that particular region/ locality. Jaipur puppets are normally modeled after the regional traditional costumes and ornaments. In themes they play Rajasthan historical tales or local legends. Few characters are a must in any of these puppet shows like Raja (king), Rani (queen), Anarkali (court dancer), Jogi (saint), Sapera (snake charmer), Jadugar (magician).



The common faces of male and female puppets.

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Process
5. Products
6. **Design**
7. Contact Details

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/design>



The faces of Mughal emperors.



The puppet face depicting dancer.

1. Introduction

2. People and Place

3. Tools and Raw Materials

4. Process

5. Products

6. Design

7. Contact Details



Puppet depicting Chinese face.



Image of Raakshas(demon).

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/design>



Face of jogi (saint).



Jadugar (magician).



Anarkali (court dancer).



Collection of faces depicting Michael Jackson, Kings and soldiers.

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Process
5. Products
6. **Design**
7. Contact Details

Design Resource

Kathputli

Making of Puppet

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms.

Anushree Kumar

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/kathputli/contact-details>

Contact Details

This documentation was done by **Professor Bibhudutta Baral**, Ms. Anisha Crasto and Ms. Anushree Kumar 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)**

1. Introduction
2. People and Place
3. Tools and Raw Materials
4. Process
5. Products
6. Design
7. **Contact Details**