

Design Resource

Orian Wooden Toys - Sonpur, Orissa

Wooden Handmade Toys

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Hariharasudan T.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/orian-wood-en-toys-sonpur-orissa>



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2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
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Introduction

Wood carving in Orissa or Odisha has been around for ages. Idols of lord Jagannath and wooden toys is a very ancient and traditional art form of Odisha. In most Jagannath temples the idols that are used are the once which are made out of wood.

A lot of colorful wooden handmade toys are made and sold on a daily basis. The colors that were used in the past were all made out of vegetables and fruits but watercolors are being used instead as they are more easily accessible and not too expensive.

In today's world as plastic has become quiet cheap and very easily accessible. Toys being made out of plastic are becoming more and more common compared to the wooden toys. The number of artisans who used to make wooden toys have reduced as there isn't that much of a demand anymore sadly making this yet another dying art form.

Traditionally these toys are colored with natural colors made from fruits and vegetables. Preparing the color in itself is an art, which would take some time learn. But as time progressed readily available colors started being used, as they were easier to obtain. And this being an art form in which the knowledge is passed down from generation to generation, a lot of the younger generation don't know how to make the colors.

Generally wood from shamli, shavan and ghamandi are used in the making of these toys. Most of the times shemli wood is what is used, as it is easily available and quiet cheap. The type of wood used keeps on varying from place to place as the artisans use whatever is available locally.

These toys are very colorfully and brightly painted which makes kids get attracted to it. Many different types of toys are created such as horses and elephants in many different poses. Some are sold with wheels as an attachment at the bottom with a rope attached so it can be pulled. Most of these toys are not very detailed while carving or painting as they are for kids as toys and may get spoilt very easily.

It usually takes about 2hrs to make these toys including the time to paint and dry it. They are mainly sold at fares and other carnivals in most cases they are sold locally and very rarely exported. As it is all water based color it has to be well protected from water and humidity.

All of the lord Jagannath idols are still made in this same style and are used for worship in many places. These wooden idols of god are not just used in houses but in temples as well. It is probably one of the most recognizable features about any Jagannath temples. The idol of lord Jagannath at the famous Puri temple in Odisha is also one that is made out of wood.

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These artifacts are all made out of only one block of wood, only in cases where wheels have to be separately attached different pieces of wood is used but otherwise the entire toy is made out of one piece of wood as a whole. These toys have been around for centuries and a proper era from when they started is hard to be determined.

In today's world where plastic toys are found everywhere in many different forms, these toys are a nice throw back and have a nice natural feel to them. If not to play with they are very adorable just to admire at.



Orian wooden toys that are being enameled by the artisan.

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Layer by layer wood is removed to shape the toy.

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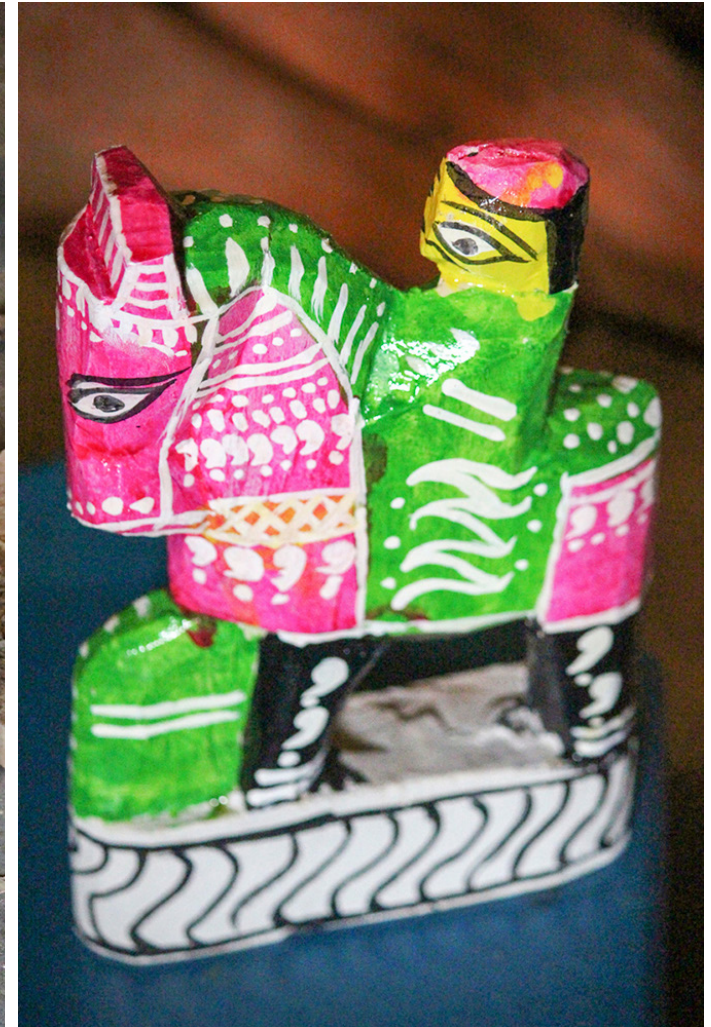
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Wood is chiseled as per the design of the toy.



Multicolored Orian wooden toy of Odisha.

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Fine details are given by enameling.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw material required for making orian wooden toys:

- **Wood:** It is the most basic necessity for these wooden toys and Shalavi wood is what is used in the making of these Orian wooden toys.
- **Watercolor Paint:** It is used to paint these artifacts. In the past colors which were made from natural substances like flowers and fruits were used.
- **Paintbrushes:** Paintbrushes of varying sizes are used to apply the many different layers of paint coats on these artifacts.
- **Chisels:** Chisels of different sizes are used to carve the block of wood into the required shapes of animals and god idols.
- **Hammer:** It is used to drive the chisel into the harder secessions of the wood.
- **Mallet:** It is used in the parts where finer carving is required.



Wood is the basic raw material that is used for making Orian toy. Pencil is used for marking purpose.

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A paste of primer (mixed with water) is used for coating on the wooden toy.



Paint and the paintbrush are used for enameling the toy.

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Axe is used for cutting the wood.



Wooden chunk is used for hammering purpose, instead of hammer.



Chisel is used for scrapping out the excess of wood.

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Making Process

Although these kinds of toys have been being made for decades the process in which these toys are made has not changed a lot. Only the tools and the colors that are being used have been changed.

- First the wood is brought in and rough shaping is done and is set aside to dry to remove any of the moisture content.
- Pencil markings are done on the rough cut out for proper shaping.
- Rough shaping is done using a big chisel and a hammer.
- Finer detailing is done using a smaller chisel and a wooden mallet.
- A coat of primer is applied and the artifact is set aside to dry.
- Once dried two layers of water color paint coats are applied to make the artifact bright and colorful.

Flow Chart:



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Selected wooden plank is marked as per the design of the toy.

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On the markings, the wood is slightly etched.

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Most of the extra wood is then chopped off.



Further the wooden is initially shaped.

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Layer by layer excess of wood is scrapped off.



The sharp edges are smoothed.



Once the desired shape of the toy is rendered the further process gets initiated.



Primer with mixed water and diluted to get the required consistency.

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Thus the primer is applied as the first coat on the wooden toy.

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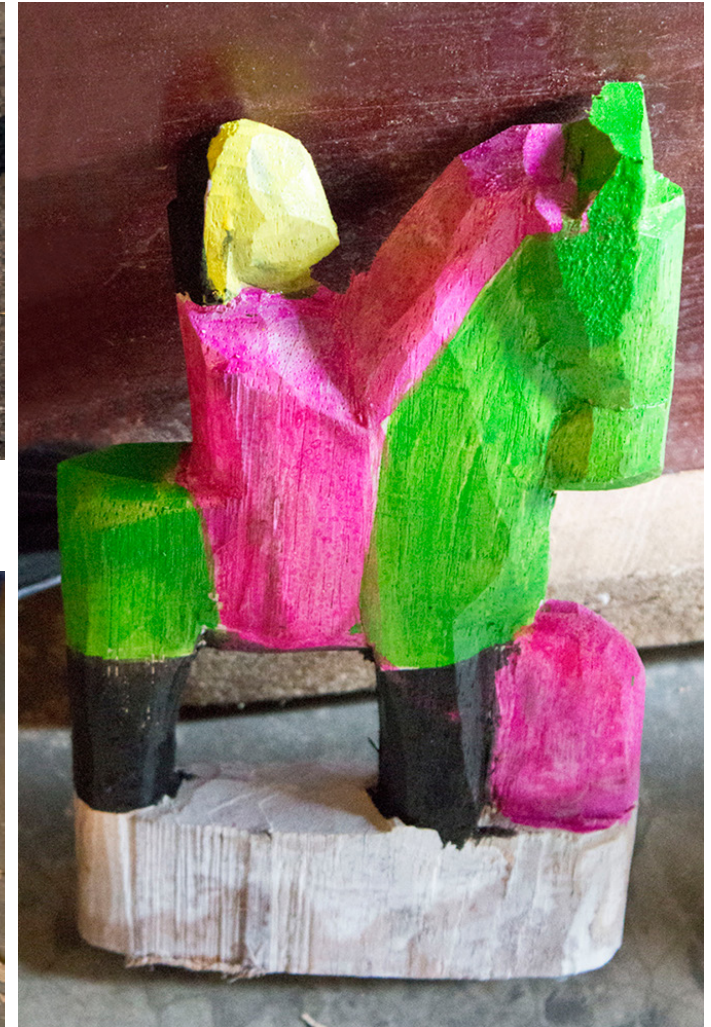
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It is then allowed to dry completely.



The basic flat colors are applied on the toy.



It is then allowed to dry.

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Once the base color is completely dried, the fine details are made.



Thus the final product gets prepared.

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Products

A lot of these products have remained in their traditional form. Animals like horses, elephants and cows as well as idols of lord Jagannath are made in this art form. The animal toys are mainly targeted towards the small children. The bright colors used on these toys always seem to attract the young children. In local fairs and carnivals you will get to see many being sold to kids in the age group of 3-5 years.

These toys range in sizes from 6 inches to 2ft. The cost of most of these artifacts start from about INR100.00 and can go up in the thousands depending on the level of detail that has been requested by the customer.



Beautifully enameled, multicolored Orian wooden toy.

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Bright and dashy Orian wooden toy that attracts every craft/art lover.

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Contact Details

This documentation was done by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Hariharasudan T. at [NID, Bengaluru](#).

You can get in touch with

- Prof. Bibhudutta Baral at [bibhudutta\[at\]nid.edu](mailto:bibhudutta[at]nid.edu)

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

Key Contacts:

Shri. Himanshu Shankar, Senior Craftsman

Sonpur, Orissa

India

Mobile: 09668612499

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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