

Design Resource

Patachitra Painting - Bhubaneswar, Orissa

Traditional Cloth-Based Painting

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and
Manasa K. H.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/patachitra-painting-bhubaneswar-orissa>



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Introduction

The patachitra are generally located as the earliest indigenous paintings in the Indian state of Orissa. Word patachitra is derived from Sanskrit language, pata means cloth and chitra means picture. It is a term given to traditional, cloth-based scroll painting, of eastern state Orissa, in India. Patachitra is a traditional painting of Orissa. This old tradition still survives in the places like Puri, Raghurajpur, Paralakhemundi, Chikiti and Sonepur. These paintings are based on Hindu mythology and specially inspired by Jaganath and Vaishnava sect. Earlier it was done only on cloth canvas and known to depict Hindu mythology.

Since beginning of Patachitra culture, lord Jagannath who was an incarnation of lord Krishna has been the major source of inspiration. The subject matter of patachitra is mostly mythological, religious stories and folklore. Themes are chiefly on Lord Jagannath and Radha-Krishna, temple activities, the ten incarnations of Vishnu basing on the 'Gita Govinda' of Jayadev, Kama Kujara Navagunjara, Ramayana, Mahabharata.

Patachitra paintings are the pictogram of the most popular living traditions in the art world of Orissa. Patachitra paintings exhibit the strong line and brilliant color that are the two principal aspects of Orissa folk painting. In this region many castes exist like maharana, mahapatra, sumar, swain, sahuo, godia, pandit, naik, and pradhan. Castes, which master in patachitra and palm leaf paintings, are maharana, mahapatras, sahuo, and swain. Other castes indulge in making crafts like cow-dung toys, wooden toys, stone carving, papier-mache, and coconut shell painting. The main occupation of the people here are the crafts they indulge in.

Benudhar mahapatra is born on 1935 is a master craft man of patachitra. He won national award for his skills in patachitra painting. He says that it is their family business and they are involved in this work from many generations. He has been interested in art from very young age and started his career in this from the age of 15 years. In puri he is the one who began to work patachithra painting.



Traditional Patachitra painting of Hindu deities.

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Patachitra chitrakaar (painter) with his traditional work.



Senior artisan Mr. Banudhar Mahapatra with his family.



Patachitra is an oldest and traditional art form of Odisha.

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Tools and Raw Materials

The tools and raw materials are required for patachitra painting:

- **Brushes:** The finer brushes used by the chitrakars are made of mouse hair which have wooden handles. These are used for the finer work they do like ornamentation, face etc. Other plane brushes, which are not as fine as the mouse hair brushes, available normally in the market are also used by the chitrakars. All the brushes these chitrakars use lasts for 7-8 months, when they work daily.
- **Pencil and Eraser:** HB pencils are used for drawing, rough sketches and outlines before painting on the canvas
- **Scissors:** Used for cutting the desired size of the canvas
- **Khadar Stone:** Used for smoothening the canvas, which is whitish-pinkish in color.
- **Chikana Stone:** Used for shining the canvas. This stone is yellow-brown in color.



Chalk power is used for canvas making.



Handmade canvas for Patachitra painting.

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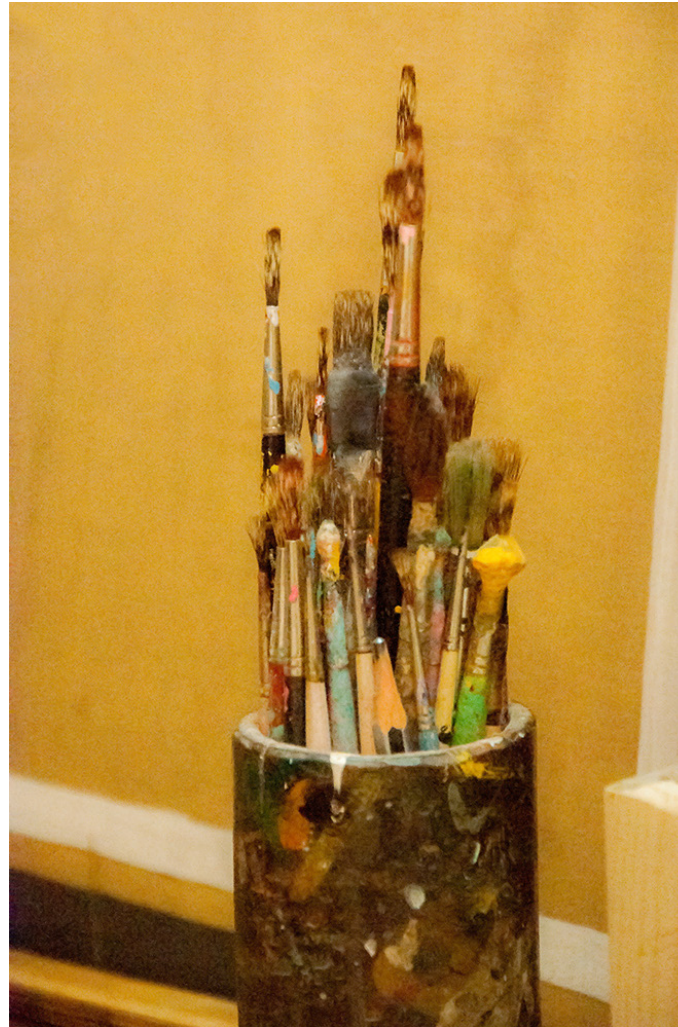
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Painting brushes with different sizes are used for colouring and detailing.



Water colours, which is derived from natural stuffs and chemical colours (zinc oxides and red oxides).

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Khaddar stone and Chikna stone for smoothing and shining.



Waste cotton cloth to prepare canvas.

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Starch made of Tamarind seed powder used as a binding agent.

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Making Process

1. Making Process of Canvas

The Process of painting patachitra begins with the preparation of canvas (pata). They use western cotton cloth to prepare canvas as it is much softer and free from starch unlike the new cotton from the mill.. Traditionally, cotton canvas was used; now, both cotton and silk canvas are used for paintings. Processing of cotton canvas starts from dipping of cotton in a solution of crushed imli seeds and water for 4-5 days. The cloth is then taken out and sun dried.

After cotton is dry, a paste of chalk powder, imli and gum is applied on both side of the layered cloth and it is sun dried. After drying, khaddar stone is rubbed on the cloth several times for smoothening the canvas. When canvas is smooth then chikana stone is rubbed for shinning the cloth.

2. Making of Color

The materials used in ancient time to make this painting were vegetable, earth and mineral sources. Most commonly used colours were black, white, yellow and red. Color making process was the time consuming and toughest process in those days but now it is easy as they buy different types of stones from market in order to prepare each different colours.

3. Ancient Method of Making Colors

Black color is made out of lampblack; a burning lamp is placed inside an empty tin, till a considerable amount of soots collects on the underside of the tin. The soot is then mixed with gum and water for use. The oil used in the lamp is from polang tree seed, which are locally available.

Yellow from haritali stone and red from hingal stone, White is obtained when conch shell is powdered and boiled with kaitha gum, till a paste is formed. For use, little of this paste is mixed with water.

Green is made by boiling green leaves like neem leaves with water and kaitha gum.

Brown is obtained from geru stone, whose powder is mixed with gum and water.

Red comes from a stone hingual, which is a locally available stone. The stone is powdered and mixed with water and gum.

Yellow is derived from yellow stone called hartal, which is found in Jaipur. The stone is powdered and mixed with water and gum for painting.

4. Modern Method of Making colors

All colors are mixed in dried coconut shells. Colors are prepared using different varieties of stones and chemicals which are available in market. Different shades of colors are made by mixing the existing primary colors, like, red mixed with white gives pink. In case the colors dry in the coconut shell then water is mixed in the color and it is reused.

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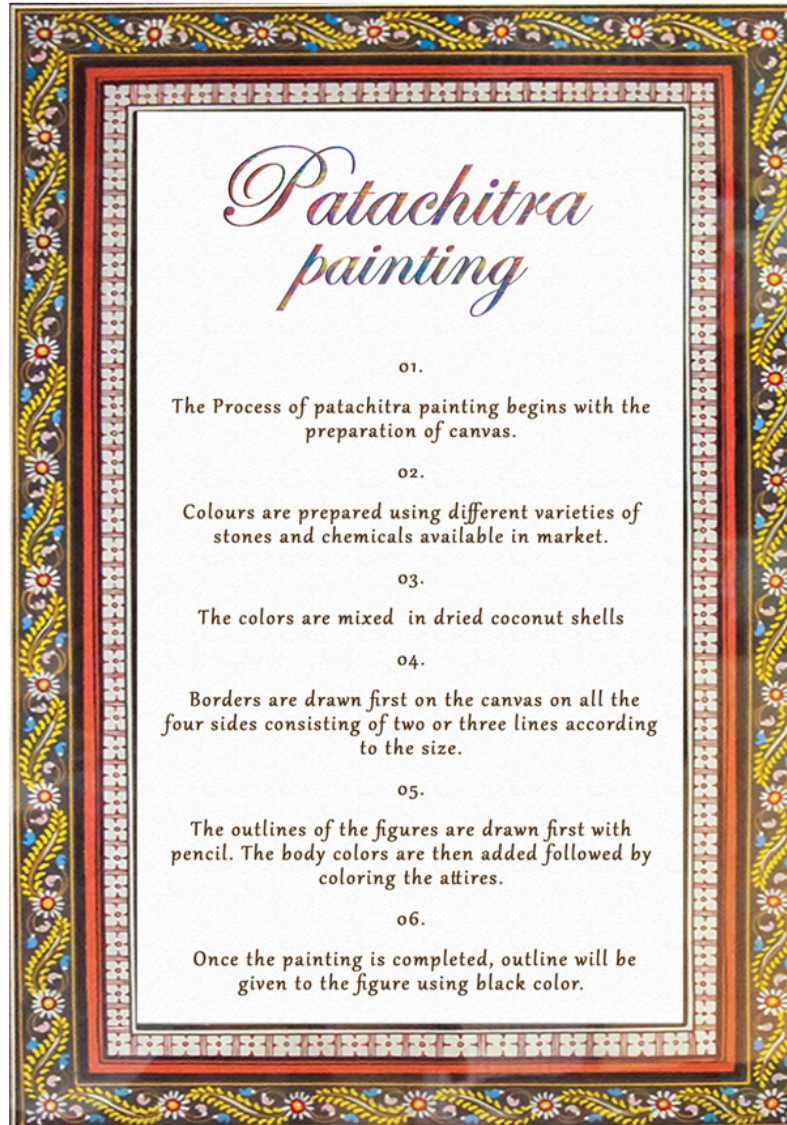
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5. Patachitra Painting Process

Borders are an integral part of painting and this is drawn first on the canvas on all the four sides consisting of two or three lines according to the size. The outlines of the figures are drawn first with pencil. The body colors are then added followed by coloring the attires. Once the painting is completed, outline will be given to the figure using black color.



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Starch made of tamarind seed powder is applied on the waste cotton cloth.



Chalk powder is mixed with starch and water.

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Applying the chalk powder paste on the starched cloth.



Chikna stone is rubbed to give shining.



The layered cloth is dried thoroughly.

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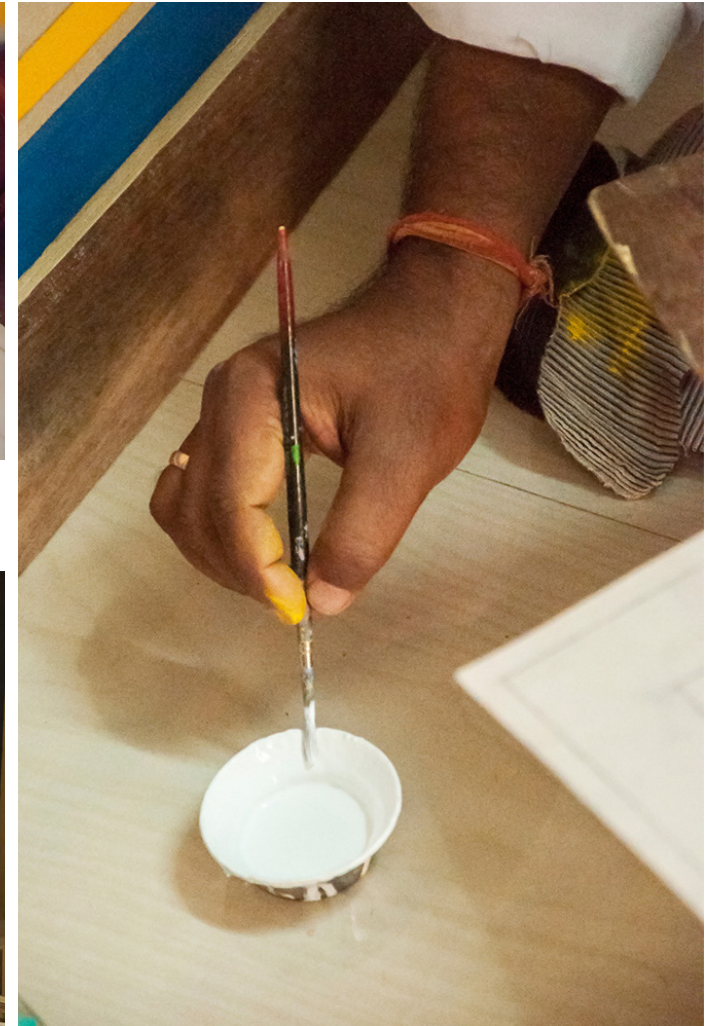
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Chitrakaar (painter or artisan) draws the outline of the figures on the canvas.



Artisan painting the canvas by following the traditional designs.



Zinc oxides are used for white colour.

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Patachitra paintings are generally painted with the fluorescent colours.



Chitrakaar decorates the painting by grey border.

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The figures are detailed by creating black outlines.



Painting that portrays the scenario of Krishna Leela.

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Color theme followed in painting is traditional, which follows like for Krishna they use black and blue, ram is painted with green color and they are trying to save the ancient traditional style of patachitra painting. The subject for patachitra is mostly mythological, religious stories and folklore. Themes are chiefly on Lord Jagannath and Radha-Krishna, temple activities, the ten incarnations of Vishnu basing on the 'Gita Govinda' of Jayadev, Kama Kujara Navagunjara, Ramayana, Mahabharata.



The Patachitra painting that describes the tales of Mahabharata.



Nava-gunjara painting of Vishnu in the composite of nine animals.



The portrayal of Hindu deity, lord Jagannath.

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Contact Details

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