

Design Resource

Silver Filigree - Karimnagar

Silver Wirework

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/silver-filigree-karimnagar>



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2. Tools and Raw Materials
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Introduction

Karimnagar silver filigree derives its name from a town called Karimnagar, district in Andhra Pradesh state. During the 19th and 20th centuries this craft flourished and played a vital role as it was a livelihood for many of the families. Since 19th Century AD, the craftsmen of Karimnagar produced rich intricate trellis made by twisting silver wire, which referred as Jaali. It is believed that silver filigree craft was adopted from Elgandal town near Karimnagar before it moved to Karimnagar town nearly 200 years ago. In the present field research and enquiry in Karimnagar town, it has come to light that this craft was introduced by a widely travelled expert goldsmith, Kadarla Ramayya - resident of Yalagandala (Elgandal) who learned and absorbed this new filigree jewel technique and style.

In local language, filigree is referred to as, Vendi teega pani-silver wirework. Pure silver is melted and moulded into required shapes. The rod like shape silver is shaped as thick wires with the help of automated drawing machine. Two of the thinnest wires are heated and wound around a charkha and flattened again. These are then twisted together and pressed into zigzag patterns around the ribs of the design formed by thicker strips of silver and expertly soldered. The motifs and designs were drawn are inspired by flowers, birds, musical instruments and geometric patterns.



Silver is beautifully transformed into breath-taking intricate design.

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Skilled artisan of Karimnagar involved in silver heating process.



Traditional closed furnace is build and set up permanently at artisans placed.



Different stages of making process done by different artisans as per their experience.

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The products also coated in golden shade as per choice.



Peacock feather is artistically depicting in silver filigree work.



Silver piece is being melted at high temperature.



Small beads and grains made of silver are filled in the unique master piece.

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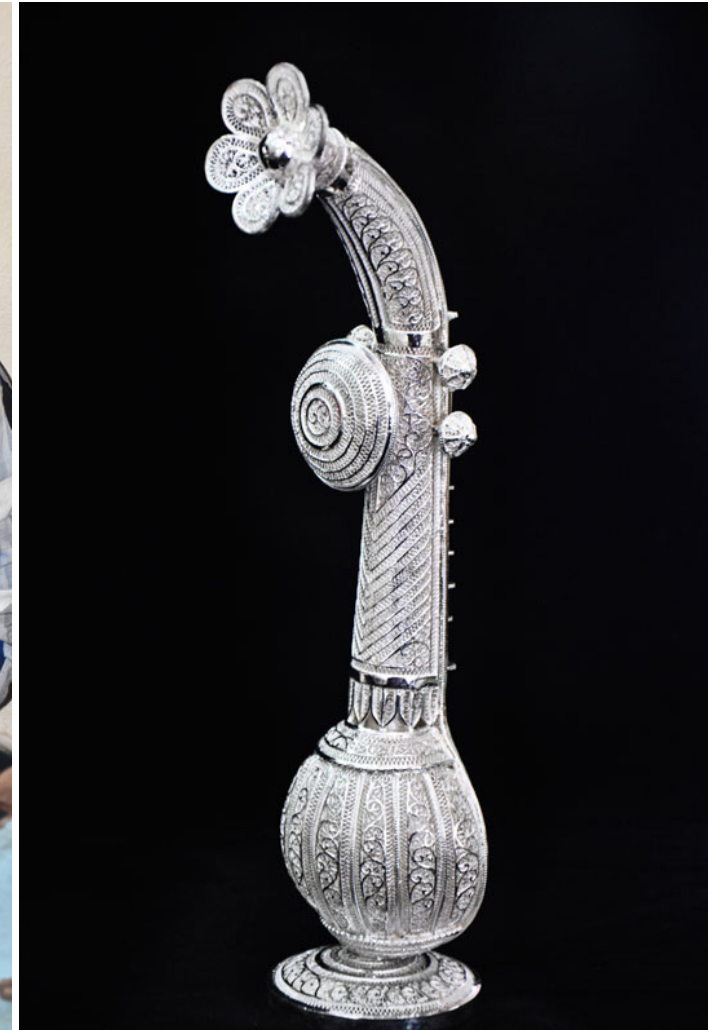
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The designs are created to fill the gaps while working.



Replica of Veena instrument done with silver.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Different tools and raw materials used are:

Pure Silver:

Silver-silver biscuits are the main raw material used in the process; the biscuits are melted into the different shapes as required to the design.

Navasagaram:

The substance navasagaram (in local language) powder is added to the melting silver to ensure easy flow of the silver liquid, when it is poured into mould.

Iron Tongs:

These are holders used to hold crucibles while casting process and also for safer and easier handling.

Boring Machine:

This machine is used to size the silver rods into required size as per the requirement.

Compass:

Compass tool is used to give accurate circular shapes to the design.

Yerigaram:

It is a powder called Yerigaram locally, it acts as adhesive. Small silver filings are marinated in this powder and fixed to the edges of the design done on silver product by heating.

Crucible:

Crucible is a container especially used to melt silver.

Reetha:

Reetha is a natural seed. Seeds are heated and soaked in the water. The extracted water is used to wash the silver products to obtain shine.

Brass Brush:

It is a metal brush used to rub on the final products for getting striking shining.

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Pure silver biscuits.



Boring machine.



Iron holders.

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Compass tool.



Yerigaram powder.

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Brass brush and dimension scale.



Different types of tools used in making process.

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Geajaldhim (called locally) cubical shaped tool. It is used to make the sheets into curved shapes.



Navasagaram powder.



Crucible.

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Different sizes of crucibles.



Variety of tools for twisting and cutting of the silver.



Moulds used to pour the melting liquid silver to make rods.

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Making Silver rods

First the designs are drawn on the sheet from the reference the outside frame of desired product is made. Silver biscuits are melted and converted into silver rods. These rods are converted into thin wires, which are used to fill in the filigree work. The making of this silver wire is in itself a fascinating process. Pure silver ingots are put through a wire-drawing machine to produce very fine wires.



Silver biscuits used to create rods and different shapes.



The biscuits are placed in a crucible and melted.



To get the temperature high another crucible is closed on top of it.



With the help of the iron tongs, biscuits are lifted and checked to ensure proper melting of silver.

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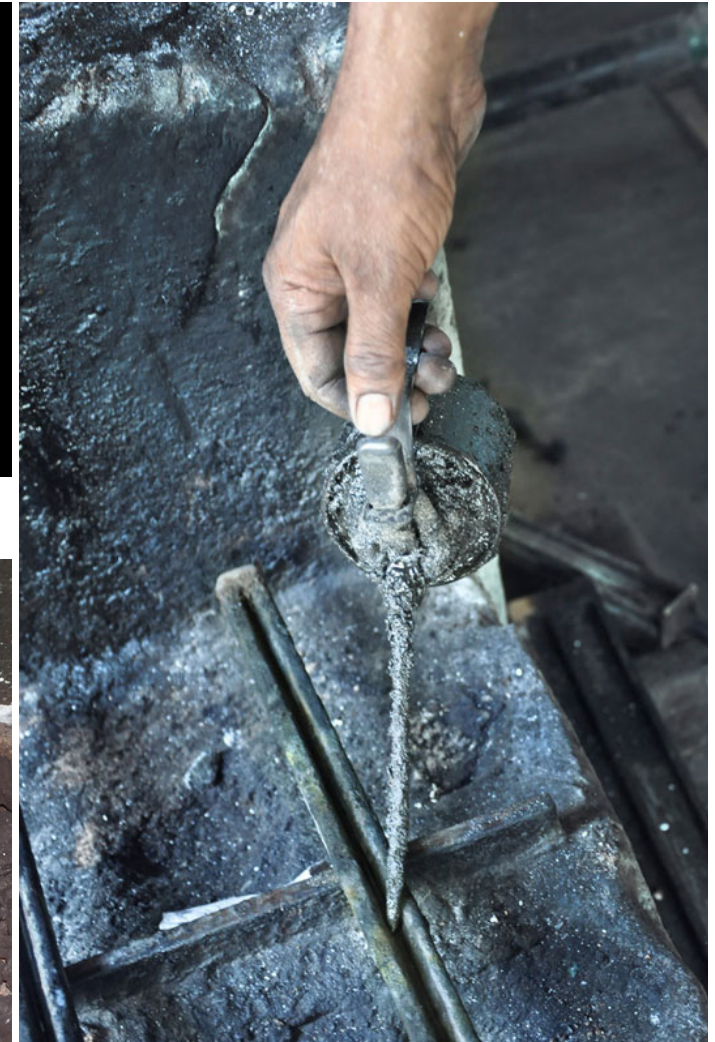
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Charcoal is used as fuel to produce heat.



Melted silver is taken out using small crucible for the further process.



Oil is poured into the mould for the easy flow of liquid silver.

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Melted silver liquid is being poured into the molds.



The silver has taken the rod shape.



These rods are kept ready for the sizing process.

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The silver rod is removed and dipped in the cold water to make it cool.



The silver rods are washed to remove the stains.

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Sizing Process

Sizing process is done to make the silver rods thin as per the required dimensions. Prepared silver rods are pressed between the rods of boring machine to resize the silver strands. The rod passed through the openings of boring machine to attain desired dimension. The finished strands are then used to create Jaali work.



Using hammer, silver rods are cut into small pieces.

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With the help of Boring machine silver rods are resized.



Closer view where silver rod is passed through machine.

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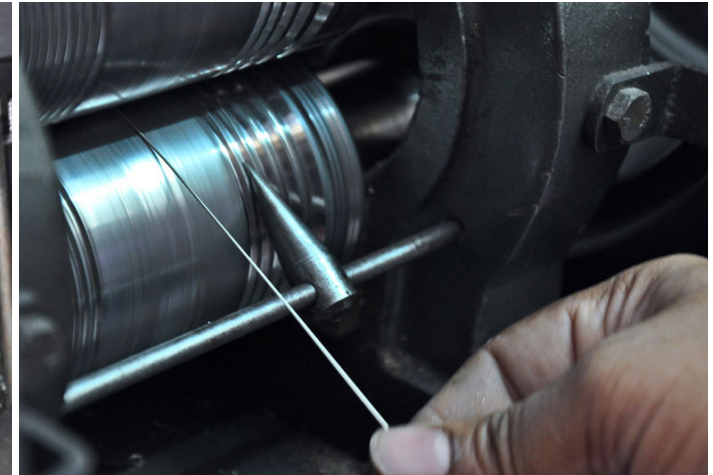
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Here the silver rods are stretched to make it thin in size.



Rod is sized into thinner small wire.



Now the silver wire is ready to be used for product making.

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Making Process

Making Process is done with great passion by highly experienced artisan to create fascinating masterpieces. The process involves stages like frame making, designing wires, inserting design into frames, welding and polishing.

The process starts by collecting thin flat silver wires. These wires are then twisted together into zigzag patterns and used to make the frame. Aligning and joining the pieces of silver wires make the basic frame. Then different motif designs are made by twisting silver strands manually using holders and other tool called Podi sravanam locally. These designs are properly aligned in the frame and composed by adding several design motifs. Once the alignment is completed, the filigree frame is welded to join the framework. The product is then heated for bending it into required shape. The finished product is dipped in the diluted sulphur and polished with solution made of Reetha. This process of heating and dipping in the sulphur liquid is done 3 to 4 times to remove the black coat from the design, thus giving it a glittering effect. Polishing is done with brass brush made of small brass strings, which is readily available in the market. Finally, the product is again smoothened and rubbed with a soft cotton cloth.

Since the product is heated and polished repeatedly, silver filigree products attain striking shine and luster, which stays for a longer period. The smaller articles are directly molded into various designs. For larger ones, smaller components are made and pieced together. These threads are then shaped into various designs and patterns. Filigree is thus a combination of different pieces joint together.



Wax is applied on the base where the product is to be made.

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Four silver strips are aligned to form rectangular shape. Basic frame is ready for designing process.



The edges are welded to join.



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Early prepared spring is cut and fixed to the borders.



Border is fixed and extra part is removed.



Silver wire is twisted to make design.



The prepared design is inserted in the frame.

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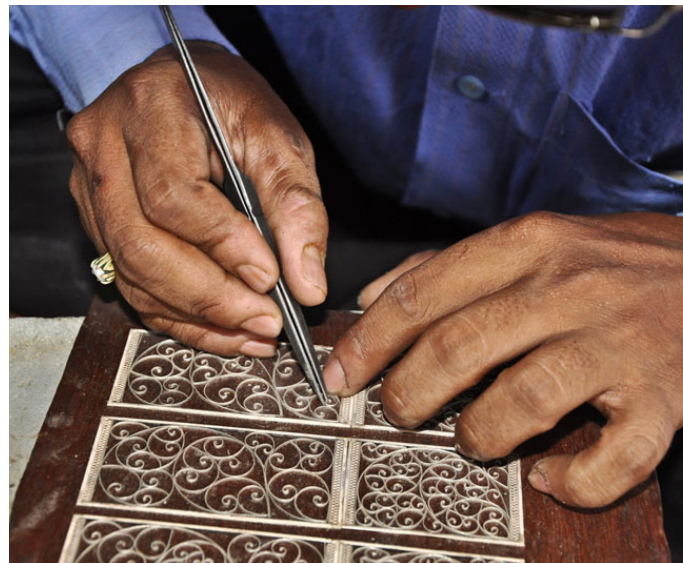


The silver is coiled and pressed to form leaf shape.



The coiled design is inserted to create mango motif.

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Small beads made of silver are set in the projected frame.



The zigzag patterns are kept in the border.

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Flat edged tool is used to press on the designs to set the small beads stiffly.



Metal sheet is tied to the frame for the better support.

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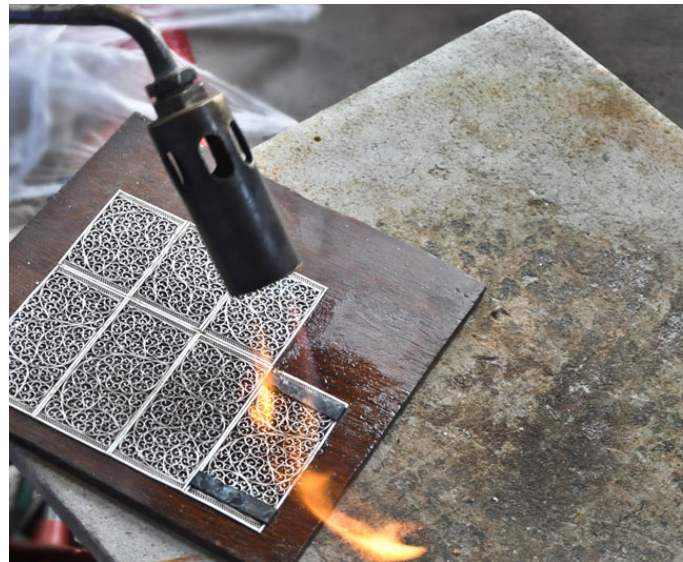
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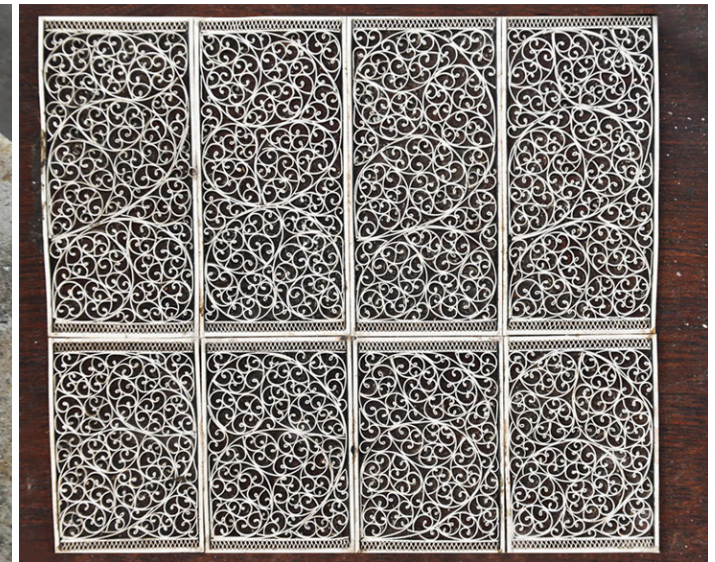
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The frame is heated before removing it from the board.



Frame is kept ready for the welding purpose.

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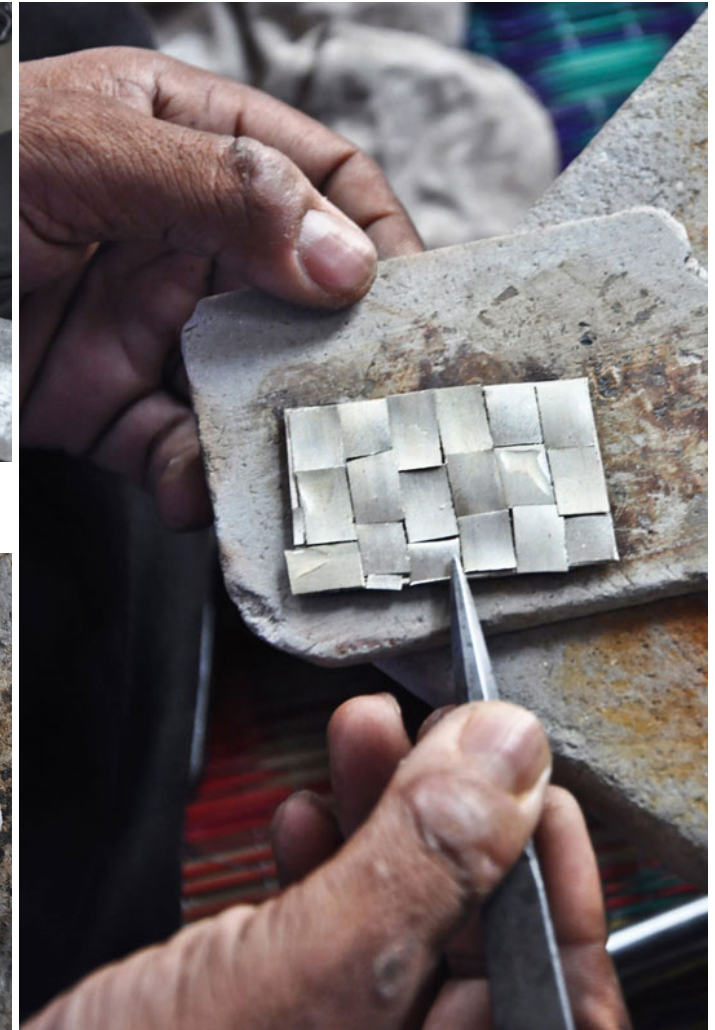
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Small thin silver pieces are placed on the frame for welding.



The art piece is turned upside down.



Frame is fully covered with silver pieces.

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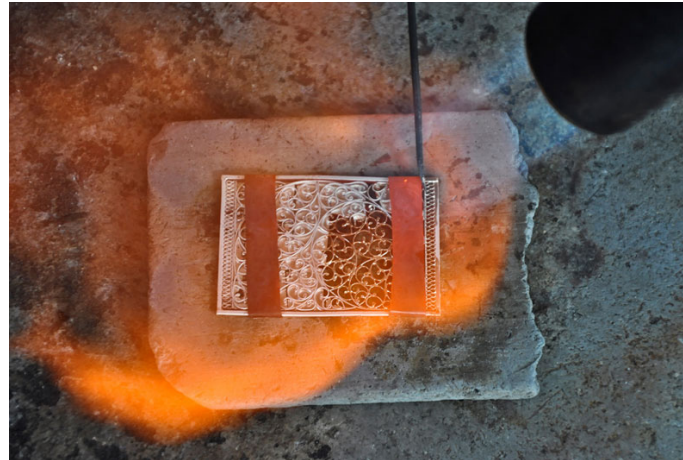
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Heating is done to fix all the small parts together.



After heating, the jaali work is properly set in the frame.



The frame is beaten mildly to make it even.

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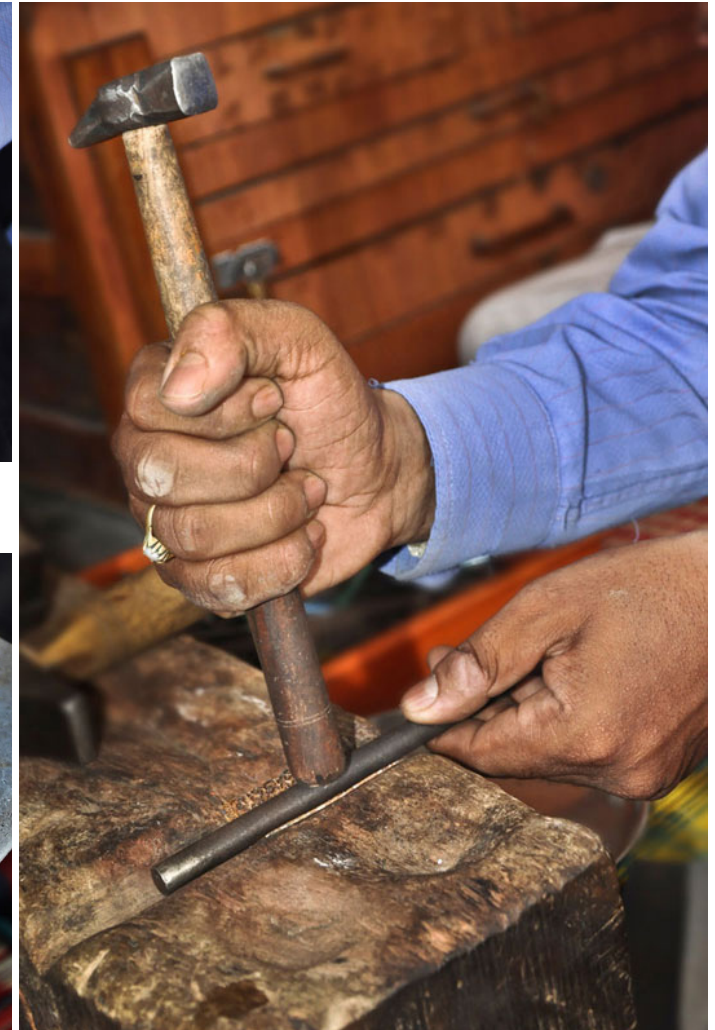
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The worked piece is rubbed over the sand stone to make it smooth.



Silver is easily bended, when it is slightly heated.



Flat frame is curved with the help circular shaped rod.

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The curved edges are being joined.



The edges are binded together using small silver beads.



Burning process is done repeatedly for proper binding.

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The product is dipped into the diluted sulphuric acid.



Using brass metal brush the product is polished for shining.



After washing the product is rubbed with soft cloth.



The parts of product are made separately and joined later to make the bigger products.

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Products

Products and Themes:

Silver Filigree of Karimnagar is a unique art form by expertise craftsmanship. The silver is designed to create range of products with intricate and magnificent motif patterns. Earrings, necklaces, bangles, rings and pendants are included in traditional products. Idols of lord Ganesha, lord Venkateshwara adorning figurines of deities created for worship. Puja items and decorative art pieces are created inspired by flora and fauna, Birds, peacock, chariots and even ladies bags utility ware like plates, trays, attardaans, ugaldans, ittardaans, changerdaans (oodhdan), spoons, ashtrays, photo frames, boxes and cases in different shapes and sizes. Storage items are made with multipurpose compartments for or keeping different items like spices, betel nuts, betel leaf (paandaan). Containers, lamp stands, flower baskets, rose water sprinklers and other fancy items are include in the distinct products.



Traditional surai in silver filigree.



Container in peacock form is beautifully composed in flower and zigzag motifs.

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Jewelry box with leaf shaped stands.



Silver wallets with stems, creepers and beaded designs.



Unique design of lord Ganesha is one of the latest creation.

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Swan in zigzag patterns.



Pen made in creeper motif.



Veena in intricate Jaali work is an exclusive art form.

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A plate with sophisticated floral design used in festive and wedding occasions.



Leaf plate with engraved design.



Filigree work in peacock form.

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A unique traditional art piece.



Idol of lord venkateshvara.

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