

Design Resource

Talai Aati Bommai

The art of making head-shaking dolls

by

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

Source:

<http://dsource.in/resource/talai-aati-bommai>



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

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Introduction

Thanjavur or Tanjore is the headquarters of the Thanjavur district in Tamilnadu. It is situated in the Cauvery delta, at a distance of 314 Km from Chennai. The traditional head-shaking dolls of Thanjavur are well known by its local name as 'Talai aati Bommai'. These dolls take their original standing position though they are moved in any angle. Handmade dolls are made with clay and Plaster of Paris. Base is completely made of clay in a form of dish. The body of doll is created with the moulds and is attached to clay base. Then the dolls are beautifully painted with bright colors to describe the facial expressions. In Thanjavur, there are nearly 10 to 15 families involved in production of clay dolls. These dolls are used in all ritual functions especially in Kolu-ritual display of Thanjavur dolls celebrated during Dasara festival.



The Thanjavur dolls in the making process.



Women involved in doll production/making

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Typical Thanjavur dolls with heavy base made of clay.



Modeled dolls ready for embellishment works.

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Dolls depicting a scene of daily life.



Beautifully painted facial expression.

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Displayed dolls at Thanjavur market place.



Idol of village women.



Base of doll is painted with natural red clay.



Colorful dolls in bright hues.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Clay and POP (Plaster of Paris) are used in the production process. The base of doll is made with clay and the body is with Plaster of Paris. Moulds are used to create the shape and facial expressions of dolls. Fan is used to dry the prepared dolls. Both natural and artificial colors are used in painting process. A solution which is made of POP is used to coat the dolls before painting. Natural red soil is used to color the base of the doll and oil paints are used for other decorations on the body of the doll. The painting is done using different sizes of brushes.



Moulds which are made of POP (plaster of Paris).



Brush used in painting process.

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Plaster of Paris.



Dough made of clay and POP.



Different colors of oil paints.



Coconut shell used as container to store color.

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Golden color powder used mainly for ornamentation.



A mould with detailed facial expressions and accessories.



File used for smoothing the various parts of the doll during the making process.

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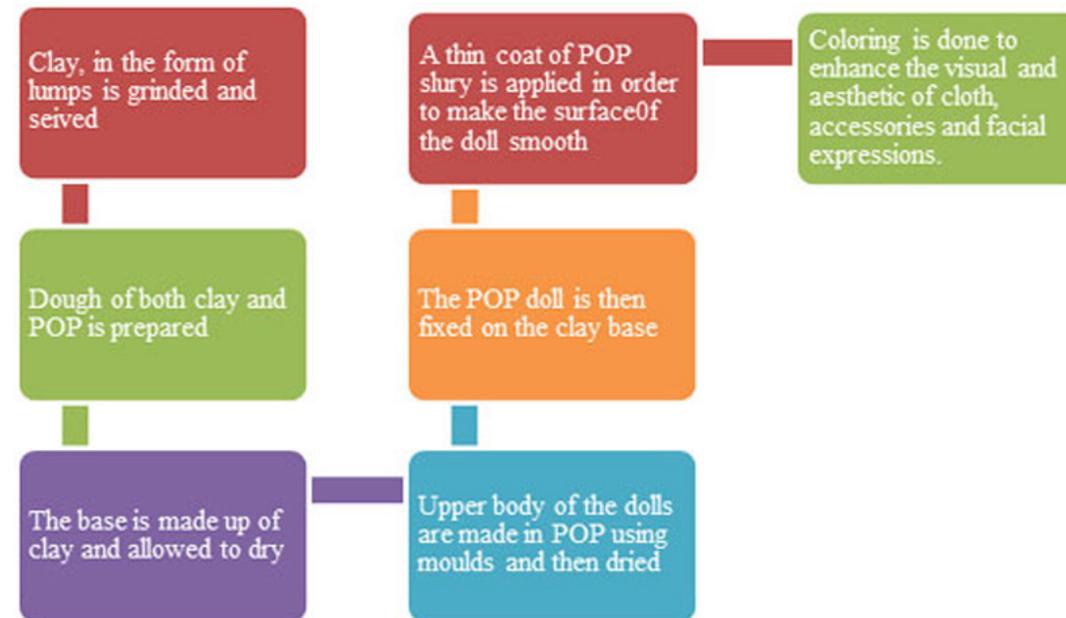
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Making Process

The Thanjavur Talai aati Bommai or Uruttu Bommai production process is simple and starts by preparing the dough. Dough of POP and clay is made separately. The base is made with clay in the shape of a dish and allowed it for drying. Then the body part is made using moulds. POP substance is placed inside the mould and pressed until it takes the shape of mould. The body shape of idol is removed and it is joined with clay base using cement and POP. A slurry mixture of Pop is coated on the doll before it is being painted. This is done to obtain shine and luster on the surface of the doll. Finally the doll is painted with different colors to define the clothing, accessories and facial expressions.



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Dough is ready for moulding process.



Clay Base is made and allowed to dry.



Body made of POP and clay base are attached.



The detailing is done with a sharp edged tool on POP model.

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Smoothing process on the surface of doll.



Artisan preparing the POP solution.

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Coating the POP mixture on the body of the doll



The coated dolls are allowed to dry in the shade.

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Coating the base with natural clay solution.



The doll is dried after clay coat coating of the base

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Mixing the red and white oil colors to obtain pink.



Face of the doll is painted with pink color.

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Clothing is painted in dark and bright colors.



Painted dolls in vivid colors.



Fascinatingly decorated jewels and clothing.

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Products

The traditional Talai aati Bommai comes in a pair called Raja and Rani (King and Queen). The specialty of these typical dolls is that the doll shakes when it is tapped and comes to its normal upright position. This happens due to heavy clay base of doll. The Products include mostly Human figures, images of gods and goddesses. Some other products consist/depict scenes from village life as well as ritual processions. The idols of Raja Rani, bride and bride groom are most popular ones among all products. These Talai aati Bommais are highly demanded in October during Dasara festival as they are elaborately exhibited in every house.



The typical Talai aati Bommai depicting Raani-Queen.



The head shaking dolls ready for the market.

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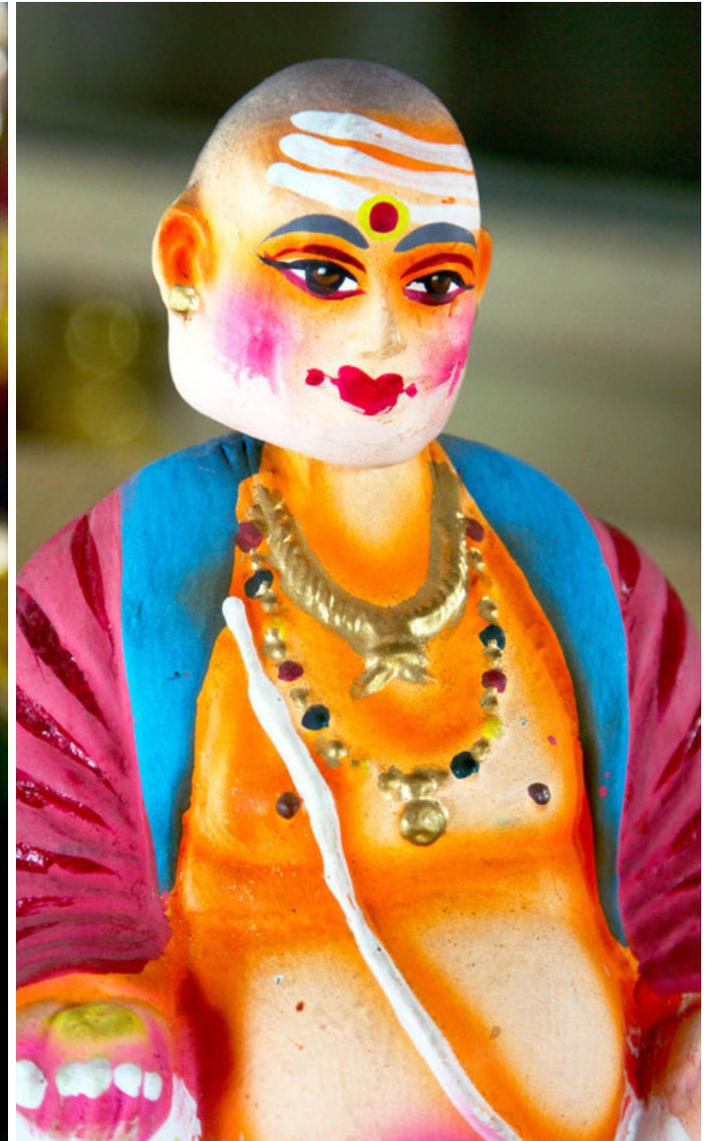
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Thanjavur dolls are well known for its fascinating ornament work.



A replica of a priest.

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A doll in attractive red and yellow colors.



Head shaking dolls depicting daily life.

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A closer perspective of detailing on the doll's body and its expressions.



A colorful doll.

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Contact Details

Professor Bibhudutta Baral and Prof. J. Antony William,
NID, Bengaluru

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 2337 3086

email: [dsource.in\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:dsource.in[at]gmail.com)

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