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Wall Mount - Koppal, Karnataka

Wooden Decoratives by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Guna D. NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

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Introduction

Arts and crafts of Karnataka are marvellous creations & it reveals the royal delicacy and the expertize and efficiency of the craftsmen. The arts and crafts of Karnataka is traditional. They have evolved through ages from one generation to another. If you ever visit a handicraft village in the state of Karnataka, you will be stunned at the sight of the villagers who always sit in groups and enjoy their work. The arts and crafts of Karnataka lie even in the articles of day to day use like an earthen pot and includes the works on various objects such as woods, ivory, stones, sandalwood and metal. One of the crafts which catches one's eye originating from Karnataka is Kinnal art from Koppal district.

Many arts and crafts were born in Vijayanagara era. Kinnal craft is one of the crafts encouraged by the king during 15th and 16th century. "Chitrgar" is the community involved in this work. After the decline of the empire, Chitragar (Artist) communities migrated to places like Kinnal, Kanakgiri and Ananthpur, and were supported by the Nawab of Koppal, the Desais of Kinnal and the Nawabs of Hyderabad helped to develop the craft. Later the craft got famous from Kinnal and named as Kinnal craft.

Place:

Kinnal or Kinhal as commonly known is a small town in the Koppal District of North Karnataka. It is like any other village but for the fact that it dates back to the 13th century era of Great Vijayanagara Empire where the first forms of Kinnal art was practiced, makes it remarkably unique.

Krishna Deva Raya ruled from 1509-1529 CE, and the empire lasted until 1646, when it was conquered by the Deccani Sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda. The empire's patronage enabled its arts, crafts and literature to rise to new heights, and its legacy of sculpture, painting, and architecture influenced the development of the arts in south India long after the empire came to an end. There were great innovations in Hindu temple construction during this period, and many diverse temple-building traditions and styles in south India came together in the Vijayanagar style of architecture, the finest examples of which are to be found in the famed Hampi ruins. The famous mural paintings in the Pampapateshwara temple, and the intricate work on the wooden chariot at Hampi, the wooden statues of Shiva and Parvathi at Virupaksha temple are said to be the work of the ancestors of the Kinnal artisans of today. Old paper tracings found in the ancestral house of one of the artisans further substantiates this belief. When patronage of the rich landed gentry was lost, the Kinnal artists were further impoverished. The artisans migrated to Kinnal village after the fall of the empire and the art identified itself with the village.

Kinnal Art:

Kinnal craft is highly decorative and follows the specific iconography used in religious chariots and known for its intricate design of household furniture like stools, cradles and plaques. The beautiful designs and patterns on wall mounts, dolls, cradles and swings are breath-taking. The artists depict scenes from myths through their dexterity.

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The artisans are called chitragara. Lightweight wood is used for the toys. The paste used for the joining the various parts is made of tamarind seeds and pebbles. Jute rags, soaked, slivered into pieces, dried, powdered, and mixed with saw dust and tamarind seed paste, is made into kitta, a mixture of pebble powder paste with liquid gum, used for embossing the ornamentation and jewellery on the body of the figure. Once the components of the figure are assembled, kitta is applied by hand all over, and small pieces of cotton are stuck on it with the tamarind paste. After this is applied, the pebble paste forms the base for the application of paint. After the final touches are done, the craft makes its way to various exhibitions, festivals, village fairs, art galleries or to the homes of art lovers. The craft survives because Kinnal wall hangings and showpieces are popular.

Kinnal craft is traditionally seen in temple chariot decorations and has found its place in many temples of Karnataka. This craft has recently been encouraged by the government by granting it the status of geographic indication.

Kinnal painting is culturally rich and is hand-painted on the wooden frames with colourful emboss which are used in temples and house decoration. Kinnal craft has rich artistic heritage practiced, which is also known as Chowki work. Chowki work is one of the art works that was popularized during the Vishwa Kannada Sammelana in 1985. The craft is mainly done on wood, depicting the figures of Gods, Goddesses, birds and animals in the center of wooden piece. The work includes embossing (gesso) work with magnificent colours. These craft also have exquisite carvings on wood representing local folk cultures. The art can easily be differentiated from other forms of arts by its intricate design. The craft is done by both men and women artisans.

As the craft is not very popular among the youth currently, the artisans of Kinnal craft are conducting many workshops and training sessions to teach and educate other young artisans to take forward the art innovatively.



Magnificently preparing the Kinnal wall plate.

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The fine line designs are made using thin paintbrushes.

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Artist paints on the sketch made on Kinnal wall plate.



Close up of the Kinnal wall plate.



Most experienced artisan of Kinnal wall plate.

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Kinnal wall plate.



Close up of the Kinnal wall plate.



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Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw materials required for wall plate:

- Wood: it is used as a primary material on which the art work is done.
- Chalk Powder: The mixture is used to make the gesso work.
- Sand Paper: It helps to smoothen the surface.
- Divider: The instrument is used for marking on wood.
- Scale: Helps to measure the lines to be drawn as per the required sketches.
- Brushes: Different sizes of brushes which are made of squirrel's tail are used as per the design to be painted.
- Paints: Enamel and poster paints are used in Kinnal craft.
- Silver Foil: It is pasted on the embossed design.
- Adhesive: It is used to paste the silver foil on the embossing.
- Zinc Powder: Paint is obtained from zinc powder which is applied on flower work.
- Opal Stone: It is used to rub the flower work and polish.
- Yellow Colour (chemical colour): It is used to obtain the gold colour.
- Wood Polish: It is used to mix with the yellow powder for obtaining the gold colour.
- Varnish: Varnish is applied on the painting to give shine and luster to the final product.

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Ply wood.



Mixture of chalk powder and adhesive.



Wood polish.

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Silver foils.



Raw form of Lead.



Mixture of lead and fish bone gum.



Opal stone.

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Scale.







Brushes.

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Asian paints.



Naturally extracted color.



Black color.

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Making Process

An ordinary wooden slab (chatris or palkis) is used to make Kinnal art. They are cut into circle, square or octagon shape. The process starts by applying mixture of chalk powder and gum and is applied evenly on the wooden slab as a base. This is kept for drying for some time. After it is dried, the surface is rubbed on by sandpaper to make it smooth for painting. Artisan uses scale, pencil and diameter to draw the borders on the slab. Gesso work is made on the borders and in the middle of the wooden piece. Gesso is a compound made of chalk powder and gum and distemper colour. The gesso work is basically made on the borders or in the center of the canvas. The designs are surrounded with flowers and leaves, with any mythological character in the middle and dried (chalk powder). After this is completely dry, silver foil is cut as per the required form and pasted evenly on top of the gesso work with the help of a brush and adhesive.

On the silver foil layer, outline for the embossed is given using thin lines in black colour to give the painting detailing and depth. To obtain the golden look, yellow powder (chemical colours) and water is mixed with wood polish and applied on the embossed area, and dried. A bright coloured paint is applied around the embossed parts to make it vibrant and striking. Flower work is done around the center of the slab using silver colour. To obtain this silver colour, a mixture of zinc powder with gum and water is soaked for 2-3 hours. These paints which are naturally made last for a long time and retains its charm. After all the painting process is done, the article is kept under direct sunlight for drying. Flower work makes the craft unique and special. It is rubbed using a tool affixed with an opal stone to its tip. It gives a shining effect to the painting. Finally, varnish is applied to obtain more shine and make it to look attractive. Tools, paints and brushes are developed by Kinnal craft artisans themselves.

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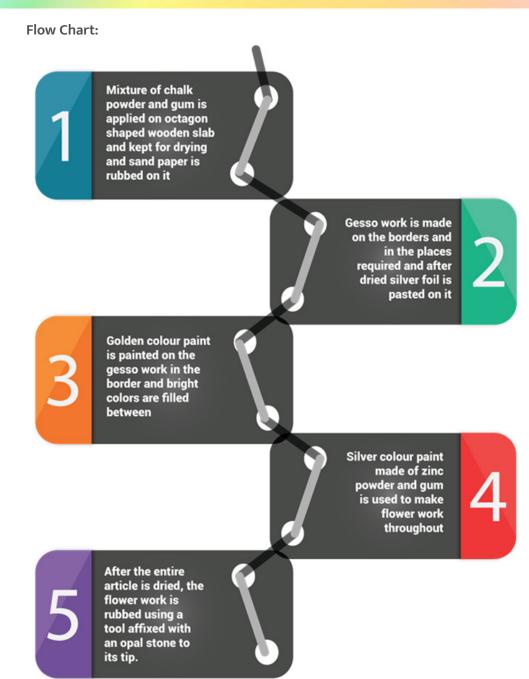
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Sufficient width of plywood is selected and the required size of wood is cut.



The wood is completely painted.



It is allowed to dry in sunlight.



Glimpse of the dried plywood for Kinnal wall plate.

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Then the surface of kinnal plate is sanded thoroughly using sand paper.



Further it is completely wiped using wet hand.



The designs are sketched using pencil on the wall plate.



Initially the outlines are drawn.

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The designs are drawn.



Then the wall plate is allowed to dry completely.



Again it is sanded using sand paper thoroughly.



Silver foil is chosen as per the size and the fevicol is applied on the backside.

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Silver foil is chosen as per the size and the fevicol is applied on the backside.



It is then stuck on the wall plate designs.



Then it is further pressed thoroughly using the cloth and the press with by the thumb finger.



It is further allowed dry for sometime.

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On the designs the outlines are drawn using black paint and thin pointed brush.



This mixture is applied on the silver foil that is stuck to the kinnal wall plate.



Wood polish is slightly mixed with golden color.

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A mixture of lead and fish bone gum is prepared to the required consistency.



It is further used to paint the detailings on the wall plate.



Once the details are done and dried the designs are rubbed using opal stone to render the shinning of the Kinnal wall plate.

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Products

The shape of the base wood in Kinnal craft are in forms of hexagon, circle, square and octagon. Size of these wall plates varies from 16 inches, 18 inches, 1ft, 2 ft, 2 and half ft, 3 ft and goes up to 4 ft as size also changes on the basis of requirements and the normal market requirement is of A4 (210x297mm).

Some of the products of Kinnal craft are Wall hangings, home decorators, table top display, mirrors, phone stand, photo frames, etc. Price depends on material cost and making charges. Price for 1ft wall plate is approximately 400-600 INR. The maximum price of the art plate can go up to 8000-10000 INR for a table top (size 4x4feet).



Kinnal wall plate that is made in oval form.

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Octagon shaped Kinnal wall plate.

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Stunning Kinnal wall plate that is rendered gorgeously using multicolor and unique techniques.

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Wall Mount - Koppal, Karnataka - Part 2

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Contact Details

This documentation was done by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Guna D. at NID, Bengaluru.

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