

Design Research Seminar

Recreating marchers of salt satyagraha by imbibing inspiration from Dhokracraft

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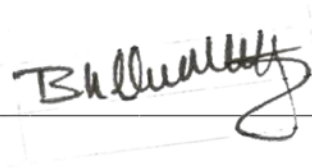
Approval Sheet:

Design Research Seminar

“Recreating marchers of salt satyagraha by imbibing inspiration from Dhokracraft” Is approved for the partial fulfilment of the requirement for the post graduate degree in Industrial Design

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Project Guide



Recreating marchers of salt satyagraha by imbibing inspiration from Dhokracraft

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Abstract: Dandi March remains a watershed moment in our history. The Dandi March, was an act of nonviolent civil disobedience in colonial India led by M K Gandhi and to produce salt from the seawater in the coastal village of Dandi. 80 Marchers accompanied Gandhi on his march. These men hailed from almost all parts of the country and accompanied Gandhi from the beginning of the Dandi March until the end. To commemorate the significance of these marchers, we recreate them from Dhokra art, a tribal art so eternal that it goes back 5000 years and survived the test of time.

Keywords: Satyagraha, Dhandi, Dhokra craft, Lost wax, Metal casting, Non-violence.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Dandi march lasted for 24 days from 12 March 1930 to 6 April 1930, a campaign of tax resistance and nonviolent protest against British salt monopoly. It gave impetus to Indian independence movement and started national wide civil disobedience movement. Gandhi along with 80 trusted volunteers covered 240 miles in 24 days. Started from Sabarmati Ashram 240 miles away from Dhandi and broke the salt law on 6 April, 1930 at 6:30 am. It sparked large scale acts of civil disobedience against British Raj salt laws by millions of Indians. The salt satyagraha continued for an year ending with Gandhi release from jail and negotiation with viceroy. Over 60,000 Indians were jailed as a result of satyagraha. Gandhi used civil disobedience as a technique for fighting social and political justice.

To commemorate the efforts put by the people participated in Dhandi march and carry the memories associated with the event we intend to design the marchers in Dhokra art to pay everlasting tribute to the lives well lived and worth remembering. To feel the presence of these people and know about the past events, we intend to give them an expression through Dhokra art.

II. DHOKRA ART

A. History

Dhokra art is one of the earliest known method of non-ferrous metal casting known to human civilization. The name Dhokra was initially used to indicate a group of nomadic craftsmen. Later it applied to beautifully decorated brassware products created by the lost

wax process. In India, these craftsmen are clustered in the states of Bihar, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal. Dhokra art is practiced by different communities like the Thataries, Ghasis, Situlias, Ghantaras, Bathudis and other Dhokra workers.

B. Manufacturing process

The two main processes of lost wax casting are solid casting and hollow casting. While the solid casting is predominant in the southern parts of India, the hollow casting is more common in Eastern and Central India. Solid casting uses a solid piece of wax to create the mould while hollow casting uses the clay core. In hollow casting process a clay core is made which is the shape of the final cast image. The clay core is covered by a layer of wax composed of bee's wax, nut oil and a resin from the tree *Damara orientalis*. The wax is then shaped to finer details of design and decorations. It is then covered with layers of clay, to take the negative form of the wax on the inside. Drain ducts are left for the wax, to melt away when the clay is cooked. The wax is then replaced by the molten metal, using brass scrap as raw material. The liquid metal poured in hardens. The metal fills the mould and takes the shape of wax. It is then immersed in water for rapid cooling of molten metal. The outer layer of clay is then chipped off and this way every artefact is unique in its own way. The metal idol is then polished and finished.

III. DESIGN PROCESS

In 2013, 48 sculptors were selected from various countries through an open call. Selected sculptors created clay sculptures of Salt Marchers at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) campus in Mumbai and each of them created clay sculptures of salt satyagraha marchers. The sculptors were given liberty to follow their individual approaches and to maintain visual coherence guidelines of eminent Indian sculptor Sadashiv Sathe were followed. Photographs, Films and documentary references helped sculptors capture the determination and spirit of 80 marchers who accompanied Gandhi.







The marcher's models are studied based on their body posture, clothing, expression and reinterpreted as figurines in Dhokra craft form. The traditional methods are adopted to imitate the core structure of the marchers and followed the same technique to detail it out. The best part of dhokra craft is that we can achieve the body posture of marchers but detailing of the expressions is impossible. This short coming is the real beauty of the dhokra craft which gives the unique look. It follows the Gandhi philosophy of sustainable production. People visiting Salt satyagraha memorial can own these dhokra marchers and remember the effort, value of the salt satyagraha marchers.

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