

Design Resource

## Eggshell Painting - Kolkata

Amazing Craft

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth B.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/eggshell-painting-kolkata>



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### Introduction

In nature, it is mostly the female animal that possesses the ability to bear a child and reproduce to keep the generation going. Among them, species like birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish that lays eggs to give birth to their offspring. An egg is a result of the fertilization of an ovum, and it is an organic vessel that carries a zygote, allowing the embryo to develop into an independent life. Once ready and adequately developed, the egg hatches, allowing the baby out. Eggs make a major part of the human diet and are a rich source of proteins; hence, humans have been eaten for thousands of years. The most popular choice here is chicken eggs, while duck, goose, caviar, and quail eggs are occasionally used, especially in the western part of the world. Now chicken egg production is a global industry branching out to various areas of the modern food industry.

The eggs possess a thin but strong outer shell made of calcium carbonate (CaCO<sub>3</sub>) crystals. It is a semi-permeable membrane with pores that allows the passage of air and moisture through them. Therefore apt and used for decoration purposes as it holds watercolors, acrylics, oils, etc., when painted. Eggshell paint is a newly found craftwork where the shells are painted to a satin finish and low luster after the egg is emptied. Here special care is taken in the last touchup stage with precise bordering, merging layers, and other visual effects for making the main patterns stand out. For the craft, though any bird egg can be preferred, larger and stronger eggs are favored for ease of use and broad finishing. Painting is a creative expression that involves the usage of paint, pigment, color, or other medium applied to a surface using a brush, knife, sponge, or airbrushes. Kolkata is a place from the state of West Bengal, located along the banks of the Hooghly River. This second-largest city of the country is often regarded high in the world market for its handlooms and handicrafts. Mrs. Sonia from New Alipore of Kolkata is a trained painter, now running workshops on fine arts especially painting for young girls from the locality. She is an active participant in art exhibitions hosted across the country. Her collection of natural and recyclable products includes eggshell paintings and paintings on paper, wood, glass, etc.

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Mrs. Sonia, the artisan, with her family.

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Artisan involved in the eggshell painting process.



Artisan pasting the eggshell on a chart paper to make the art.



A beautiful eggshell painting made by artisan Mrs. Sonia.



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## Tools and Raw Materials

The tools and raw materials that are used for eggshell painting are as follows:

- **Eggshell:** It is the basic raw material used in the making of eggshell paint.
- **Adhesive:** It is used for gluing the raw materials.
- **Paintbrush:** It is used for painting purposes.
- **Acrylic Paint:** It is used to color the eggshells.
- **Scissor:** It is used to cut the chart papers.
- **Chart Paper:** It is used as a base material to hold eggshells.
- **Wet Cloth:** It is used to dry the eggshells.



Different sizes of brushes are used for painting.

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Acrylic colors are used to make designs over the eggshells.



Watercolor is used as the base color.



Eggshells are used as the basic raw material.

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## Making Process

The making of eggshell painting starts with the artisan gathering enough eggs. These handpicked eggs are then emptied into a bowl, and the shells are washed properly. Once washed, they are cut into two halves and dried using a clean cloth. Now the artisan proceeds to the next step, i.e., shaping. Here, the eggshells are glued to a chart paper by applying an adhesive to the shell's inner portion and placing it over the paper. Keeping them flat, these are pressed for natural cracks, which give a unique look to the craft. After the shells are nicely stuck, painting is done on them to produce intended patterns. Different kinds of acrylic paints and brushes are used here. Natural colors, watercolors, and oil paints are also preferred at times for the painting purpose, depending on the idea and the kind of detail needed. Background colors are certainly given to make the main characters drawn stand out. Once the painting is done, the art piece is left to dry for 10 minutes. The final stage is cutting, where the chart paper holding eggshells are cut into appropriate sizes according to the artisan's idea using a scissor. This cut piece is then framed inside a wooden or glass frame for longer durability. In this way, eggshell paintings are made.

Flow Chart:



1. Eggshells are collected by emptying eggs.



2. Eggshells are crumbled on chart paper, forming a shape.



3. Painting is done using different paintbrushes on the eggshell.



4. Eggshell painting is cut into appropriate size and framed using wooden or glass frames.

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The eggs are emptied for the shell.



The shell being washed and dried.



The adhesive used for gluing the shell to the chart paper.



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Shells being trimmed into the required size using a scissor.



Eggshells are glued and pressed for natural cracks.

Shell base being painted with blue watercolor paint.



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Various colors are mixed for unique color combinations.



While painting, the artisan starts with the body part of the puppet.



Artisan giving an outline to the pattern drawn using a round painting brush.



The background color is given to make the main characters stand out in the painting.

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The final look of eggshell paint.

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## Products

The eggshell paintings made by Mrs. Sonia are sold through e-commerce websites as well as self-marketing, where the customers collect the art pieces personally. The range of products made at her workshop also includes handicrafts made of wood, landscape paintings, and interior decorative items. The cost of these products starts from INR 500 and goes up to a maximum of INR 50,000. In contrast, their size ranges between 1 inch and 4 feet depending upon the customer's requirement. According to Mrs. Sonia, the prices are fixed as per the product quality, design, size, techniques used for the making, and workmanship.



A beautiful painting inspired by the artisan's imagination.



Eggshell painting depicting Lord Vishnu and Lakshmi.



A wall hanging depicting Lord Ganesh is made out of eggshells.



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## Video



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## Contact Details

This documentation was done by Professor Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth B. at [NID, Bengaluru](#).

You can get in touch with him at [bibhudutta\[at\]nid.edu](mailto:bibhudutta[at]nid.edu)

You can write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

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