

Design Resource

Gangaur

Traditional Festival of Rajasthan

by

Tej Prakash Jangid and Sanmati Hosure

IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/gangaur>



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<https://dsource.in/resource/gangaur/introduction>

Introduction

A colourful and most important festival of Rajasthan is Gangaur. It is also celebrated in some parts of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal. 'Gan' means 'Shiva' and 'Gauri' means 'Parvati' hence the word Gangaur forms. Gangaur is a celebration of marriage and love, honouring Goddess 'Gauri' or 'Parvati'. Every woman whether she is married or unmarried takes part in this festival. Women overflowing with eager enjoyment make clay images of 'Shiva' and 'Parvati', dress them beautifully. They offer prayers to them, observe day-long fasts for marital happiness and prepare delightful dishes for the family. 'Parvati' represents perfection and marital love; therefore married women do it for the welfare, health, and long life of their husbands and happy married life. While unmarried women worship for being blessed with a good husband.

Legendary fact is that with the deep devotion 'Gauri' won lord 'Shiva's affection and love. Then, she visited her paternal home during Gangaur to bless her friends with marital fidelity. The festival is not only about celebrating marriage and love but also marks the celebration of spring and harvest. The festival begins on the next day of Holi and is celebrated for two weeks. Commencing from the first day of Chaitra, the festival continues for 16 days. The newlywed bride observes the full course of 18 days of the festival that succeeds her marriage. Women fast for the full period of 16 days eating only one meal a day. Even unmarried girls also follow the same ritual.

Gangaur festival attracts a huge number of tourists from all over the world. The most prominent festivities happen in Jaipur, Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, and Bikaner. A sweet called Ghewar is a specialty of the Gangaur festival. Local people eat and distribute Ghewar among their friends and relatives. A procession commences from the Zanani-Deodhi of the City Palace, Jaipur with the image of Gauri. The procession is headed by an old palanquin, chariots, bullock carts, and a performance by folk artists. It then passes through Tripolia Bazaar, Chhoti Chaupar, Gangauri Bazaar, Chaugan stadium, and finally converges near the Talkatora.

Tradition and Rituals

Gangaur festival begins on the next day of Holi. People from Rajasthan follow a custom of collecting ashes from the Holi fire and seeds of 'Barley' are sowed in it on the first day of the Gangaur festival. The seeds are then watered every day awaiting germination. Gangaur festival is colourful and full of music. The hands of women were decorated with beautiful mehndi designs. The prayerful songs for Isar (Siva) and Gauri were sung during rituals. Women carry painted earthen pots on their heads.

Unmarried girls carry 'Ghudlia' on their heads during the procession on the seventh evening after Holi. Ghudlia is an earthen pot with holes around and a lamp inside. The procession is practiced for ten days. During the procession, locals and elders give gifts to the girls in the form of sweets, jaggery, oil, ghee, etc. Then these gifts are used for making special dishes by women at home. On the last day, the girls break their pots and throw the debris into

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the well or a tank and enjoy a feast with the collected gifts.

Big fairs are organised during the festival. Images of Gauri and Isar are made with clay. But some of the Rajput families use permanent wooden images after painting them every year. On the final day, married women carry the images of Isar and Gauri, on their heads. The procession is taken out during the afternoon escorted by traditionally dressed camels, bullock carts, horses, and elephants. It heads towards water resources like well, river or bawdi. Gauri is departed to her husband's house with songs sung by women. The procession completes by throwing clay images in the water. This is the end of the Gangaur festival.



Beautiful eyes of Gauri.



Side-view of an idol.

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Different sizes of Gauri idols.

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Artists

In Bikaner, numerous families such as Viswakarma Community, Carpenter, and Mistry are involved in the making of an idol. The most famous among all is Ishwardas Art Gallery. Late Ishwardas himself started carving wooden idols and now his grandsons are carrying a legacy of idol carving. Lt. Ishwardas started his journey 70 years ago. His grandsons Girdhar Lal, Sanwar Lal, and ten Mistris are working in the workshop. Sanwar Lal is 'self-motivated, a knack at his carving skill'. They see the trend is booming nowadays for Gangaur but earlier they used to carve Dhola Maru and other small wooden carving products.



Late. Shri Ishwardaas Makad.

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Shri Girdharlal Suthar.



Shri Sanwarlal Suthar.

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A worker at the workshop.

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Tools and Raw Materials

The tools and raw materials that are used for Gangaur idol carving are as follows:

- **Teak Wood:** The main raw material used for making idol.
- **Half-round Chisel:** It is called aka Navla in the local language used for carving.
- **Semi-round Chisel:** It is called aka Batlari in the local language used for carving.
- **Flat and half-round File:** It is used for giving smooth finishing to the product.
- **Sandpaper:** Different grades of sandpaper are used for smooth finishing.
- **Oil Paints:** Vibrant oil-based paints are used for painting Gangaur idols.
- **Artificial Jewellery:** These are used to decorate Gangaur idols.
- **Traditional Fabrics:** Gangaur idols are dressed with these attires.
- **Hacksaw and Zig Saw Blade:** It is called Karoti in the local language used for cutting wood.
- **Chisel:** Different varieties of Chisel like Flat chisel, Half-round chisel, and Semi-round chisel are used for carving.



Chisel of different varieties.

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Wood is used as basic raw material.



Stencil is used to mark the basic shape of an idol.



Half-round chisel (aka Navla in local language).



Hacksaw (Karoti) and Zigsaw.

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Flat File and half-round file.



Screwdriver and other tools.



Tools kept in the tool holder.



Flat chisels.

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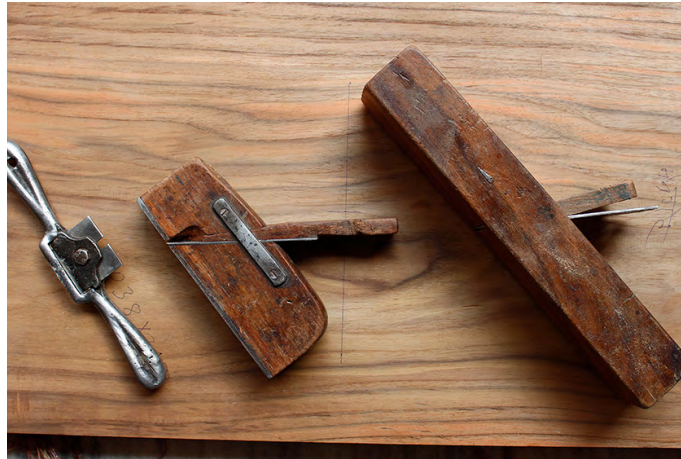
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Different types of wood scrapers.



Oil paints, wood polish, and colour palettes are used for the painting process.



Types of brushes are used for painting idols.



Semi-round chisel (aka Batlari in local language).

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Making Process

Teak wood is used for making idols. A 2D template (side view) is used for marking on the wooden log. The artist starts carving accordingly. Different types of chisels and other tools are used for carving. Detailing of body parts like the face, chest, belly, hands, legs, etc. are done with the help of chisels. A lot of patience is required for making these idols. Sandpaper is used for smooth finishing and leveling joint parts. Once the main body part is ready, hands, legs, head are attached to it. With the help of a drilling machine and screw, these parts are fixed to the main body. After joining all parts artisan make sure that all parts are fixed properly and smoothen the joints wherever required. Usually, it takes seven to nine days to make raw wooden Idol.

Now comes the painting process. Vibrant bright colours are used to paint Gangaur idols. Face, hair, eyes, hands, and legs are coloured in such a way that it looks lively. The idol is ornamented with jewellery and embellished with traditional attire. The finished idols are so attractive that one can believe that god and goddess are residing in them.



As the first step, brown colour and white colour M-SEAL are taken.

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Different types of tools.



Idol template.



Wooden block is marked using a template.



Basic shape is obtained after cutting extras.

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Front portion of an idol.



Artisan achieving body shape by chiseling wood.



Flat filing is used for smoothing.



Sandpaper gives more smoothness.

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Artisan smoothing whole body of idol.



Fingers are carved using a tool.



Minute detailing like nails also carved using a tool.



Parts of hands are kept ready.

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Foot is getting ready.



Front side of the foot is smoothened using a file.



Toe is shaped using a tool.



Foot is smoothened using sandpaper.

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Foot is ready.



Now comes the eye portion.



Eyes are carved carefully.



Extra wood from the face is being removed.

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Nose is being chiselled.



Artist carve lips carefully.



Braid is made separately.



Artist checking the braid measurement.

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Braid is attached to the head using a screw.



Face is smoothened.



Arm shpe is cut.



A small hole is made on arm for fixing purpose.

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After attaining proper arm shape, it is smoothened using sandpaper.



Different stages of arm making process.



Artisan showing ready hand portion.



Palm is attached to the hand.

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Hand is fixed to body using nail and screwdriver.



Artisan leveling attached hand with the body.



Foot is also attached in the same way as hand to the body.

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Gangaur idols before decoration.



All idols are painted using oil paints.



Hand and foot are painted and kept to dry.

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Ghagra and Choli, rajasthani traditional dress.

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Ghagra, Choli with Odhni.



Artificial jewelley are used for decorating idols.



Beautifully adorned Gauri.

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Products

Gangaur idol is a religious idol which is famous among the age group of seven until Udyapan in females. Udyapan is a custom that means “I here onwards ends and I am thankful to the goddess who fulfilled my all wishes, now I have no wishes anymore”. So basically, every girl child or woman needs an idol to fulfill her wishes until all gets completed. Hence idol-making comes into the picture, idol can be made up of wood or clay but nowadays wooden idol is so famous among all age groups yet it is very costly.



Wooden idol of Gauri in red colour attire.



Wooden idol of Gauri in green colour attire.

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Wooden idol of Gauri in pink colour attire.



Gauri in yellow colour traditional attire.

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Different sizes of idols.

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Gauri's closer look.



Fingers are also decorated with ornaments and red colour.

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Gauri with traditional apparel.



Pleasing look of Gauri.



Gauri idol.

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Baby idol locally called Bhaiyaji.



Gan idol with traditional apparel.

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Gangaur family.

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Video



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Contact Details

This documentation and content was done by Tej Prakash Jangid and Sanmati Hosure at IDC, IIT Bombay.

You can get in touch with him at [nationalcraft.export\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:nationalcraft.export[at]gmail.com)

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

Key Contact:

Ishwar Dass Art Gallery,
Indise Vishwakarma Gate,
Bikaner, Rajasthan 334001
India

Mobile:

Girdharlal Suthar: 9413011905

Sanwarlal Suthar: 9413011904

Suraj Prakash Suthar: 9460905139

Chander Prakash Suthar: 9166664148

Email: [ishwardassartgallery\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:ishwardassartgallery[at]gmail.com)

Helpdesk Details:

Co-ordinator

Project e-kalpa

Industrial Design Centre

IIT Bombay

Powai

Mumbai 4000 076

India

Phone: 091-22-2159 6805/ 091-22-2576 7802

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

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