

Design Resource

Making of Durga Idol - Agartala, Tripura

Handmade Armature

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/making-durga-idol-tripura-agartala>



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Introduction

The third-smallest state in the country, Tripura, is located in Northeast India. To its north, south, and west, it is bordered by Bangladesh and the Indian states of Assam and Mizoram to the east. Agartala, the capital of Tripura and also is the second-largest city in northeast India after Guwahati. Handicrafts and handlooms of Tripura are unique and attractive. Tripuri has a skillful boon to create incomparable handicrafts and handlooms. The artisan could produce extraordinary crafts from simple materials like clay, bamboo, and wood. The different cultural groups of the state are perfect in bamboo and clay work. Furniture of cane, idol-making, lamps, and bamboo dining table mats and floor mats are some of the state's attractive handicrafts. The artisans of Tripura weave wonderful fabrics with great designs. Each tribe of Tripura is famous for its unique handicrafts. Idol making and cane and bamboo are the oldest industries here.

Significance of Durga Puja:

During Durga Puja, God worshiped in her various forms as Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati in the form of the Divine Mother. Though the Goddess is one, she is represented and worshiped in three different aspects. On the first three nights of the festival, Durga is worshiped. On the following three, Lakshmi and then Saraswati Devi on the last three nights. The following tenth day is called Vijayadasami. Vijaya means "victory", the victory over one's minds that can come only when these three: Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati are worshiped. The festival of Navaratri or Durga puja has various significances. The meaning of Navaratri is nine nights. The tenth day is known as Vijayadashami or Dussehra. It was the day when goddess Durga got victory over a demon after nine days and nine nights long battle. The people worship Goddess Durga to gain strength and blessings. Worshipping Goddess Durga helps devotees remove negative energy and negative thoughts and get a peaceful life. It is celebrated to commemorate the victory of Lord Rama over evil Ravana. People celebrate this festival by burning the giant statue of Ravana and fireworks on the night of Dussehra. Sculptures have been in many of the cultures as the central religious devotion. It is said that it is also an expression of religion and politics. One of the methods of sculpting is pottery with clay as one of the oldest materials. Durga Puja is celebrated in the state of Tripura, with all its pride and glory. In India, Durga Puja is the second biggest celebrated in this state and the biggest celebrated festival to Tripura's people.

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The board of idol making place.



The coloured idols are in the making process.



An armature of a body in different postures is kept ready.



The artist measures the idol with a piece of cloth.

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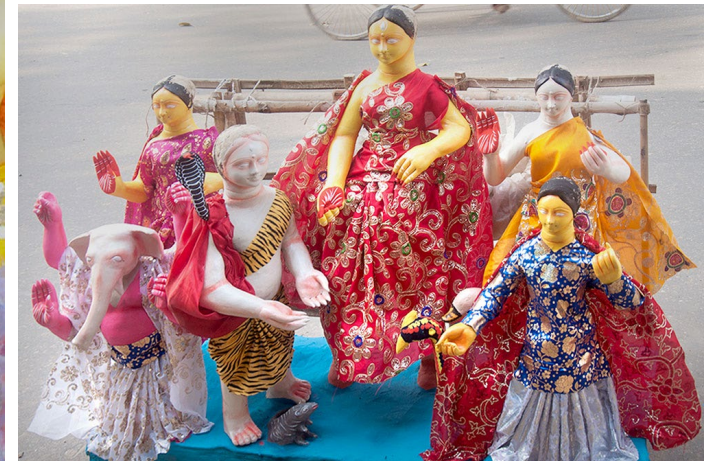
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The artisan has made dhoti with a cloth and attaching it to the idol.



The women artisan is colouring the idols.



The semi-finished idols are decorated with clothing.

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A red-paint is applied on the idol's hand.



The base layer of white paint is applied to the idols and kept for the drying process.



The idol of the Brahma is painted in red colour.



Artisan is painting the eyebrow part of the Ganesh idol.

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The Shiva idol's face in the painting process.



The idols are supported with wooden sticks.



A women artisan is giving white colour as a base colour on the idols.

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Tools and Raw Materials

The following are the tools and raw materials used for making the Durga idol:

- **Thin Ropes:** These are used to hold the hay together for the required shapes and sizes.
- **Hay:** It is used to make the required base structure of the idol.
- **Sticks:** These are used to give support to the idols.
- **Bamboo Sticks:** These are used as the bottom base for making the idols.
- **Rice Husk:** It is used to mix with clay to make it stiff.
- **Clay:** It is used for the base and the final touch-ups of making the Durga idol.
- **Water Colours:** It is used to colour the Durga idol as per its forms.
- **Mould:** It is generally used to make jewellery for the Durga idol.
- **Plastic Cover:** It is used to store the clay in moist conditions.
- **Paint Brushes:** Different sizes of paint brushes are used to paint the details of the idols.
- **Water:** It is used to keep the clay in a moist condition for better making of the clay objects.
- **Machete:** It is used to cut jute fiber into small pieces.

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Dummy hair is spread to fix on the idol.



Sickle shaped knife is used in idol making.



Rice grass is used for idol making process.

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Twine threads are used to tie the hay to get the basic structure of idol.



The bamboo sticks are used in armature making.



Armature of body in different postures.

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Face mold is used to make the face of the idol.



Accessories like artificial crown is used to decorate the head of idol.



The brush and yellow colour are used to paint the idol.

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Making Process

The base-level consists of clay mixed with dry rice grass, which is applied over a bamboo framework. This is then baked in a furnace to harden the base like any clay pot would be set. A layer of fine jute fibers mixed with clay is used for giving smooth layers. Various shapes make the basic structure of the idol of Goddess Durga. The armature is made by using dry rice grass, sizes of bamboo sticks tied with jute string. Each body frame is fastened to make a complete idol except the head. Clay is kneaded with rice husk and kept in a plastic cover to keep it moist. Then the clay is applied to the armature as a base coat. It is allowed to dry. There are three steps in applying the clay. First of all, a clay solution where the percentage of water is high is applied to the straw figurine; it fills the crevices left by the straw structure. The second layer is then applied with great caution as it is the most important among these three layers. Different body parts, such as the head, feet, and palms, are attached to this stage's main torso. The face of the idol is made separately with mold. It is made with fine clay creating each feature with great care and skill. The third layer of liquid clay or plaster of paris is applied. The idol is covered with soaked cloth to give it a smooth finishing. On completing the clay structure, the figure is painted with white earth colour before painted with pink or yellow earth colours. The master artist does painting eye and other detailing. After that, the idols are varnished. Hair is glued, and then the idol is dressed and costumed and then ornamented.

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The artisan is taking the dry rice grass to make the armature.

The dried rice grass is used in armature making process, and artisan is tying the jute threads.

The body shapes of an armature are made with rice grass.

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Senior craftsman making an armature.



The craftsman is making the body part armature by tying rice grass.



Armature of an idol in different shapes and sizes.



The clay is applied to the armature as a base coat.

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Artisan kneading the clay.



The face of the idol is made by using molds.



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The face and other body parts are being fixed.



Artisan is attaching the head and hands to the idol body, and finish the smoothing process.



Artisan is applying the base colour on the idol.

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The idol is kept for the drying process.



The artisans are applying the yellow colour on the idol.



Artisan is applying the colour on Ganesh and other small idols.

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The process of painting the features of the idol.



The artisan is painting the eyebrow part.

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The female artist is decorating the idols with colorful saree.



The artificial hair is stuck on the idol's head.



Different types of idols that are fully decorated.

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Products

The artisan generally makes various sizes of idols in multiple forms as per the references or the pictures given by the customers. The craftsmen also try different models by the trial and error method, where the people choose the new idols and later offered them bulk orders. The smallest size of the idol is about 3 feet, and the most significant size is about 18 feet.



Beautifully ornamented Goddess Durga's idol.



Lord Ganesh.

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Durga Mata with other idols.



Lord Shiva's idol.



The finished Kali Mata's idol.

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Contact Details

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