

Design Resource

Soap Carving - Shilpakala

Art of shaping

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S.,
Lija M. G., Manmi Dutta and Rakshitha
NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/soap-carving-shilpakala>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Contact Details



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Introduction

Soaps generally are used for cleansing and are produced by treating the vegetable oil, fats or animal oil with a strongly alkaline solution. It is generally the key component for lubricating greases that are usually the emulsions or mineral oils. It is said, the Babylonians were the first people to invent the art of creating soap by boiling fats with ashes. Majorly used them for the cleaning of the cotton and the wool in the textile manufacturing units. Each type of people developed with different technique of making and obtaining the soap. It is said it is more used for cleaning the cooking utensils or goods and also for medicinal purposes.

Carving is generally the act of shaping something from the materials by scraping some portions with the help of the available tools. It is said that people in the olden days didn't speak a lot but with the help of stones they used to carve on the rocks and hills to tell out what they wanted to tell others. They used to draw on the walls to communicate the things in their surroundings.

With the Interview with Smt. Gayathri shilpi the daughter of A.C.H.Archarya and Smt. Saroj Devi describes though she has learnt the art of making sculptures on the stone from her father. She has chosen to make the sculptures on the soap the easily available and it is easier to carve this material. She has also taken the part of training the sculptors in teaching them the carving on soap before the stone carving for the thorough understanding of the parts as which has to protrude and the parts that have to be done with intricate carvings.



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3. Making Process
4. Products
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2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Contact Details



Artisans carving lord Krishna's image out of a soap.



Varieties of soaps are carved into different types of designs.



Soap carving craft has been practiced in their family from generations.

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Tools and Raw Materials

The several types of tools and raw materials required for the soap carving are as follows:

- **Bathing Bars:** Soaps are used as the basic material for the craft.
- **Pencils:** It is used to draw the outlines of the figures to be carved.
- **Sharp (pointed) Tool:** It is generally used to draw the outlines of the motifs.
- **Cutting Tool:** It is used for cutting channels of different sizes for removing the soap surfaces.
- **Modelling Tool:** It is used for more intricate points.
- **Gouge:** It is used to carve out the materials with circular, semicircular shapes.
- **Thai Knife:** Thai shaped knives used for major carvings.
- **Cuticle Pusher:** It is used in some cases for very fine line work carving.
- **Cloth:** To keep the soap surface dry and easier for carving by keeping it away from air and water molecules.
- **V Tool:** It is used to give more detailed carving on the soap surfaces.
- **Tooth Pick:** It is used to remove out the small intricate materials from soap surface.



Bathing soaps are used carved to get the required object.

1. Introduction

2. **Tools and Raw Materials**

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Contact Details

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1. Introduction
2. **Tools and Raw Materials**
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Contact Details



Tools used in carving the soap into an intended design.

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Making Process

Soap is one of the objects that is used in the daily life which also can be used in the making of sculptures. On the dried soap outlines are made with help of a pointer or with the old refills on which the smaller portions which can be removed out are taken with the Cutting tools, Modeling tools, Thai knives etc. to obtain the depth and details of each parts.

Designs of flowers motifs, face, flutes etc. are concentrated at the beginning stage and the next step it is carved little more deeper. Parts such as crowns, necks are concentrated on and then further on chains, ear etc. are carved out with intricate carvings. In olden days the old umbrella needles were used to draw and mark the details while sculpting / carving. Mostly the gouges, flats and v shape tools are preferred to carve out visualized figures or motifs required. Cloth is used to hold the soaps in between to avoid the moisture on the surface of the soap while scraping out the parts. After the sculpture is made on the soap, it is kept in glass to keep it from air and water molecules.



Sketch of the desired design is drawn on the surface of the soap.



Soap is carved with the reference of the sketched line drawn on the surface.

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2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
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The basic shape is obtained by carving the soap.



Little depth is given to the design by carving out the excess part.

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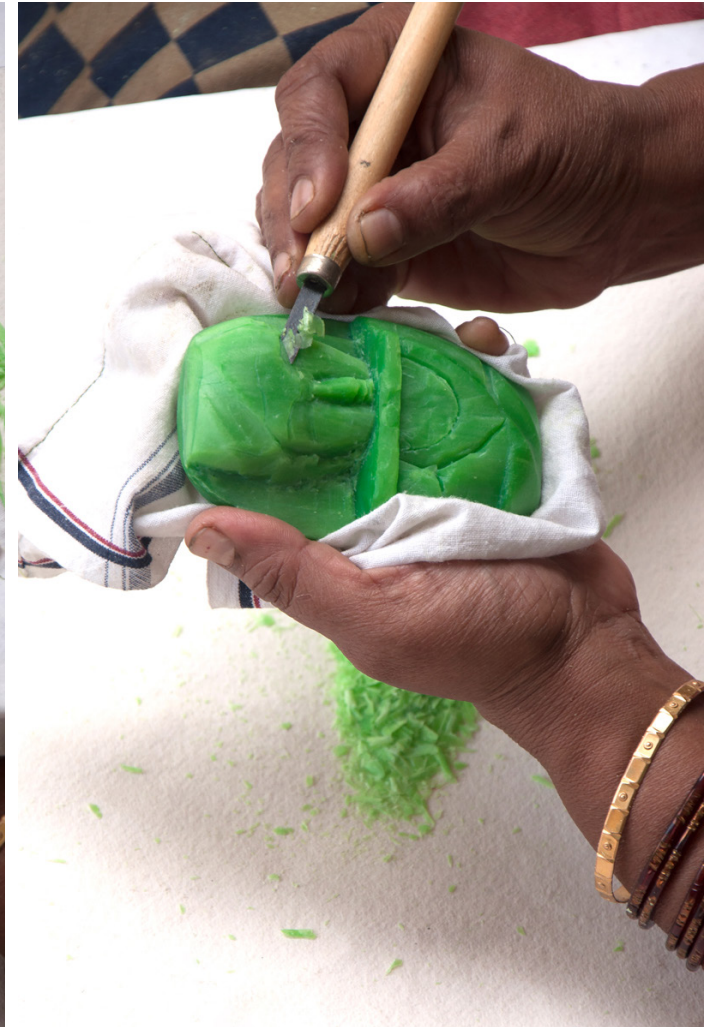
Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/soap-carving-shilpakala/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Contact Details



For further carving of the soap it is held with a cloth to sustain the grip and to avoid it from slipping.



Facial features are carved out delicately.

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2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Contact Details



Details are intricately carved to the sculpture.



Carved soap sculpture is dipped in the water to obtain the plain texture.



Finished soap sculpture depicting Lord Krishna.

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. **Products**
5. Contact Details

Products

The carved products are generally stored in the glass shelves of the institute to be kept safe and used as a reference for the carving by the pupils. Different motifs of flowers, famous deities and anything from nature are carved as per the sculptor. More of the carved products are kept in the institute itself as a reference and it is an easily available material which is carved out to know each part of the carvings. Sizes are generally with the soap sizes of medium, large and small that are available in the market and got easily.



Various designs of soap sculptures and clay sculptures made by the artisans.

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Different God and Goddess are carved out of various types of soaps.



Preserved soap carvings of Ganesha, Parvathi and other God and Goddess.



Soap carving of a women.

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This documentation was done by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S., Lija M. G., Manmi Dutta and Rakshitha at **NID Campus, Bengaluru**.

You can get in touch with

- Prof. Bibhudutta Baral at [bibhudutta\[at\]nid.edu](mailto:bibhudutta[at]nid.edu)

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

Helpdesk Details:

Co-ordinator
Project e-kalpa
R & D Campus
National Institute of Design
#12 HMT Link Road, Off Tumkur Road
Bengaluru 560 022
India

Phone: +91 80 2357 9054

Fax: +91 80 23373086

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

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. **Contact Details**