

Design Resource

Stone Carving - Varanasi

The Skillful Crafts in Stone

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Ms. Anushree Kumar and

Ms. Aruna Kumari

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/stone-carving-varanasi>



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2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
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Introduction

Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh has very rich deposits of red stone. The experienced stone artisans of Varanasi have been doing stone carving since 50 years. The art has been carried from older generation to retain the tradition. Blocks of red stone is first cut and carved roughly. The detailing is obtained by fine carving. Highlighting facial expressions with artificial colors can be said as special feature in their carving. The stone artisans in Varanasi are called as Girharwal locally. Men involve in carving. Women help in polishing and washing the final idols. In Varanasi, there are nearly 20 to 30 families engaged in stone carving.



Idol of lord Hanuman carved in red stone.



Carved stone slabs.



Displayed products at artisans place.



Replica of lion.

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Stone carver involved in carving.



Carved idols of elephants.



Stone workers at their free time.

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Women involved in polishing process.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Red, white and green are the types of stones used as basic raw materials available richly in surrounding places. The artisans of Varanasi procure stone from Chunar which is located 20km away from Varanasi. The references are marked on the stone using charcoal. Hammer locally called as Hatauda is used for hammering. Different types of chisels used for chiseling. Batti is the stone used for polishing after completion of carving. The divider Prakaar is used for scaling. The idol is washed with cold water after its completion. The idols are painted using artificial colors.



Red stone is the basic raw material.



Stem of coconut tree used to clean the stone during carving.



Hammer and chisels are the main tools used in stone carving.



Water used to sprinkle on stone while carving.

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Rough stone used to smoothen the stone surface.



The closer view of smoothening process.

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Making Process

The production process involves stages like stone cutting, sketching the design on it, carving and finishing the product. The making process starts by selecting fine quality stone. The big blocks are first roughly cut into shape according to the planned idol to be carved. The proportions are marked on the stone using charcoal and then the extra portion is taken out by hammering with hammer and chisel. The rough outlines of idol are drawn on the surface of the stone. Based on these rough sketches the major carvings are done by chiseling. Once rough details are carved, the detailing and ornamentations are carved using sharp-edged and pointed chisels. Finally the idol is smoothed and then polished by rubbing with stone called Batti locally. The polishing enhances the shine and luster of the article. The carved idol is washed with water and kept ready for the marketing. The quality of carving varies according to the requirement and the price as well. The idols are painted colorfully as per the client requirement.



The design to be carved is being sketched on the stone by the artisan in the beginning stage.



Carving initiated based on the traced lines.



Rough design is sketched on stone.

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Roughly carved idol.



Shapes obtained through the process of hammering and chiseling.



Major carving is done using large chisels.



Artisan giving rough detailing on the stone statue.

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Skilled carver involved in detailing out the shape.



Cleaning the excess stone dust.



The carved idol is ready for smoothing.

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Smoothing the rough surface using Batti- a type of stone.



The finished product of deities.

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Products

Most of the stone products are replicas of gods, goddesses and Hindu mythological characters- some are the images of animals like elephant, horse, name plates and sitting posture of Nandi-ox. House hold items such as Daraiti- stone grinder, Chakla – a circular stone slab to make roti also examples of products. The five faces of Hanuman idol is a regular product. This is produced to cater to needs of temples in surrounding areas. These idols are also exported to Gaya and Patna in Bihar district.



Carved and painted idol of Goddess Durga.



Lord Hanuman.

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Carved and painted idol of Dr. B R Ambedkar.



Image of Nandi.



Carved letters on stone slab.

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Chakla – a circular stone slab to make roti.



Ganesha idols made for temples.



Replica of Four-headed lion emblem.

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Image of lion in sitting posture.



Sil-used for grinding purpose. Miniature temple.

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Video



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Contact Details

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