

Design Resource

Thewa

Gold leaf work of Pratapgarh

by

Sakshi Gambhir

IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:

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



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Source:

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

Introduction

Described as 'rangeen kaanch pe sone ka kaam' or gold work on colored glass, thewa is essentially a form of quasi-enameling where a silver wire frame is covered with delicately patterned gold leaf and sunk into a softened layer of colored glass or enamel. This traditional Rajasthani art of infusing 23K gold with gemstones and multi-colored glass has an intricate and elaborate process in which the entire piece of jewelry is handmade and can take more than a month's time.

The motifs of olden times reflect the lifestyles of the patrons - hunting scenes with elephants and palanquins, deer, peacocks and lions, Maharana Pratap riding his illustrious horse Chetak, soldiers engaged in war, Krishna with the gopis etc.



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Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/thewa/place>

Place

The craft originated in Deolia, a small estate in the district of Chittorgarh that was ruled by Prince Bika of Mewar. The scarcity of water in the region forced a shift of capital to Pratapgarh, 16 km to the east. Since then, this small town is quite well known for it.

It is believed that thewa impressed Maharaja Sumant Singh of Pratapgarh so much that he bestowed immense wealth upon the Soni (goldsmith) and rewarded him with the title of 'Rajsoni' - The chief jeweler of the court. Both, the title and the craft are being passed on through generations.



Pratapgarh city.



Pratapgarh city.

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Pratapgarh city.



Vishnu Lal Soni's house.

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Vishnu Lal Soni's house.



Vishnu Lal Soni's house.

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Vishnu Lal Soni's workshop in his house.

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People

The thewa artisans, all hindus, belong to the Soni caste. Nathu Lal Soni invented the process in 1707, the secrets of the craft being passed directly from father to son over the generations. Many of the members from this family have been awarded by UNESCO, National & State Government.

Shri Vishnu Lal Soni, is another well known thewa artist who has won several national and international recognitions for his excellent workmanship. He has practiced thewa since the age of 15 and those several years of dedication can be seen in the finesse of his work.



Vishnu Lal Soni.



Vishnu Lal Soni's assistant.

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Vishnu Lal Soni's State government award.



Vishnu Lal Soni's State government award.



Vishnu Lal Soni's UNESCO seal of excellence certificate.

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Process



Scribing



Glass fusing



Casing



Foiling



Ornamenting

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<https://dsource.in/resource/thewa/process/scribing>

Scribing

To create the pierced work design, blank 23-karat gold foil sheets somewhat longer than the final result are fixed on a working surface - a board covered with a layer of lac. The lac is warmed and the metal is pressed lightly onto it. When cold, the lac hardens and holds the gold foil, its resistance supporting the pressure on the metal during work.

Traditional design subjects are carefully drawn on the gold surface with a pointed steel scribe. The designs commonly used can be divided into two main groups - mythological (or religious) and secular. Popular subjects among the former are Srinathji, a form of Krishna installed at Nathdwara and Radha-Krishna. The latter include Shikargah, a hunting scene depicting animals in jungle foliage, water streams with domestic animals and flowers and birds, etc.

The entire background of the design is chiselled out and through these openings, the colored glass is seen in the result. This finished worksheet is heated and carefully stripped from the lac surface and cleaned. The surplus metal outside the design frame is trimmed away.



Blank 23 karat gold foil sheet.

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Blank 23 karat gold foil sheet.



Blank 23 karat gold foil sheet.



Blank 23 karat gold foil sheet being beaten.

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Beaten 23 karat gold foil sheet.



23 karat gold foil sheet being fixed on lac.

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23 karat gold foil sheet being fixed on lac.



Lac.



23 karat gold foil sheet being fixed on lac.



23 karat gold foil sheet being fixed on lac.

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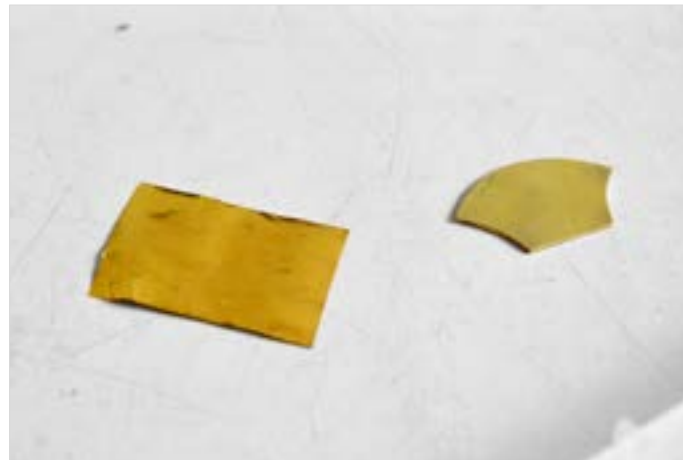
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23 karat gold foil sheet being fixed on lac.



Scribing tools.



Gold foil and metal die.



Design being scribed on the foil.

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Design being scribed on the foil.



Design being scribed on the foil.



Scribing tools.



Design being scribed on the foil.

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Design being scribed on the foil.



Design being scribed on the foil.



Design being scribed on the foil.



Design being scribed on the foil.

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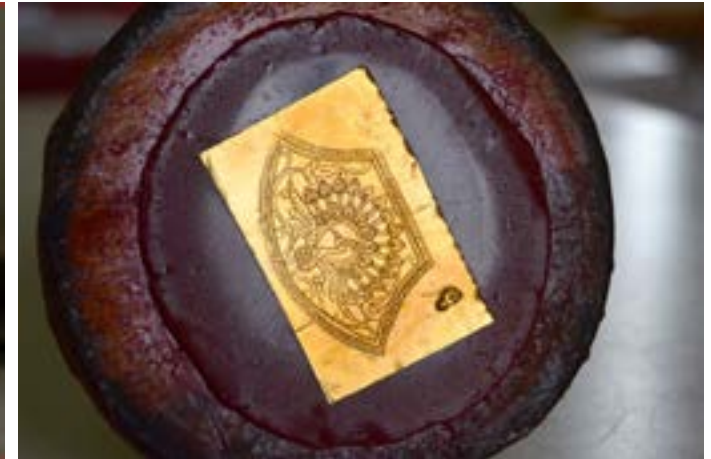
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Design being scribed on the foil.



Complete design of the peacock.



Background of the design being chiselled out.



Background of the design being chiselled out.

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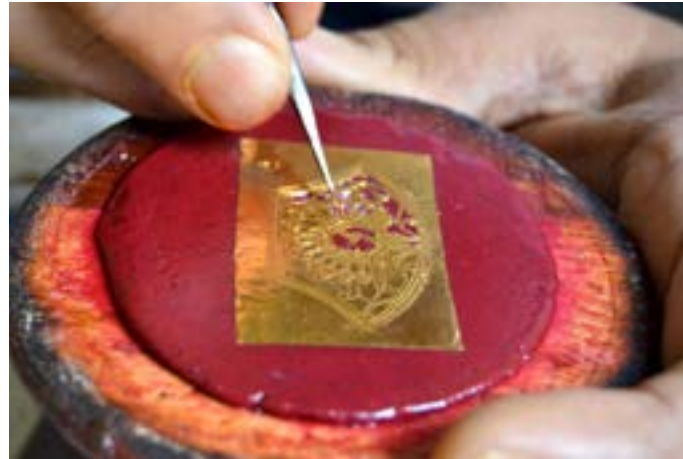
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Background of the design being chiselled out.



Background of the design being chiselled out.



Background of the design being chiselled out.



Foil being hated to be stripped from the lac.

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Trimming the design frame.



Leftover gold foil trimmings that will be re-used.



Remnants of lac on the foil.



Trimmed foil.

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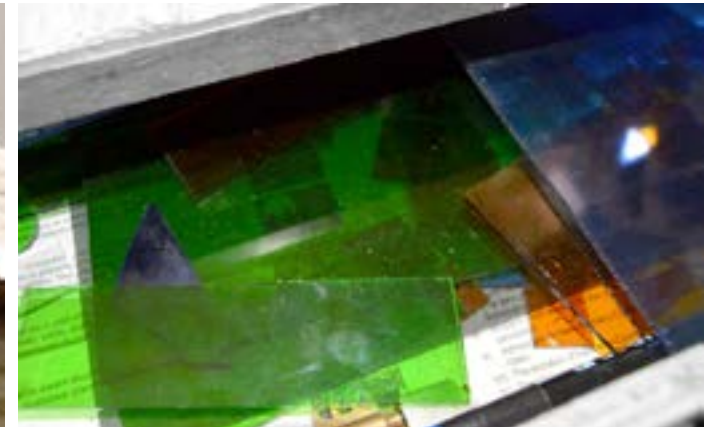
<https://dsource.in/resource/thewa/process/glass-fusing>

Glass fusing

The finely chiselled metal sheet is then fused to the glass surface which is absolutely bubble free and 1/16 inch thick. Transparent red, green and blue glass are the most popular - the color intentionally suggesting ruby, emerald and sapphire. Different shapes including rectangles, ovals, hexagons and circles are cut using a sharp glass cutter. Safety eyewear is advised during this process. Most artists do not allow anyone to see this process and maintain it as a family secret.



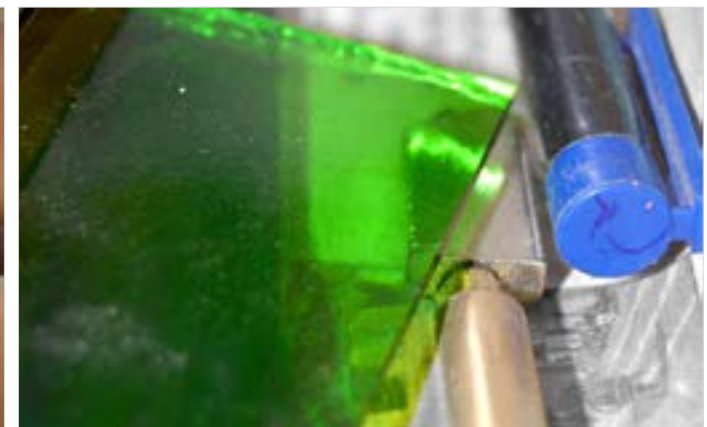
Transparent glass pieces.



Colored glass pieces.



Identical shape being cut in glass using a glass cutter.



Glass cutter and colored glass.

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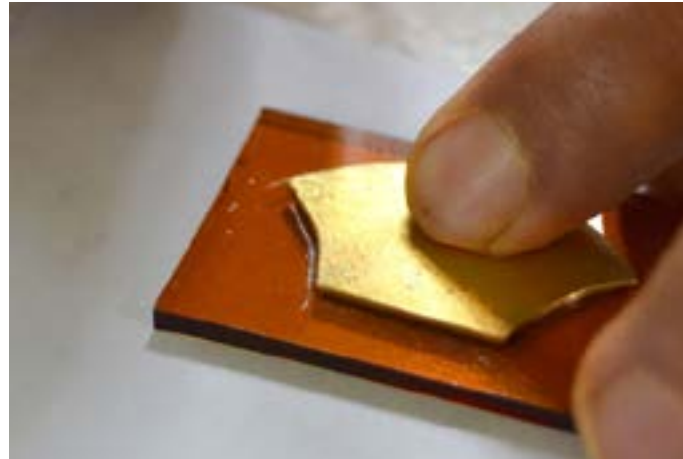
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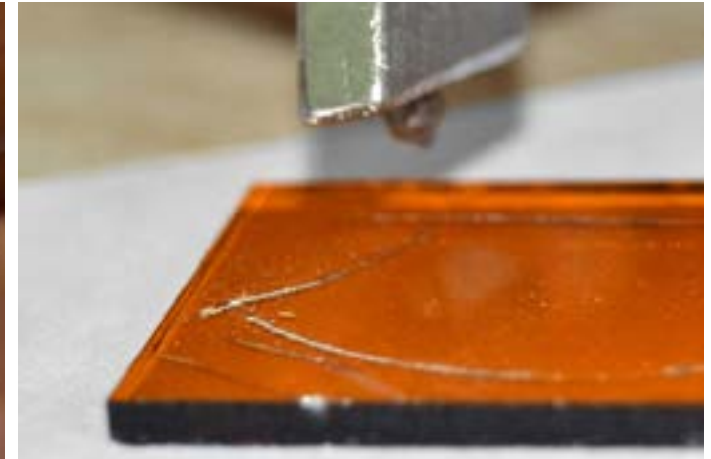
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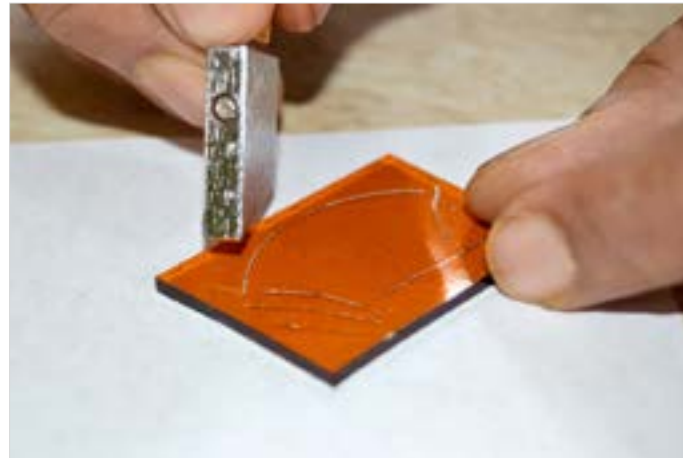
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Identical shape being cut in glass using a glass cutter.



Identical shape being cut in glass using a glass cutter.



Identical shape being cut in glass using a glass cutter.



Identical shape being cut in glass using a glass cutter.

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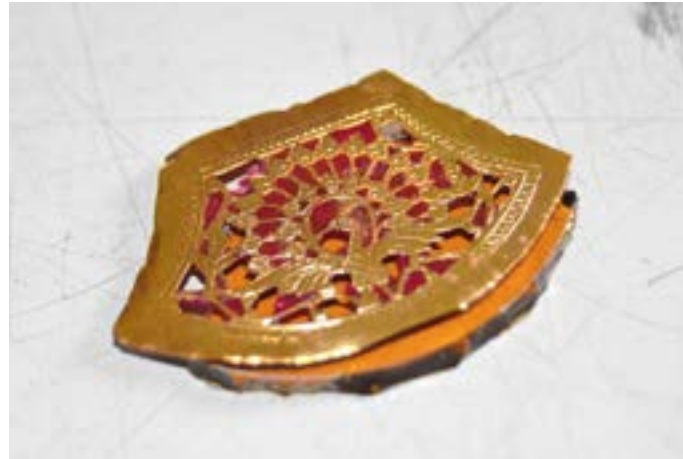
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Identical shape being cut in glass using a glass cutter.



Glass cut out in the same shape as the metal foil.



The back side of the glass with gold foil design fused in it.



The front side of the glass with gold foil design fused in it.

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The front side of the glass with gold foil design fused in it.

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Casing

The gold-fused glass is set inside a peripheral silver strip for strength and protection against damage. These are prepared by heating strips of silver and molding them in the same shape as the glass, only slightly bigger. These are further placed into a gold-plated silver case that finally gives it the look of the intended jewelry product.



Paper padding for packing the glass tightly in the case.



Silver strip.



Silver strip.



Silver strip being shaped like the glass.

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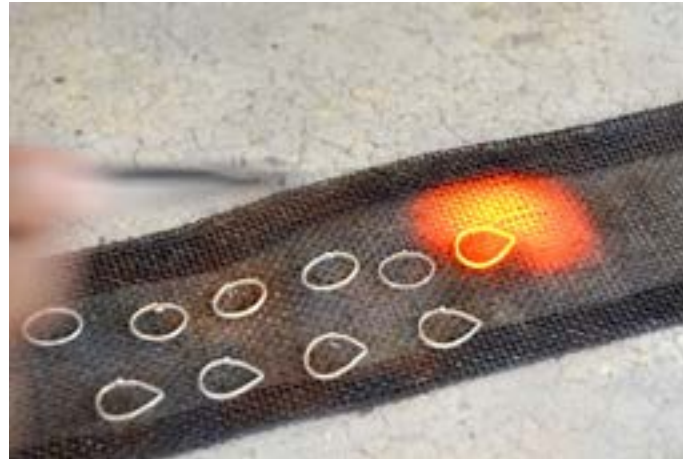
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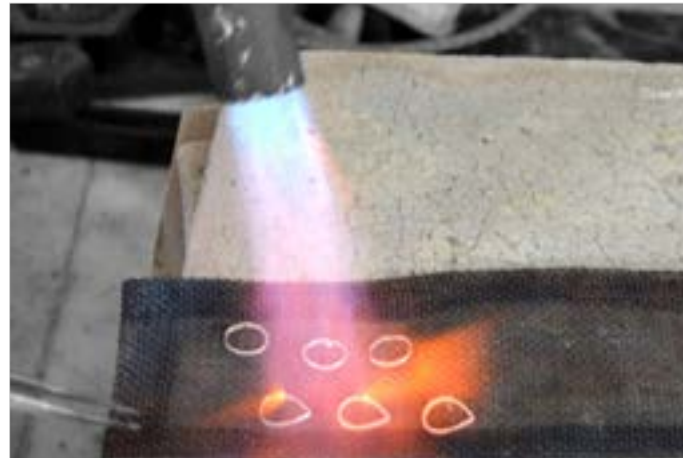
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Silver strip being shaped like the glass.



Silver strip being shaped like the glass.



Silver strip being heated to be shaped like the glass.



Silver strip being shaped like the glass.

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Silver strip being shaped like the glass.



Silver strip being shaped like the glass.

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Peripheral silver strips for the glass.



Example of how the silver strip fits on the glass (by showing it on a die).

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Silver casing for a pendant.



Gold plated silver casings for pendants and cuff links.



Gold plated silver casing for a pendant and the gold-fused-glass that it will hold.



Gold plated silver casing for a pendant.

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Gold plated silver casing for a pendant.



Gold plated silver casing for a pendant and the gold-fused-glass that it will hold.

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Foiling

Before the casing is finally closed on the edges, paper padding and foil are inserted under the glass. Sheets of paper make it tightly packed and strong. Colored foil adds brilliance to the piece. Then, the edges of the case are softly hammered, to close it over the glass in a way that it doesn't hurt on the edges or juts out.



Paper padding for packing the glass tightly in the case.

Paper padding for packing the glass tightly in the case.

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Colored foil is inserted under the glass to add brilliance.



Colored foil is inserted under the glass to add brilliance.



Colored foil is inserted under the glass to add brilliance.



Colored foil is inserted under the glass to add brilliance.

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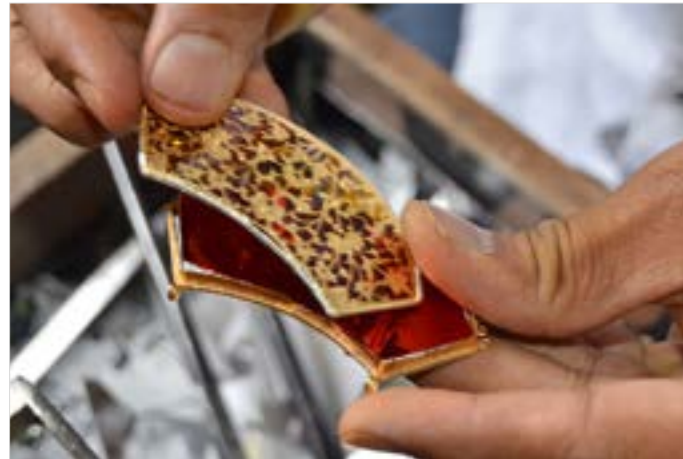
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Colored foil is inserted under the glass to add brilliance.



Colored foil is inserted under the glass to add brilliance.



Glass being put in the case.



The edges of the case being closed in.

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The edges of the case being closed in.



The edges of the case being softly hammered to close in over the glass.



The edges of the case being softly hammered to close in over the glass.



The edges of the case being softly hammered to close in over the glass.

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The edges of the case being softly hammered to close in over the glass.



The edges of the case being softly hammered to close in over the glass.

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The finished pendant.

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Gold plated silver cases for cuff links.



Glass with gold foil work for cuff links.

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Cuff links cases.

Design Resource

Thewa

Gold leaf work of Pratapgarrh

by

Sakshi Gambhir

IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/thewa/process/foiling>

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The edges of the cuff links case being softly hammered to close in over the glass.



The edges of the cuff links case being softly hammered to close in over the glass.

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Thewa cuff link.



Thewa cuff link.

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Source:

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Ornamenting

All the casings have small grooves, loops or holes for hanging beads and gemstones. These make the jewelry piece look all the more beautiful.



Beads and gemstones for ornamenting the jewelry piece.

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Pearl beads.



Red beads.



Ornamenting the pendant

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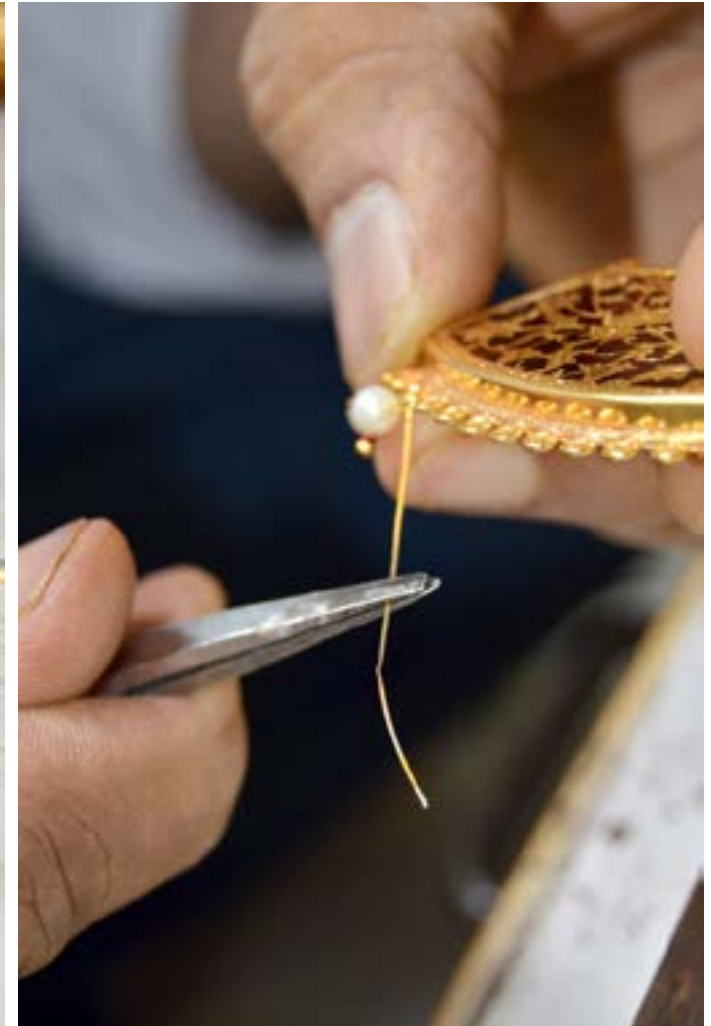
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Ornamenting the pendant.



Ornamenting the pendant

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Ornamenting the pendant.

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Ornamenting the pendant.



Ornamenting the pendant



Ornamenting the pendant.

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Ornamenting the pendant.



Ornamenting the pendant.

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Ornamenting the pendant.



Ornamenting the pendant.

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Ornamenting the pendant.



The finished product.

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Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/thewa/products>

Products

The traditional product range includes Ittardanis, boxes, platters, betel-nut containers, water sprinklers and card boxes. With the loss of patronage from royalty and nobility, the craft is now more or less restricted to the making of jewelry - pendants, earrings, rings, brooches, bangles and cuff links. The motifs have evolved too - the primary forms in vogue today are floral trellises, peacocks and elephants.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.

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Thewa pendant set with earrings.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.

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Thewa pendant set with earrings.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.

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Rod is dipped in diluted sulfuric acid to remove impurity's.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.

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Thewa pendant set with earrings.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.

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Thewa pendant set with earrings.



Thewa ring.



Thewa bangle.

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Thewa bangle.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.

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Thewa pendant set with earrings.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.

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Thewa pendant set with earrings.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.

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Thewa pendant set with earrings.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.

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Thewa pendant set with earrings.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.

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Thewa pendant set with earrings.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.

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Thewa pendant set with earrings.



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Thewa pendant set with earrings.



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Thewa pendant set with earrings.



Thewa pendant set with earrings.



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Thewa box.

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Source:

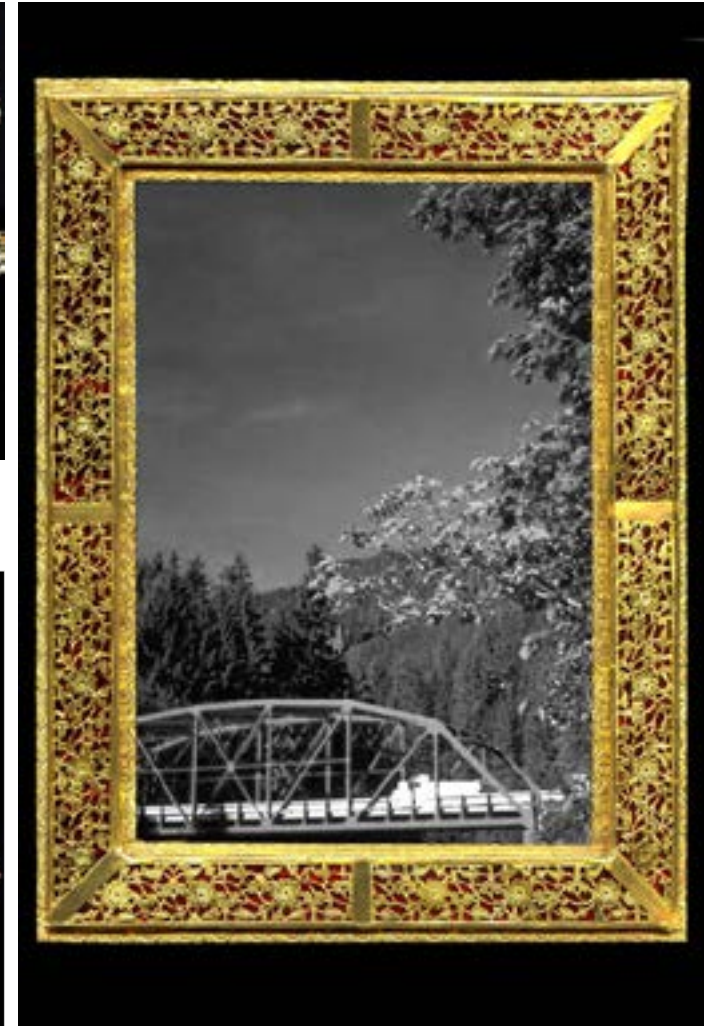
<https://dsource.in/resource/thewa/products>



Thewa jewelry with kundan detailing.



Thewa jewelry with kundan detailing.



Thewa mirror.

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Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/thewa/contact-details>

Contact Details

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