



*I discovered a village  
where colors were as vibrant as the expressions*

*I discovered the masks  
which hides something, to show more*

*and then*

*I discovered myself  
In the people of Raghurajpur*



# Kagaja Mukha

Fantoming the feelings

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Written and documented by:

**Saswat kumar Dash | M.Des | Toy and Game Design | Batch of  
2016 | National Institute of Design, India.**

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# Kagaja Mukha

Fantoming the feelings

A Document on  
Papier Mache Craft of Raghurajpur, Odisha

Documented by Saswat Kumar Dash under the guidance of Ms. Carmin Fernandes, Ms. Sonal Chauhan and Mr. Amit Sinha

## Acknowledgement

I cherish his memory by thanking him for that gift he brought to my family, a set of Kagaja Mukha of the deities in Puri temple, my late Uncle Sriman Girindra Panda, remembering those at my home got me the idea to take up this craft for documentation. I would also thank my parents for their support regarding this.

The field visit and research might have been very difficult if not for my friend Mr. Sudeep Bahinipati who paved my way with utter simplicity. The co-operative shop keeper Prafull bhai who willingly closed his shop in the middle of the working hours to take me to the village and meet the craftsmen. Keshab bhai, the master craftsman who helped me with literally whatever I wanted during my stay, all the other villagers who didn't let me feel I was an outsider.

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## About NID

The National Institute of Design is one of the premier design Institutes of India. The institute functions as an autonomous body under the department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of commerce and industry, Government of India. NID is recognized by the department of scientific and industrial research under Ministry of Science and Technology, government of India, as a scientific and industrial design research organization. In 2010, Business week placed NID in its list of top design schools in the world.

The principle for foundation of NID recommended a problem-solving design consciousness that linked learning with actual experience and suggested that the designer could be a bridge between tradition and modernity. The curriculum generates the scope to integrate experiential and explorative learning in order to understand and achieve a high degree of creative innovation and quality, the philosophy of learning by doing.

NID has been making efforts to provide design intervention for craft, handloom, rural technology, small, medium and large-scale enterprises, and outreach programs for capability and institution building and sustainable livelihood, employment opportunities and economic growth. It encourages students to understand the value of craft by introducing courses, which encourages students to interact with artisans and see craft by their perspective to understand the core values of craft, tradition and culture.

## Preface

Craft reflects an idea. It is the manifestation of that idea. It is what happens when people try to make something perfect, instead of making the idea perfect. It is about how humans create the world around them. Exploration, accidental discoveries and deliberately generated outcomes are among few ways of developing crafts. Different people coming to common ground, shaping, changing, transforming or influencing each other for a better outcome. They attach identity and take pride for the idea and they recreate it. Because of this continuity and presence of the artifact, its value is established in society.

The crafts of India are diverse and have rich history and traditional values. Throughout centuries, crafts have been embedded within the culture of many rural and urban communities. It shows us the synthesis of historic, emotional and spiritual significance upon the communities practicing them, that is what imbues love into tangible things. All Crafts are likely to have been subjected to intervention of all means it can be societal needs and aspirations which reflects societies patterns of change over time.

This document is contribution towards preserving a craft for the generations to come. The study for this is done upon 'Kagaja Mukha'(Paper mask craft) of Raghurajpur village in the Indian state of Odisha. It includes photographs from field visit and text descriptions covering detail aspects of the craft and the culture of people practicing it. The research method used in this project was interviewing different people related to the craft and gathering information directly from the sources. Few available references were taken from books and articles on the web, Images and data from the 'Indian Museum' Kolkata and 'Shreyas Museum' Ahmedabad were also included.

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Introduction

## Odisha and its Crafts

Odisha is bound by the Bay of Bengal in the east, sharing borders to West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh. It has a long tradition of art and culture dating back as far as the third century B.C. Post Kalinga war, emperor Ashoka embraced Buddhism and spread the message of peace and non-violence, the remnants of which are still in form monuments and sculptures. The Kharavela king at first century B.C. organized dance and music and had a reputation as the worshipper of all faith. It was the Ganga king, Anantavarman Chodaganga who started building the Jagannath Temple at Puri during the 13th Century A.D., the Konark Sun-temple was built by Narasimhadeva I during the same time.

This heavily influenced the culture of Odisha, festivals and rituals were practiced based around the deity Lord Jagannath. The earliest classical dance and music originated from the temple dances of Devadasi mentioned in scriptures and depicted in sculptures. Odisha's temple-culture is a magnificent reflection of the grand temple architectural essence of India. Be it the sanctified environs of the Lord Jagannath temple at Puri, or the mystic eroticism of the Sun temple of

Konark, or the deep caves, or the Buddhist monasteries, the vibrant folk paintings or the weaver's handspun magic, Odisha sings with pride a ballad resonant with the richness of a living past, the dynamism of a flourishing present and a prospective future.

Many Crafts are similarly influenced through the temple culture, like the Pattachitra which means painting on a canvas was done as a ritual during the 'Snana-purnima' (Bathing ritual of lord Jagannath), masks were worn by performers and stage artist for characterization of several gods and goddesses as well as animals during ritualistic performance. At the same time, other crafts like Dhokra metal casting, Horn-bone craft, Ikat dyeing, Paddy and root craft, coir craft, Santhal and saora paintings were practiced traditional by the tribal people. Stone carving was practiced even before the temples were built.

*Introduction image:  
Water color painting of  
the village Raghurajpur*

*Artist: Vijay Kakade*

*2: Map of Odisha, bay of  
of Bengal to the east*



*3: A pattachitra painting*





4



5

4-The Jagannath temple, Puri

5-Artist performing Odissi, one of the 8 classical dance form of India

6-Ikat Sambalpuri print, textile printing art

7-A Wheel of the sun temple in Konark



6



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8- Coir craft

9- Dhokra metal casting craft of Torbha, Balangir

10- Horn bone craft of paralakhemundi

11- Appliqué work of Pipili



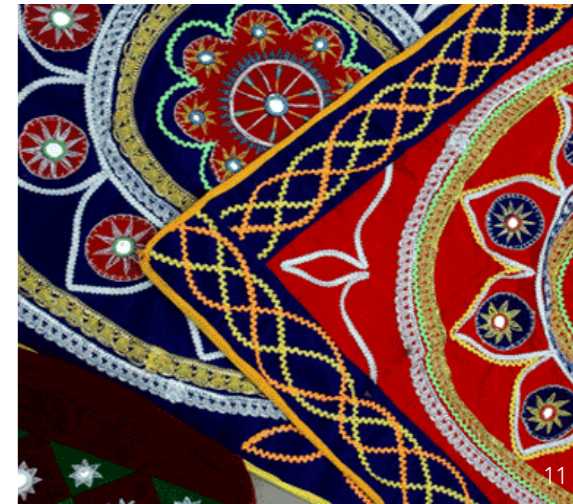
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11

## Raghurajpur

This quaint village located amidst the shades of coconut-palm stands on the banks of the river Bhargavi. This is a heritage village with about 140 houses. Each house has a unique story painted on its walls. Every house here is an artist's workshop and has an art piece in making at any time. Many are involved in Pattachitra painting, stone carving, papier mache, mask making, toy painting etc. Apart from craft, the villagers are also involved in classical dance form of Odissi and Gotipua.

It has the distinction of being the only place where the traditional decoration called Patas, used under the throne of Lord Jagannath and on the three chariots during the annual Ratha Yatra festival. It is also the venue for the annual Basanta Utsav – Parampara, which is an important tourist draw.

Tourist, artists, students, researchers all come to this village for its recognized craft. The artisans take craft making workshops over invitation by institutions at various places, sometimes outside Odisha.



12. Raghunath temple at the entrance of the village



13. Painting on the wall of a house in Raghurajpur



History

## The Village

Raghurajpur has long been the home of the exquisite art. The Pattachitra paintings, Gotipua dance, paper masks are all important part of the rituals around Jagannath temple in Puri.

The village having present at the bank of river 'Bhargabi' must have been the settlement of artisans since centuries, after the Jagannath temple of Puri was built at thirteen centuries.

The name Raghurajpur derives from 'Raghu-raj' which literally means King Raghu which is a synonym to Lord Rama in Hindu mythology. According to a popular lore, it is believed that Lord Rama stayed at this palace for a short while during his fourteen years of exile.

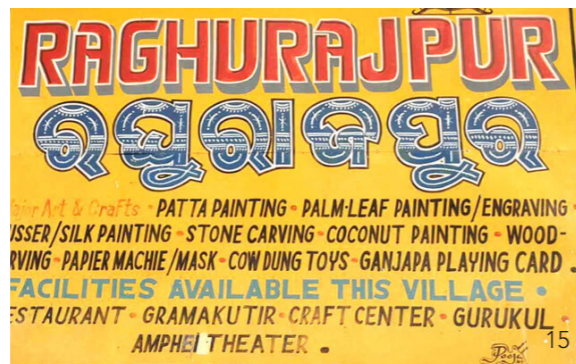
There is a very interesting story on how these art form came into being. According to the legend, on Debasnana Purnima, Lord Jagannath and his siblings take bath in cold water on a hot day and fall sick for 15 days. Due to their illness, their darshan was not possible and so the tradition of making "Anasar Patti" started so that pilgrims can still pray to the Gods, represented on paper, though.

Around, 2000 it was developed as a heritage village by INTACH, and soon became a major rural tourist destination of the state, drawing tourist, both domestic and foreign to the village. Villagers were also trained to provide heritage walks to the visitors by the organisation, and has since become a template for heritage tourism in the region.



History cover page: Wall painting in Raghurajpur, low fidelity

14. A pattachitra painting of Lord Jagannath, Bhalabhadra and Subhadra



15. Board at the entrance of the village

## The Craft

Masks were worn by performers during several occasions of performing dances or acts, since the eleventh century when the King of Kalinga 'Kharavela Deva' promoted music and dance as organised performances across his capital. The first masks were made up of wood and moved on to light weight materials with the popularise usage of paper later. Mask made with only paper used to get sweaty and ruined the paints and the physical form, so a composite of paper, cow dung and clay was used to make the mask sturdy as well as light weight. Nowadays mostly the craft is produced for decorative purpose.

The history of folk theatre also known as Jatra in regional parlance has been a dominant influence on this craft. The characters of these Jatras are made of wood, sholapith and Papier Mache and are vividly painted to appear attractive. The characters are dressed according to the roles played by them and are controlled by strings. Based on the characterizations, masks are used by the artists. This has given rise to the art of making masks from special paper.

The centuries old tradition of 'Sahi jata' blends spirituality and performing arts. Enacting

different characters of the Ramayan during the Sahi Jata holds special significance to them. It is like a service they offer to the dieties through expression of their skills.



16. Sahi Jata, street performance at puri wearing masks



17. Kandhei naacha, a folk theatre practice in odisha



Culture and  
Tradition

## Language and religion

Odia language is spoken commonly. It is a classical Indo-Aryan language with a long literary history. The earliest manuscripts dating back as far as 10th century can be still seen at museums and over the cave walls of Khandagiri and Udaygiri. As the text was engraved on palm leaves, a sharp tool was used, and to avoid tearing the text were curved. Apart from which Hindi is widely understood followed by English, which the villagers learned from the textbooks of school children. They communicate with non-Odia tourists quite effectively.

Community follows the Hindu religion and mostly belong to the Karigara (meaning artisans) caste. Among the Karigara caste, there are variations according to the type and purpose of work. The Maharanas were assigned various work in the Jagannath temple, Puri, they painted the walls did

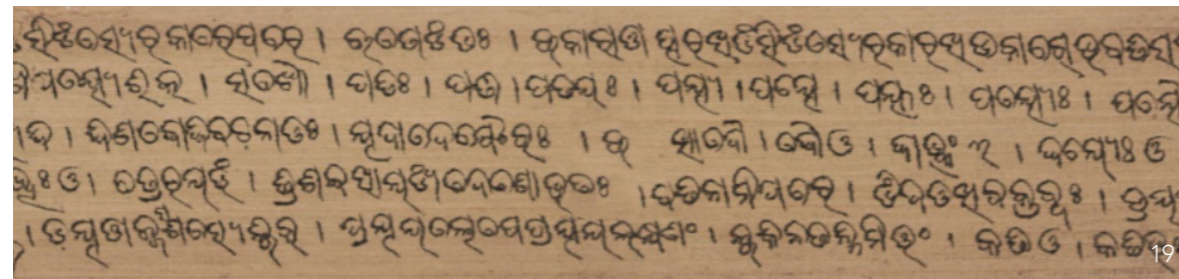
stone carvings made artworks for festivals, categorised under the deity they had to work for, one group worked for Lord Jagannath another for Bhalabhadra and one other for Subhadra.

There are also smaller factions who follow prophets and organize cultural activities called 'Satsangs' to celebrate their own ideas and philosophy.



18. Craftsman offering early morning prayer

Culture Cover: A women standing outside the house in raghurajpur



19. Manuscript written in Odia over palm leaf

## Food and Clothing

Food and clothes are the most important thing to service, these come under the basic need for life. Majority of the population are non-vegetarians and follow traditional cuisine.

Rice is the main food, both suns dried and par-boiled rice is the staple food of the people. They use rice in different ways and prepare various items from the main course to deserts. Dal, Green vegetable curry etc. along with Pakhala Bhata (boiled rice permeated with water over the night) and Saga Bhaja, Badi Chura goes together ornamentally. Deserts made from a variety of ingredients, milk, Chhenna (a form of cottage cheese), coconut, rice, and wheat flour being the most common.

The traditional clothes for men are Dhoti and Kurta, whereas women prefer to wear Saree. The younger men prefer western clothing pattern and wear Jeans, t-shirts, shirts, while the elders mostly after forty years of age wear traditional. The women before marriage wear salwar kameez and transitions to saree afterward. While at work they keep a Gamuch (cloth towel) around the shoulder for the convenience of wiping any sweat, doing so to protect the paints from getting wasted. Men

mostly do not cover their upper body with any clothes and wear only a lungi or dhoti when inside the home. Jewellery is worn by the women during festivals and functions.



20. A buffet of many food items being served at lunch



21. The clothes of older people

## Festival, rituals and myths

Within this small locality, there are seven temples lined up from the start of the village to the end, at the center lane, all of which have many followers. Among others, Bhuasuni is considered the oldest traditional diety, and it is believed that she watches over the villager's well-being, many go on to describe events about it also like someone's kid being saved after a chronic disease, some being able to go outside the country to follow their dreams etc... Many other stories are related to other deities.

The art form has an uncanny resemblance to the old murals and paintings done on the walls of religious centers in ancient Odisha. After the Debasnana Purnima day, the first fortnight of Asadha month, the temple at the Ratnavedi is closed for the devotees during this period, which is known as Anasar. During this period, the devotees get a darshan of the paintings of their revered deities — Lord Jagannath (Krishna), Lord Balabhadra and Maa Subhadra. These paintings are made in the colors black, white and yellow respectively. Known as Anasar Patti, they are made by traditional chittrakars of Odisha and are said to be the origin of the Pattachitra art that has transcended ages.

The artist depicts the stories from Hindu mythology through their art, the stories from Ramayan or Mahabharata are the most common. 'Sahi Jata' meaning local festival is held every year at Puri, the participants from each locality come be a part of it where the artists represent through enacting several episodes from the epic of Ramayana, along with the acting the costumes are also extravagant.

Besides producing these beautiful works of art, this village has a living tradition of performing art known as Gotipua, the earlier form of Odissi. A popular theme here is the Dashavatara or the 10 incarnations of the Hindu deity Vishnu. While one visual depicts the sage Manu in his ship being towed by the giant fish (Matsya), the next showcases Vishnu in his tortoise (Kurma) incarnation holding up the earth during the churning of the ocean, the wild boar (Varaha), half man-half lion (Narasimha), dwarf (Vamana) and Rama incarnations, which is all by the book.

22. The deities of puri temple during "deva-saana purnima"



23. Cemented structure in home, representing child birth



24. Temple patio of Bhuasuni temple, raghurajpur



25. A Satsang, praying Abhiram the prophet



## Other Crafts

This is perhaps the only village in India, where each family is engaged in one craft or the other such as Patta paintings, palm leaf engravings, stone carvings, paper mache toys and masks, wood carvings, wooden toys, cow dung toys and Tassar paintings.

Each craft is unique but follows the same art form, can be identified by some distinguishing features that the figures display. The figures would be characterised by long beak-like noses, prominent chins, and elongated eyes. Each figure can be distinguished from the other by facial features, hairstyles, clothing, etc. The main themes of all the crafts have always been inspired by Lord Jagannath and the Vaishnava sect. Materials used for the most of the crafts are also similar, like the type of brush used for artwork, the raw material for adhesive, the derived natural colors.

The village has a community of artisans who produce different varieties of handicraft items. Perhaps, nowhere else in India, one finds such a congregation of so many artworks at one place. One come across the best tradition of Odisha paintings and some of the finest pieces of artwork in this village.



26. Cow-dung toys displayed for sale



27. Pattachitra painting over glass bottles



28. Miniature stone carving displayed outside home

29. Pattachitra painting of lord Ganesha



30. Palm leaf engraved painting and the tool



31. Papier mache birds and coconut art works



## Work Style

Many artist practice the craft to carry forward the family's legacy, it must be a fulfilling experience as they continue to do so despite many other options to earn a living. They train young childrens in this art form at the village gurukul. The art form followed by all the artists is similar, these are mostly line arts and no shading and gradients are used, 6 limited vivid colors are used white, red, blue, green, yellow and black.

All the artists in the village does almost all kind of different craft while each family has their own specialization. They work at their respective homes. Because of working at home they do it very flexibly, it is not like a job for them and more like a regular hobby, which they do whenever they feel like doing it, but the passion of doing the craft, the love for working on it keeps them from lazing out, rather makes them work more. They usually wake up at around 5 O'clock in the morning and sleep by 12 AM, they have a afternoon nap after lunch for arond 2 to 3 hours.

Many of the village craftsmen are national and state awardees and they even are invited to design colleges like NIFT and State craft associations to conduct workshops.



32. A Woman working in the house



33. Man working inside house, painting pattachitra



34. Man working at house patio, palm leaf engraving



Nature around  
the Village

## Environment

Situated on the southern bank of river Bhargavi and surrounded by coconut, palm, mango, jackfruit groves and other tropical trees, Raghurajpur has an idyllic setting. The differences between Raghurajpur and any other rural settlement become apparent at first sight itself. For one, all the houses in the village are laid out in a compact form around a central boulevard of sorts. This is clearly not a farming settlement where houses are interspersed between wide swathes of green fields. It is a settlement of craftsmen and has been laid out in a manner that facilitates the exchange of thoughts and ideas.

At first glance, the houses look ordinary but then, invariably, comes the double take. You look and then you look again, in disbelief, in delight and, finally, in awe. Because the inhabitants of Raghurajpur haven't limited their creativity to paper and cloth; even the walls of their homes are their canvas. We are talking murals. What's more, these are no ordinary, random paintings. Each painting or set of paintings follows a theme. Some depict stories from the Panchatantra, others take on a religious tone and focus on the Puranas, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata. This setting looks like a display gallery with a studio

space. There are two lanes in the village, the houses are present adjacent and facing them and in between are a chain of temples and mandaps, all cultural and communal activities are done there, also serves as a play area for the children. The houses are made at a height from the ground because of previous floodings from the Bhargavi river, which was a common phenomenon until the river went shallow nearly two decades ago, this river flows in both direction depending on the season.

These days just a few number of cattle are domesticated, so earlier available raw materials like cow-dung are now purchased.

*Nature around the village cover: Coconut trees at the before the village*

*35. Making bricks at the village outskirts*

*36. One of the two lanes of the village*

*37. Coconut trees beside a pond in Raghurajpur*

*38. Wall paintings over the house in the village*



*35. Making bricks at the village outskirts*



## People

Deeply driven by the peerless passion and profound love for art, culture & ethos, the artisans of Raghurajpur have kept alive an intricate art form. It takes years of relentless practice, dedication and skill for an artisan to carve a flawless and magnificent piece. Several artisans of the village have won the President's awards for their excellence in 'patta' painting and palm leaf painting. The first to win President's award was Jagannath Mohapatra in 1965. Thereafter following his footsteps, many have brought laurels and fame to the state.

There are good people in the village, they are very helpful, they listen to outsiders and are patient to let them know about the process of working. Humble, respectful, kind are some adjectives to start describing them. The outskirts of the village is a settlement of people from different places who are not the artist themselves but have set-up studios and hired amateur artists for the business, they purchase craft artifacts from people within the village and sell it to the customers at higher prices.

Gotipua and Odissi dance had been practiced by a few families, dance academy is a prominent part of the village. With the advent of

time, the original culture is taking a shift, like the girls practicing Gotipua dance. Along with the craft, some of the families are also involved in the business of daily items and grocery, they get the materials from the nearby market of Chandanpur and puri.

The village is around the year flocked by both domestic and foreign tourists who visit to view in first-hand how such masterpieces are created. Many of the ardent art lovers and travelers even reside here for a short span of time to learn and behold the diverse set of art prevalent in the village.



39- Odissi dance academy in the village

40- Elderly couple working at the house patio

41- Woman making wooden toys

42- Women with a child waiting for costumers





Crafting the  
Kagaja Mukha

## Materials and Tools

### Philosophy of Colors:

These paintings are brought to life by the use of strong natural colors. They use six main colors, namely, white, orange (hingula), yellow (haladi), blue (nila), green(sabuja) and black(kala), and all the colors are extracted from natural ingredients. While white is prepared from conch shell powder, orange is extracted from geru (red oxide stone), black from soot, blue from indigo, yellow from haritala (a kind of stone) and green from leaves. They use wood apple gum (kaitha) along with water to ensure that the colors don't bleed and to give them a luster. The colors represent certain aspects of the Gods. While white is used to express the 'sattvika' side, red is used to portray the 'rajasika' side and 'tamasika' is depicted with black. The characters too are painted in colors that express their mood or rasa. For example, "Hasya" or laughter is portrayed in white, "Raudra" or furious in red and "Adbhuta" or strange in yellow. The powdered form of these natural colors are nowadays available in the market, so the artist doesn't have to make it themselves. Earlier the artist had to make them all, it involved getting the raw material, processing them and

extracting colors, preserving also added. This had associated risk of poisoning and other physical risks.

### Papers:

Paper has been a cheap source of material earlier when the artists didn't buy them, all the waste papers from around the locality was collected. It was lightweight and suitable for molding into complex shape retaining its properties even then. Adding layers of paper increased the strength. Nowadays the artist have to buy papers as the amount and scale of making has increased and also there are more commercial roles added.

### Brushes:

Defining the details of the art is brought about through the strokes made by brushes with personally defined quality. Animal hairs are used to make brushes. To make bigger strokes brushes were made from Ox tail hair whereas the one which could make very thin lines were made from Squirrel hair.

*Carfting of kagaja mukha cover: Unfinished base painted masks*

*43. Grinding Hingula stone (HgS) to make color in house*

*44. Colors kept in plastic jars in powdered form*

*45. Mixing colors with Kainta atha (wood apple gum)*

*46. Brushes of varying sizes*



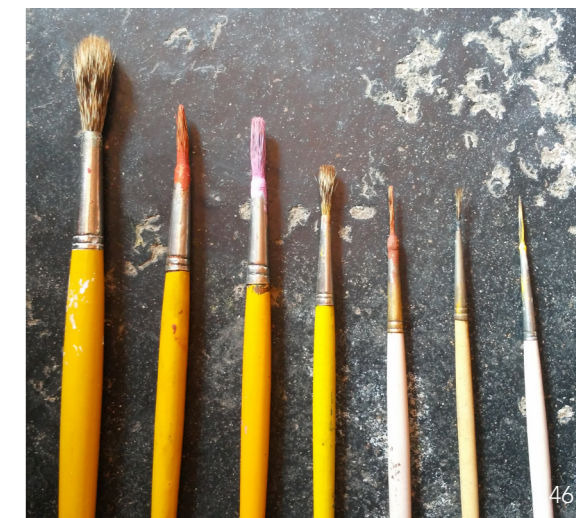
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### Anthill clay:

Anthill clay is used for a smooth structure by mixing it with Cow-dung, smooth powdered is made after broken down into a granular structure. The ant-hill is first poured with kerosine oil to get the ants out, then it is broken using hammer and shovel.

### Tamarind-seed adhesive:

Tamarind seed is available easily and a renewable source, firstly tamarind seed is collected, then are broken into powdered form. This powered tamarind seed is boiled with less water and stirred continuously until a thick paste is formed. The paste is then cooled and stored for later use. Once made the adhesive should be used before one week passes, it then gradually loses its stickiness. It is a strong adhesive and doesn't stick to hands making it suitable to use.

### Cow-dung:

Cow as cattle has been a traditional culture of almost every community in the world. Cow-dung is considered holy in the Hindu

mythology and is also believed to have medicinal properties according to Ayurveda. It is used for making Mukha because of its property of strengthening when dried. This usage culture might be lost because there are fewer cattle in the village and cows aren't eating or grazing on healthy food, they now consume waste and so the cow-dung is foul to handle. Also, these days cow dung is bought from the cattle herder in the amounts of kilograms.

### Clay from the pond:

Sticky clay from a pond is used to make molds of different shapes. This clay is used because of its toughness after drying up, this toughness comes because of its cohesive property. It dries quickly, takes around 2-3 days for drying depending on the weather.

### Cotton cloth:

A perforated cotton cloth is used to the clay mold. It makes difficult the paper to stick to the surface of clay strongly, doing so making the process of removal of masks from mold simpler.

47. Ant hill, from here clay is taken



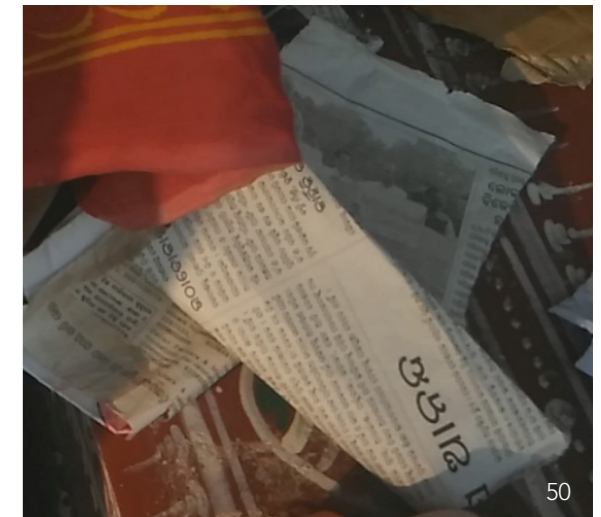
48. Cow-dung mixed with ant hill clay



49. Tamarind seed adhesive



50. Torn un-pulped papers



## Process

### Making the mould:

First, the clay is collected from the pond and gathered together. Sand particles are not suitable and can create fractures in the mould which can break the entire mould, so they are avoided and only sticky clay is used.

A rough shape of the mould is prepared and then smoothen out carefully into the desired shape gradually. When the wetness of the shape is lessened and the desired form is achieved, a piece of cloth is applied with tamarind seed adhesive and pasted over the mould. This shape is again smoothened until a refined shape is accomplished.

This mould is kept for drying up to 2-3 days depending on the weather condition, if it is summer it takes nearly a day and a half for the mould to dry up, while it takes around 3 days during rainy days. These moulds are made up of different shapes and sizes, as the moulds are not the direct product and making it is a difficult process, there is less number of variations. These moulds define sizes of the final mask, so they are made of several standard sizes. Some moulds are made upon special orders but not for regular commercial purpose. Mould making is usually done by the women of the family.



51. Mixed clay and cowdung ready to be used



52. Dried clay mould



53. Cotton cloth pasted over the clay mould

54. Collecting soot from kerosene lamp



55. Prepared black color



### Making of colors:

Powered from natural colors are mixed with Wood apple gum (Bel/Kainta atha in local language) to make a paste of color, this paste is diluted with water to achieve a desired type of blend. Earlier for every 6 different types of color used, the powder has to be prepared by the artists by collecting natural ingredients from different places and processing them in their home by various different processes.

The white color was derived from a creature in the sea, there are many types of 'samuka & sankha' (sea-shell, conches) found, among them there is one 'chitra-sankha' (Translation: picture conch Assumed meaning: Coral reefs, which deposit and form a salt water ecosystem and are held together by calcium carbonate) with a distinct mark on it called 'chitta' and white body with red linings, when these creatures are dead they drift towards the land area by sea waves and are collected by the fisherman, our ancestor must have had instructed the fisherman (dhibara) to collect some specific type of material for them for which they would be paid for, the artisans then selectively collect it from the fisherman and bring them home for further processing.

They have 5 different kinds of Silas (Indian traditional stone grinders), first the conch shells are ground with a large stone (around 5 kilos) to make it granular, then grinded with another stone for breaking into even smaller structures, then these particles are soaked in water and taken to another grinder (spice grinder) for making it even finer, totally fine powdered particles. Milk of Kainta tree (taste sour, its fruits appear like bael/Aegle marmelos and are white in color, small leaves and thorny) is collected, which form a latex. This latex is boiled until a layer is formed on top of it, the layer is removed and collected and the process of forming layers through boiling is repeated until all the latex forms into layers, this is then mixed with the conch shell paste to form a natural 'white color' - this color is used for finishing."

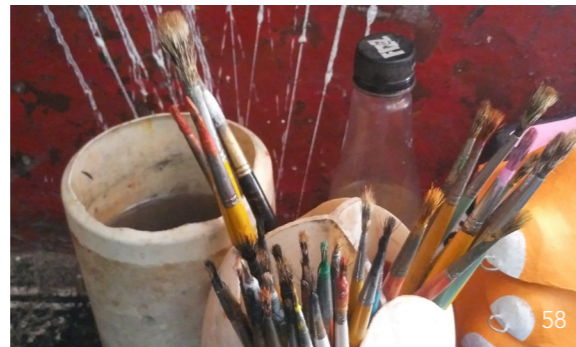
The yellow color is extracted from a stone called 'hadtala', there is a white hadtala and a red hadtala broken from rocks found on some hills, at present, it costs around 2000 to 2500 INR for a kilogram of the stone. It is used in the making of fireworks. Higula/Sindura is a orange-red color which also comes from the hills, it takes around 3-4 days to make color from the stone (Muguni pathara/ Mercu-



56. Broken Coconut shell used as containers for color



57. Pigments of color inside plastic jars



58. Brushes and water for painting

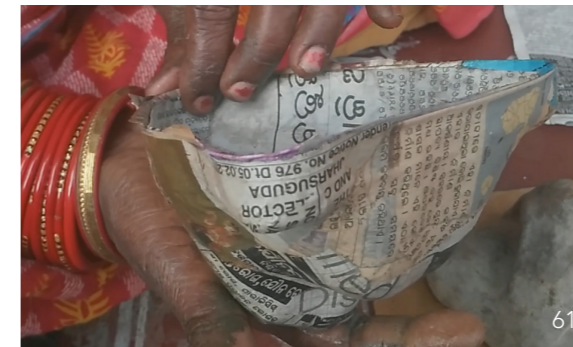
59. Application of paper over the mould



60. Thoroughly pressed with fingers



61. Taken out of mould to dry



ric Sulphide). The stone is ground into fine particles along with drops of water to make a paste, it is let drying. After drying the process of grinding and drying is repeated for 3 to 4 cycles. If a little of this gets in the eyes, it can be very dangerous, one might lose their sight, it is poisonous. Stone Costs around 6000 INR per kilogram in the market.

Black is extracted by collecting the smoke from an oil lamp, an oil lamp is covered with a container, the smoke is more than 90% carbon with a very little oxide which gives a dark rich black color. The container has to be carefully placed and the sick has to be carefully adjusted to lit the fire just right because burning more would, burn the released smoke and it would turn reddish due to further oxidation. All these color pigments are stored in powdered form and to use them, the latex extract is mixed with them.

Some secondary colors:

- yellow + white = champa color (bright yellow)
- hingula + white = golapi (pink)
- hingula + black = pacha (Brown)

## Making Masks:

The dried mould, unplugged torn papers, tamarind seed adhesive, Cow-dung mixed with ant-hill clay, water is kept together to start with.

Paper is thoroughly applied with tamarind seed adhesive and pasted over the mould, around 5 to 6 layers of paper are pasted together over the mould for smaller size masks, up to 10 to 15 layers of paper is applied for bigger work, this layers of papers are shaped into the mould by applying pressure through hand and smoothing the curves, torn paper is used so that folds and creases decreases, decreasing the irregularities and achieve an even surface. This form is taken out from the mould and is kept for drying, it takes around a day to dry.

After drying, the dry paper form is then coated with a layer of mixed cow-dung and anthill clay, this increases the strength of the overall product. Any addition to the form is made during this process, such as adding tusk to the form of Lord Ganesha. This process increases the number of variation which can be achieved by using a single mould by making



62. Drying up of the paper



63. Applying cow-dung mixture over the dried paper



64. Drying up of the cow-dung mixture

65. Base color are painted first



66. Thick outlines are marked



67. Detailed painting is done



various small tweaks to the original form. This is again left for drying under the sun to allow it to dry quickly, it takes around a day to be used for further processing.

After the mask is dried, several other layers of paper are pasted over it. This smoothens the surface and makes the form stronger, as it is now a composite material. Limestone water, made from chalk powder is applied over it after drying. This is now kept for drying, after which it is rubbed with coconut husk to remove any uneven surfaces, this would become ready for painting then.

First, the base colors are applied which becomes the first layer and are the colors which have the most utilisation, these colors are decided as per the character the artist wants to make. Then outlines of details are painted over as line art, a simple brush stroke of color are left within the framed shapes for identifying regions to use separate colors, this also helps to resume the work easily.

The intricacies and details are painted, all with hands using brushes of various sizes. After this dries, the mask is made. For a shiny look, a layer of lacquer is applied.

## Craftmanship

Making the mould, pasting of paper are done usually by the women of the family, they are considered good at handling materials. All the paintings are done mostly by the men.

It is evident that the males are traditionally trained more than the females in painting, whereas the females are trained on material handling and usage. These artists have developed muscles memory through decades of working, they have very steady hands and the strokes are effortless. During painting, they don't refer to anything as a master subject, which implies their detailed knowledge about the form, composition, and colors. While the same goes for women in case of dealing with materials. The philosophy of learning through experience.

Apart from this, the craftsmen have a vast knowledge base of their own culture and they are also good at communicating these to any layman. They have a lot of interesting stories to tell at a various situation, these are influenced mostly by the religious practices and beliefs bestowed upon them by their elders and ancestors. They also respect the nature and acknowledge their survival to it.



68. Women engaged in molding paper



69. Men engaged in painting



Sales and  
Distribution

### Scale, size, and capacity:

The masks are made at some standard sizes and measured in inches ranging from 4 inches to 4 feet, the standard sizes are 4 inches, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18 and 3 feet and 4 feet for some special orders. On an average, they make around 10 masks a day, as it takes time for the half-finished products to dry, all the process of making including painting and material handling are done simultaneously. Because they only have their house as inventory, they have the constraint on the amount of craft they make, although their houses are already filled with the work. Currently 3 people in the family work, they take orders from the businessmen for production in bulk amount, for an order of 50 masks, they ask time for about 12-13 days. Ideally, 5 days of work completes 50 pieces, but as they work individually and independently out of interest and without pressure/influence, they attend to social life and engages in other traditional activities, they keep some days for if some important things come up, or as a slack time. It might also happen that they have to attend to some kind of health problem may or may not be directly related to them. This is how they complete working within the promised time.

### Finish, value, and pricing:

On an average, if the total cost of raw material is around 40 rupees, the craftsmen can make a profit by selling it at 100 rupees. The pricing is done on the basis of size and time taken to complete the work. The raw materials are purchased in bulk from the market of Puri, most popular sales are of sizes 6 and 10 inches, they sell for 150 and 300 Indian rupees respectively. The 3 feet masks are used for stage decorations and costs around 3000 rupees when bought from the artists. They sell at high prices in the market, more than double the amount craftsmen sell them.

### Market:

Walls of the houses of the artist are covered with the display of these crafts, making it a studio showroom. People, mostly tourists roam around the lanes passing each house like going through an art gallery village, they buy directly from the artists. This makes the village a unique marketplace. Also there a significant number of e-commerce businesses selling this craft, but no platform yet have any collaborations with the artists.

*Sales and Distribution cover: Masks hanging on the wall of the home of artists*

*70. Working inside displaying at window*



*71. House of the artisans*



*72. Some big tiger masks*



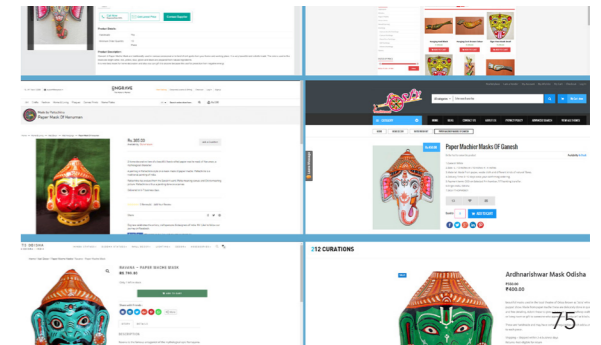
*73. Masks hanged over the walls inside the house*



*74. Inventory, finished product inside cardboard board*



*75. Some online market place*





Conclusion

## Conclusion

There are stories to be told everywhere, and each of them tells the tales of the people narrating them. This was a story of the people of Raghurajpur through their own medium of expression, Kagaja Mukha. All the conscious decisions they make to create the craft are like the small details of a story which captures the actual essence, this is what adds layers and makes you dive deep into their thoughts.

Finding bliss in what would otherwise be a hardship, respecting materials when there is immense exploitation and considering themselves responsible towards the indigenous culture, this is what keeps the craft alive.

Money is an important matter which catches you at the first glimpse, this experience helped me look beyond the commercial aspect of not only the crafts but also other tangible objects.

I learned to appreciate and respect art, it gave me another perspective at looking at the materials and look into the details of the processes. Furthermore, it was a self-discovering journey into the dimensions of uncertainty with the only tool to dispose of

is the effective communication. This journey made me realize that we can be intuitive as well rather than just following a structured way of life.

“I discovered a village  
where colors were as vibrant as the  
expressions

I discovered the masks  
which hides something, to show more

and then

I discovered myself  
in the people of Raghurajpur”

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With the Maharana Family

This crafts family of Raghurajpur village is comprised of 6 people, Srikhetra Moharan (master Craftsman, second from left) his wife (second from right), his son Keshab Maharana (Master Craftsman, Centre), three daughters, Kumari Sasmita Maharana (Master Craftsman), received Odisha State Merit Award - 2007, Odisha Lalit Kala Academy Award - 2008, Rasmita and youngest Namita (Right). Their in-house studio is named as Keshab Handicrafts and they specialize in making 'Kagaja Mukha', they also make Pattachitra, Tasser painting, Bottle Painting, Coconut Painting, Woodcarving and Palm leaf engraving.

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