

Examrace

The Lost-Wax Process and Nataraja

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- The lost-wax process is a technique used for making objects of metal, especially in Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. In each region, a slightly different technique is used.
- The lost-wax process involves several different steps.
- First a wax model of the image is made by hand of pure beeswax that has first been melted over an open fire, and then strained through a fine cloth into a basin of cold water. Here it resolidifies immediately.
- It is then pressed through a pichki or pharni — which squeezes the wax into noodle-like shape.
- These wax wires are then wound around to the shape of the entire image.
- The image is now covered with a thick coating of paste, made of equal parts of clay, sand and cowdung. Into an opening on one side, a clay pot is fixed. In this molten metal is poured.
- The weight of the metal to be used is ten times that of wax. (The wax is weighed before starting the entire process.)
- This metal is largely scrap metal from broken pots and pans.
- While the molten metal is poured in the clay pot, the clay-plastered model is exposed to firing.
- As the wax inside melts, the metal flows down the channel and takes on the shape of the wax image.
- The firing process is carried out almost like a religious ritual and all the steps take place in dead silence.
- The image is later chiselled with files to smoothen it and give it a finish. Casting a bronze image is a painstaking task and demands a high degree of skill.
- Sometimes an alloy of five metals — gold, silver, copper, brass and lead — is used to cast bronze images.

NATARAJA

- Shiva is associated with the end of the cosmic world with which this dancing position is associated.

- In this Chola period bronze sculpture he has been shown balancing himself on his right leg and suppressing the apasmara, the demon of ignorance or forgetfulness, with the foot of the same leg.





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- At the same time, he raises his left leg in bhujangatrasita stance, which represents tirobhava, that is kicking away the veil of maya or illusion from the devotee's mind.
- His four arms are outstretched and the main right hand is posed in abhaya hasta or the gesture suggesting.
- The upper right holds the damaru his favourite musical instrument to keep on the beat tala.
- The upper left hand carries a flame while the main left hand is held in dola hasta and connects with the abhaya hasta of the right hand.
- His hair locks fly on both the sides touching the circular jwala mala or the garland of flames which surrounds the entire dancing figuration.
- The well-known dancing figure of Shiva as Nataraja was evolved and fully developed during the Chola Period and since then many variations of this complex bronze image have been modelled.
- A wide range of Shiva iconography was evolved in the Thanjavur (Tanjore) region of Tamil Nadu.
- The ninth century kalyanasundara murti is highly remarkable for the manner in which Panigrahana (ceremony of marriage) is represented by two separate statuettes.
- Shiva with his extended right hand accepts Parvati's (the bride's) right hand, who is depicted with a bashful expression and taking a step forward.
- The union of Shiva and Parvati is very ingeniously represented in the ardhanarisvara murti in a single image.
- Beautiful independent figurines of Parvati have also been modelled, standing in graceful tribhanga posture.
- During the sixteenth century, known as the Vijayanagar Period in Andhra Pradesh, the sculptors experimented with portrait sculpture in order to preserve knowledge of the royal patron for posterity.

- At Tirupati, life-size standing portrait statues were cast in bronze, depicting Krishnadevaraya with his two queens, Tirumalamba and Chinnadevi.
- The sculptor has combined the likeness of the facial features with certain elements of idealisation.
- The idealisation is further observed in the manner the physical body is modelled to appear imposing as well as graceful.
- The standing king and queens are depicted in praying posture, that is, both hands held in the namaskara mudra.

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