





Saptasajya Festival 2021: Empowering Traditional Artisans of Odisha through Designer Intervention

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Website and Social-Media

<https://www.instagram.com/saptasajyafestival/>

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<http://saptasajya-foundation.org/festival//>

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Looking Back at the First Edition of the Festival (27th— 29th December, 2019)

The Saptasajya Foundation was set up in 2014 with the dream to revitalize the artistic traditions of Dhenkanal district, at the heart of which lies the village of Saptasajya, surrounded by seven hills with perennial streams. Today, however, Dhenkanal is counted among the most backward districts of India, with its once renowned cultural heritage, engendered.

The Foundation seeks to work for the welfare of the people in the area, especially the traditional artisans, with the mentorship provided by young artists and designers, who have graduated from diverse pedagogical institutes. The ultimate aim is to revitalize the traditional artistic traditions of Odisha and make the traditional products reach a wide commercial market, through design innovations and experimentations.

The first edition of the Saptasajya Festival from the 27th to the 29th of December, 2019 was curated by art-historian Bilash Sardar who brought together 20 indigenous metal artists, working for years in a familial tradition. The focus was on artisan clusters from Odisha working with non-ferrous metal crafts— Dhokra from Saptasajya, Bell-metal from Bhubana, Metal-jewellery from Karamul, and Silver-filigree from Cuttack.



These traditions artisans were placed under the mentorship of contemporary designers and artists, with the aim of developing a symbiotic two-way process of interaction and exchange of ideas. The contemporary interventions intended to provide the traditional art-forms a sustainable and extended market. At the same time, it allowed the contemporary artists to take back a rich plethora of traditional knowledge of the 'desi' or the folk genres, to their respective studios

In the first edition of the festival, the designers who mentored the traditional artisans were— Sidharth Mohanty (Dhokra artisan cluster from Nuagaon, Saptasajya), DigantaRakshit and Pinaki Mohanty (Dhokra artisan cluster from Nabajibanpur, Saptasajya), Tarashis Mohapatra (Bell-metal artisan cluster from Bhubana), Damayanti Debnath (Metal jewellery artisan cluster from Karamul), and Sidharth Mohanty and Jagrutee Das (Silver-filigree artisan cluster from Cuttack).



Curatorial Note

Hi, I am Bilash Sardar, pursuing PhD in the Department of Art History at Kala Bhavan Santiniketan with a Junior Research Fellowship. I completed my Masters (2017) and Bachelors (2015) from the Department of Art History and Aesthetics, the Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda. I have worked as the Centre Administrator and In-house curator of the Utsha Foundation in Bhubaneshwar (2017-2019), and in the same position for Arthshila, Santiniketan (2021).

Saptasajya festival 2019 was launched with the idea of creating designed craft objects with the fusion of traditional craft technique and a modern aesthetic. This edition of the festival carried on the similar notion. Intervention in the traditional craft practices is not a simple and short time job. To introduce a contemporary sensibility and addressing the necessity of it requires a number of collaboration sessions with them. Observing the response from last year, this year's curatorial concept tried to continue the initial approach in an attempt to enhance the project and its continuity.

The same artisans were invited this time around and put together with the designers to go through a process of gradual development. Another unique approach was the effort to amalgamate different craft forms. Here designers collaborated with other artisan groups to create utility or designed objects using two different craft forms. It was further open to experiments with locally available craft materials to use it with another craft form to create innovative objects. The four-day festival went through different sessions of workshops, interactions among the designers, craftsmen, mentors, and volunteers.

In the last edition we invited metal craftsmen from different parts Odisha. This time we intend to broaden our periphery by inviting craft group other than metal craft as well. Nine craftsmen groups collaborated with ten designers to develop their designs and products. As the initial idea was to work with the designers and crafts clusters for over the years to make an impact, we invited the same clusters and designers with the new craft groups and designers.

Bilash Sardar



From the Founder-Director

I am from Saptasajya and my family has always lived here. I have seen the dhokra artisans from Sadaibarni ever since I was a child, and it has always been a very fascinating experience for me. The one thing which bothered me was that the artisans were repeating the same patterns and designers, over and over again.

We started the Saptasajya Festival in 2019 to bring traditional artisans and talented young modern designers together so that they can explore new designs, which are commercially viable in today's market and in line with the consumer tastes.

Starting with dhokra and allied metal crafts, we have moved on to the other craft forms of Odisha like Sabai grass and applique. In this second edition of the festival, we have got nine such artisan clusters working under the mentorship of very bright ten designers, and we are hoping to come up with some really exciting products that can cater to the needs of the national as well as global market in the coming years. Next year, we hope to take this forward. We want to bring in merchandisers, architects, other groups and interested parties, who can take these products and use them in large commercial or even retail projects.

Gayatri Rath





**DHOKRA
ARTISANS
FROM
NUAGAON**

MENTOR
SIDHARTH MOHANTY

ARTISANS
TRINATH BEHARA
PRASANTA BEHARA
BANSIDHARA PRADHAN
RAMESH DEHURI

**DHOKRA
ARTISANS
FROM
NABAJIBANPUR**

MENTOR
ARKA GHOSAL

ARTISANS
PURNA MAJHI
GAJENDRA BEHARA
SUMAN PADHAN
BANMBAR PADHAN

**DHOKRA
ARTISANS
FROM
JHIGIDI &
BARAKHAMA**

MENTOR
KRISHNA GUPTA

ARTISANS
RAGHU ULAKA
PANCHAMI ULAKA
LAXMAN NAYAK
TRIPURA NAYAK

DHOKRA

Dhokra is an indigenous non-ferrous metal casting using the lost-wax casting technique, prevalent in many tribal belts of India. It is perhaps the most prominent traditional craft tradition of Dhenkanal with two Dhokra villages in close proximity- Nabajibanpur and Saptasajya. Besides, there were artisans from Jhigidi and Barakhama in Odisha participating in this year's Saptasajya Festival.

The products of dhokra artisans are in great demand in domestic and foreign markets because of primitive simplicity, enchanting folk motifs and forms.

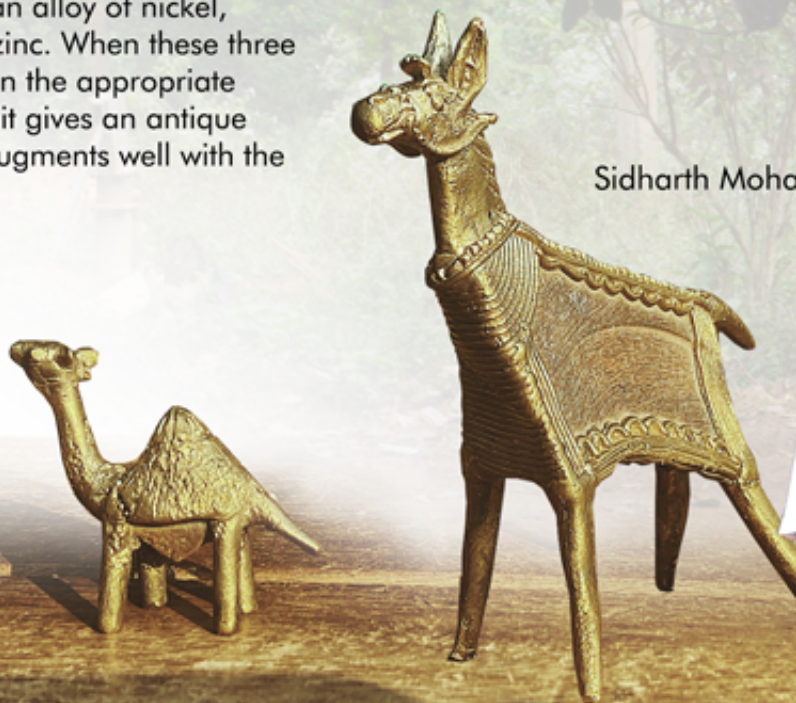
Dhokra Artisans from Nuagaon

Dhokra casting is an essentially folk-art that is not only the craft of Orissa but it is also found in Madhya Pradesh, Bengal and Bihar. The metal used for this casting is brass followed by a lost wax method. Especially when it comes to Odisha, Dhokra metal casting is largely set in southwest of Odisha, namely Kuliana in the Mayurbhanj district, Kaimatin Keonjhar district, Haradagaria in the Puri district and Sadeibarni in the Dhenkanal district.

Using molding, dewaxing and casting techniques the tribal families located at Dhenkanal cast the figures of gods and goddesses, lamps, boxes, ornaments and their ritual objects that are used for household needs. These products are sold mainly in the local weekly market. The craft of Dhokra metal casting remains a strong link to socio-cultural connections in Odisha.

Dhokra is an alloy of nickel, brass and zinc. When these three are mixed in the appropriate proportion it gives an antique look and augments well with the interiors.

Sidharth Mohanty



In 2019, when I worked with the cluster of traditional dhokra artisans from Saptasajya for the first time, I observed that their drying process relied heavily on the weather and hence was time-consuming. In terms of ideation, I felt that the incorporation of stones and pebbles as the core would reduce the initial mould making and drying processes. Besides, the stone would add weight and value to the existing product.

In the process I realized that granite or river-side pebbles was the best choice. My idea was to follow the shape of the stone, since each stone piece has the ability to generate unique figurines. I would thus like the user of the product to select the specific stone which appeals to them, based on which dhokra figurines can be generated. Polishing can be customized to glaze both the brass and the stone, and the final products are at least 15 percent heavier than the figurines without a stone.



I was glad to see the artisan group adapt to the new designs. Their traditional skills and the inclination to accept innovative design practices makes the festival a wholesome experience.

This time around, the intent was to create hair-pins in dhokra, which can also be used for self-defence. Hair pins are generally light weight and are easily disposable. Adding a bit of weight and having a slick design creates a modern appeal for daily use.

I started off with the initial observation that the artisans were using one big mould in which multiple figurines are casted together, instead of one mould per piece. A cylindrical clay mould would keep a portion of the hair pin hollow. Thin hair pins could be therefore casted together in one mould. I found out that tar could be used as an alternative to bee-wax, producing intricate detailing. Multiple iterations were created using the bee-wax threads, to test the intricacies of different design patterns.



PROCESS

After placing a stick/copper wire for support, a core model is made using a mixture of mud, cow dung and water. Upon this model a pure form of clay is applied for the smooth finishing. This model is allowed to dry completely. By using lengthy wax threads, the whole clay model is wrapped with it to form a layer and to obtain the selected pattern of design. On this coating of wax layer, a layer of sand is applied. Two channels like holes are made on it and allowed to dry. One channel is made to pour the molten metal hence the other channel is automatically used for releasing the air out. After the clay model is completely dried. A layer of sand mixed with a minimal amount of clay is applied. Thus, the clay-wax model is totally set ready to bake. The model is thoroughly baked in a furnace and the wax in-between the layers of clay gets melted and remains as a hollow space between the layers of clay. It is dipped in water to cool down. Once cooled completely then by slightly hammering and brushing the burnt mould, the metal artifact is thoroughly cleaned and polished.



Dhokra Artisans from Nabajibanpur

I am an alumnus of NIFT, Bhubaneswar and have been working in the industry for six years now as designer and design faculty. A product designer by profession I hold a keen interest in the field of craft and its implementation in modern designs. Earlier I have worked with various materials like raisin, acrylic, sabai grass, date-palm, wood, stone, dhokra etc. My experiments have ranged from fusion of raisin and wood with age-old crafts of Odisha and infusing natural fibres (sabai grass) into today's design language creating products of daily life. Currently I am working as a design faculty at INIFD and Product and graphic designer in a reputed company in Bhubaneswar.

Arka Ghosal



At the Saptasajya festival I tried to create a design range of dining accessories like candle stand for hotel dining areas and some study or office related product like different kind of paper holder in dhokra echoing the use of these traditional art form of lost wax method to create usable object of daily life which may transform this just an art form to design language and widen the area of its implementation and expected to accept in the mass.



Dhokra Artisans from Jhigidi and Barakhama

I am Krishna Gupta, a designer & a teacher. I am the founder of the multidisciplinary design and branding studio in Bhubaneswar called DEN studio. With an experience of ten years in the field of design, retail and teaching, I am really passionate about creating new experiences through design. I am a NIFT graduate and I have always believed in giving it back to the community.

My association with traditional craft goes back to my college days where for the first time I worked with any traditional craft. My experiences from then have always attracted me to work with skilled artisan of any traditional craft.

Krishna Gupta



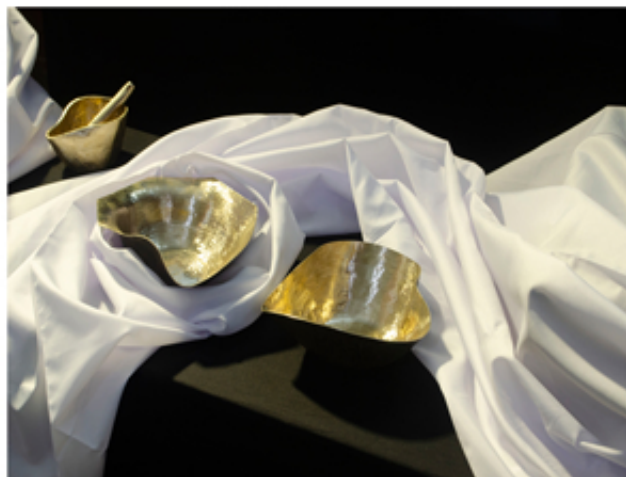
This time at the Saptasajya festival I had the opportunity to work with the Dhokra artist from Phulbani, Odisha. Working with them and understanding how Dhokra from that part of the country is different from all the other places in India was a very insightful and amazing experience for me.

My thought processes this time was clearly on how I can bring in the commercial aspect to the already traditional design and educate the artisan to understand the thought process of how their same traditional designs or products can be more functional and commercial.









Bell Metal

Bell metal or bell bronze is an alloy used for making bells and related instruments, such as cymbals. It is a form of bronze with a higher tin content, usually in approximately a 4:1 ratio of copper to tin (typically, 78% copper, 22% tin by mass).

The higher tin content increases the rigidity of the metal, and increases the resonance. It also has industrial uses, being specified for valve bodies, piston rings, bearings, and bushings.

In India, in the state of Assam, it is called kanh while in West Bengal and Odisha, kansa, it is called Kanchu in Kannada and is used for cooking and eating utensils. Belaguntha in Ganjam district, Kantilo in Nayagarh, and Balakati near Bhubaneswar are well known for this craft in Odisha.

**BELL METAL
ARTISANS
FROM
BHUBANA**

MENTOR
TARASHIS MOHAPATRA

ARTISANS
RABI NARAYANA SAHOO
ISHWAR CHANDRA SAHOO
CHHAYA KANTA SAHOO
SANJAY SAHOO

Bell Metal Artisans from Bhubana

Hi, I am Tarashis Mohapatra. I am a mechanical engineer with a master's degree in design and engineering from IISC Bangalore. I have had a variety of designing experience, starting from bio-mechanical design to industrial and machine design, where I designed consumer electronics, to FMCG packaging devices. Currently I am into architecture as well as engaged in material-science research on bronze and brass alloys. I am trying to come up with a bronze and brass kitchen-ware brand of my own.

I grew up looking at the grand statues of the gods and goddesses of the various religious festivals throughout the year- Durga Puja and so on. Since my family was deeply involved in the rituals, I developed an inclination towards the traditional idol-makers, the jewellery makers for the goddess and so on. Inspired by the traditional artists, I started drawing and painting when I was three or four years old, and then it took me a long time to reach where I am today as an engineer trying to fuse technology with traditional artistic skills.

Tarashis Mohapatra



In the Saptasajya Festival, I have been working with bell-metal artisans from Bhubana. I have learnt a lot from them- the traditional technique of how they make the bowls. I understand they have learnt the skills of craftsmanship from their ancestors, without having the theoretical knowledge of the books. I would say that it would help a lot if they knew about the science and technology more accurately- for instance how much the alloy can be flattened or at what exact temperature the alloy melts. With scientific knowledge we can refine the thickness of the bowls precisely, and make the process more efficient. In return for my designer and technological intervention, I would be learning more about the practical implementations of the laborious skill from them.

When I did a market survey of the bell-metal utensils, I saw it has been very low-profile with steel and more recently plastic taking over. So, the main agenda is to revitalize bell-metal utensils, which have an anti-bacterial property with innovative contemporary shapes. My future plans would be to have a more efficient production line. The current production line has many demerits, for instance- the artisans are continuously exposed to dense smoke being emitted by the burning of coal. It would be challenging to see if the desired 1100 degree Celsius required for melting the alloy can be obtained by a clean renewable source of energy.





Silver Filigree

Tarakasi is a type of silver filigree work from Cuttack, a city in Odisha in the eastern part of India. The filigree artists work with an alloy of 90% or more pure silver.

Traditionally, myriad forms of animals, birds, flowers and even miniature handbags and other souvenirs are made in Tarakasi work. The filigree jewellery is particularly rich in patterns. In Odisha, the stress is on arm jewellery, necklaces, toe rings and especially anklets. They are considered auspicious as well.

SILVER
FILIGREE
ARTISANS
FROM
CUTTACK

MENTOR
JAGRUTEE DAS

ARTISANS
PRADIP KUMAR DEY
RAMACHANDRA DAS
MAHENDRA JETHI
SURENDRA BEHERA

Silver Filigree artisans from Cuttack

I am an alumna of NIFT Hyderabad and have been working for more than seven years now. As a creative person it has always been my effort to explore various different avenues of design. I have had the privilege of working with many forms of indigenous crafts and textiles. I have also been imparting design education to the new generation of aspiring creative professionals. Teaching is a great tool that has helped me stay updated with trends. It also helps in generating out of the box ideas through discussions and debates with fresh young minds. This process results in churning out new perspectives of looking at design and its outcome.

Jagrutee Das



Through my journey as a designer, I had the chance to explore various handicrafts and handlooms of India like Pattachitra, Kalamkari, Ikat, varieties of hand embroideries, Silver Filigree, Bamboo craft, Sabai Grass craft, yarn crafts etc. From clothes to accessories to home decor, I have tried to explore authentic Indian arts and crafts through my process over the years. In fact, with the same intention I co-founded Artistrē which is a brand that offers new age home decor products utilising the skills, materials and aesthetics of Indian artisans and weavers.



Out of the many projects that I have been involved with, Saptasajya Festival particularly holds a very important position in my portfolio of work. In the first edition of Saptasajya Festival I worked with Silver Filigree which is one of the most beautiful crafts of Cuttack. The intricate motifs and the minute details of Cuttack's Silver Filigree make it extremely special and attention worthy. With the advancement in technology, handicrafts have been replaced with mass produced items. It's our primary responsibility to help handicrafts survive in these trying times. Thus, I tried to come up with contemporary products that would appeal to today's conscious and smart consumers using silver filigree.



When I was approached for the second edition of Saptasajya Festival, I was pretty sure that I wanted to work with Silver Filigree again and try to take the craft to a new dimension with the able support and cooperation of the artisans. This not only required me to think about newer products but also looking at Silver Filigree from a different angle and exploring the possibility of twisting either the process of making the craft or the materials. The greatest advantage of Saptasajya Festival is that it's a platform which tries to boost varieties of craft forms. This year there were several different craft clusters present there like Bamboo, Sabai Grass, Dhokra etc. My intention was thus to use other materials available at the festival and combine them with silver resulting in a combination never tried before. A thought as simple as that could have had an impact and that was proven when the products were ready.



I combined silver filigree with bamboo, broken tiles, dhokra and other metals and conceptualised products which were edgy with a touch of classical art which is an intrinsic characteristic of silver filigree, thus retaining the original aesthetics of the age-old craft. My idea was to create a new market for silver filigree beyond puja pandals and wedding gifts. By doing so the resulting products would not only appeal to the younger and fashionably updated youth but also be relatively economical and pocket friendly.

I made a range of pendants, ear rings, finger rings and jewellery boxes with new market potential. This festival helps the artisans in a great way by providing them an atmosphere where they collaborate with artists and designers to make products with contemporary aesthetics and commercial viability.



I am very thankful to Ms. Gayatri Rath for organising a festival of this sort that supports authentic Indian arts and artisans. It also facilitates designers like me in finding extremely skilled and creative craftsmen in order to keep the legacy of Indian crafts alive. I am thankful to the entire team of Saptasajya Festival, fellow designers, craftsmen, photographers and each and every member involved in making this endeavour a success. Looking forward to the next edition.





Metal Jewellery

The craft of metal, especially dhokra jewellery involves simple tools of pliers and hammers for bending wires and sheets of varying thickness. Soldering is done using a small blow torch run by petroleum using silver and soldering powder to join two pieces together. To go with ethnic wears from some leading designer brands, metal jewellery/accessory can be the perfect match!

METAL
JEWELLERY
ARTISANS
FROM
KARAMUL

MENTOR

NITESH RAJ

ARTISANS

GADADHAR SAHOO
MANOJ KUMAR SAHOO
SULOCHONA SAHOO
NUKHRI SAHOO

Metal Jewellery artisans from Karamul

I am working with the handloom and handicrafts of Odisha and it's been five years since then, experiencing the authenticity and pure thought of the artisans and trying to mould the traditional view of the products in most contemporary vision by maintaining the aesthetics and ethics of the originality.

The science or rather art of designing deals with holistically addressing the further developing solutions of the problems around us in day-to-day life. Designing at my vision surrounds primarily in India wearing unique astonishing silhouettes art in tandem with the aesthetic of the design. The main base of my ideation is handloom, organic dye, eco-friendly and sustainable products. It also includes up-cycle, recycle and re-use of the fabrics, garments or any other products, through which a new design can be achieved with more efficient and acceptable look. The handloom and organic fabrics of the Indian clusters and cultures adds mesmerizing brightness to the design which makes it unparalleled. The basic feature of the silhouette depicts the free spirit of an individual which we lack nowadays.

Nitesh Raj



I have my own minimal way of designing which has the capability to turn any individual's tendency to be stronger, confident and lead the way towards self-sufficiency. Taking India towards its originality, I want to take our customers as our partners in this mission. There is a thought to create a quality product along with quantity, which may serve the local and can be a global label.

I have a thought process towards the upliftment of the artisans of the clusters and also working on how to make rural life more comfortable and also trying to make a market for the artisans of the clusters to have a stable place for their fair trade with neither less profit rather on a constant growing graph.





Sabai Grass

Eulaliopsis binata is a perennial, densely clump-forming grass growing from a more or less woody rootstock; it produces narrow leaf-blades around 30 - 80cm long, and strong, wiry flowering stems 60 - 90cm tall. In India, this species is the second-most important raw material for paper pulp after bamboos, and it is much collected from the wild there.

In West Bengal and Odisha, it is commonly cultivated on marginal uplands as a source of raw materials. The grass is woven into mats and other products. The plant is a good source of fibre, which is widely used for making sails, ropes and strings.

SABAI GRASS
ARTISANS
FROM
BADJOD

MENTOR
SIDHARTH MOHANTY
ARTISANS

BHABANI MISHRA
SOMBARI MOHANTA
NAMITA NAIK
PARBATI NAIK

Sabai Grass artisans from Badjod

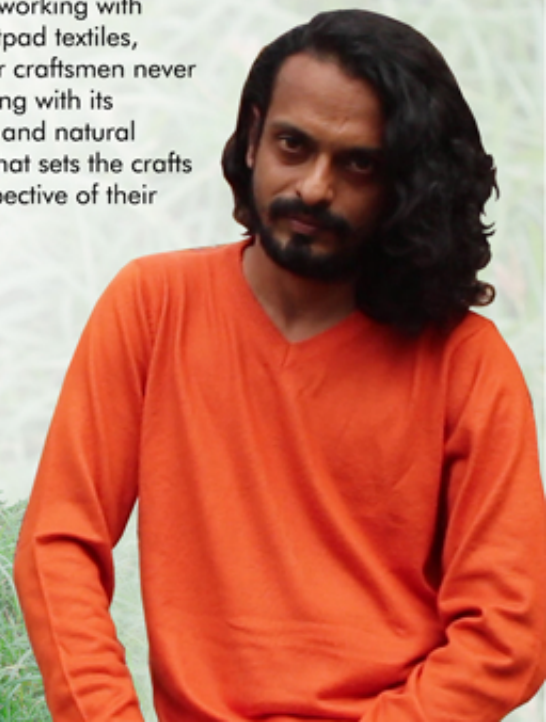
"Everything you possess of skill, and wealth and handicraft, wasn't it first merely a thought and a quest? "

Rumi

I am Sidharth Mohanty, a designer, artist, academician and most importantly an ardent admirer of indigenous crafts. Born in a small town in Odisha called Cuttack, it was a distant dream that came true when I graduated from NIFT, Bengaluru in 2005 and thereafter, started my journey in design. Within the working experience of seventeen years, no matter where I worked, whether exports or retail, what I was always drawn towards was the world of Indian crafts.

That undiminished quest brought me to Odisha in 2010 to explore the fine and brilliant craftsmanship of our Odia artisans. Since then, I have had the privilege of working with various arts, crafts and textiles of Odisha like Pattachitra, Silver Filigree, Kotpad textiles, Terracotta, Coir craft, Sabai grass craft etc. The excellence of the skill of our craftsmen never ceases to amuse me. Odisha's crafts reflect the Odia culture's simplicity along with its creative genius. Filled with bright colors, dancier figures, simple geometry and natural inspiration, the crafts of Odisha outshine anything one has seen before. What sets the crafts of this state apart, is the love of Lord Jagannath visible in all of them, irrespective of their type, technique or material.

Sidharth Mohanty



To be able to contribute in my small way in the cause of preserving Indian handicrafts, I took a baby step in 2020 and started Artistrē along with my co-founder, Jagrutee Das. Artistrē is a home grown brand making handcrafted home decor products and eventually plans to expand to apparels and accessories. We work with a cluster of women Sabai Grass artisans from Badjod, Mayurbhanj. We make contemporary wall decor combining Sabai Grass craft and macrame.

While talking about Odisha's crafts, it becomes imperative to mention the role of Saptasajya Festival in supporting its cause and helping the handicrafts survive and flourish. I had the chance of working as a designer in the first Saptasajya Festival, 2019. And this time, I feel honored to have been a part of the festival again in its second edition in 2022. What makes this edition special for me is that it gave me a platform to work further with the same Sabai grass artisans, thus supporting the collaboration in contributing to the cause of the festival.



This year I wanted to play with the material and create forms, shapes and styles not tried before. I made bags and accessories for the smart casual dressers. The flexibility of the grass gave me the opportunity to create geometric structures which can be seen in some of the bags made during the festival, while also moulding into twisted shapes in the accessories like earrings and pendants made by the artisans there.



I also tried to utilize some of the existing shapes and products brought by the artisans by upcycling them and changing their end use. I cannot but forget to thank my student, T. Himagiri who assisted me throughout the festival and truly made my work possible at the festival.





I can truly say I had a fulfilling experience at Saptasajya Festival and believe that all the products made are marketable because they have been made keeping a user in mind. I myself would be reproducing many of the products made during the festival for my own brand, Artistrē.

There's no bigger market than social media today. These products properly promoted on social media would reach a very wide audience and be able to generate better income for the artisans. I thank Mrs. Gayatri Rath for making me a part of Saptasajya Festival. I thank all the artisans, fellow designers, documentation team and volunteers for their grateful support.





Applique

Applique is ornamental needlework in which pieces or patches of fabric in different shapes and patterns are sewn or stuck onto a larger piece to form a picture or pattern. It is commonly used as decoration, especially on garments. The technique is accomplished either by hand stitching or machine. Applique is commonly practised with textiles, but the term may be applied to similar techniques used on different materials. In the context of ceramics, for example, an appliqué is a separate piece of clay added to the primary work, generally for the purpose of decoration.

The term originates from the Latin applicō "I apply" and subsequently from the French appliquer "attach".

APPLIQUE
ARTISANS
FROM
PIPILI

MENTOR

SONALI SUCHISMITA PANDA

ARTISANS

SARASWATI RATH
SAGARIKA MISHRA
MAMINA PANDAY
UMESH KUMAR

Applique artists from Pipili

Hi, I am Sonali Suchismita Panda. I work as a Textile Designer and am currently appointed as a faculty in INIFD, Bhubaneswar. I have worked on a few projects as a designer. In the past, I have also designed costumes for a theatre act called MAHISHMATI.

I am really fascinated by the traditional crafts in our state and that has inspired me to work on the applique craftsmanship, which I think has a great potential in today's market. In the Saptasajya Festival, I was working with such artisans who have acquired the skill generationally.

Sonali Suchismita Panda



After engaging with the Pipili and Dhenkanal artisans I suggested they produce new products like name plates, marriage cards, coasters, laundry bags, accessory organizers, tissue paper holders etc. We worked on this project whole-heartedly and created some well-crafted products. I hope these products will help the artisans in the future for sustaining in the commercial market. These products have been created keeping the current trend in vision. I hope the products will find adulation in the market when launched.





Bamboo

Bamboo weaving involves two distinct sets of bamboo strips which are interlaced at normally right angles to form an object. The longitudinal lengths of bamboo are called the warp and the lateral lengths are known as the weft. The method in which these strips are woven affects the characteristics of the finished piece.

Bamboo is typically hand-woven, with a number of bamboo weaving traditions having developed globally over time, particularly in Southeast Asia and East Asia, where bamboo suitable for weaving is particularly abundant.

**BAMBOO
ARTISANS
FROM
DHENKANAL**

MENTORS

SHRADHA PATTNAIK & SAKSHI JAIN

ARTISANS

PRASANTA SENAPATI
DEBIPRASAD SENAPATI
BIJAYA SENAPATI

Bamboo artisans from Dhenkanal

I am Shradha Pattnaik, an architect by profession. I have worked on Architecture and interior design projects in architecture firms in Bangalore and Bhubaneswar. Presently, along with my practice, I am also working at INIFD Bhubaneswar as a faculty in the interior design department.

I am Sakshi Jain, a fashion and a graphic designer. After graduating from NIFT, I had the opportunity to design for labels. Currently, I have my clothing line, "BASISK" which runs on e-commerce. I use it as a medium to express, create and change the idea of basics that should be.

Shradha Pattnaik

Sakshi Jain



As designers, we have always had our inclination towards traditional crafts and materials. The power of using these crafts and being able to design and implement products with it is an amazing experience. The simplicity and intricacy of these crafts add so much value to the products.



Our collaboration during this edition of Saptasajya festival was with the extremely talented bamboo artisans from Dhenkanal. Starting from day one, we had continuous conversations with the artisans to understand their working style and the techniques used by them for creating products. This helped us proceed better and develop new designs where the artisans could also learn something new without compromising on their techniques. This entire process was a learning experience. Getting to know the properties of the material, followed by design development and execution. The team of artisans working with us were open to new design ideas and new products being made. The whole idea was to design utility and aesthetic products.



We tried to focus on two segments which are travel and hotel for developing the products. There were products such as a small stool which could be dismantled and stacked back together to make it easy to carry, small bags, travel friendly cutlery set including spoon, forks, and chopsticks. There was a skateboard designed with bamboo for kids. It could also be used just as an artifact for the wall as well. For the hotel segment we developed products such as a towel hanger which could also be used as a curtain holder if increased in size and as a tissue holder if decreased in size. There were bottles, cupcakes and phone holders. Bamboo being a sustainable material, it has the scope to expand its use in the interior design section in the cafes/hotels across the state. With that use of material in the daily practices, it would be an upgrade in lifestyle and choices.



Adhering to strict Covid Protocols and maintaining adequate safety measures, the festival this year started off with stunning dance performances by the students of the Sargam Dance Academy in Dhenkanal, in the presence of Ashish Dhir, eminent photographer and archivist.



We were thrilled to have the Collector and District Magistrate of Dhenkanal District, Mr Saroj Kumar Sethi, as our chief guest for the closing ceremony and the exhibition. We were also elated to have Mr Biren Das, an eminent personality in the world of journalism and television production.

Mr Saroj Kumar Sethi
Collector and DM Dhenkanal District

Mr Biren Das
Journalist and Filmmaker



26-29 December 2021

Mr. Biren Das
Journalist and Filmmaker

Mr Saroj Kumar Sethi
Collector and DM Dhenkanal District

Gayatri Rath
Founder and Director,
Saptasajya Foundation





Ashish Dhir
Photographer
Guest of Honour



Saptasajya festival 2019 was launched with the idea of creating designed craft objects with the fusion of traditional craft technique and a modern aesthetic. This edition of the festival carried on the similar notion. Intervention in the traditional craft practices is not a simple and short time job. To introduce a contemporary sensibility and addressing the necessity of it requires a number of collaboration sessions with them. Observing the response from last year, this year's curatorial concept tried to continue the initial approach in an attempt to enhance the project and its continuity.

Bilash Sardar, Curator

