



INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT
SENIOR SECTION
DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS



CLASS: XI
PAINTING (049) & SCULPTURE (051)
WORKSHEET No. 11

Unit – III (B) INDIAN BRONZE SCULPTURES

Introduction:

Indian sculptors had mastered the bronze medium and the casting process as much as they had mastered terracotta sculpture and carving in stone. The cire-perdu or 'lost-wax' process for casting was learnt as long ago as the Indus Valley Culture. Perhaps the 'Dancing Girl' from Mohenjo-daro is the earliest bronze sculpture datable to 2500 BC. Bronze sculpture and statuettes of Buddhist, Hindu and Jain icons have been discovered from many regions of India dating from the second century until the sixteenth century. Most of these were used for ritual worship and are characterised by exquisite beauty and aesthetic appeal. At the same time the metal-casting process continued to be utilised for making articles for various purposes of daily use, such as utensils for cooking, eating, drinking, etc. Present-day tribal communities also utilise the 'lost-wax' process for their art expressions.

The archaeologists have discovered a bronze sculpture at Daimabad, Maharashtra dated 1500 BC. Significant is the 'Chariot', the wheels of which are represented in simple circular shapes while the driver or human rider has been elongated, and the bulls in the forefront are modelled in sturdy forms. Interesting images of Jain tirthankaras, Buddha, Bodhisattva and Hindu deities have also been discovered from Chausa, Bihar, belonging to the Kushana Period during 2nd century A.D. This process of making idols is continued to till now.

Much other remarkable bronze sculpture has been cast in south India during Chola and Pallava periods 7th to 12th centuries A.D. Nataraja and Devi Uma are main figures of that period.



Dancing Girl
Mohen-jo-daro



Bull from Mohen-jo-daro

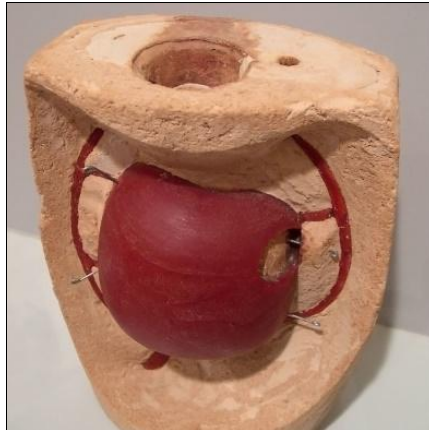


Chariot from Daimabad

The Lost-Wax Process (Method of Casting Metal: Solid and Hollow)

The 'Lost-Wax process' or 'Cire-perdue' is a technique which is used for making objects or sculptures from metal. This technique is used almost all over the world. But a slightly different technique or methods of casting is used in Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.

There are several steps to make an idol or sculpture by the molten metals. First of all, a wax model of the image is prepared by the artist's hand. All the details are clearly engraved on it. After completion of the image, it is now covered with a thick coating of paste which is prepared by the equal parts of clay, brick-dust and plaster of paris, but a link way has to be made from which the wax of the image may come out after melting it on open fire and then melted metal can be poured into that channel from where the wax came out. After some time, the clay layer is exposed patiently and behind that a solid metal image appears. We can make solid as well as hollow form of the idol or sculpture by this technique. For hollow form of the idols, first of all, a crude image is made by clay and it covers with wax layer and all the details of the idol made on it. After completion of the image same process is repeated.



NATARAJ: THE DANCING SHIVA

Nataraja or nataraj, the dancing form of Lord Shiva, is a symbolic synthesis of the most important aspects of Hinduism, and the summery (*cheerful*) of the central tenets (*belief*) of this Vedic religion. The term 'Nataraj' means 'King of Dancers' (Sanskrit nata=dance; raja=king). In the words of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Nataraj is the "clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of... A more fluid and energetic representation of a moving figure than the dancing figure of Shiva can scarcely be found anywhere.

The Origin of the Nataraj Form

An extraordinary iconographic representation of the rich and diverse cultural heritage of India, it was developed in southern India by the 9th and 10th century artists during the Chola period (1880-1279) in a series of beautiful bronze sculptures. By the 19th century AD, it achieved canonical (established) stature and soon the Chola Nataraja became the supreme statement of Hindu Art.

The Vital Form and Symbolism:

- In a marvelously unified and dynamic composition expressing the rhythm and harmony of life, Nataraj is shown with four hands representing the cardinal directions (four directions).
- He is dancing with his left foot elegantly raised and the right foot on a prostrate figure- "Apasmara Purusha", the personification of illusion and ignorance over whom Shiva triumphs.
- The upper left hand holds a flame, the lower left hand points down to the dwarf who is shown holding a cobra.
- The upper right hand holds an hourglass drum or 'dumroo' that stands for the male-female vital principle, the lower shows the gesture of assertion (declaration): "Be without fear". Snakes that stand for egotism are seen uncoiling from his arms, legs and hair which are braided and bejeweled.
- His matted locks are whirling as he dances with an arch of flames representing the endless cycle of birth and death.
- Goddess Ganga, the epitome of the holy river Ganga also sits on his hairdo.
- His third eye is symbolic of his omniscience (unlimited knowledge), insight and enlightenment.
- The whole idol rests on a lotus pedestal, the symbol of the creative forces of the universe.

NATARAJ

