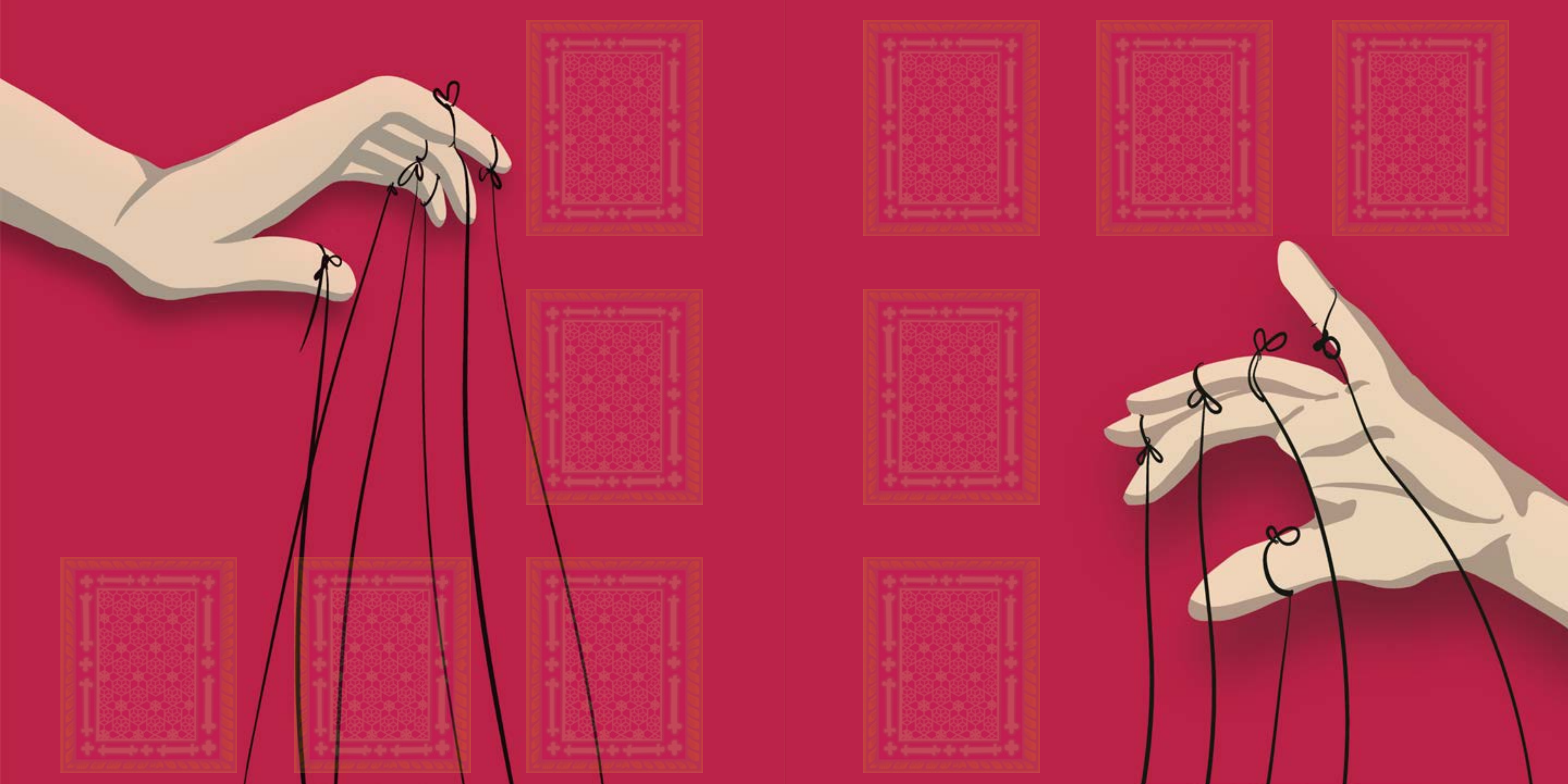




KAASHI-KATHA

THE STORY THROUGH WOOD





Copyright © 2021 by NIFT
All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

Printed in India

First Printing, 2021

Craft Cluster Documentation
Fashion Communication, Batch of 2019-23
Fashion Communication Department
National Institute of Fashion Technology
New Delhi

www.nift.ac.in

Divya Aggarwal
Reza Zaidi
Medha Ghosh
Adya Maggo
Parul Aggarwal
Shashank Gautam

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Before undertaking this journey, we have heard of from our seniors who would go and visit the field but, in our case, the current scenario has not led us to what the previous batches have experienced. Yet the entire process of completing this group project has been very rewarding for all of us. While doing this research we visited the state-owned emporiums on Baba Kharag Singh Marg, Connought Place, New Delhi and interacted with the sales people there who were kind enough to give us their valuable time and insights. We also visited the Crafts Museum, Pragati Maidan again in New Delhi to enhance our views about the craft of Kathputli and how it has evolved with centuries. We feel grateful to have been able to contribute to the documentation and further research of this century's old art form. For giving us this opportunity, we would like to extend our appreciation to our alma mater NIFT, Delhi, which has included the option of doing a research on the various crafts and exposing us to the ground reality. Next, we would like to show gratitude towards our CC, Ms. Lavina Bhaskar and our mentor Ms. Anupreet Duggal, for guiding us with patience throughout this process and helping us at every stage and arranging us online meetings with various stalwarts in the crafts arena of India. For all of the valuable input you have given us in completing our data collection and report compilation. We would also like to thank our immediate seniors for sharing their knowledge and directing us throughout our research in these difficult times. Virtually we were fortunate to interact with members of the Kathputli community, we feel grateful to have been welcomed with open arms into their workshops virtually. We are also very grateful for the information you shared with us, without which this research would have been incomplete. We are also sincerely thankful to all the bloggers and websites who have lend us a helping hand in our research. We would also like to thank everyone else who has been involved in this project for the past fifteen days; your support has been of the utmost importance to us.



ABSTRACT

The tale of the string puppets of Rajasthan is one that dates back many centuries, while the art form has a rich history, current awareness on it is depleting. While it still remains a vital attraction in Jaipur's tourism industry there isn't much that is known about what happens behind the curtains of the stage; from the moment the wood is procured to the final moments of the Kathputlis dancing on stage. This had come to our notice while looking for secondary information, that there aren't many reliable sources. Much of the information we found only brushed the topmost layer. With this research we hope to understand how the art form has changed over the years, study its implications on the stakeholders, while paying heed to the art form itself. The research conducted was qualitative in nature, where empirical and interpretive approaches were employed. The data collection was done with the aid of semi-structured questionnaires and took into account the views of the art forms stakeholders. Through this research it was found that the members of the Bhat community are the sole practitioners of this art form, bringing the Kathputlis to life with the swift movements of their fingers. The process of making a Kathputli is time taking and involves a variety of intricate work to be done in the final stages of manufacturing and the themes of the stories narrated range from the valiant tales of warriors to romance and comedy. However, the style of their performance has changed over the years, this change can be factored to the reason that the artisans believe that the demand from the audience has changed. And that changing their way of showcasing the art form would be the only way to attract more audiences. While the puppets were predominantly made for performing in the past, their purpose has shifted to meet the needs of the artists. With the change in technology, environment and globalization, the artisans have adapted in order to survive. This research explores the various methods in which the puppeteers have evolved to sustain the art form in the 21st century and how the current day and age is affecting them and the measures they have taken to sustain their families.

CONTENTS

■ Introduction

- Rajasthan
- About the craft
- Historical Overview

■ Research and Analysis

- Research statement
- Aims and Objectives
- Pre-Research hypothesis
- Limitations
- Rationale

■ Literature Review

- History
- Background assistance
- Roles taken up
- Livelihood
- Turning Tides
- Sales

■ Kaasth Kastha : The story through woods

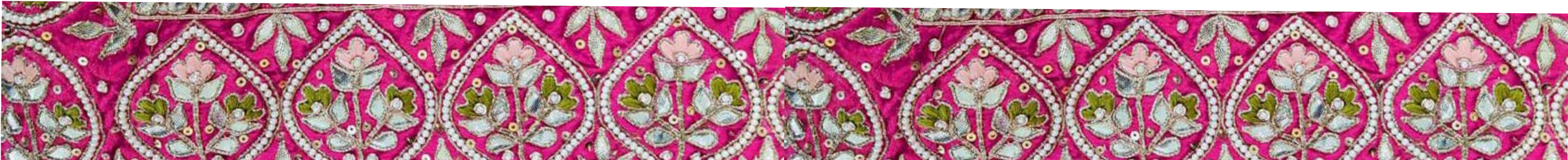
- Types of puppets
- Tools and raw materials
- Process
- Contribution in making process
- The act : Behind the curtains
- Stories and Characters
- Music and Instruments
- **SWOT analysis**

■ Solution

- Logo Ideation
- Introduction to advertising model
- Why social media advertising
- About our campaign

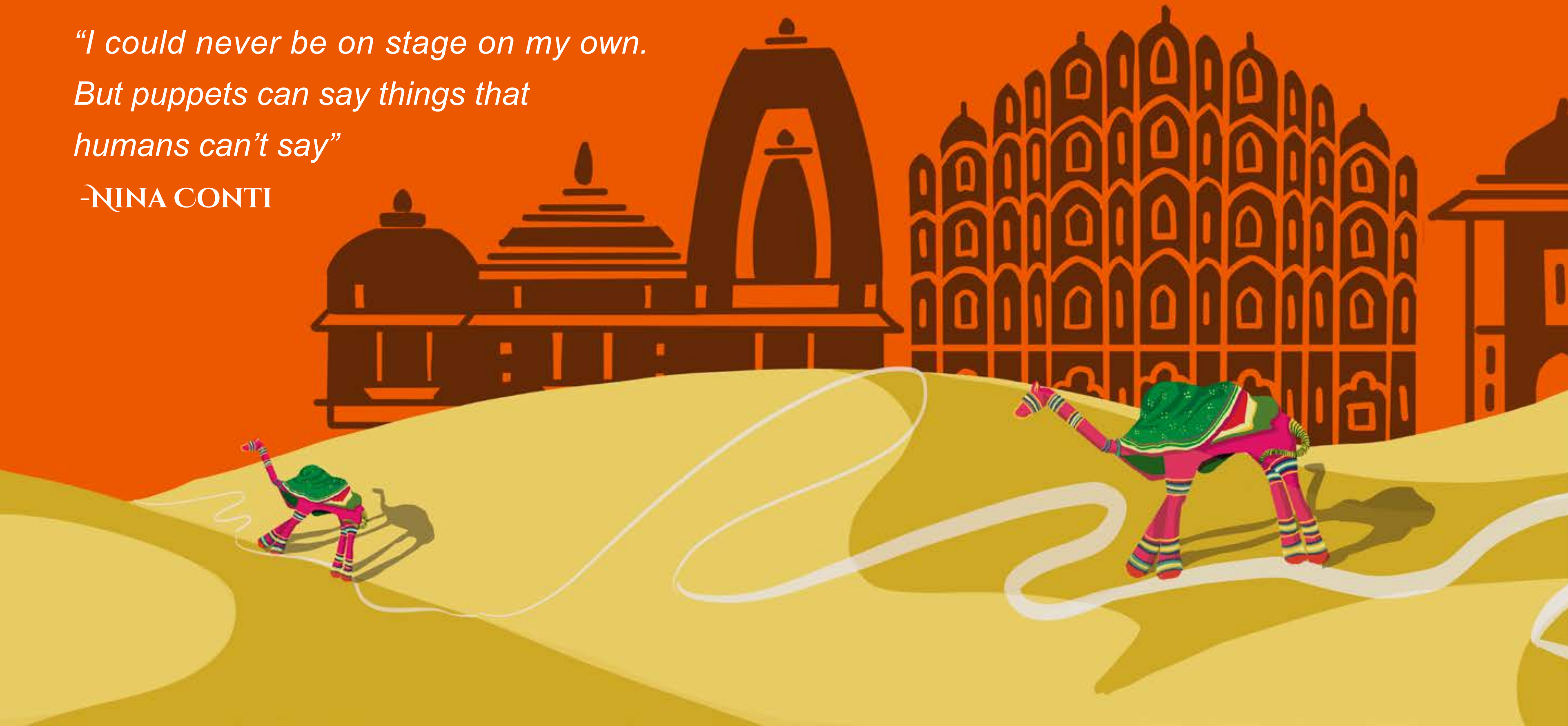
■ Conclusion

- Epilogue
- Contributions
- References



*"I could never be on stage on my own.
But puppets can say things that
humans can't say"*

-NINA CONTI





INTRODUCTION

RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan, meaning “Land of Maharajas” was formerly called Rajputana, “The Country of the Rajputs” is India’s largest state by area. The state located on northwest part of country and is a home of cultural diversity. The capital city is Jaipur, in the east-central part of the state. Its features include the ruins of Indus Valley Civilization, Temples, Forts and Fortresses in almost every city. Rajasthan divided into 9 regions; Ajmer State, Hadoti, Dhundhar, Gorwar, Shekhawati, Mewar, Marwar, Vagad and Mewat which are equally rich in its heritage and artistic contribution.

Rajasthan experiences a tropical desert climate. It remains extremely cold in the months of October to February while it bears the scorching heat of the sun from March to September. Rajasthan is one of the warmest regions in India with an average daily high temperature of 33 degrees centigrade. It is yearlong warm or hot. In the desert areas, it is usually hot and dry in summer and cold during the winters. Coming to the Aravali range, to the west, both rainfall and humidity are low. While to the east, weather can be characterized by high humidity and better rainfall.

Language

Hindi is the official language of the state, and to some degree it has overshadowed the local languages of Rajasthan. Much of the state’s population, however, continues to speak Rajasthani languages.

Culture & Traditions

Rajasthan has a rich heritage of its Art, Culture & Architecture. Many of these art forms have survived through ages and are even part of present culture of Rajasthan. Rajasthan is world renowned for its forts, havelis, tombs, and cenotaph present across the geography of state, reveal the blend of multiple dynasties. The glittering jewellery and attractive handicrafts of Rajasthan have caught the fantasy of the people around the world. Rajasthan has rich tradition of music & dance forms. The music is uncomplicated, raw and songs depict daily chores. Rajasthan is also famous for textiles, semi-precious stone work and its traditional & colourful handicrafts. Rajasthan is also one of the cultural centres for miniature painting art with its unique Rajasthani or Rajputana school of painting. The painting form is well diverse with multiple schools like Mewar, Marwar, Hadoti, Dundhaar and even more styles of painting.



About the Craft



ABOUT KATHPUTLI

The etymology of kathputli is derived from the sanskrit words for son or children, 'Puttika' or 'Puttalika'. This has sunk so deep into the mindsets of puppeteers that they mostly keep the boxes containing the puppets inside their bedrooms and after the puppets have worn out it is not neglected instead taken to rivers and immersed into the currents.

Traditionally the artisans who were involved in making the puppets were from the nomadic community called the Putli Bhaat or Nat. Nats are the performing artists who wander village to village along with their portable theatres. They entertained gatherings by narrating the achievements of heroes of mythological stories or historical background. Though they originally belong to the Nagaur area in Marwar region, they travel all through the country in order to exhibit their skills. Now these communities have settled in various places of Rajasthan.

It has been the oldest form of entertainment. In olden days these did not only entertain but also provided moral and social education. They tackled problems like dowry system, women empowerment, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, cleanliness. Through these puppet shows they made people aware of social problems they were facing and also showed them ways to solve them.

Narration and music make an intricate part of the puppet show. They both are usually hidden from the audience. Though variations in pitch and colouration, the puppeteer gives the puppet its own voice.

Origin

Although India has abundance of puppets in various styles coming from all over the country, and each part has different puppet forms, that were the source of entertainment in those days. The community who made Kathputli puppets were usually nomadic in nature, and took to the roads to do shows for people of all walks of life. They roamed around in the Western region of India and earned their livelihood by entertaining people. Be it in the cities or villages, or even palaces, they were always welcomed for their performances. The people would sit around a large tree, or form a stage to do the act. These shows were always accompanied by live musicals and had a lot of lively singing and foot tapping dancing that the puppets did to enthral their fans. Sometimes voice enacting was also done between the puppeteer and the puppets, like a fun conversation.



HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The earliest puppets probably originated in Egypt, where ivory and clay articulated puppets have been discovered in tombs. But it is truly Rajasthan's amazing kathputli which made India one of the first countries to invent its traditional puppetry. The desert region of Rajasthan is home to some of the most relished art forms of India, one such art form being Kathputli, the dance of the string puppets. Puppeteers would build a stage on which they would make the wooden marionette dolls dance, by attaching strings to the dolls. Simultaneously they would recite poems and stories, with an entourage of musicians assisting them.

It is believed to have originated over 1500 years ago in a tribal Bhat community. Tradition of Kathputli is based on folk tales and stories. Scholars believe that folk tales convey the lifestyle of ancient Rajasthani tribal people and Kathputli art might have originated from present day Nagaur and surrounding areas. Rajasthani Kings and nobles were patrons of Art and Craft and they encouraged the craftsmen in activities ranging from wood and marble carving to weaving, pottery and painting. Whereas contradicting sources discovered on-field, Mr Lakshmikanth claims that the art form originated from Iran. Many centuries prior immigrants from Maharaja period, bringing with them their culture and practices which Iran settled in what is now modern-day Rajasthan. They came during the influenced the locals of Rajasthan and made this art form a commonality in the region (Lakshmikanth Bhat, 9th February 2020).

Over the last 500 years, Kathputli was a system of patronage supported by kings and well-off families. The patrons would look after the artists in return for the artists singing praises of the patrons' ancestors. Bhat community claim that their ancestors had performed for royal families, and received great honour and prestige from the rulers of Rajasthan. Patronised by many ruling families in the state, it soon grew into a major art form of the region.

While the art form is now referred to as a tourist attraction in the past it wasn't just limited to the courts of the king they were also performed in the town square. They would revel in the music and storytelling and the performances would go on for hours and hours running on the excitement and encouragement of the audience. They would breathe life into the lovingly carved wooden dolls through music storytelling, and the swift movement of their fingers. Reciting stories about the benevolent rulers, or the mighty gods. These stories comprised the puppeteer's portfolio until recently, now they have opted for stories that are more attractive to the audience such as those with snake charmers and dancing women.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

RESEARCH STATEMENT

To study the evolution and changes in the art form of Kathputli and analyse the socioeconomic implications the art form has on the communities involved with it in Jaipur.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

- To understand how the art form has evolved over the years and to form a comparison between the traditional and modern outlook on the art form.
- To elaborate the process of making the Kathputlis and the tools/techniques used to make these puppets come to life.
- To analyse the perceptions on the future of the art form and see where it is heading.
- To understand the livelihood of the people involved with the art form and gauge their perspectives on the art form with the help of interviews and observation.
- To inquire about the demand for Kathputlis in Jaipur today and find out the perspective of sellers in the field.
- To study the social understanding of the art form in Jaipur - by analysing how aware people from different backgrounds and age groups are about the art form today; through interviews and interactions with the local.

PRE-RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

After the literature review, numerous articles were found talking about the art form diminishing at a rapid pace. Therefore, it was hypothesized that the number of people practicing the art form today would be limited; ergo there wouldn't be many performances in the city. Due to this reason, we assumed that the local sellers as well as the mass sellers would face certain implications. Another assumption made was that the artisans practicing the art form today would have a variety of insights on the history of the art form, as their ancestors have been a part of it for centuries. It was also assumed that the equation between stakeholders involved was a part of an ongoing cycle, and such implications would break the flow of this cycle.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitations of the research were:

- As assumed beforehand due to the travel restrictions, it proved to be difficult to extract the precise information the research required, from the puppeteers due to unavailability of large amount of data.
- There are multiple cities and towns in Rajasthan that have a rich heritage connected to the art form of Kathputli, but due to the nature of the research, and time constraints we were only able to research about artisans of Jaipur.
- The reduced possibility of getting multiple perspectives from the communities involved such as local market sellers, audiences, NGOs etc.

RATIONALE

The pink city of Jaipur once nestled between four arches, has now expanded beyond. But even after coming so far, the city has not given up on its rich history and art forms from 8 centuries ago. One such art form that represents their entire state is: Kathputli. What fascinated us about the art form is its symbolism of Rajasthani people, heritage and culture. Even after all these years, they proudly narrate the stories of their kings and warriors, keeping their history alive. Our group consists of people from different parts of India, and who have all heard about the art form, but realization dawned, that not many knew about it in depth. The Kathputlis were used in movies, advertisements, books and many other platforms. Then why is this art form considered to be diminishing? What goes on behind the curtains of the stage? How are these puppets made and what is the process of putting on a show? We were intrigued by these questions. And a majority of these answers rest within a selected community called that Bhats. We undertook this research to know more about Kathputlis and the Bhats who made these Kathputlis. Through our research, we aim to generate substantial information about the art form and bring it to a public forum. Our journey began with our curiosity about an art-form we knew about, but simultaneously didn't really know about and we wish it ends with us understanding the intrinsic nature of Kathputlis and its people.



LITERATURE REVIEW

HISTORY

Skimming through the pages of history, a thread of information about the origin and the socio-economic status of these puppeteers can be traced. Marwar, rich in artistic traditions and narrative compositions is an abode to a mélange of semi-nomadic groups called Nat (now called Bhat). Nat, as the name suggests, means „dancers“(Sondgrass, 2004)The western region of Rajasthan is an abode to the performing communities whose prowess lies in the art of puppetry, music, poetry, comedy, snake-charming, mimicry, etc. These communities are composed of professional storytellers, skilled poets, and singers for centuries. The Nat claim to have descended from Brahmins who used to compose Sanskrit, songs of praise” for kings and maintain royal genealogies by scribing them in temples, books, manuscripts, etc. (Sondgrass, 2004).

The audience of the Nat performers has been forever changing throughout time. The art form that was once performed to entertain the royals then went on to perform for a group of leather workers called the Bhambis, who were a part of a backward caste. It was when the Bhambiswere forced to quit working in the leather industry, that the Nat gave themselves a name of higher status called „Bhat” (Sondgrass, 2004). The now termed „Bhat” community, who were earlier limited to dance and acrobatics, then took up puppetry. This can be identified as a milestone in the history of the Bhat community (Sondgrass, 2004). With further analysis on the topic, it was seen that their choice of audience members has led to a decline in their position on the pyramid of hierarchy in the caste system. Moreover, some claim that puppetry entered their community in the twentieth century, whereas contradictory sources say that the 11 art form and the community have been interlinked for thousands of years (Kathputli Or Indian Puppets From Rajasthan, 2018) (Sondgrass, 2004). Prior to India”s independence, Kathputli performances took place before the royal families of various Indian states (Sondgrass, 2004). However, after independence, the popularity of the art form gained elevation, leading to diversification in their clientele; Indian metropolitan cities, wealthy Rajasthani merchants, military officials, etc. (Sondgrass, 2004). With the evolution in the modern means of entertainment, its demand had declined. The puppeteers are striving to keep the art form alive but the community”s approach to sustaining the art form and themselves is not elaborated upon, in the various websites and journals available. Adding on, there is a lack of information on the promotional techniques used by the Bhats and the use of technology for the sustenance of the art form. Through the survey of available research, it is clear that the current state of the art form and the process of its evolution is an unexplored area of research.

ROLES TAKEN UP

Secondary sources claim that the industry revolves around the specific role and responsibilities performed up by the individuals who are involved with it. Men and women take up roles that complement one another. Customarily men are in charge of executing the more tedious tasks such as, acquiring the resources, as well as carving the wood and giving the puppets an identity. More often than less, men are the ones to perform. While many women have taken up roles as housekeepers, there are many who concurrently work behind the curtains (Chandola, 2019). They stitch the clothes which are worn by the dolls and paint the Kathputlis in vibrant hues. The work doesn't end here for them, they also sing ballads. The women juggle more than one duty, they are designated to working in their homes, taking care of their children and supporting their husbands, who perform and sell the puppets. It can be assumed that the designation of the women lies in areas that are more artistic and intrinsic in nature. The women work in the sanctity of their own four walls and are bound by the precedents of society, leaving men to take up the more glorifying roles, such as performing

LIVELIHOODS

An art form that was once of great importance is now enduring a crisis; its artisans are struggling to earn a decent living. This struggle can be reflected in their homes and living conditions. Kathputli Nagar, a domicile for these artists, is an area of 789 meters. Narrow alleys, cramped houses, and sewage flowing through the streets are a few of the characteristics used to describe this locality. The houses themselves are constructed with short and common walls. The sanitation and hygiene conditions are deplorable. Rather there is no regard towards sanitation, so much so that its dwellers defecate in open fields.

Many of the NGOs which were looked into, focus on the empowerment of women and the upliftment of the community but don't focus on the bigger picture. There are NGOs that are working towards empowering the women of Kathputli Nagar. One such organization is Saarthak, which has recently begun working on improving their living conditions (Saarthak, 2020). While there are organizations like Saarthak that help these artists, there is a lack of secondary information on the effectiveness of these NGO's and whether they are sustainable in the long run.

TURNING TIDES

The artists accused the digital age to be held responsible for the crisis the industry is enduring. They believe that modernization and the advent of film and TV have caused a drastic effect on the art forms sustenance (Chandola, 2019). It has been brought to their knowledge that the current generation is a techno-dependent one and that they would rather spend time indulging their phones than allowing themselves to experience an age-old art form. These are the claims of the puppeteers, who observe the audience members, but what about the perspective of the audience members themselves? The perspective of the audience members must be explored in terms of what attracts/repels them towards the art form. This perspective can be used to study the reasons behind the decline in demand for the art form. This shift in demand has led to the artists earning less than what they previously were. Ergo resulting in a lower standard of living. The meagre income earned by the artisans presents them with no alternative, but to live in substandard conditions. The inhabitants of Kathputli Nagar are well acquainted with the fact that in order to obtain a higher standard of living they must venture out and take up alternative jobs, in fields such as shop keeping, vegetable vending, etc. henceforth they are keen on barring their children from working in this industry and are adamant about educating their children by sending them to schools and encouraging them to get better jobs. While some believe that, there are others who want this tradition to be continued for ages to come and are keen on teaching this knack of fingers to their children as well. In terms of livelihood, it can be comprehended that these Kathputli Nagar dwellers are trying to keep this art from afloat not only for the means of their survival but also because this form of puppetry brings an eminent cultural value to the state itself (Unfold Craft Official, 2018).

SALES

While a large segment of the Kathputli industry relies on performing there is another stratum that relies on the selling of these puppets for income. The puppets are sold in the form of home decor, key chains, etc. Within these shops, the puppets can be spotted hanging on the doors, walls, and from the windows. The dolls are not the only trinkets sold, the puppeteers also make colorful chains of hanging birds, camels and other animals famous in the region.

These bits and baubles are made of the same raw materials; stuffing used to make the puppets and are reinforced with metal threads (Dangoria, 2019). The puppeteers finesse from the assorted convictions of their customers. The bird hangings are presumed to bring positive energy to a house. Apart from the lucrative puppets and bird hangings, they also make stuffed toys and dolls as decorations. All of the trinkets sold in the shops are patiently crafted by hand, with each piece being individually checked. The dolls are created to bring out the colorful elements of nature and the grandeur of Rajasthan .

Most of the literature that discusses the different perspectives of the people only enumerates the puppeteer's opinions. The seller's perspective on Kathputlis, how the merchandising has evolved over the years and the use of online platforms has not been specified.





KAASHTH KATHA STORY THOUGH WOODS

By delving into the process of making Kathputlis from start to finish, this section will enumerate the initial stages of procuring the raw materials and carving the wood, to the final stage of tying the strings to the newly assembled puppets

TYPES OF PUPPETS

The process of making the Kathputli varies with the type. Broadly speaking, there are two types: the ones used for performing and the ones used for commercial purposes. The ones made for commercial purposes are comparatively much simpler and easier to make, taking roughly two days to make a pair. However, the artisans at the Puppet House make puppets by the hours and can make up to four to five pairs of 22 Kathputlis in a day. On the other hand, it takes twenty days to make a pair used for performing. This is because each part of the doll is made with precision and intricate details. The Kathputlis used for performing are much more colorfully painted having brighter colors with detailed materials. The reason as to why it takes longer to make the ones used in performing is that almost every part of the puppets body has to be made separately and then attached, with the help of keel. This is done for the swift movement of the puppets' joints, which is required for dancing and performing. There is also a difference in the materials used for selling and performing. For instance, the threads used in blankets and pillows are the ones used in the making of commercial Kathputlis. Whereas suththi ka dhaaga, a strong, silky black thread, used in the stitching of leather shoes is used to stitch the Kathputlis made for performing.

In order for the puppets to dance, small holes must be drilled in, and strings must then be looped through the holes. The selling puppets have no more than three holes to which the threads are attached, whereas several holes are needed for the performance ones. Strings are attached to almost every joint of the dancing Kathputli. There could be as many as 30-40 strings attached to the puppets. The string material used is the same as the one used when stitching the Kathputlis for performing. The variation of Kathputlis being manufactured has diversified a lot over time. Traditionally the Kathputlis were male and female dolls. In early times these dolls were available in much simpler garb, only cloth, now there are different designs, shapes, and even different costumes. However, such customized dolls are rare in the market today, as they don't sell regularly, and are very exclusive. The pricing of the customized pieces depends on the size, the kind of base material used and the kind of customizations the client wants. There is a very limited number of clientele for these kinds of Kathputlis.

TOOLS AND RAW MATERIALS

Tools: Tools used in making of puppets are:

- Basola (Hammer): Hammers of different types are used at different stages of the making process. Big head hammers are used while carving the face and small head hammers are used for nailing.
- Chorsi (Chisel): Chisels of different shapes and sizes are used. Flat and big chisels are used for basic carving of the wood. Flat and small chisel are used to carve out the intricate portions like eyes, nose, ears etc. Round headed chisels are used for further intricate carving.
- Sui (Needle): For stitching women need needle. Needles ranging from small (1 inch) to big (4 inch) are used according to the requirement.
- Sewing Machine: For better finish and faster work performance artisans are now using hand operated sewing machines.
- Scissor: For cutting clothes, for making strings etc. artisans use scissors.
- Files: Small wooden files are used for finishing the face.
- Aari (Hand Saw): Small hand saw is used for cutting wood.
- Koochi (Brush): Applying basic coat on the puppet women in the family mainly use koochi. These are made out of palm leaves.
- Paint Brush: Eyes, mouth and other fine detailing are done by paint brush. These brushes are bought from the stationary shops.
- Whet Stone: This is used for sharpening the tools.



Puppet making involves several kinds of material which together make beautiful lively puppet. Following are the raw materials used to make these puppets:

- Wood: Wood is used to make the face and the upper body of the puppet and therefore it is the most basic raw material in the process of puppet making. Artisans use seasoned Aardu wood or mango wood. Aardu wood is soft, light and low cost which makes it more preferred over mango wood. The wood is brought from the local market at a rate of Rs. 500- Rs. 600/ Quintal. By using cutting machine, the big logs are cut into small pieces of 7–8-inch length.
- Decorative Clothes: Artisans make two types of puppets- one is for selling and one which is used for performances. The puppets made for performance are decorated with highly ornamented new cloth. These cloths are brought from katla (place where cloths are sold).
- Old Cloths: Puppets which are made for selling are adorned with used and old cloths like sarees, and other materials. These cut pieces are bought from the tailors.
- Gotta
- Paint: The face of the puppets is painted with synthetic colours. Artisans use paints to paint the face. Main colours used in painting are White (for base of the face and eyes), Red (lips and Bindi for women) and Black (for eyebrows, hair and eyes)
- Jewellery: Small jewelleries are used to decorate the puppets. These jewelleries are made using beads, chains and different small shining bright items. The women of the house specially make these jewelleries according to the need.
- Chaan (Waste rags): These are brown coloured waste rags which are used to fill the puppets. They are brought from the rug factories at a rate of Rs. 10- Rs. 20/Sack.
- Nails: Most of the jewellery, cloth, strings etc. are fixed to the puppet with the help of nails. Small nails with broad heads are used which are brought from the local hardware shop.
- Thread: Strong threads are used to stitch the cloths of the puppets and also to make the strings.
- Waste Cotton: Cotton is used as fillers.
- Regmaal (Sand paper): Sand paper is used to smooth/polish the surface of the face. Generally, 60 and 100 number Regmaal is used to finish the surface.



PROCESS

The process of making puppet is very intricate and involves a lot of patience. The process is conducted by both men and women. In Jaipur the puppets made are of small size; with wooden heads, decorated with cloths and stuffed with chaan or cotton.

The making process can be categories into following steps:

- Making of the face
- Finishing
- Coloring
- Stitching
- Decoration
- Attaching of strings
- Performance

Making of the Face:

The puppet making process starts with the making of the face. Different characters have different facial structure and expression and are carved accordingly. This process is mainly done by the men and is called Chilaai. Craftsman, with the help of chisel and hammer painstakingly carve the face. The whole process takes around 3-4 hrs. Generally there is no difference in the face of the male and that of the female puppets. The puppets have no wooden hands and legs and these are made in cloth

Finishing:

Once the face is made it is kept for drying, thereafter it is rubbed with the help of sandpaper and a then a coat of Plaster of Paris mixed with turpentine oil is applied on the surface of the face to fill the small holes on wood. Once it is dried it is again rubbed with sandpaper to remove the extra material and then touch wood is applied as the basic paint with the help of koochi and the face is kept for drying.

Coloring:

The dried face is finally coated with a pale white color matching to the skin color. The eyes are painted white, lips in red color and puppets depicting females are painted with red bindi on the forehead.

Stitching:

The decoration starts with preparing the cloths. These are hand stitched and stuffed with old cloths and rags. This is done mainly by the women. Puppets made for performances are decorated with great zeal. Women stitch cloths according to the nature of the characters. The one made for selling are decorated with cut pieces from sarees. Male and females are dressed with dhoti and lenhga respectively made out of similar sarees.

Decoration:

Heavy embellishment is done on the puppets which are meant for performance. They are decorated with handmade jewelry, instruments etc. to make them appear lively. These puppets are mainly sold as souvenirs and for this reason the female puppets have traditional gorla on their foreheads while the males have beens (Snake Charmers Flute) which depict the culture of Rajasthan.

Attaching of the Strings:

Since these are the string puppets; therefore attaching strings become the most important element of the puppets. Artisans use these strings to manipulate the puppets during performances. Proper location of the string is necessary for better maneuvering of the puppet's actions. Strings are mainly attached with neck, shoulders, hands, legs and head of the puppet. These strings are either looped with the fingers of the puppeteer or to a small wooden strip which is operated by the lead puppeteer. The string attached to the head also connects to the back. These strings are strong cotton threads which can bear the load of the puppets. Finally the highly decorative and beautiful puppets are ready to perform on different traditional and contemporary themes.

CONTRIBUTION IN MAKING PROCESS

The art of making the Kathputlis is passed on from generation to generation within the Bhat community. The puppeteers have been assisting their families in the making process since their childhood. Each family member has a vital role in the process; the Kathputlis are a collective effort of the entire family.

The men are usually the ones that acquire the raw materials required. The raw materials include wood, cloth, paints, keel (nails), basoli, genthi, chorsi, etc. A few of the raw materials are recycled from old items, such as old sarees, dhotis, etc. The old performances Kathputlis are also reused, in parts or as a whole. Apart from acquiring the raw materials, men also carve the wood; the head and facial features of the Kathputli. The women paint the dolls, stitch their clothes and do the „shringaar“ i.e., decorate the doll just the way people dress a bride. But this task isn't restricted to women, sometimes the men help. Many puppeteers said that they don't force their children to help them with the making, that the children do it of their own free will and self-interest.

Adding on, our secondary sources said that men and women have very distinct and stringent roles, but the evidence found on field is contradictory to this claim. The stitching and painting work is also done by the men for Kathputlis and women help with the carving process as well.







DRESSING

Whenever we think of Rajasthan, yellow sand, intricate architecture and colourful, vibrant attires come to our minds. Colourful clothing, heavy ornaments and designer dresses aren't just their fancy, but it is what defines their identity, their status- social and economic, their religion and their region. Everything they put on, from hair to toe, has a deep significance. Here's a glimpse of the variety of costumes used in the craft through the good ol' Instagram outfit challenge!

Male dressing in Kathputli : They are adorned with traditional costumes and attractive jewelry. The Kathputlis are dressed just to resemble the Rajasthan men. Pagri is one of the most important parts of men's attire in Rajasthan. The mustache is their pride, and the Kathputlis wear it as a symbol. The upper garment is called as Angrakha which means protecting the body, Angrakha is made of cotton. Dhotis or Pyjamas are used to cover the lower portion of the body. Mojaris or Jootis are made of colorful cloth and stuffed with cotton and embellished with embroidery on velvet or brocade.

Female dressing in Kathputli: Ghaghara & Choli, the traditional attire of Rajasthani women is what the female Kathputlis are adorned with, along with traditional jewelry made out of shiny cloth and heavy eye details. It is believed that three dots on the face protect from evil spirits or evil eyes by attracting attention to the most robust part of the face like chin or cheek etc. They are made using black mascara also. It also enhances beauty of a woman. "Odhni" is worn over the blouse, with one end tucked into the skirt and the other end on the head or the shoulders. The female Kathputlis perfectly signify the beauty and intricacy of female Rajasthani dressing.



THE ACT: BEHIND THE CURTAINS

As mentioned in the literature review the setting of the stage itself is a major aspect of the performance. The entire stage is set up in a way that emphasizes the Kathputlis and creates an illusion that they are moving and talking by themselves. A component usually overseen by many about the stage itself is its compactable and travel friendly nature, as the puppeteers travel across Rajasthan and other constituencies of India.

A typical Kathputli show is performed by the entire family, where each member has a designated role. The head of the family (oldest male) sits next to the stage with his instrument, the dholak and narrates the story. The other men perform behind the stage and talk in the „puppet language“, which was invented to portray the puppets as having their language, the women in the family translate this „puppet language“ to the audience

The secondary sources claim that women have no involvement in the performance aspect, but what we found on field contradicts this, it was said that women play a vital role in the making and performance. This was observed during the performances attended as well. The whole process of a puppet show gives a significant role to each family member. The puppeteers say that it helps them stay connected to their roots and strengthens their family bond.

The creative process behind Kathputli covers a wide range of stories told in the most colorful manner. The artisans create songs based on scripts. Through the movements and demonstration, the Kathputlis tell a meaningful stories and these movements play a huge role in it. As with any stage performer, the puppet should generally face the audience; but may turn to one side or the other. There are times when a puppet does turn its back to an audience just like an actor. Puppets generally should look out towards an audience and not up at the ceiling unless they wish an audience to follow their line of vision. Generally a hand or glove puppet should talk a lot.

Finger movements in Kathputli: One of the most important techniques in puppetry is continuous motion. Motion shifts from one portion of the puppet to another, so that one moment the puppet is moving its head and the next moment shifting its torso or repositioning an arm. The puppet may shift from side to side, look around, lean or straighten, fidget (with part of the stage, its own clothing or hair, or any available object), cross or uncross its arms, sigh, tilt its head, or make any number of other small motions, in order to continue to appear lifelike.

STORIES AND CHARACTERS

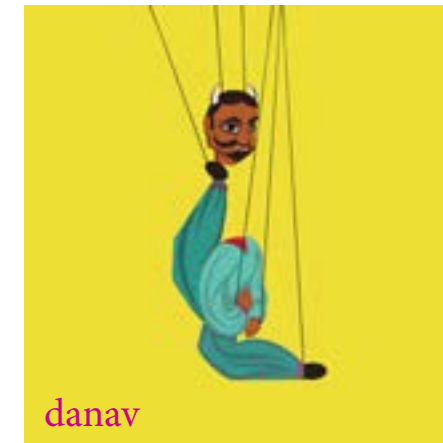
It is hard to enter the pink city and leave without having heard of the great and valiant leader, Maharana Pratap Singh of Udaipur. He is considered as one of the greatest leaders born of Rajasthan and the tales of his bravery, determination and courage resound throughout the lands. The stories of his staunch warrior spirit and leadership are etched in golden ink throughout Rajput history. The natives of Rajasthan still look at him with great respect and admiration, and honor him by telling tales of his bravery through various mediums. The reason for this admiration and unfaltering loyalty that exists till date is given in the stories recited by the puppeteers. Maharana Pratap Singh was the only Rajput ruler to have defied the Mughal emperor's army, to protect his kingdom of Mewar and its people. Despite the unfathomable odds piled up against him, he refused to surrender to the Mughal emperor and waged a full-blown war against him. Even though he lost the war, the Mughal emperor and his council were unable to outwit the Maharana and imprison him. The hardships that he and his family had to endure through these times were unbelievable, but owing to their determination and strong will, they survived the war against the Mughals. The Kathputli performances depict the battle scene between Maharana Pratap Singh and the then general of the Mughal Army, Raja Man Singh. They depict how the Maharana comes out victorious and then they speak of his glory. This very story is a prominent one and is often noted in the local puppet shows that are scattered at different venues throughout the city.

This story is also very significant for the artform because a majority of the performers weave their stories around the tales of Maharana Pratap. The story is a must have in the portfolio of every puppeteer and each one has their own variation.

However, the themes of the shows also include: romance, drama, comedy, etc. A few shows are known for their unique characters instead of the storyline itself. These characters are: the Magician who can detach his head from the rest of his body, Anarkali, the snake charmer, Michael Jackson from pop culture who can also do his signature "moon walk" on the stage, and many more.

A puppet is designed and decorated according to the stories they are being used in. The sellers have also started selling Kathputlis of certain characters, as it adds an extra touch to the puppet and is connected to the stories recited in the shows. A lot of puppeteers we spoke to said that the story of a performance is the pinnacle of the performance itself along with the beautiful puppets.

People from the older age group i.e., 35 years+, knew more about the stories narrated in different performances and preferred stories about various historical figures. Whereas the sample that belonged to the younger age groups either didn't have a lot of knowledge about the stories and themes of Kathputli shows or were bored with the old stories and lacked awareness of the art form. The young locals just watched the shows when they are put up at weddings or other events.



danav



sapera



maharani



anarkali



yodhya



daku

MUSIC AND INSTRUMENTS

A performance involves a range of different instruments like a harmonium, dholak, ghungroo (small bells attached to a string), etc. During sufi performances, a tabla is used along with a harmonium.

Apart from the above instruments, it was observed that the puppeteers had made an instrument of their own called boli, to accompany in their performance. This is used for the “puppet language”. It is a small instrument, played using the mouth by blowing air into it. To make this instrument, a bamboo stick is cut into two, and both the ends are tied using a wire made from a particular orange rubber. There is a small passage in the middle, through which the air passes, creating a whistle-like sound as we breathe. This instrument is used as an accompaniment in several performances.

In modern-day performances, background songs are used to enhance the performances. Songs like kalio kudd padiyo mela ma, cycle puncture kar gayo are famous Rajasthani songs used in many Kathputli performances. Bollywood songs or foreign language songs are also played. This helps the puppeteers to attract a younger audience and tourists from around the world.



SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis (or SWOT matrix) is a strategic planning technique used to help a person or organisation identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to business competition or project planning.

STRENGTHS

- 1. Excellent reputation.
- 2. Loyal customers.
- 3. 1500-year-old rich history.
- 4. Story depth and portrayal using eye catching doll costumes.

WEAKNESSES

- 1. Lack of awareness among people.
- 2. Absence of strong sale market expertise.
- 3. Lack of presence in market space.
- 4. Decline in the number of kathputli experts.

OPPURTUNITIES

- 1. Potential diversities in stories.
- 2. Using social media platform to promote.
- 3. Awareness of sensitive topics through stories and skits.
- 4. Collaborating craft with different Indian heritage companies.

THREATS

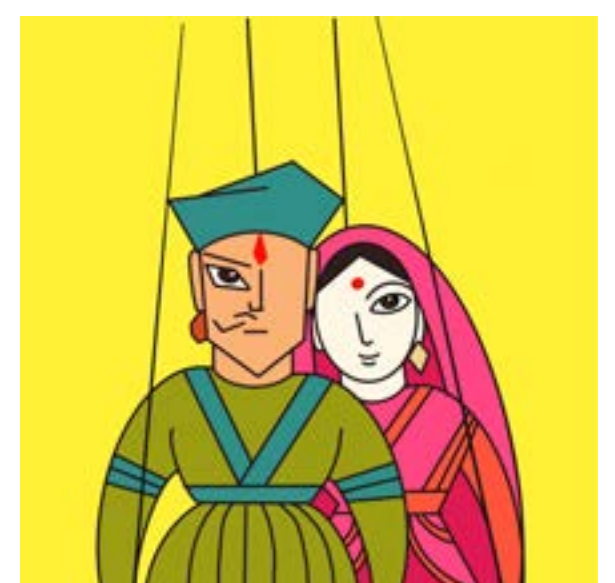
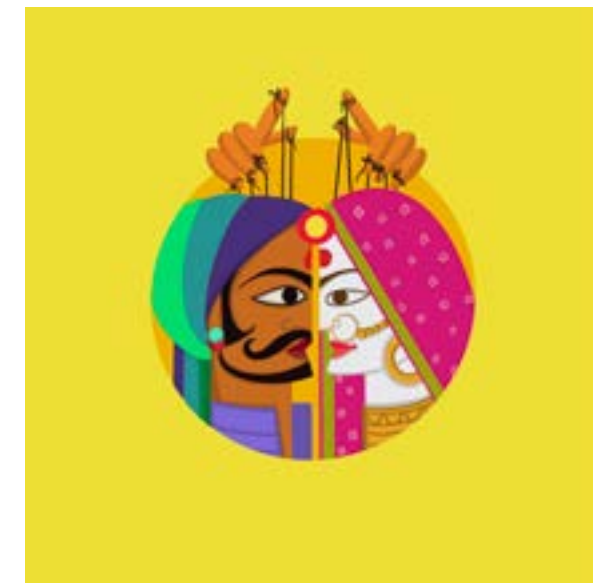
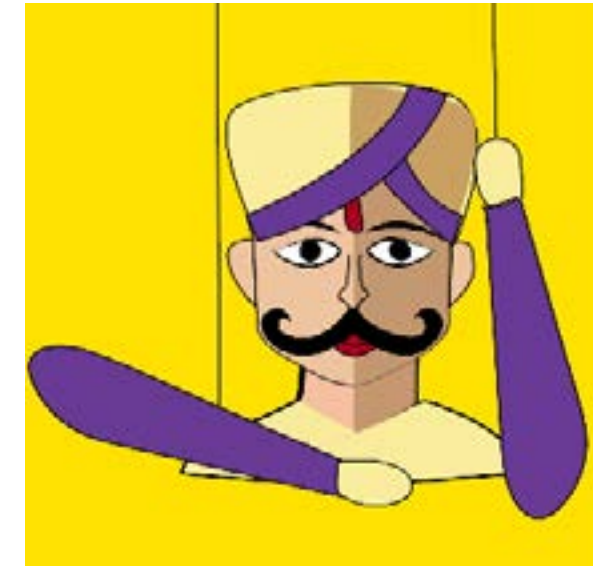
- 1. Rapid growth in digital media.
- 2. Increase in plastic replica products.
- 3. Giant developer companies taking away artisan Performa ground.
- 4. No proper livelihood or source of income.



SOLUTIONS

LOGO IDEATION

For the ideation of logo everyone pitched in their effort from suggestions of the artisans. From ideating of the words to the sketches initially prepared from the 'khaka' of the artisans, finally the two most important characters of any kathputli show; a male and a female kathputli is sketched into the logo naming Hansu and Sunaina as the brand ambassdor of our Project Kaashth Katha.



INTRODUCTION TO ADVERTISING MODEL

Social network advertising, also social media targeting, is a group of terms that are used to describe forms of online advertising that focus on social networking services. One of the major benefits of this type of advertising is that advertisers can take advantage of the users' demographic information and target their ads appropriately.

Social media targeting combines current targeting options such as geotargeting, behavioral targeting, socio-psychographic targeting, etc., to make detailed target group identification possible. With social media targeting, advertisements are distributed to users based on information gathered from target group profiles.

Social media platforms we are using :

- Instagram
- Facebook

WHY SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING?

Increased Brand Awareness

Social media is one of the most cost-efficient digital marketing methods used to syndicate content and increase your business' visibility. Implementing a social media strategy will greatly increase the brand recognition since we will be engaging with a broad audience of consumers.

Visuals

We can use Instagram to present a series of photos or graphics in a visually appealing manner. Instagram allows us to practice digital storytelling in ways that other social media platforms may fall short. Students can create class-specific Instagram accounts and may delete them after the course is over if they so choose.

Community

Social media is all about building a community to instill faith in the brand. To create awareness about the craft, we believe adding value to people in form of the latest social media trends and information can make people interested in the craft. We will be presenting information and facts related to the craft in context of relevant trends and information.

Wide reach

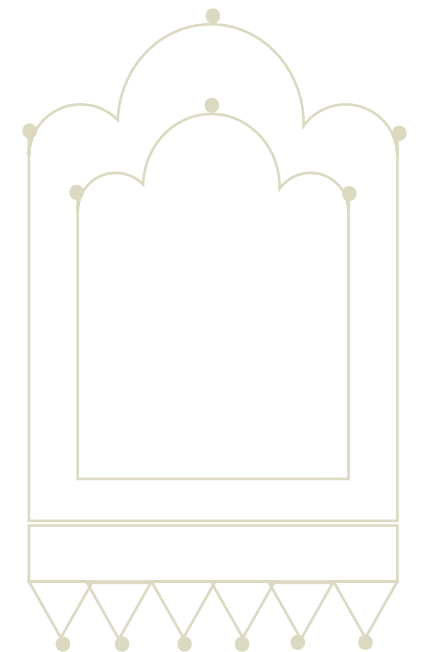
The social media platforms will allow us to reach a wide audience from all across the world. It will help us reach anyone and everyone who may be interested in the craft and could help us patronize it further.

ABOUT OUR CAMPAIGN

Kaashth Katha - Our social media campaign derives its name from the Hindi word Kaashth, meaning wood and Katha meaning story. Kathputli puppets are made about of wood, and tell a story. Our campaign is a story of the craft keeping in mind is to use the latest social media trends to make the campaign more relatable to the younger generation, most in touch with social media but least in touch with crafts in order to create an awareness about the craft that has been in the arena for more than a millenia and due to new medium these are getting lost with time.

Apart from this we will be creating a live show with the artisans which will enhance their reach to newer generations.

We be using all relevant and latest features and formats on our posts to ensure maximum engagement on the pages. The short formats include short quizzes, social media trends, polls and animations.





CONCLUSION

EPILOGUE

Kaashth Katha - Our social media campaign under the leadership of faculties and under the initiative of Craft cluster has fully endorsed and worked upon the major setbacks that has been undermined by many in the sector and helped the artisans in growing their craft of kathputli on a newer platform and growing on a new reach of people who are keen not only people from India but also people from abroad.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Research : Reza Zaidi, Parul Aggarwal

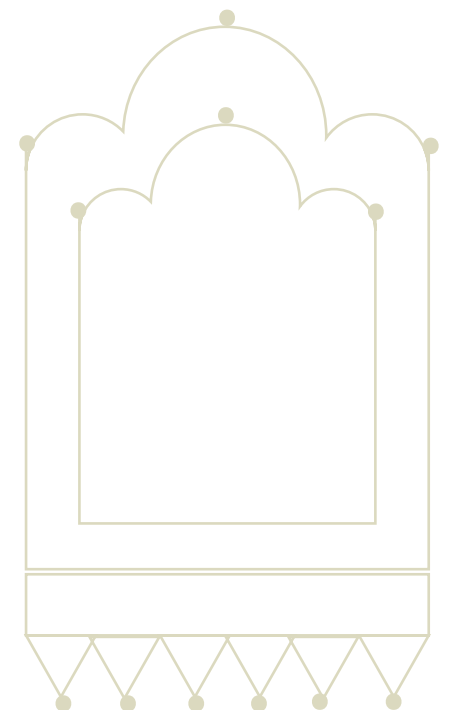
Research Document : Shashank Gautam, Medha Ghosh
Adya Maggo

Illustrations : Medha Ghosh

Animations : Divya Aggarwal

Instagram Content : Adya Maggo, Shashank Gautam

Website : Reza zaidi, Parul Aggarwal



REFERENCES

<https://rajasthan.gov.in/AboutRajasthan/Pages/default.aspx>
<https://www.britannica.com/place/Rajasthan/History>
<https://www.travelogyindia.com/rajasthan/brief-about-rajasthan.html>
<https://www.travelogyindia.com/rajasthan/weather-in-rajasthan.html>
<https://www.rajras.in/rajasthan/culture/>
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathputli_\(puppetry\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathputli_(puppetry))
<https://gaatha.org/Craft-of-India/jaipur-kathputli-making-craft/>
<https://priorworld.com/editorial/the-puppets-of-rajasthan/>
<https://wepa.unima.org/en/kathputli-ka-khel/>
<https://www.samedaytours.in/blog/tradition-of-kathputli/>
<http://www.schoolchalao.com/basic-education/show-results/indian-folk-dance/kathputli-dance-rajasthan>
<https://www.livehistoryindia.com/story/forgotten-treasures/the-unique-craft-of-rajasthans-puppeteers/>
<https://irakoi.com/kathputli-or-puppets/>
<https://dsource.in/sites/default/files/resource/kathputli/downloads/file/kathputli.pdf>
Auterio, S. (2018). An Introduction to Indian Puppetry. Sahapedia. Retrieved from <https://www.sahapedia.org/introduction-indian-puppetry>
Chandola, M. (2019). The lost art of kathputli. The Hindu Business Line. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/specials/india-interior/the-lost-art-of-kathputli/article26749882.ece>
Dangoria, R. Kathputli Craft of Jaipur An Approach For Livelihood And Entrepreneurship. Think India Journal, 22(15).
<http://dsource.in/sites/default/files/resource/kathputli/downloads/file/kathputli.pdf>
Dangoria, R. (2019). Kathputli craft of Jaipur An approach for livelihood and entrepreneurship. Think India Journal, 22(15), p.611. Retrieved from <https://journals.eduindex.org/index.php/think-india/article/view/13302/8557>
Gründ, F., Bhatt, P. (2012). Kathputli ka Khel (Bhakay-Kaul, S.). World Encyclopedia of Puppetry Arts. Retrieved from <https://wepa.unima.org/en/kathputli-ka-khel/>
Kathputli Or Indian Puppets From Rajasthan. (2018). Irakoi. Retrieved from <http://irakoi.com/kathputli-or-puppets/>

Kathputli- The Art of Telling Stories Through Puppets. (n.d.). InRootz. Retrieved from <https://www.inrootz.in/mythology-articles-stories/ar307/kathputli-the-art-of-telling-stories-through-puppets>
Kathputli. (n.d.). Government of Rajasthan. Retrieved from <http://www.industries.rajasthan.gov.in/content/industries/handmadeinrajasthandepartment/artandcraft/woodandsandlewoodwork/kathputli.html#>
Kathputli. (n.d.). Government of Rajasthan. Retrieved from <http://www.industries.rajasthan.gov.in/content/industries/handmadeinrajasthandepartment/artandcraft/woodandsandlewoodwork/kathputli.html#>

