Decoding Craft Expressions: Wood Carvings of Traditional Houses of Gujarat

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The French School of Far East
Gujarat and Sindh Studies
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Jay Thakkar
Assistant Professor, CEPT University
Research Head, DICRC, India
Author of Naqsh & Matra
introduction
Introduction

Academics

Associate Professor
Faculty of Design
CEPT University
India

Area of Teaching
Interior Design Studio, Graphic Design, Wood workshop, Craft & Technology, Craft Traditions

Research

Research Head
Design Innovation & Craft Resource Centre (DICRC)
SID Research Cell, India

Author of Books
Matra (2008)
Naqsh (2004)

Professional

Honorary Secretary
Institute of Indian Interior Designers (IIID) - Ahmedabad

Visual Communication Consultant
Introduction

Centre for Environmental Planning & Technology (CEPT) University
Ahmedabad, India

Faculty

Faculty of Architecture
Faculty of Public Policy & Planning
Faculty of Technology
Faculty of Design
Faculty of Arts & Humanities
Faculty of Geometrics
Faculty of Climate Change

Centre

Centre for Sustainable Environment & Energy (CSEE)
Design Innovation & Craft Resource Centre (DICRC)
Centre for Continuing Education
Centre for Rural Development
Centre for Infrastructure
Center for Urban Transport
Centre for Research, Development & Consultancy

Decoding Craft Expressions: Wood Carvings of Traditional Houses of Gujarat
Design Innovation & Craft Resource Centre (DICRC)

Vision

To document, study, analyse, research and generate resource related to **Space Making Crafts** (SMC) of the vernacular and traditional buildings of India

Undertake research projects addressing social concerns as well as professional and academic interests related to the Space Making Crafts (SMC)

Establish a platform for research scholars to disseminate acquired knowledge

Create opportunities for public involvement (including craftspeople) towards issues of sustainable craft practices and traditional and vernacular built environments
Research

**Mātrā: Ways of Measuring Vernacular Built Forms of Himachal Pradesh**

Authors: Jay Thakkar & Skye Morrison

Published by SID Research Cell, School of Interior Design, CEPT University in August 08
ISBN – 819040968-9, Hardbound, 315 pages, 800 images (sketches, hand measure drawings, technical drawings, 3D CAD drawings, photographs)

**Naqsh: The Art of Wood Carving of Traditional Houses of Gujarat: Focus on Ornamentation**

Author: Jay Thakkar

Published by SID Research Cell, School of Interior Design, CEPT University in October 04
ISBN – 817525285-5, Hardbound, 240 pages, over 1000 images (B/W, colour, sketches)
The size of the house in different seasons.

Middle attic openings in the structural wall that assist in the seismic design.

The schematic of cuboid-module under each house represents the kath-khuni Kath-Khuni. These sketched figures are used to record the different configurations of balconies are highlighted. These are only some of many possible variations the villagers integrate balconies to the basic cuboid house form.

This is the critical part of the process because it is when the master artisan creates the story in images. The woodcarving tools include the aari (chisel) and plane. The metal would be nehan to heroic deeds to the delicate trail of leaves and spirals, these

The temple has stone carving with woodcarving motifs (see figure 233) and narrative folk woodcarving inside the temple. Guild system. In this medieval system there were master artisans in and exaggerating classical forms to suit their own desires. Family. Two factors are at play in these types of temple: The first factor is the size of the structure and the resources available to employ master artisans. Woodcarving is integrated into the construction of the building, and not added later (figure 71). This is in direct proportion to the size of the structure and the resources available to employ master artisans. Woodcarving is a form of folk art that

This is the auspicious rituals. Entrance door. Low relief imagery is similar to the woodcarving. Coins nailed on to the door frame her view of the mountains from outside the kitchen, the heart of the house.

There is a need for storage at different levels. are complemented by the storage spaces at this level. This is

Building up the thickness of the walls is important for the villagers because there is no infrastructure of indoor plumbing. The balcony is both a delight and curiosity.

The top roof of the Prashar Rishi temple is currently covered in fine slate tiles, while the top roof is a conical shape and covered with fine slate tiles, while the top roof is a conical shape and sharply pitched. Built around 1340, the Prashar Rishi temple is situated on the bank of the river Sutlej. This clearly demonstrates the need of the community to superimposed load on the foundation. Watch-holes were constructed in the foundation at each floor level for this. The temple is a three-storey pyramid. This clearly demonstrates the need of the community to superimposed load on the foundation. Watch-holes were constructed in the foundation at each floor level for this. The temple is a three-storey pyramid.
Decoding systems

Decoding a building
Decoding systems

Decoding a building

XYZ Axis System

X Axis

Y Axis

Z Axis

Sub Axis

Genetic Ideation

Surface

Volume

Composition

Intangibles

Perception + Memory

Gravity + Logic

Spatial + Intellect

Tangibles

Ornamentation

Material

Elements

Analysis Typology

Analysis of Expression

Analysis of Construction

Analysis of Articulation

Area of study

Space Making

Craft Expression

Traditional Building Practice

Traditional Spatial Configurations
Decoding Craft Expressions: Wood Carvings of Traditional Houses of Gujarat

XYZ-T Axis System = Operational Craft Matrix (OCM)

Process

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<th>Intangibles</th>
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<td>Contemporary application of temporary practice</td>
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Decoding systems

Decoding a building
Traditional houses of Gujarat

Typologies of traditional houses
Wooden houses
Decoding system - Craft Expressions
Wood Carvings of traditional houses
Typologies of traditional houses

- Vernacular Houses
  - Row House Type Wooden Houses
  - Individual House Type Wooden Houses
  - Row House Type Colonial Houses
  - Individual Bungalow Type Colonial Houses
Decoding Craft Expressions: Wood Carvings of Traditional Houses of Gujarat

Typologies of houses - Vernacular Houses

Gujarat

House, Banni, Kutch District
Source: Jay Thakkar

House, Savarkundla, Amreli District
Source: Sangeetha Priya

House, Ahwa, Dang District
Source: Gaurav Dinodia

House, Amreli, Amreli District
Source: Sangeetha Priya
Bhunga houses in Ludiya and Bunni, Kutch

Material: Mud and Grass

Gujarat

Typologies of houses - Row House Type Wooden Houses

Source: Jay Thakkar
Decoding Craft Expressions: Wood Carvings of Traditional Houses of Gujarat

Gujarat

Typologies of houses - Individual House Type Wooden Houses

House, Khambat, Anand District

Source: Jay Thakkar

Raj Mahel, Amreli

Source: Jay Thakkar
Kapadvanj houses, North Gujarat
Material: Brick masonry with wood

**Gujarat**

**Typologies of traditional houses**

Bohra houses in Sidhpur, North Gujarat

Material: Brick masonry with wood


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Jay Thakkar
Gujarat

Typologies of houses - Row House Type

Colonial Houses

Source: Mitraja Vyas
Source: Rishav Jain
Source: Rishav Jain
Source: Jay Thakkar

House, Khambat, Anand District
House, Nadiad, Kheda District
House, Kapadvanj, Kheda District
House, Nadiad, Kheda District

House, Kapadvanj

House, Kapadvanj, Kheda District

Source: Rishav Jain
Source: Rishav Jain
Source: Rishav Jain
Source: Rishav Jain

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Typologies of houses - Individual Bungalow Type Colonial Houses

Gujarat

Source: Sangeetha Priya

Source: Jay Thakkar

Source: Shri Soumaya

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Typologies of houses - Individual Bungalow Type Colonial Houses

Colonial houses, Ahmedabad, Central Gujarat
Material: Brick masonry with wood

Traditional Wooden Houses

Row House Type Wooden Houses
Gujarat

Traditional wooden houses
Traditional wooden houses
Gujarat

Traditional wooden houses

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Traditional wooden houses
Gujarat

Traditional wooden houses
Decoding Craft Expressions

Wood Carving Craft
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XYZ Axis System

Surface

Intangibles

Perception + Memory

Wood Carving Craft
Decoding Craft Expressions

Wood Carving Craft

XYZ Axis System

Tangibles

Ornamentation

Surface

X Axis

Y Axis

Facade, traditional house, Gujarat

Wood Carving Craft
Decoding Craft Expressions

Wood Carving Craft

XYZ Axis System

Analysis of Expressions

Issues

Material

Technique

Ornamentation type

Composition

Style

Value

Surface
Decoding Craft Expressions

Wood Carving Craft

Methods of recording
Photography
Field Drawings
Technical Drawings

Analysis of Expressions

XYZ Axis System

Surface

X Axis

Y Axis

Study of ornamentation details, Gujarat
Study of brackets, Gujarat
Decoding Craft Expressions

Wood Carving Craft

**Material**

**Wood**

- Sag (Teak)
- Sisam (Black Wood)
- Chandan (Sandalwood)
- Haldarvo
- Sevan (White Teak)
- Limbada (Neem)
- Baval (Babul)
Decoding Craft Expressions

Wood Carving Craft

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Wood Carving Craft

Technique

Carving

- Relief carving
- Undercutting
- Incised carving
- Sculpturesque carving
- Pierced carving
Decoding Craft Expressions

Wood Carving Craft

Ornamentation type

Finite Designs

Motifs

Figural Motifs
Natural Motifs
Geometric Motifs

Bands

Finite Bands
Infinite Bands

Patterns

Organic Patterns
Geometric Patterns

classical forms / forms
depicting narrative / popular
figural forms / folk forms /
animal forms

floral forms / palmettes forms

simple & complex
geometrical forms / objects
Finite Designs

Motifs when used singularly or in a cluster form in a simple or ornate manner, produces a design around which a boundary can be drawn and is finite in extent. Such bounded designs are known as ‘finite designs’
Decoding Craft Expressions

Wood Carving Craft

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Decoding Craft Expressions: Wood Carvings of Traditional Houses of Gujarat

Wood Carving Craft
Decoding Craft Expressions

Style

Time

Mid 16th to late 17th century
(from 275 to 425 years)

Late 17th to early 19th century
(from 150 to 275 years)

19th to early 20th century
(last 150 years)

Composite style
Eclectic style
Art deco
Mid 16th to late 17th century
(from 275 to 425 years)
Late 17\textsuperscript{th} to early 19\textsuperscript{th} century
(from 150 to 275 years)
19th to early 20th century
(last 150 years)
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Wood Carving Craft

Value

Placement

Structural Logic
Aesthetic Logic
Cultural Logic

Meaning

Ritualistic
Popular
Ornamental

Workmanship

Skill
Density
Material exploration
Decoding Craft Expressions

Placement

Structural Logic
Aesthetic Logic
Cultural Logic

Wood Carving Craft

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Decoding Craft Expressions

Wood Carving Craft

Meaning

Ritualistic
Popular
Ornamental
Decoding Craft Expressions: Wood Carvings of Traditional Houses of Gujarat

Wood Carving Craft

Workmanship

Skill
Density
Material exploration
Design Interventions
Current Scenario

Craftspeople

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Current Scenario

Working with Craftspeople

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Activities of DICRC for crafts related to traditional interior architecture

Space Making Craft (SMC) Workshops

**Wood Turned Lacquer Crafts of Dholka**
Craftspeople: 5, Students 5, Duration: 15 days, Output: 1 interactive cataloging partition

**Bamboo Crafts of Kotwalia Community, Dang**
Craftspeople: 25, Students 25: Duration: 15 days Output: 24 innovative products catering to urban, rural and high end market

Space Making Craft (SMC) Documentation

**Gujarat Traditional House Documentation**
Data collection and organization, Mapping data on google map.
Preliminary field visits to Sidhpur and Patan, Craft Manual explorations

Collaboration of DICRC with national and international organization/institute

National
- Indian Institute of Craft & Design, Jaipur
- Eklavya Foundation
- Tapini Bamboo Development Centres (TBDC)
- Rhizome Consortium

International
- T U Delft, The Netherlands
- University of Melbourne, Australia
Thank you

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