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Sculptural and Architectural Fusion of Temples in Art Works of Odishan Contemporary Artist Study With Aesthetical Viewpoint and Interpretat in the Way of an Art Historian. (A Specific Critical Analyzation on Alka Priyadarshinee a Women Artist)

Digambar Behera

ART CRITIC, ART HISTORIAN AND ART TEACHER, ODISHA ADARSHA VIDYALAYA, DONGRIGUDA, DABUGAM, NABRAWANGPUR

ABSTRACT: *An art historian would tell you that temples provide us with not just a place to worship the Divine, but also remarkable architectural and artistic contributions. The design of temples has been established according to the science of Vastu Shastra, which contains extensive wisdom and intelligence stemming from our ancestors and current culture. The architecture and sculpture located within temples are examples of the various cultural, historical and spiritual narratives in existence at the time that will aid the understanding of the artistic and academic achievements of that era. You may be surprised that I call the temple's creators "artists" as opposed to "artisans," but you should know that the individuals responsible for designing and constructing the temples infused their artworks with both an aesthetic vision and a compelling story. Academic definitions state that those who have mastered the principles of art and aesthetics are generically referred to as "artists." The temple creators were not simply talented tradesman; they were also educated laborers who adhered to the rules of Vastu Shastra, creating ageless masterpieces which will continue to delight.*

There has always been confusion regarding who was first in creating sculpture and painting and where these artworks originated from. In addition to that, these types of art raise questions about how art is made, who creates all of this artistic expression, why it's done in different ways and who has come up with the concept for planning the various forms of artwork. Understanding temple architecture and its relevance to religious practices also requires a consideration of some related questions and answers. Temples are where, in the ancient period, people could go for knowledge; and all of the educational aspects of this knowledge are now found on temple walls just like they were at that time. In terms of the temple architecture of Odisha, many different dynastic rulers built these monumental temples: Sailodbhava dynasty, Bhumankara dynasty, Soma Bansi dynasty, Ganga dynasty, Gajapati, Bhoi and many other smaller dynasties all played a role in building this great architectural heritage throughout Odisha. Artists and art connoisseurs provided the majority of what was needed to create all of the artwork and set a standard for future generations; and thus were the major contributors to creating the legacy of artists, builders and architects in temple architecture. This was made possible through the expertise of the vastukara who had vast amounts of knowledge in structural engineering (i.e. authentic knowledge of structural engineering) and who had a high level of knowledge of sculptural expressions. Using their expertise, patrons (or clients) were able to turn dream-like ideas into reality and etch their names into the history of time, yet, not one of these artists' or creators' names was inscribed anywhere.

Various scholars from various societies wrote down about how to construct temples and also the usefulness of these temple construction processes on the construction wall of the temple. All of this information is available today but nobody is interested to understand the above-mentioned topics. Today, people are influenced by the so-called Sannasi (an ascetic within Hinduism) and are attracted to superstitions and illusions by the so-called holy monks (sannasi) in social media. Our Hindu culture is incredibly weak towards its own religion, therefore many Sanskrit speaking people or "Katha bachak" are exploiting the Indian community through their supposed authority.

These people are able to convince others to give them large amounts of money and power, leading them to believe that they own the Indian community; it is unfortunate that our people have no interest in reading their holy book, the Veda, Purana, and Upanishads.

Before 273 BC Odisha did not exist as a historical record but when Ashoka came to power as emperor of the Mauryan Empire he made great contributions by having issued edicts and inscriptions throughout his rule. The Hati Gumpah and Jaugada inscriptions provide testimony to what Kalinga/Odisha was like prior to the Kalinga Wars between asoka and the king of kalinga at dhauli in 261 BC. Asoka was deeply affected by war and changed his name from Chandasoka, a name meaning 'cruel Asoka', to Dharmasoka after meeting a Buddhist monk named Upagupta. For centuries after this time the area known as Odisha has been ruled by many distinct governmental entities. In addition to the multiple changes in governance over this period of time, distinct regional landscapes have existed in Odisha as a result of natural occurrences, such as volcanos, flooding, landslides, etc... and artificially created environments that have occurred as a result of human intervention. I do not intend to write a history dissertation, but I wish to explore the evolution of art forms that were developed in conjunction with changes made within the original architectural structures built for religious purposes and how those architectural structures have inspired and continue to inspire artists in Odisha (including painters/sculptors) when creating works using other mediums such as photography or drawing. In this article I will provide a detailed and critical analysis for each of these works of art.

I. INTRODUCTION

Odisha has promoted socio-cultural development through intellectual vigor in all forms and in many areas so that Odisha will have its own distinct identity in all areas as an ongoing development through this path. Temples are incredibly significant to Odishans and they continue to practice the ancient Jaguar and the Jaguar philosophy. Lord Jagannath is referred to as 'Jagata' or 'Natha' which literally translates to having a father. The temple of Lord Jagannath was constructed at Puri, Odisha, by Chodagangadeva during the Ganga dynasty and was previously called 'Niladri' or 'Purushottam khetra'. The temple was constructed according to Kalingan Architecture (a sub-set of Nagara Architecture) style. Yes! I do remember the day when, while I was an art history teacher at Kalinga College of Art and Crafts, I took my students on a field trip in order to teach them about the temple architecture of Odisha and the history of Odisha. I accompanied my students to several temples: Bhubaneswar, Konark, and Puri. When they asked questions about the different styles of temples and the various types of sculptures that are found on the temples, I explained the various factors that define the style of a temple and how we can identify or determine the style (based on its characteristics) by the symbols (that are associated with the style). With this background, I discussed how the intricate designs being used for decoration in sculptural work are often found in other forms of decorative arts, such as wood carving and textiles. Consequently, two of my students, Pragati and Sumitra, wanted to know how to include these intricately designed decorative works within their projects. To answer their question, I encouraged them to learn about the historical development of temples in the state of Odisha, what style of temple they are, how temples of Odisha were constructed, where the style came from compared to other styles of temples, what temple forms were used in traditional master paintings of Odisha, what contemporary artists are doing today in relation to temple form within their own work and their average daily use of decorative works from the sculptures in the temples. Overall, this chapter will serve as a reference point to remind students, as well as researchers and scholars, to look at historical and cultural relationships between decorative artwork and the sculpture work located on the buildings they have visited and will continue to visit throughout their life.

The artistic form of Odia art provides insight into the history of Odisha through both its cultural heritage and virtuosity of the artists who created the masterpieces. The temples are the primary source for preserving the historical narrative of Odisha. They serve as places of worship for those who follow Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. Additionally, there are artistic expression forms (e.g. sculptures) found in caves and on temple walls, which provide further storytelling capabilities.

Khandagiri, Udayagiri, Ratnagiri and Lalitagiri are considered the emergence point of temple architecture in Odisha. Mahameghavahana of the Kharavela dynasty and Gupta dynasty both had a high degree of art and architecture, and they are credited as the primary sources of temple building in Odisha. The art of prehistorical living space also depicts eastern art history and the temples of Odisha. The art historian prior to examining these areas has a strong appetite for knowledge about art and the study of the pieces he is investigating. The art historian would spend time attempting to read and find something new in his writings by researching the areas for both materials and literature. Through the pursuits of the art historian, the world of art has discovered many different objects and fact. At the same time merchants were coming to India from Maurya, emperor Asoka spread Buddhism throughout Odisha.

In 261 B.C., after the conclusion of the Kalinga War, the Buddhist monks were kind enough to refer to Ashok Chanda as Dharmasoka, thereby marking the beginning of a new period of architectural growth in India. Some Buddhist texts describe Ashok's construction of 84,000 stupas throughout India. In Madhya Pradesh, the Sanchi Stupa is an example of these kinds of constructions, while in Bihar, the loams/risi caves are another example. Similarly, when speaking of all the various stupas and chaityas of Odisha, Dhauli Giri can not be overlooked as one of the most important, especially because of its famous Shanti Stupa and the nearby Daya River. The famous elephant sculpture from Dhauli Giri has served as an example of anatomical structures that subsequent generations of Odia's would use. After the great king Asoka, king Kharabela would continue to establish Jainism through his royal customs and residences which housed Jain monks. This was done via the chaitanya's, stupas, vihara's being painstakingly carved from natural to the finest detail using sedimentary stone, which most definitely ensured the king would be remembered forever.

In addition to the Kharavela, many other kings and queens were a part of his unique creations too, many of whom now also reside in his panoramic paintings. The entire city of Bhubaneswar features numerous temples that reveal both the original spirit behind creating the templation as well as the dedication to these traditions through the effort put forth by their creators. Each temple shares with us its past; how we ruled our kingdoms such as Udra, Utkal, Kangoda, Tolsali, Kosala. Other historical temples will also tell us about the king's history by way of sculptures, motifs, and intricate artistic designs.

Odisha has been politically ruled by many dynasties, such as the Sailodbhava, Bhoumankara, Soma, Ganga, Bhoi, Surya, Bhanja, and Keshari, and supported the creation of many unique temple buildings for the worship of deities according to the principles outlined in Odishas' architectural texts, such as Silpa Prakasa, Viswakarma Silpa Satra, Silparatnakara, etc. I will present a description of what can be expected from temples according to these various architectural texts in the hope that this brief overview will motivate people to learn more about temples and their distinctive design elements.

Temple making text in Odisha: -

India is home to a variety of temples that embody the distinct cultures from each geographical area of the country. The people from each of the regions in Odisha have created a unique style of construction for their temples, which is reflected in the art and design of the temples throughout the region. In addition to the differences in how they built their temples, all of the temples located in Odisha were built using the same building material (temples built in Odisha). Every region has created its own style for building their temples; some may use only Sree Venkateswara Deity, while others may build in completely different ways. The principles of Quantum Physics also apply to the study of temples because they observe that "everything has a certain frequency of vibration and that everything has the ability to alter the frequency of vibration." All objects in the universe are continually affected by the effect of other physical objects.

The Indian understanding that buildings built in accordance with the principles of Vastu will be long-lasting, of good quality and conducive to a well-ordered life is ultimately supported through the existence of temples built according to Vastu principles. The term Vastu refers to the area in which a man lives or his "living space"; the area of land upon which a man's home or living space is established (as well as the area of space above his head) is also referred to as Vastu. In order to create guidelines for managing one's health, developing economic security, leading a peaceful life, and attaining a future healthy life, the sages and Rishis of India wrote many texts regarding astrological principles.

The temples created a completely different perception of life on Earth through their representation of the mental state of our being. The people will draw a vastuchitra (a vastu) or a pictorial representation of the directions, earth, etc., in the ground when they make a new home. The vastupurusa (the body of the vastu) is drawn at various locations (different directions) of the vastu mandal depending on the year and month. The temples are also considered to be the vastu mandal. According to the Silpa texts, there were three main types of temple architecture as follows: Nagara, Dravida, and Besara.

According to different silpa text these temples are evaluated from different Mahaprasada and Prasad style, some of the styles are also seen in our Odisha in different temples Annalise, those are: - 1. Mahameru Prasad, 2. Mahakailasasabhaga, 3. Mahibhadra, 4. Kesari bhaga, 5. Srivasta Deula, 6. Mahatrikuta, 7. Basantakuta, 8. Puyasala, 9. Kirtidhusana, 10. Bhangamasara, 11. Kyatrabhusana, 12. Medinivijaya, 13. Prasada vishnubalabha, 14. prasada shivabalabha, 15. Hamsadribimana, 16. Garuda Prasad, 17. Laghubimana Deula, 18. Astasri Prasad, 19. Mahakailasha bhaga, 20. Kalpataru Prasad, 21. Drabidha badavhi, 22. Mahadrabida, 23. Puskara ratha, 24. Madhabi, 25. Kosali, 26. Birati, 27. Narayani bhadra etc. if we are going through the chronology, we can arrange like in periodic wise vis:-

- 6th – 9th century known as ancient age
- 10th – 11th century known as middle age.
- 12th -16th century known as post age.

This chronological order is just a footprint of historical methods to understand different aspects and styles of art and sculpture. Odisha temple architecture is evaluated from the Nagara style of architecture, but it is not totally followed as the Nagara style. The Odishan temple architecture style, known as Kalinga style architecture, contains its own individuality and specialties. Historically, Odisha temple architecture belonged to the orders Rekha Deula, Pidha Deula, and Khakara Deula, but in the primary phase, architecture generally conformed to two distinctive principles, which are the local canons deposited as the Rekha Deulas or Sikhara and Bhadra Deulas. During the 6th to 7th centuries, the temples were made with very proficient and excellent arrangements of temple-making techniques. The Rekha Deula is known as the Garbhagriha, or main sanctuary, which is juxtaposed with the Bhadra Deulas, or Mukhasala, known as the congregating hall. Primarily the mukhasālā of this variety has a square plan with two openings. If we study details about this kind of architecture style, we need to know about how every section has a specific style and indigenous name. Sikhara contains foot areas, which are known as pāda or pabhaga, and going upward, then chronologically, we get to know talajangha, Bandhana, uparajangha, Baranda, bhumi Amalaka, Gandi, Beki/ kanthi, Amalaka, khapuri, kalasa, Ayudha etc. "In temple architecture, the pillared areas are referred to as the jangha, or the 'thighs' of the structure, symbolically compared to the human body. On the gateway, the upper level of the jangha is crowned by the chādya (sunshade). Above this, the uppermost part of the pillars carries the mouldings known as varāndikā."

Rekha Deula contains the main source of narratives and sculptural emotion of an artist. Sequentially the main sanctuary upholds their own identity, like from the foot part names, as *Pabhaga*, which is designed as an inverted lotus flower and upward-facing rising lotus flower petals. Moreover, some temples contain some intricate floral design and animal figure patterns; most of the temples have this part identically reserved for sequential five laments of Indian motifs that are inverted lotus petals, *Bandhani* decorated with *Rudrakya* motifs, upward lotus petals, *Bandhani*, *Bhumi rajju*, and then *Bandhani* contains the *phulachauta* design. The main shrine contains other elements: *Tala-jangha* (the lowermost part and uppermost part of the foot area), *Bandhani* (a hawser-like structure that is three-banded and looks like it upholds the temple), *Upara-jangha* or lower thigh, *Baranda*, and *Bhumianala* (the lowermost subsidiary replica of the shrine). These four elements are known as *Bada*. The upper part of *Bada* and the lower part of the head, known as *Gandi* (torso), contain ten sediments; it also contains *Bhumi Amala*. Serially going upwards, another section is intricately decorated with some yakshini and yakshya, locally known as *Mandira Charini* and *Charaka*, who are lifting the main part of the temple at the top. Yakshas or yakshinis occupy their place in between the *Bisama* and *amalaka*, generally known as *Beki* or *Kanthi*. In the increasing direction there are other significant parts: *Amalaka*, *Khapuri* (skull of the temple), *Kalasa* (sacred pot), and *Ayudha* (weapon).

This is the simple and easy method normally expressed by educators and scholars, but in different Silpa Sastras, a variety of theories about Kalinga Temple architecture are expressed.

According to Silpa Ratnakara, the elegant pitha (plinth) is first raised over the platform, which is known as Vedi. This Vedi stands up on the ground, and over it, the Rekha deularises and there is another temple next to the Rekha deula known as Pidha mandira.

These Pithas are categorized by eight types vis: -1. Suthira, 2. Simha, 3. Bhadra, 4. Khura, 5. Paryanka, 6. Kumbha, 7. Padma, 8. Vedi. This text also explains that there are different appreciations and style was followed by ethnic group. According to our sacred text and society, we are listing them as four group or jati/varna. The Brahmana jati temples represent a refined architectural expression shaped by symbolic proportion and sacred geometry. Their identity is primarily defined through the nature and extent of Rekha deula, the vertical rhythmic segments that articulate the temple tower, and guide the viewer's gaze heavenward. These vertical divisions are not merely structural devices. They embody spiritual ascent and metaphysical order. The Brahmana jati temples are classified into seven structural types: -Niladri, Nilachala, Nandikeswara, viravana, Malaya, Himalaya, virataranga, and Nilakuntala. Each designation suggests an aesthetic lineage inspired by landscape, mythic geography, or spiritual symbolism, revealing how architecture is a poetic translation of sacred imagination. Collectively These seven Rekha traditions constitute what is recognized as the Vipra Jati also in English the priestly architectural order. Another noteworthy structural tradition known as Sindhudeirodhava. It is believed to have originated in the cultural sphere of Vanga Desa. Significantly, the denomination Niladri and Nilachala is intimately associated with the Jagannath temple which hint at a deep cultural rooting in Oudra or Utkala region.

The most of four types temple styles had originated in the Kalinga and Mastya countries are named as Kesari, Kirtibhusana, Kausika and Dhanasri. These constitute characteristics of the Kysatriya jati or the warrior class of temple. The six Rekha structural temple types of merchant class are named as Surendra, Sobhanga, Sobhana, Svarnakuta, Surekha, Jalada alias Meghadambara. These had derived in the Magadha country (northern Bihar) and gratifying to the eyes. The Prabhakara type of Rekha temple has its origin in the country of Saurashtra and it belongs to service class or Sudra Jati. Thus, the structural temples are divided into mainly four class or categories the same way as the castes system of Brahmana, Kysatriya, Vaisya and Sudra.

The imperative Ayudha: -during the temple making time, the king or patron will place a wheel(Chakra) or trident (trisula) along with a sacred flag at the top of the temple. These things help to decrease the probability of sin, and they help to protect from natural disasters like Storms, lightning and floods etc. Also verses say that the builder's or king's lifespan will increase when they place the Ayudha at the top of the temple. This ritual is also conducted and overall guided by the connoisseur of all holy rituals, or sage. Some mythological events are said by canons and puranas. Some metaphors, like the king of all devatas (Indra) had placed a trident at the top of his abode because of the threat of Asuras (demon). Another story is that the lord Vishnu also had placed the chakra at his abode, Vaikuntha loka, in the milk ocean because of fear of Danavas.

Types of temple structure: -

According to let professor, Bansidhara Mohanty's translation of Silpa Ratna, written by Shri Kumar in 16th century there is description about the types of temples, like

1) CHATUHSALA NAYEKA

"Divide the width of the plinth (ayatana) area into 32 units (bhagas). thereupon, the nayeka will be built with its height (uccheha) in the proportions of bhitti 18 units, anga 16 and sira 14 units. Again, the anga of the structure would be constituted of four storeys of 16 parts, of which, the four storeys would be of 5, 4, 3 and 2 parts from bottom to the top, in that order, the balance two parts being covered by kantis (Khandis). So, the Chatuhsala Nayeka structure has three kantis on the anga".

Let Simplify all the stuff, which is like,

in the chatuhsala nayeka type, the width of the plinth is divided into thirty-two equal units. The total elevation of the structure is proportionately arranged into three principal divisions:

- Bhitti (wall portion)- 18 units
- Anga (intermediate body)- 16 units
- Sira (head of superstructure)- 14 units

The anga portion is further articulated into four storeys comprising sixteen parts of total. These four storeys are proportioned progressively from bottom to top in the ratio of 5:4:3:2 units. The remaining two units are occupied by kantis (khandis). Thus, the chatuhsala Nayeka structure is characterized by the presence of three kantis within the anga division.

2) SARVANGA GHANTA NAYEKA

a) Characteristic general feature

The Sarvanga Ghanta Nayeeka type of temple is distinguished by its elaborate structural and decorative elements. It incorporates 38 rasana-stambhas (ornamental pillars), 14 jalantaras (water outlet or drainage channels), 64 kalasha (ritual finials or jar motifs), 20 pavas, 100 purusas (figural representations), and 100 sikharas (miniature spire motifs). These components collectively establish the architectural grandeur and symbolic richness characteristic of this temple form.

ii. Elevation: -

In elevation, the temple is proportioned according to a carefully measured canonical system. The width of the ayama (ground plan) is fixed at 40 bhagas (units). The vertical divisions are organized as follow.

- The bhitti or bada (wall portion) rises to 24 bhagas.
- The anga or gandi (superstructure) measures 22 bhagas in Height.
- The sira (final portion) attains a height of 19 bhagas (or uruts).

Furthermore, the anga is subdivided into 15 parts, arranged into three successive sections:

- The first section consists of 6 parts,
- The second of 5 parts,
- The third of 4 parts.

Such proportional canons are attributed to the sage Varaha, who is said to have prescribed these measurements for the harmonious construction of this architectural type.

iii. structural decoration: -

the decorative scheme of the temple begins at the pada (pabhaga), the base or plinth, which forms the foundation of the ornamental program. The mouldings of the pabhaga include:

- Olata- Vasanta (inverted moulding)
- Vasanta, often repeated

- Kumbha- Vasanta
- Viparita- Vasanta (reversed moulding)
- Samamsa- Vasanta
- Kani
- Khura- Vasanta

Above this, the Jangha(wall section) is enriched with decorative motifs such as:

- Khura
- Khamba
- Pata
- Kani
- Vasanta
- Lola
- Bandha
- Danda
- Rajju
- Pheni
- Barandi
- Amla-vasanta

The varandi(projecting cornice) is adorned with ornamental features including:

- Bharola
- Lola
- Pheni
- Pata
- Srahi
- Kani
- Pallava
- Patta
- Vasanta
- Jhara
- Jhalaka
- Vaula

Prescriptive principles: -

It is the responsibility of the skilled and learned architect to construct the *Pabhaga* (basement) of the *Sarvanga-ghanta* structure in strict accordance with the prescribed *Bhaga* units. The decorative treatment may extend over 11 Rudras, 12 Suryas, or 14 Bhuras (Bhaga division), depending on the chosen canonical variation within the sarvanga- ghanta type. The ancient sages, from their forest hermitages, are traditionally believed to have codified these structural and decorative principles.

3) SOBHANA OR SOBHANANGA NAYEKA

The ayama, or base dimension, of a temple of the sobhana or sobhananganayeka type is 32 units. While the bhatti (wall) rises to 24 units, the pitha (platform) is only allowed to be 5 units high. The gandi, or superstructure body, rises to a height of 36 units above this. Additionally, there is a fixed vertical measurement of 11 units from the veki (neck) to the khapuri (skull-like crowning member). The chakra (disc) above it is five units tall, while the kalasa (final pot) is eight units. The elevation is 90 units total from the pitha at the base to the chakra at the top. The Sobhana Prasada is a temple built in accordance with these measurements.

4) REKHA-GARBHA NAYEKA

The side length of the ayatana (base) in the Rekha Garbha Nayeka is 16 units. The quotient that results from dividing this measurement by 8 is 2. The height of the bada (lower wall portion) is determined by multiplying this quotient by seven, which results in 14 units.

Additionally, the prescribed height of the Garbha-sikhara (sanctum superstructure) is 10 units, which is obtained by multiplying the same quotients by 5. The mudalasara, or ceiling width, is set at two units.

5) BHADRA-GARBHA NAYEKA

For the Bhadra-Garbha Nayeka, the length of the plinth or base is measured as 20 units. Dividing this by 10 produces a quotient of 2. Seven times this quotient determines the height of the bada, which is 14 units. Similarly, six times the same quotient establishes the height of the sikhara (superstructure), amounting to 12 units. Furthermore, half of the quotient, taken three times, determines the width of the ceiling or mudalasara, which measures 3 units.

6) MOHANA-GARBHA NAYEKA

The Mohana-Garbha is made up of the 32 "bhagas," which are the basic units of measurement used when measuring. The 32 bhagas are divided by the basic unit of measure (known as the "hola") of 16 bhagas gives us 2 bhagas, which are called the "anka" or "quotient number". The width or breadth height of the Mohana-Garbha wall/tada is equal to the product of 6 times anka, giving 12 bhagas. 7 times anka also give the height of the Mohana-Garbha wall/tada is equal to 12 bhagas. 7 times anka will also generate the total height of the Mohana-Garbha superstructure or "sikha," which equals to 14 bhagas. Lastly, multiplying the two times anka will yield a value of 4 bhagas, which creates the width of the "mudavistara" (ceiling). Using this same calculation process will allow you to determine the Rekha, Bhadra, and Mohana sikhas.

7) NANDI OR NANDIKESWARA NAYEKA

According to the ayamavarga of nandi or nandineshvaranayeka, the ayatana is $16 \times 2 = 32$ units. Accordingly, the height of the utsarga of the pitha or base of the structure is 5 units, the height of the bhitti or wall of the structure is 12×2 (Dinamani) = 24 units, and the height of the anga or gandi is 36 units (Vahni 3, ritu 6).

The height of the mastaka (head) structure from where the neck or griva meets the khapuri of the mastaka is 12 units, and the height of the symbolic weapon, which can either be a chakra or a kankapatra, is 5 units. Therefore, the total height of the structure would be 90 units.

8) THE NANDIKESWARA NAYEKA COMPLEX

Build a khurapitha-style plinth and construct a temple structure called Nandikesvara on top of it; then build a second temple structure, called chatuhsalaNayeka in front of the first. Finally do the same for the mohana (Devanga). An architect who has knowledge of construction will review all of these components and decide the location of Siva or Surya or Ganesha or Durga or Narayana or possible related images within each structure.

9) NANDIVARDHANA NAYEKA

The temple (or prāsāda) built in the Nandivardhana style has a total ayatana (width) of 32 bhagas, utsarga (elevation) of 78 bhagas: the wall (bhitti) is 24 bhagas high, 35 bhagas for the anga (gandi), 11 bhagas for the shira (finial), 8 bhagas for the kumbha (jar), and 5 bhagas for the chakra (disc). This information outlines the proportions between the limbs of the temple structure classified as the Nandivardhana prāsāda.

10) PANCHAKALYANI NAYEKA

There are 30 bhagas for the tri-divisional (tripuri) anga, of which the bhitti has 12 bhagas, the anga has 10 bhagas and the sira has 8 bhagas. There will also be 2 monkeys and have the structure of the bhitti of the Viraghanta class; with a pada, a varandi, and a jangha; these all-combined will make a total of 2 bandhanās.

11) NARAYANI NAYEKA (BHADRA)

a) Sira spread

The character of the śrahi is described as having 20 units in width while the ghanta-mula has 19 units, the ghanta-tālu has 13 units, the gala has 11 units, the amla has 13 units, the karpuru-mula has 12 units, the karpuru-taalu has 10 units, the kalasa has 5 units, the ghari has 1 unit, and the chakri has 4 units. The bhitti has 20 units of elevation measured out from this.

b) *Bhitti elevation*

The elevation of the Nārāyanināyekābhitti parts, calculated with respect to the bhitti itself as 20 units, are as follows: pāda (5 units, which is either one of and also the same as pitha/pabhaga), jangha (4), bandhana (2), the second jangha (4 would have already been calculated - however for clarity I will provide this information again), and varandi(5).

c) *Na pidhagandi elevation*

The gandi has nine pidhas within, which contain the following measures: The first pidha has a thickness of 3; the second has $2\frac{3}{4}$; the third has $2\frac{1}{2}$, the fourth has $2\frac{1}{4}$, and last (fifth) one of the first potala is $1\frac{3}{4}$, then that of the badakanti is $1\frac{1}{4}$, sixth pidha 2, seventh $1\frac{3}{4}$, eighth $1\frac{1}{3}$. And ninth is $1\frac{1}{4}$. Thus, in all the gandi is of 20 units.

d) *PidhaKateni (recession)*

The first kätēninathi is 1 unit, that of the second $2\frac{1}{4}$, third $2\frac{1}{4}$ fourth $2\frac{1}{4}$, fifth $2\frac{1}{4}$, sixth $2\frac{3}{4}$, seventh $2\frac{1}{4}$, eighth $2\frac{1}{4}$, and ninth $2\frac{1}{4}$ and thus the total reduction on both sides is $18\frac{1}{2}$ units.

e) *Na pidhagandi (spread)*

Now we describe the width of the nine pidhas of the gandi (gadi) of the structure. The width of the first pidht is 46 units, that of the second $43\frac{3}{4}$, third $41\frac{3}{4}$, fourth $39\frac{1}{4}$, fifth 37, badakanti $31\frac{1}{4}$, sixth pidha $34\frac{1}{4}$, prime seventh 32, eighth $29\frac{3}{4}$, and of the ninth pidha $27\frac{1}{2}$ units.

f) *Śira elevation*

Now for the temple, the elevation of the sira (finial), taken as 19 units, is broken up as galā (veki) $2\frac{1}{4}$ units, śrahi $2\frac{1}{4}$, ghanta 5, again galā $1\frac{1}{8}$, ghari $1\frac{1}{8}$, and kalasa $6\frac{1}{8}$ units.

Or one may have another alternative set of proportions for its gandi and sira, its bhitti being the same, as follows:

g) *Śira spread*

The diameter or width of its galā (veki) being $16\frac{1}{2}$ units, that of śrahi 21, ghañtā-mūla 20, tālu 13, amlā 13, kapurimula 12, kapuri-tālu 10, kalasa 4, and ghari 1.

h) *Na pidhagandi elevation*

The thickness of the nine pidhas: the first pidha is $2\frac{3}{4}$, that of the second $2\frac{1}{2}$, third 2, badakanti $1\frac{1}{2}$, fourth pidha $2\frac{1}{4}$, fifth 2, sixth $1\frac{1}{2}$, badakanti $1\frac{1}{4}$, seventh pittha $1\frac{1}{2}$, eighth $1\frac{1}{2}$, and ninth pidha is $1\frac{1}{4}$. Thus all totalled 20 units would constitute the elevation of the gandi.

i) *Pidhakāteni (recession)*

The kiteni or extent of horizontal recession of the successive pidhas from the bottom-most of the series is as follows:

For the first pidha it is nil, for the second one it is $\frac{1}{8}$, third $\frac{7}{8}$, fourth $1\frac{3}{8}$, fifth $1\frac{3}{8}$, sixth 1, seventh $\frac{5}{8}$, eighth $1\frac{1}{8}$, and ninth is 1, and thus in all 9āngulas or finger width.

j) *Na pidhagandi spread*

The widtit or spread of the nine pidhas are as follows:

"The first pidha is 44, second $42\frac{1}{4}$, third $40\frac{1}{2}$, badakanti $34\frac{1}{2}$, fourth pidha $37\frac{3}{4}$, prime fifth $35\frac{1}{2}$, sixth $33\frac{1}{2}$, badakanti is 28, seventh pidha $30\frac{1}{4}$, eighth 28 and the last i.e. ninth one is 26 units.

k) *Sira elevation*

The height of its neck (veki) is $2\frac{1}{4}$ units, that of the śrahi $2\frac{1}{4}$, ghanta 5, again gala (neck) $1\frac{1}{8}$, amla $1\frac{1}{8}$, kapuri $1\frac{1}{8}$, and kalasa is $6\frac{1}{8}$ units.

l) *Rathakās:*

- Spread and recession

We now describe the spread of the rathaka or rahapaga. The width of its neck (veki) is 16 units or āngulas. Now its recessions-along the first bhūmi, from one kanaka to another kanaka, it is 19 āngulas, second pata $18\frac{7}{8}$, third $18\frac{5}{8}$, fourth $18\frac{3}{8}$, fifth 18 and sixth one is $17\frac{5}{8}$, āngulas.

- Potalas

Next the potalas. The thickness of its first pata is 17, second is $16\frac{3}{4}$, third $16\frac{1}{2}$, fourth $16\frac{1}{4}$, fifth $15\frac{7}{8}$, sixth $15\frac{1}{2}$, seventh 15, eighth 14, ninth $13\frac{1}{8}$, tenth $12\frac{3}{8}$, eleventh $12\frac{1}{4}$, twelfth $11\frac{7}{16}$, thirteenth $10\frac{3}{8}$, fourteenth 9, and the visama is $7\frac{1}{2}$, āngulas (finger width).

- Anuratha or Anuraha

Next the anuratha. On both the anurathas there would be a black margin (kakha) of 3 āngulas, and so also on both sides of the rahapagas.

- Gandi distribution

The gandi surface has to be divided horizontally as 4 bhagas to constitute the two kanikarathakas, and 4 bhagas to constitute the two anurathas, with the rahapaga alone to constitute 4 bhagas. The surface of the structure has to be so distributed in 12 parts from the base or bhūmi of one horizontal segment of the gandi to the next bhūmi.

- Surface decor with phulis

Such surface has phuli (floral decor) for the width of 6 āngulas and next to it melana (blank margin) of $1\frac{1}{2}$, āngulas and also such melana on the other side of the phuli is $1\frac{1}{2}$, āngula. Thus, the width of the danda including melana-garbha adds up to 19 āngulas. Then petals of the anuratha will be set covering $1\frac{1}{2}$, āngulas on either side of it, and thus making it 22 āngulas for the anurathas on both the sides. Next petals would be set in the raha kākha (borders of the ralia paga) to the extent of $1\frac{1}{2}$, āngulas on either side. Thus, the width of the border decor for each rāhāpaga would be 25 āngulas. The corresponding width for the second bhūmi is $24\frac{3}{4}$, āngulas, the third bhūmi 24, the fourth pata 23, the fifth pata 21, and for the sixth pata 14 āngulas.

Then we take up such width of the border for the second potals, its first pata is to be of $17\frac{3}{4}$, āngulas, second 17, third $16\frac{1}{4}$, fourth $15\frac{1}{2}$, fifth $14\frac{1}{4}$, sixth $13\frac{1}{4}$, seventh $12\frac{1}{4}$, eighth $11\frac{1}{4}$, ninth $10\frac{1}{4}$, tenth $9\frac{1}{4}$, eleventh $8\frac{1}{4}$, twelfth $7\frac{1}{4}$, thirteenth fourteenth $5\frac{1}{4}$, āngulas to cover from one raha to the other raha.

Raha Pramana or characteristic: -

Divide the width of the chakada or base of the plinth into 12 parts. Then the quotient will be the basis for further distribution of its elevation of $5\frac{1}{2}$ units according as it is the upper or lower surface. The height of bhūmi (base), including the arch (torana), and the kān̄thi, would make out the $5\frac{1}{2}$ units, of which the first bhūmi would be 1 unit and its kākhipakha (side margin) $\frac{3}{4}$ unit, the second bhūmi of 1 unit and its kākhi-pakha $\frac{3}{4}$ units, and the third bhūmi 1 unit, and taking the toranakān̄thi as 1 unit, one would have the total utsarga of elevation of $5\frac{1}{2}$ units or bhagas.

Out of the elevation the potala and kalasā, are to constitute in all 5 units or bhagas, the height of kalasa is $1\frac{1}{2}$ units and of the potala $3\frac{1}{2}$ units. The entire height of the first potala would be so made as to be covered in eight storeys (athaputa) or horizontal divisions. Above that there would be the jalipata-kān̄thi to make out 1 unit. Above that a six-storeyed potala would be raised, and thus, in all, the potalas would have 14 storeyes. Next the kalasa would be made that high so as to cover $1\frac{1}{2}$ units. Thus the total elevation would be the same as the net width of the plinth (chakada). For the ayatana-garbha having 16 āngulas wide chautali-phuli (four line floral decor) there is this prescription in a Sanskrit sloka or couplet that sets down the measurements as that the total distance of the midpoint of the raha from the kanaka would be 10 units to be distributed as kanaka 3 bhagas, anupava 2 bhāgas, anuraha 2 bhagas, and half of the raha width amounting to the balance 3 bhagas, and thus in all 10 bhāgas.

The order of such structure is of the bhadra jāti.

Raha kakha Pramana: -

The raha in tri-ratha structure being 3 bhāgas each, its kakha or margin would cover 6 āngula of a gap or separation on the two sides. The rahakakha of a pancharatha structure similarly is 2 āngulas, anurathakākha 1 āngula and thus 6 āngulas to its two sides. The saptaratharakakha would be $2\frac{1}{2}$ āngulas, anuratha 3 āngulas, anupava $1\frac{1}{2}$ āngulas, all in 6 āngulas to the two sides.

The raha-kakha of the navaratha structure is 1 āngula, anuraha kakha $\frac{3}{4}$ āngula, anupava kākha $\frac{3}{4}$ āngula and again auratha kakha $\frac{1}{2}$ āngula, thus, all in 6 āngulas to the two sides.

Plinth decor and structure: -

Taking a square area as the base on the mulapinda or the flat platform raised, one would mark out the kakhas (marginal gaps) and distribute the surface of the structure from one kanaka, or the kanikapaga, to the other, on the same side, in rathakas. The sides will be divided each into 6 bhagas, i.e. parts or units, that is 3 bhagas each for the vahi or arm (that is the horizontal distance of the edge of the kanaka to the mid-line of the rahapaga).

The Naga figures have been classified in eight divisions of structural proportions for the eight Nāga types. The first bhaga is 8, the second bhaga is 16, the third one is 24, the fourth bhaga is 32, the fifth bhaga is 40, the sixth bhaga is 48, the 7th bhaga is 56 and the eighth bhaga is 64. Thus, bhagas of the Nagas have been successively divided from the Ananta Naga to the Mahāpadma Naga classes. Now we will start describing with the first Naga division of the Ananta Naga class, which is of a coiled form.

Ananta Naga:

Phaṇa (hood) is 1 bhaga, sira (head) 1 bhaga, hridaya (chest) 1 bhaga, udara (womb) 1 bhaga, kati (waist) 1 bhaga, janu (thigh) 1 bhaga, puchha (tail) 2 bhagas, thus the whole body a total of 8 bhigas.

The Vasuki Naga: -

Vasuki Naga: Phaṇa is 2 bhagas, sira 2 bhagas, hridaya 2 bhagas, udara 2 bhagas, kati 3 bhagas, kati 2 bhagas, janu 2 bhagas, puchha 4 bhagas, thus 16 bhagas in total.

The Takysaka class: -

Takysaka Naga: Phaṇa is 3 bhagas, sira 3 bhagas, hridaya 3 bhagas, jathara (womb) 3 bhagas, kati 3 bhagas, janu (thigh) 3 bhagas, and puchha 6 bhagas, and in all it is 24 bhagas

The Karkotaka class of Nagas: -

Karkotaka Naga - Phaṇa is 4 bhagas, sirabhagas, hridaya 4 bhāgas, udara 4 bhagas, kati 4 bhagas, janu 4 bhagas, and puchha 8 bhagas, thus in all 32 bhagas.

The Samkha class of Nagas: -

Samkha Naga: Phaṇa is 5 bhagas, sira 5 bhagas, hridaya 5 bhagas, udara 5 bhāgas, kati 5 bhagas, janu 5 bhāgas, and puchha 10, bhāgas, thus 40 bhigas make the whole body.

The Kulika Naga class: -

Kulika Nāga: Phaṇa is 6 bhagas, sira 6 bhagas, hridaya 6 bhāgas, udara 6 bhagas, kati 6 bhagas, janu 6 bhagas, puchha 12 bhagas, and all in 48 bhāgas.

The Padma Nāga class: -

Padma Nāga: Phaṇa is 7 bhāgas, sira 7 bhāgas, hridaya 7 bhāgas, udara 7 bhāgas, kati 7 bhāgas, janu 7 bhāgas, and puchha 14 bhagas, and all in 56 bhagas.

The Mahāpadma Nāga class: -

Mahāpadma Nāga: Phaṇa is 8 bhagas, sira 8 bhagas, hridaya 8 bhagas, udara 8 bhagas, kati 8 bhagas, janu 8 bhagas, and puchha 16 bhagas, and in all the body is 64 bhagas. Such is the sequence of proportional distribution of the eight-fold divisions of the Naga classes.

The references made in this article come primarily from Silpa Ratnakara as well as a few other sources. Let's find examples of both old and contemporary artists' works that pertain to some cultural, architectural, or traditional phenomenon across both time periods.

We will use a combination of both negative and positive assessment/correlating criteria when making the connection between heritage and modernity through assessing the quality of artists and their output via an in-depth examination of each to determine how an artist may have achieved their full potential within art practice. This exposes those creators/works who are deserving of recognition for having accomplished something significant through their dedication to creating excellent art. Additionally, the article will expose the truth about the Odisha Art Academy and bring attention to several individuals who have profited financially off of their involvement with it and similar institutions to promote the idea that there should be some level of responsibility for all parties involved in artistic creation.

Alka priyadarshinee: -



Alka priyadarshinee with canon ESO -1D (2025)

A strong-willed woman discovers unexpected solutions where others perceive only obstacles. This is truly reflected in the life journey of the Odishan artist Alka Priyadarshinee, who dedicatedly practices in the field of photography. We might call her the “lens woman of Odisha”. She consistently invests her energy into the camera to capture cultural heritage that narrates social norms and the compassion embedded in traditional rituals.

She belongs to the village of Khamanga in the Jagatsinghpur district, Odisha, where the Devi River flows alongside the village, which is a major tributary of the Mahanadi River system. From early childhood, she showed a deep propensity toward art practice. She was fascinated by her school drawing books, calendar illustrations, and landscape and mythological depictions of deities found in diaries. She was born on 10th March 2000 (by certificate), on the auspicious occasion of ParswaParibartana Bada Ekadashi in the month of Bhadrava, according to the Hindu calendar.

Her grandfather, Shri Nimai Charan Mishra was the strongest supporter of her creative talents when she was a child. As a government teacher, one of his main values was that children should participate in extracurricular activities. He operated under that value every Sunday when the children of his family did things such as crafts, painting, singing and other forms of art. As she first became aware of the different ways of pursuing an artistic career through her school days, she also was introduced to her teacher, Shri Pabitra Mohan Gayen, who was greatly affiliated with B.K. College of Art and Craft. She continued her schooling with Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir. During her academic years, she excelled not only in the field of sports but also in the field of drawing and painting, winning many prizes and accolades. But her achievements did not stop at that only, as she showed excellent proficiency in Mathematics, which is a combination of creativity and intelligence.

After completing her schooling at Sishu Mandir, she chose the Science stream at Maharshi College of Natural Law in 2015. Despite being committed to the field, her heart remained at home in art. Even while studying, she would quietly draw in the margins of her notebooks, letting her imagination run free onto the paper. At some point, her love for drawing was misinterpreted. One of her family members, who was worried about her commitment to academic affairs, would sometimes express his irritability and discouragingly comment on her drawing activity. However, this is also part of her silent struggle. She eventually stopped drawing due to some circumstances in her family life. Still, nothing could stop the fire in her heart, and her enthusiasm for art remained alive, just awaiting the right time to resurface. In 2017, after completing her higher secondary education, she was at a crossroads. She took the competitive exams like Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) and Joint Entrance Examination (Main), while maintaining conventional career options. Deep inside, however, she knew where her true calling was. She chose passion over predictability and changed her path, opting instead for admission into the prestigious B.K. College of Art and Craft in Bhubaneswar, thus commencing her journey into the world of art.



After achieving her degree in Applied Art, she was accepted into Utkal University of culture to study Applied Art as well. Many women artists inspired her work and she worked diligently throughout her career to create experience in her area of specialization. Alka Priyadarshinee is an inspiration to students who want to work in photography because she perseveres despite many challenges in her life. The culture of the area, the ceremonies connected to Odia customs, and the growth of the province all have a significant impact on her artwork. Photographs and illustrations are frequently used to convey it, capturing the vitality and spirit of the thirteen festivals that occur each year and showcasing the diversity of the province's culture. Her desire to use the camera to express herself inspires her creativity and demonstrates the strength of her spirit. By capturing society's most vibrant and dynamic elements through her lens, she uses her art to convey its strength. She also worked on different themes, such as renowned utensils of Odisha, at place Balakati and Kantilo, which is locally known as Kansa (bell metal), alongside thematic narration of some tribal life such as Santala, Bonda tribe. Let's discuss her art work by the use of magnifying Lens of an art connoisseur.



➤ The door of culture

This artwork captures the enduring legacy of Odia culture as it breathes and evolves in the modern era. While aesthetic perspectives have shifted and undergone reformation, the underlying authenticity remains a beacon for global cultural enthusiasts. It serves as a visual replication of ritualistic devotion, a sacred journey that mirrors the human desire to travel with loved ones, offering a spiritual and mental reprieve for the common person.

her photograph explains the old tradition of the Sandalwood Festival practiced by Lord Lingaraj, who comes outside to celebrate with his beloved wife, Maa Parvati. However, he does not appear in his original stone sculptural idol form. Instead, he comes to Bindu Sagara for Chapa Khela as the Bije Pratima (Sri Chandrasekhara), along with the local gods and goddesses (Parswa Devata, Khetrapala, and Khetrapalini), which are made of brass.

This ritual continues repeatedly for 21 days during Bhitra Chandana (Inner Festival) and 21 days during Bahara Chandana (Outer Festival), making a total of 42 days.

in the sacred landscape of Ekamra Kshetra, the Chandan Yatra (Sandalwood Festival) represents a sophisticated ritual of divine mobility. It marks the transition where the deity transcends the confines of the garbhagriha (sanctum) to engage with the public sphere.

While the primary deity, Lord Lingaraj, remains as the immovable (sthavara) stone Swayambhu Lingam, his presence is manifest through the Bije Pratima (representative metal icon). For this festival, the Lord assumes the anthropomorphic form of Sri Chandrasekhara. Unlike the static lithic sculpture, these brass icons are designed as chala-pratima (mobile deities), allowing for a dynamic participation in the ritual drama of the city. The deity is accompanied by his consort, Maa Parvati, and the protective guardians of the temple precinct—the Parswa Devatas and the Kshetrapala/Kshetrapalini.

These figures are cast in brass, a metallurgical choice that signifies both ritual purity and the durability required for water-based ceremonies. The ensemble journeys to the Bindu Sagara for the Chapa Khela (boating festival). This is not merely a voyage; it is a highly choreographed ritual of "cooling" (shitala), where the deities are anointed with sandalwood paste to mitigate the seasonal heat.

The festival is a 42-day liturgical marathon, divided into two symmetrical phases these are:-

Bahara Chandana > 21 Days > The "Outer" festival, defined by public processions and the boating rituals at Bindu Sagara.

Bhitra Chandana > 21 Days > The "Inner" festival, consisting of esoteric rituals conducted within the temple's private courtyards.

The Chandan Yatra of Lord Lingaraj exemplifies the concept of the 'living sovereign' within Odishan temple traditions. It documents the transition of the godhead from his aniconic stone form to the anthropomorphic brass icons of Sri Chandrasekhara and Parvati. Accompanied by the guardian Kshetrapalas, this metal ensemble participates in the Chapa Khela at Bindu Sagara. This 42-day cycle split equally between the public Bahara and the secluded Bhitar phases highlights the ancient tradition of providing seasonal comfort and ritual 'play' (Lila) for the divine."



➤ The remaining life

These second photograph of our heritage are framed by contemporary rituals, representing a remobilization of venerable architecture. They transform the physical world into a cultural narrative that is part of our identity; perhaps they describe how our lives remain a source of hope for others who might come to heal our inner struggles."

Technically, the picture was taken by Alka as the Rukuna chariot passed between the temple and Lingaraj temple road. That moment she captured connects our history to the present situation. It reconstructs the original by preserving the real essence of the flower; though the flower may die, its essence is never forgotten.

This photo was taken in natural light on the occasion of the Ashokashtami festival, often called the "Mahasnana" or Rathayatra of Lord Lingaraja. The Rukuna Ratha is really famous for being called Anabhibhara which means it never turns around. The chariots in the Puri Ratha Yatra are taken apart. Built again every year but the Rukuna Ratha is built new every time and it has a special ritual where it is pulled backwards on its way back which is called the Bahuda Yatra instead of being turned all the way around. The Rukuna Ratha is 35 feet tall and it has 4 wheels and it is usually covered in really bright red and yellow cloth. The Rukuna Ratha also has the chalanti Pratima, which's a special idol of Lord Lingaraj and it has idols of Gopalini, who is also known as Parvati and Vasudeva who is Lord Vishnu on it too which shows the connection between the Hari-Hara cult, which is the union of Vishnu and Shiva.

The Rukuna Ratha travels from the Lingaraj Temple to the Rameshwar Temple, which is also called the Mausī Maa Temple. It goes about 2 kilometers down the Rath Road. People think that Lord Lingaraj goes to the Rameshwar Temple to pay respect to Lord Ram, who stayed there when he was in exile.

There is a cool ritual that happens the night before Ashokashtami, where water from the Marichi Kunda, which is a special tank near the Mukteswar Temple is sold to people. The people in the area believe that taking a bath in this water can help women who are having trouble getting pregnant.

The Rukuna Ratha festival is a deal and when artists make art about it, they try to show what the festival is really, like by using different kinds of art to express their ideas and this helps to create new ways of thinking about the Rukuna Ratha and what it means to people. While the ritual's authenticity resides in the lived experience, an artist's vision aggregates fragments of the subject's life, midwifing new concepts through various artistic mediums.



➤ The carrier or legacy

Our handlooms embody the social norms and cultural values that fortify the intangible heritage of Odisha. Weavers nurture a profound connection between beauty and the human experience. While food, shelter, and clothing are fundamental human needs, garments do more than just protect us from the elements but they represent our identity. Alke's photography captures the gentle, meticulous nature of the preparation process led by master artisans. Though the methods may be traditional, the skill involved transcends contemporary art practices.

Odisha boasts a diverse range of handlooms, each based on unique techniques and methods influenced by regional circumstances and the environment. Every specific weave carries its own indigenous history and legacy. The state's most iconic handloom is famous for its "Bandhakala" or tie-dye artistry. There are different handlooms in all over Odisha: -Sambalpur ikat from Sambalpur, Sonpuripatta from Sonpur, Bomkai from Ganjam, Khanduapata from Nuapatana, Kotpad from Koraput, Berhampur patta (phoda kumbha) from Berhampur, pasapali from Bargarh, Gopalpur tussar from Gopalpur, Habaspurifrom Kalahandi etc. Maniabandha saree is one of them from Cuttack district, Odisha.

While the sarees are central to Hindu worship today, their weaving techniques have deep Buddhist roots. The weaving community in Maniabandha historically followed Buddhist traditions. This influence is visible in the geometric precision and certain symbolic motifs that predated the heavy integration of Jagannath-centric iconography. Even after many in the community integrated into local Hindu traditions, the distinct "Maniabandhi" style remained a unique hybrid of these two cultural flows. The Maniabandha sarees are famous for the Malda Ikat or Warp and Weft Ikat process.

Its Aesthetic Profile are typically lighter and finer than the Sambalpuri Ikat. They are known for a softer texture and a slightly "hazy" edge to the motifs, which is a hallmark of authentic hand-tied Ikat. The lions, elephants, deer, peacocks, lotuses, kumbha, shreejantra etc. are commonly used in maniabandha saree. This is the common history about maniabanda saree.

Alka articulates her interior world through the lens, drawing from a rich tapestry of artistic lineages. She possesses a rare sensitivity to the ontological beauty woven into every handloom thread, perceiving the labor and legacy behind the craft. Her mission is to curate a harmonious dialogue, a bridge of shared intent between the visionary artist and the master artisan.



➤ untold dance

As an art historian, this particular photograph from Alka's album remains my most cherished acquisition. I derive a profound sense of joy from its presence, the composition and inherent vibrancy evoke a deep, rhythmic amusement within my soul. Every single part of this image helps to create a tune beautifully combining heritage with a strong sense of being unique. The known classical and folk traditions like Odissi, Chhau and Bharatanatyam are famous all over the world but the heart of Odisha beats in its lesser-known rituals that have a strong rhythm. One of these rituals is Ghanta Nrutya, which shows the side of the Odia people in a big way connecting everyday life to the divine. Beyond the classical forms there is the real strong soul of regional heritage. Ghanta Nrutya is not a performance it is a sonic offering by the Ghantuas, where they hit a bronze gong, called Ghanta to make a heartbeat for the Divine Mother.

This dance is performed in the courtyards of Goddesses like Sarala, Mangala and Ramachandi and it is a way of worshiping Shakti. It is more than a set of steps it shows a deep faith and strong dedication to the feminine principle of the universe. At its core the dance celebrates the connection between people and the Earth. It is a tribute to Mother Nature recognizing her as the source of life and food.

The Ghantua are performers who dedicate themselves to the Goddess through a big show of 21 different dance forms during the Ghanta Patua festival. They are driven by their devotion to Devi. They balance a wooden symbol of the Goddess on their heads while doing complex leg movements and hand gestures. They do styles, such as Puchi, Ghanta, Chakri, EkapediRanapa, which is dancing on one leg and DwipadiRanapa. The Pahada style is done the most by the Rahula or Ghantua dancers.

During the festival they travel to places to collect offerings from the community. Their spiritual journey ends on Pana Sankranti, the Odia New Year when they go back to the temple to do their amazing dance, over hot embers.

This collection of work by Alka is a visual record going beyond just taking pictures to become a way of reclaiming culture. The camera does not just take a picture it uncovers the stories of Odia heritage that are often hidden by time.

This collection shows that Odia culture is not something static but something that is dynamic and changing. Alkas work successfully connects the past, to the present making sure that the energy of our heritage stays strong.



➤ The dramatic perception

A proficient artist always shows dedication through their work. Alka, consistently determined in her presentation, captures the unexpected expressions of a folk artist. By perceiving the essence of his inner mood, she wonderfully captures the performer's true sentiment. This picture was taken during the 'Sahi Jata' in Puri.

The Sahi Jata of Puri is really something. It is an old and lively outdoor theater tradition in Odisha. This tradition is connected to the history of Odisha, which's a mix of fighting and spiritual things. During the spring season the streets of Puri become like a stage where performers do their thing.

The Sahi Jata tradition is thought to have started with a ruler named Chodaganga Deva back in the century. He wanted to teach the young people called Paikas, how to fight and also celebrate the Rama Leela. This tradition typically starts on Chaitra Shukla Navami, which's the day Lord Rama was born and it goes on for around 10 to 12 days.

Puri is divided into seven lanes called Sahis. Each Sahi is in charge of a part of the Ramayana story and they show off their unique fighting skills. To get ready for the performance the dancers practice for a month while wearing heavy weights like sandbags or stones on their bodies. The eye-catching people are the Naga dancers, who dress up like brave warriors with big fancy headgear, shields and weapons. They move in a way with big steps. You will also see wooden masks and frames called Medhas that represent characters like Parsurama, Ravana, Hanuman, Goddess Durga and so on.

The Sahi Jata dance is very energetic. Has a lot of percussion. It is different from classical dances like Odissi and mahari. The Sahi Jata dance shows off the Akhada culture of Puri which's all about being strong and having good rhythm in your footsteps. The performers walk in a group through the narrow lanes accompanied by the loud beats of the Mahuri and Dhol.

The Sahi Jata of Puri tells the story of the Ramayana. It is also deeply connected to the rituals of the Jagannath Temple. It is like a bridge between the fighting history of the Odia people and their love, for the gods of the temple. The Sahi Jata of Puri is a thing that brings together the history and the devotion of the people.



➤ Sparkle skill

The craftsman and the flame have a connection. You can see this connection in the way the sparks dance. The lighting brings out the beauty of traditional crafts. The photographer has taken something and made it look really special.

This picture shows how the craftsman feels when they are working hard. The light and dark colors make the moment look important. The craftsman and the flame are working together to create something. The picture captures the feeling of the craftsman and the flame.

The person in the picture is alone with fire, which makes me think of a blacksmith or a fireplace connecting the past to photography. The way the picture is set up is defined by the light from the fire. This warm light shows the person's muscles and face making them stand out from the dark around them. It feels like they are alone in a special way. The warm light from the fire against the shadows makes the hard work look like something bigger than just physical labor. The colors in the picture are mostly earthy and fiery with the cool dark background making them stand out. The picture feels very real you can almost feel the stone walls and the hot sparks. The man's rough skin and the sparks flying around him create a contrast, between things that last and things that do not.

I saw this photograph that Alka Priyadarshinee took at Balakati. Balakati is a village near Bhubaneswar. It is famous for making things from kansa and brass. People in Odisha are very good at this.

As someone who likes art history I think Balakati is a place. It is, like a museum that's still alive. The people there still make things from metal like they did a time ago. The metal they use is called bell metal. It is a mix of copper and tin. They use a lot of copper and a little tin to make it. The mix is usually four parts copper and one part tin. This means it is seventy eight percent copper and twenty two percent tin.

Lastly, I want to say thank you and pay my respects to her journey. She has taken great photos with her camera capturing moments with a lot of care and a good eye. I, Digambar Behera feel like I have seen a lot of her life and work up close. So, I want to call her the "Lens Woman of Odisha."

Educational Qualifications

- ✓ Master of Visual Arts (2021–23) from Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar.
- ✓ Bachelor of Visual Arts (2017–21) from B. K. College of Art and Crafts, Bhubaneswar
- ✓ Intermediate from Maharishi College of Natural Law (2015 – 2017), Bhubaneswar □ Schooling from Saraswati Shishu Vidya Mandir (2015), Jagatsinghpur

WORK EXPERIENCE

- 1) Given workshop on Photography at Govt. College of Art and Craft, Khallikote, Ganjam, Odisha 2024
- 2) Asst. Curator at Similpal Artists Residency and Art Camp, in association with 'Similpal Tiger Conservation Foundation'. Organised by MGM Foundation 2024
- 3) Worked as Visual Documenter at MGM Foundation 2025
- 4) Worked as Artist as well as Executive body member at Artist Association of Orissa

- 5) Participated in KALA KARMA one day water colour painting camp organized by Lalit Kala Akedemi, Regional Centre, Bhubaneswar 2024
- 6) Artist at Neo Tantra style of art that was demonstrated by Artist Dr. Prafulla Mohanty, 2021 Exhibitions
- 1) Attended Parikrama an group exhibition of research scholars of the Lalit Kala Akedemi, Bhubaneswar, 2025
- 2) Attended online photography exhibition organized by 'Manikarnika Art Gallery', 2023
- 3) Attended Photography Exhibition organized by Utkal University of Culture on World Photography Day 2023
- 4) Attended 35th and 36th annual art exhibition of B.K. College of Art and Craft at Kalinga Art Gallery 2021-224. Declaration

I think she really loves her job. She takes pictures of moments that go by fast. That many of us can only try to remember or feel for a little while. As someone who knows a lot about art and has written about it, I truly respect how dedicated disciplined and passionate every artist and craftsperson is.

This topic is too big, for one article. In my writings I will talk about her different photos, her styles, the old stories that are connected to myths, her life and some of my own experiences. I will also write about talented artists in my upcoming articles.

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