



शिल्प संगम

**Course Name:** From Earth to Deity: The Craft of Molela Terracotta Plaques

**Artisan Name:** DINESH CHANDRA KUMHAR

**Campus:** Gandhinagar



## About Craft

The Molela terracotta plaque craft of Rajasthan, practiced for over **700 years**, is a distinctive ritual art form centered in the village of Molela near Nathdwara. Traditionally created by the **Kumhar (potter) community**, these plaques hold deep **religious and cultural significance**, serving as portable shrines for tribal and rural communities who lack permanent temples. The process begins with locally available clay, kneaded and shaped into rectangular plaques. Artisans then hand-model relief figures of deities, folk heroes, and ancestral spirits, before sun-drying and firing them in open kilns. Natural pigments or simple washes are sometimes applied for decoration. Products primarily include votive plaques depicting gods like Devnarayan, Durga, or local deities, which are worshipped in households and village shrines. The craft reflects Rajasthan's living traditions of faith, ritual, and artisanal continuity.

## Course Objectives

- Through hands-on engagement, collaborative projects, and reflective dialogues, participants will explore the multifaceted nature of craft—its rituals, cultural significance, and contemporary relevance.
- Get the privilege of co-creating with Craft practitioners and discovering the historical foundations of the craft practice rooted in the cultural landscape.
- to spark creative detours, an infusion of unbiased interdisciplinary participation, and breakthrough
- outcomes that celebrate diversity in thought and contemporary themes in a traditional setting
- Through the platform, opening a possibility for creating intercraft collaborations is possible.

## About Artisan



Shri. Dinesh Chandra Kumhar, hails from Molela Village, Nathdwara, Rajasthan. He started his training at age eight under his father, 'PadmaShree' ShilpGuru Mohanlal Kumhar. Based in Molela, Rajasthan, he maintains a workshop and mentors emerging terracotta artisans.

He is recognized for his innovative designs and for expanding the boundaries of terracotta art. His creations range from religious plaques to extensive detailed panels depicting traditional, modern and contemporary designs. He has also contributed to artistic development by instructing over 30,000 art enthusiasts through seminars, workshops, and summer training programs.

His work recognised with National Merit Award in year - 2027 & 2019, and Rashtriya Tulsi Samman, in 2023.

## Course Methodology

- Demonstration by Master Craftsperson
- Learning the basics of the craft,
- Explorations of traditional forms
- Developing contemporary themes for contemporary narratives and new possibilities
- Making prototypes
- Finishing and displaying new outcomes to encourage

## Expected Outcomes

- Learning explorations for the craft technique and material
- Refined explorations of form, motif and narratives
- Molela plaque ( one or more) made by the participating student

Number of Participants - 12 to 18