Marble - Characteristics and Usage

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Marble articles are very common decorative items today. Also, in architecture, marble has proved its regular attendance with appearance in large and small buildings including both commercial and residential. Sculpture is another creative domain where marble finds immense significance with its brilliance of color, luster, and hardness. It offers a sort of purity and divine appeal to the sculpture. Thus, marble is regular raw material of inlay works, pillars, stone carvings, temple works, garden furniture, fireplace, and more.

What is marble and where does it comes from?

Marble is a non-foliated metamorphic rock that is made from recrystallization of carbonate materials, specifically dolomite or calcite. According to the various Geologists, Marble is a metamorphosed limestone. It results from the metamorphism of sedimentary carbonate rocks, commonly known as dolomite rock and limestone. Herein the metamorphism initiates the inconstancy in recrystallization of the carbonate mineral grains. Consequently, the marble rock has the interlocking mosaic of carbonate crystals. However, due to the interlocking, the primary features of a sedimentary rock get destroyed or modified.

Characteristics of Marble

Marble can be classified on the basis of their color wherein pure white marble is the outcome of the metamorphism of a very pure (silicate-poor) limestone or dolomite protolith and the colored ones with veins and swirls are due to the impurities like iron oxides, silt, sand, chert, etc. that are present as layers or grains in the limestone. Green color is often the result of serpentine owing to the extensive presence of the silica impurities or magnesium limestone. There are many other impurities that are present in the marble that are mostly mobilized and recrystallized due to the extensive pressure and heat during the metamorphism.

Usage

Marble has two major usages; the one for making sculpture and another as the construction material. For the former one, white marble is mostly demanded since classical times due to the purity in appeal, smoothness, a relative resistance to shattering, and relative isotropy and homogeneity. The technical reason for its luster is the low index of refraction owing to which the calcite permits the light to penetrate the several millimeters that gives a smooth waxy look and in deepening life to the marble sculpture of the human body.

In the domain of construction, colored marbles are of great importance. Herein, construction marble is made from the dolomite, calcite, serpentine, that can be easily polished. For construction, crystalline calcite rock is used as a building stone.

Production of Marble

Pakistan is among the largest exporter of marble in the world whereas China is the prime importer of marble, especially Pakistani Marble. In India, Marble is mostly produced in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, commonly for tile application and sculpture. Mostly, marble dust is combined with synthetic resin or cement to reconstitute or develop cultured marble. The appearance of the marble is further augmented with a painting technique also known as faux marbling that enhances the stone color pattern.

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