

Relevance of Pottery in today's time

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Design research seminar project | IDC, IIT Bombay



Declaration

The research work embodied in the written submission titled "Relevance of pottery in today's time" has been carried out by the undersigned as part of the Post-Graduate program in the Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay, India under the supervision of Prof. Raja Mohanty.

The undersigned hereby declares that this is her original work and has not been plagiarized in part or full from any source. Furthermore, this work has not been submitted for any degree in this or any other University.

I understand that any violation of the above will be a cause for disciplinary actions by the Institute and can also evoke penal action if need arises.

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Approval Sheet

The project entitled " Relevance of pottery in today's time" by Anupriya Kashyap , 136250010, is approved in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Master in Design (M.Des) degree in Visual Communication

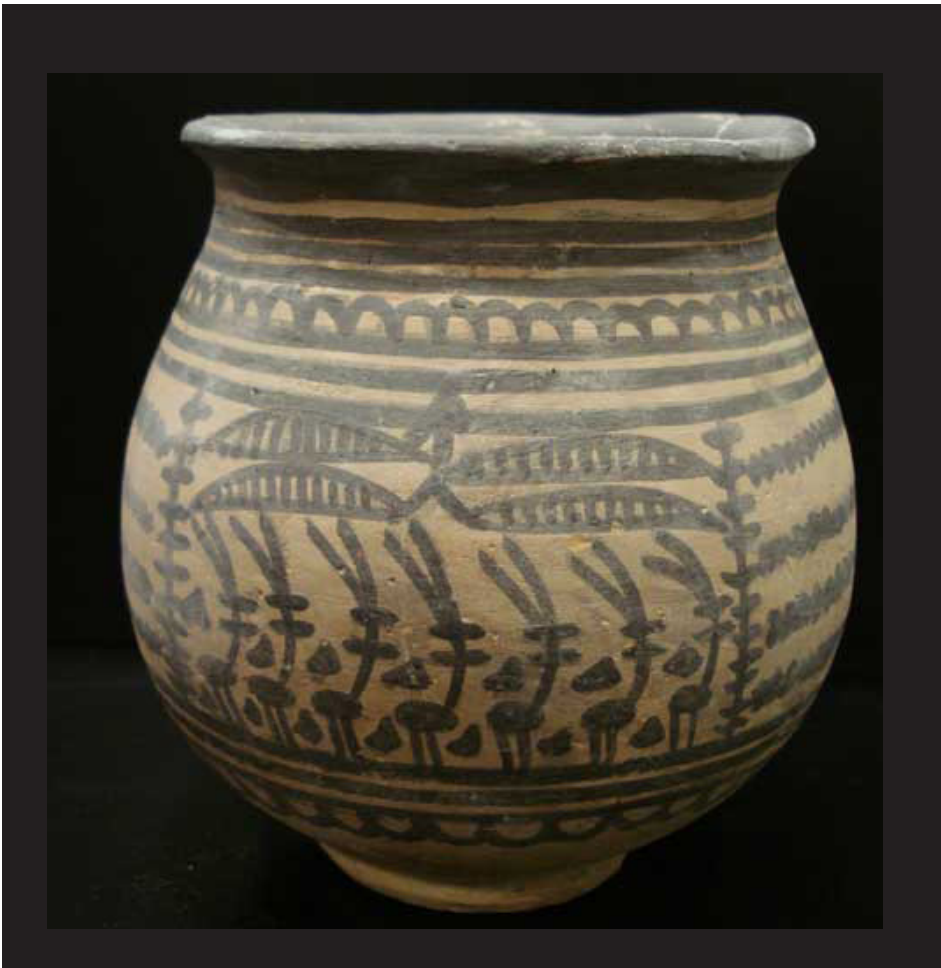
Project Guide:



Date: 29-7-15

Place: Mumbai

Introduction



Pottery in India and Indian subcontinent goes back to thousands of years back. Pottery in the early settlements of Indus valley civilization was more of a utility than art, in fact it was a perfect combination of utility with art. Today in India Pottery mainly thrives as an art form and traditional potters struggle to survive. So what is the reason, how pottery today relates to each one of us and how will pottery survive in the coming times, the following is the topic here that we have discussed and pondered upon.

Initial ideas

Initially to make a movie was to understand what I really wanted to say. So I was given a topic on which I had to develop a story to express it profoundly.

The topic was “ Art is a powerful thing ‘

Story *Art is a Powerful thing*

The story starts from an Old man painting in a gallery like hall, he is so much indulged in painting that it is like his world. He is making a scenery, with water flowing, birds flying, strong wind blowing through the trees. A woman from back comes and walks with her high heels, she looks at the painting and start talking about it's beauty, and how much she likes it. She says how she can almost listen to the water flowing, the birds chirping, the wind howling through the leaves of the trees. But the man doesn't react at all, he is still deep into his thoughts and painting. Suddenly a child from their right door of the gallery runs chirping and jumping and comes to the old man, the old man sees him and smiles and the boy starts talking to him in sign language the man replies in sign language too and laughs. The old man was deaf, but his painting reflects every sound that he could not hear but surely he felt it through art.

Playing with Clay

As I was working in the area of pottery and ceramics I wanted to feel the clay and learn its properties for my own benefit and pleasure. I learned making flat tiles with clay, which started with kneading the clay, then putting and spreading it evenly in the tile frame and giving it a plain even surface through various tools like scale, sponge, rolling pin.

Drying the tiles was also a process in itself. When they started bending from the corners during the process of drying, I had to look for a solution so they stay even through out.

I also worked on wheel for my learning and started with throwing the clay to make cylinders.

Spiritual connection with nature through Ceramics

After feeling the clay and also simultaneously thinking over what I really want to say. I felt that we in our world are so busy and exhausted in trivial things for gaining happiness that we forget what real happiness means. To take a break, to calm ourselves down, to connect to nature again in this materialistic world, we have a very few mediums left and one of them is pottery. Feeling the texture, the softness, the wetness of clay at some point of time takes back to our childhood and reconnects us to nature.

All I could think about was that pottery is a means to meditate and have fun like we use to have in our childhood days, and I thought that a film should convey this.

It all changed when I visited Vavoshi Village where I met the potters family who are traditionally practicing pottery since generations but has now started to quit.

The Vavoshi visit



First visuals



I had been to a village earlier too and when I visited Vavoshi, 20 Km from Mumbai I was expecting the same kind of visuals, houses, people. But it was different all together, the houses had so much of contrast in them where one looks like a small one with tiled roof and cow dung mixed with mud flooring and one is two storeys high fully tiled walls and a SUV in front.

The small houses were looking so pretty that I wondered why to have a house that big that looks so artificial.

Anyways, then we visited the potters family first and though I was hesitant much in the beginning their openness and warm welcome opened me a little. And that's why I was able to ask them questions that I wanted to.

The Wheel



We had taken an electric wheel to Vavoshi. By using a nearby temple's electrical supply it was used. In the village no potter even had a hand wheel and they made everything by hand, everybody was really excited to see the wheel. As our tradition says to worship one's tools as they give you means for food and shelter. The wheel was worshipped with flowers, Puja ki thali and lots of enthusiasm. People asked the price of the wheel and may be wished they had one. But in a village where potters don't have electricity at home an electric wheel seemed a dream we showed to them, that they might crave for like other technologies.



Exposure



It was good to see the smile on faces of children, adults, and old one's but then the point in showing them the wheel when ultimately they are going change their vocation and shift to some other job that can give them at least basic living standard. It will just create in them one more craving like they have thousands more, of cars, a two storey ugly tiled house, a driving job, and now an electric wheel!

Exposing them to things like art in pottery, or may be just a little education on what else they can do in pottery to make a living out of the job they know the most and they can really do well would have been a nicer thing to do. This thought that these people have pottery in their blood and they can do it really well only if they are exposed to what are the needs of today's crowd, what is the demand and how they can experiment, but yes a one day , two day or even a week's visit can't help them.

Pottery as utility



Potter uncle invited us to have tea in their house and I really was excited as I was expecting lots of Ceramic ware in their kitchen for obvious reasons, but it was shocking not being able to locate a single ceramic utensil or any ceramic ware in their kitchen.

When I asked them why their own products like the 'Chulha' or the 'Kadhai' are not traditional ceramics, their answer for the chulha was that they use it only when their gas is over and for utensils their wasn't pretty much an answer.

I had this question why aren't they using their own product?

I guess answer is quite simple their products aren't as usable in an efficient way as they were in the ancient times.

So what are we lacking here, what is the thing that is missing so much that they aren't able to come up from those basic designs and created something new, different which adapts to the present needs and requirements.

I feel education plays a very important role in opening the windows of your mind, making you aware of the new trends and needs, it also exposes you to different art forms to let you experiment and create new things.

It isn't 'Just' about pottery



In the process of coming to a concept, I was exposed and introduced to many videos on what is the thought of today's policy makers on development and how they think of bringing forward a nation. And also it was studied what happens to the people who come to a place, a very new place so called a city for their development and living. It was also studied how the developed countries are doing and how their culture is crafting on the so called thought of development.

What really is development and a prosperous country was pondered and questioned upon, and a video was made editing and clipping together the existing video to present an Idea.

First Draft



The first draft of the movie was a collection of interviews in which people talked about their connection with nature through ceramics and their childhood memories. The film basically wanted to explore what are views of today's generation and also of the people who work as potters on ceramics and it's relevance.

Second Draft



The second draft was more varied and broad and it explored the meaning of development for the policy makers and also for the people who experience this development. It was based on the Mumbai Delhi corridor video and it's validity.