



POTTERY

CHAUHAN EARTHEN WORKS
KUMBHARWADA, DHARAVI, MUMBAI

POTTERY

Introduction



HISTORY...

Pottery is one among the oldest skills acquired by man. Archaeological excavations have proof that pottery existed even during the Neolithic period, however invention of potters wheel believed to be in Mesopotamia somewhere between 6000-2400 BC revolutionised the way pots were being made.

Pottery has existed in all major civilizations like Harappan, Mesopotamian, Incas, Mayan, Chinese, Japanese...



CHEMISTRY...

The main chemicals in clay are called **silica** or silicon dioxide and **alumina** or aluminum oxide. Different types of clays used for different purposes have different amounts of silica and alumina in them. The shapes made out of clay bodies are dried and heated in a kiln at temperatures 600-1000 degrees C. This high heat drives off the water and causes the silica and alumina in the clay to bond very tightly.

There are different clay bodies like porcelain, stoneware, Terra-cotta etc. In addition to Silica and Aluminium Oxide they also have other inorganic chemicals like Oxides of Iron, Tin, Calcium, Magnesium, Manganese, Lead, Titanium, Potassium, Sodium etc

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Chauhan Earthen Works...



The Studio

It's a small scale production unit run by Mr. Nathalal Chauhan, *NathaBhai* to everyone, who is a third generation potter. They cater mainly to the decorative pottery market rather than the traditional *Ghadas and Ghamelas*. It employs 9 people and 5 out of them are family members.



*BabuBhai,
Master Potter*

The person who explained to me why I could be a potter and why I shouldn't be...

My Wheel ...



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Getting started...



The first thing to do is bring it to the right consistency by either drying the wet clay or adding water to the dry clay and evenly mixing the clay to make it into a homogenous mixture and flattening it out like a thick *chappati*.



WEDGING...

Then cut it into two halves vertically using a wet thread.

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Wedging...



Slam one of the halves on top of the other such that the cut sections are on the same side.



Flatten this again and cut horizontally using a thread.

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Wedging...



Slam one of the halves on top of the other such that the cut sections are on the same side and repeat the process for atleast 20 times.



Take this homogenous mixture and start kneading it like dough for making chappatis.

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Pig's Head...



Knead the clay in such a manner that there is accumulation of mass in the middle .This is called as forming of the *Pig's Head*.



Cut this into two halves from the centre separating each pig's head.

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Pig's Head...



Slam one of the halves on top of the other...



Slam it vertically and knead it to make a pigs head and repeat the process for atleast 8-10 times.

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Throwing...



Take the kneaded clay which is free from lumps and air bubbles and throw it on a wheel moving at a slow speed.



Using both hands hold the lump of clay tightly and try to bring it to the centre of wheel so that there is no wobbling. Remember to wet your hands if they offer resistance.

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Centering...



Holding the lump of clay between both hands try to bring it up like a frustum of a cone.



Check for any wobbling.

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Centering...



Push this cone down with right hand while wrapping the cone with your left hand to avoid off-centering.



Bring up the cone again and repeat the process for 5-6 times till the mass is symmetrically distributed and there is no wobbling at all.

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First step towards making a wall...



Make a hole in the middle of the cone with your right thumb while holding the clay with your left hand.



Using both thumbs make the hole bigger by pulling it to the sides gently.

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Raising a wall...



Try to raise the wall slowly with the thumbs inside the wall and by pinching the wall with the help of thumb, index and middle finger . This is the *Indian* way of raising the wall. Use the other fingers to support the wall.



Or this could be done by using thumb and index finger for pinching and the middle finger for supporting. This however is effective for smaller objects like *diyas* and *kulhads*.

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Shaping the object...



Shape the object accordingly by slowly thinning the wall and giving shape to it using your index finger and thumb.



Finally thin the wall and make it even using a bamboo tool.

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Forming the edge...



Form the edge using the index finger of right hand and by pinching with thumb and index finger of left hand.



Cutting the pot...

Keep a thread horizontally and hold one end tightly in one hand and let the other end wrap itself around the clay in exactly the place where you want to cut.

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Cutting the pot...



Carefully remove the pot using your left hand while the wheel is still moving. The movement of the wheel provides a momentum that makes it easier to remove the pot.



Carefully place the pot on a stable wooden surface. Do not worry if its slightly deformed while removing or placing, it can always be corrected once the clay dries and become leather hard.

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Raising the wall – the European way...



Make the hole in the middle of the cone and make it bigger using both thumbs like discussed earlier



Join the right index finger and thumb and position it outside the wall and place the left index and middle finger inside the wall in such a way that the wall passes through the knuckle of the right index finger. Gently pinch the wall and raise it slowly.

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Raising the wall – the European way...



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Raising the wall – the European way...



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Raising the wall – the European way...



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Raising the wall – the European way...



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Raising the wall – the European way...



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Raising the wall – the Indian way...



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Forming the neck...



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Finishing up...



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Removing the pot...



The wheel is brought to a stand still and the pot is separated from the clay body by cutting with a wet thread.

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Removing the pot...



The pot is carefully removed and kept on a stable wooden surface

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After 45 days of working on the wheel...

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Vases...



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Urns...



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Cups...



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Miniatures...





That's all folks !!!

THANKS...

God
Mom
Prof. Raja Mohanty
Mrs. Nirmala Patwardhan (*Ni*)
Shilpa Kanakia
Natha Bhai
Babu Bhai
Bhimji Bhai
Patil Sir
Pradhan Sir
Joshi Sir
Vini
Eddy
and all those strangers who helped me in Kumbharwada