

**NATURE IN CERAMICS – POTTERY  
EXPLORATION ON WHEEL**

**DESIGN RESEARCH SEMINAR**

**PDSPL-149**

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**INDUSTRIAL DESIGN CENTER  
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
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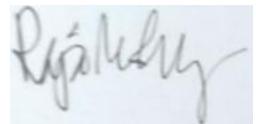
# Approval

Design Research Seminar  
Nature in Ceramics – Pottery exploration on wheel

By: Vishal Bhushan Jha  
M Des Industrial Design 2014-16

Is approved as a partial fulfillment of requirements of a post  
graduate Degree in Industrial Design at IDC, IIT Bombay.

Project Guide

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rajeshwari".

# Declaration

The content Produced in the project report is original work and takes due acknowledgement of referred content wherever applicable. The thoughts expressed herein remain the responsibility of the author undersigned and have no bearing on or does not represent those of IDC, IIT Bombay.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vishal B Jha". Below the signature, the date "24-6-16" is written in a smaller, handwritten font.

Vishal B Jha  
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# Acknowledgement

I would like to sincerely thank Prof. Raja Mohanty for guiding me through this project and giving me creative and output freedom. I would extend my thanks to Prof. A G Rao for going through my work and giving invaluable feedback and suggestions. Also I would like to thank my classmates and fellow ceramic studio mates for giving me constant appreciation and suggestions on my project.

# Contents

Abstract .....	1
Bringing nature in pots .....	3
Initial Practice .....	4
Explorations .....	6
Glazing .....	21
Conclusion .....	23
Bibliography .....	24





# Abstract

Traditional wheel pottery is one of the oldest form of arts. It has so many possibilities that in the past 10000 years or so of history, infinite forms and experimentations have been done on it and even now new outcomes keep coming. There is immense possibility of creating something new every time with pottery. This project is my attempt to create interesting fluid forms in ceramics inspired from Nature. The main goal here is to create interesting contemporary forms while maintaining the formal sophistication of wheel pottery.

## Fursat

"Fursat", A beautiful Urdu word which means disengagement is something missing in the industrial design scenario currently. We are very requirement oriented people worrying about the project goals and outcomes, always eager to tick the checklist, trying to finish the task. Though trying to maintain quality and perfection this over engagement and level achieving attitude often leads to designer's soul getting lost in process.

Fursat on the other hand is disengagement and more or less is prevalent in an artist's work. An artist usually works more on intuitions and less on logic. The reason also might be that there is not much of questioning in an art work about why the artist did a particular thing and why not something else. Also there are several interpretations of some work. This project was an attempt towards an open ended exploration in pottery. There was no set objectives to reach which gave way to more of explorations for own satisfaction and less of doing something for finishing it.

# About Pottery

A wonderful material, clay , is probably the first material to which a man turned his hand when he felt the need to make something. Not for hunting or for war, but for just creating something for pleasure of it. Out of Clay came those first utensils of mankind which were used for cooking, storing and eating. Then it started developing ornamental, personal and artistic. Also at some time, pottery became identity of a region or tribe.

If we learn simple rules of clay, it serves us well. It obeys with our slightest touch and gives tangible expressions to our thoughts, those thoughts which even our brain finds difficult to decipher sometimes. It remains plastic and responsive and changes with our command yet when we want the final form achieved to stay as it is, we pass it through fire and that makes or finger impressions to stay forever.

It took thousands of centuries for forces of air and water working on granite rock to form the clay we work on and further more winds and streams to deposit it in bed. Its ready to serve us and we should respect it for that and be honest and sincere with it. Only then can it reward us richly. It gives immense satisfaction in making something and knowing that we have made it well.

# Bringing Nature in Pots

With exploration in wheel pottery, I initially had planned to make the pots very accurate and subtle in forms with Nature exploration to be done in glazing. While exploring wheel pottery, I started experimenting with forms and alteration of pots. Carving, filigree, pinching and reshaping were some of the form alteration methods I used. Initial explorations were more of literal depiction of nature on the pots. Slowly the transitioning began and I started getting more of abstraction on the pots. One series of vase, bowl and cup was developed inspired from the rough and undulating nature of tree trunks. From there I started exploration with form alteration to make pitchers. The form alteration was inspired from Natural Hand gestures while gripping a jug or pitcher. This gave birth to a very sophisticated contemporary and abstract representation of nature in pottery. The series was inspired from various leaves and their shapes. Each pitcher has its opening inspired from a different leaf. The shape of the opening defines the pot's volume and final shape. Form transition plays a vital role in this subtlety.

## IITB Campus

IIT Bombay campus located in Powai is a 550 acres campus spread along the periphery of Sanjay Gandhi National Park and Powai Lake. It is a beautiful campus with a vivid variety of flora and fauna interacting with humans in a very subtle transitional space. The campus offers delightful opportunities to the residents and visitors to observe the nature closely. I have been experiencing the nature here from my first year and have been sitting by the lake or at Sameer Hill top sometimes to soak in the nature. The nature in campus offers vivid examples of elements of design like lines, textures, colour, shape, space, gradients and proportions.

# Initial Practice



# Initial Practice



# Explorations



## Needle Carving:

First set of Exploration on Pottery to bring in “Nature on ceramics” was done by needle carving the wet pot carefully. The patterns were either literal or abstract representation of common observations from the campus.

# Explorations



## Coiling:

Explorations on terracotta with coiling technique done to see how nature can be inscribed in a pot outside. This technique gives greater freedom to explore various shapes and the artist can give personal touch to the pots.



# Explorations



## Carving and cutting:

Further explorations were done on carving and cutting pots to make nature inspired work like Ducks, Flower, Leaves cut on candle cover etc.



# Explorations



## Carving and Filigree:

Terracotta paste filled in cone was used to make the filigree work on pots. This embossed patterns on ceramics gave it distinct look along with the cut out. Two Lampshades were made in this series.

# Explorations



## Direct visualisation of nature on pots by alteration:

Pots were altered to imitate the texture of tree trunk. In a more literal exploration, leaves were cut out in one of those bowls created. In another example the bowl was asymmetric and appeared to be falling to one side getting inspired from the trees on lakeside which appear tilted.



# Explorations

Alteration of cylinder to pitcher inspired from natural gripping of Jug handle.



# Explorations



# Explorations



# Explorations



# Explorations



# Explorations



# Explorations



Final pots were inspired by shape of leaves of various plants. Each pitcher had different opening shape inspired from different leaves and that opening shape defined the whole body form of the pitcher.

# Explorations

(final series)



# Explorations

(Process of pottery)



Making Lip of the pitcher



Starting to pinch from base



Using both hands



Gently going inwards



Making both walls meet



A pitcher with flat handle.



Marking th handle cut



Removing excess clay



Finishing the pitcher



Cutting out handle using knife



Smoothening the handle



Wet finishe pitcher, to be smoothened 19

## **Breaking Geometry, Making Pottery organic and intuitive**

Geometry is good, it soothes eyes, makes things appear organised and brings order to a setup. But breaking that geometry in a planned and organised way is what creates interest to the otherwise monotonous geometric compositions. That's what is planned in this project. Breaking geometry with subtlety.

## **Interpretation and Usages of pots**

These pitchers are contemporary art pieces and though are fully functional and in use but positioned for lifestyle market and can be used as decorative pieces, mantel and table accessories. The Series comes as a set or can be taken individually.

## **Glazing works**

For Glazing, I am considering using lighter colours to enhance the forms of the final series. Also using the leaf that has inspired the opening of the pot as pattern in glaze will accentuate the form value. Future works will include glaze tests and Glazing of pots.

# Glazing



Few Explorations in glazing were done. Different types of glazes were used to achieve results. Lauering of different glazes, Scratching applied glaze and Glazing of grooves carved were explored.



# Conclusion

The journey of this project gave invaluable learning possibilities. The beginning explorations on wheel pottery and later modifying it and exploring with carving, cutting, filigree and alterations helped a lot in developing the final forms and series. The final forms were inspired from all previous explorations. Freedom to express the nature in anyway led to this open ended exploratory result which is artistic and contemporary in nature.

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