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Mutuality: In Indian ceramic spheres

Rekha Bajpe Aggarwal
Studio Re4clay, India

The Indian ceramic industry at present encompasses a vast variety and an exponentially growing array of products with an existing commercial scope running into billions of man-hours and dollars, even per small regional cluster. It also has a living tradition of pottery, and simultaneously supports studio and commercial pottery, as well as industrial and specialized ceramics. While there is an adequate documentation available on commercial and industrial, the remaining spheres remain largely un-documented. Studio pottery, the newest sphere of ceramics practiced in India, is growing rapidly in scope and magnitude. Traditional pottery, however, finds itself relegated to the background and is dwindling at an alarmingly rapid pace. The lack of modernisation and availability of glazed commercial pottery destroys its financial viability, and precludes the future generations from following in the footsteps of their parents. Small scale commercial pottery of good quality is also dying out due to the lack of economies of scale and omnipresent cheap plastic and metal substitutes. How is it possible that the Western model, where traditional pottery exists solely in the domains of folk museums and curiosity shops, is the only model available? Mutuality is defined as the relationship between two different species of organisms that are interdependent where each gains benefits from the other and helps sustain the other. Sometimes evolution is necessitated in the process.

Biography

Rekha Bajpe Aggarwal is a ceramic Artist & Curator, also specialising in multi-media installations. An Economics (Hons.) graduate (1988), Advertising Filmmaker at McCann Erickson, she moved to independent film-making (1988-2004). At present she is the Founder/Artist of Studio Re4clay Trustee on the Board of Delhi Blue Pottery Trust, Creator/Editor of Indian Ceramic Quarterly (2008-), Projects and Planning In-charge of Sanskriti Delhi Blue Ceramic Centre (2014-), Faculty teaching Ceramics (co-curricular) at Ashoka University, India (2015-). She is currently setting up a Trust called Traditions Forever focused on documenting, retaining, sustaining and promoting traditional pottery in India.

re4clay@gmail.com

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