

SPECIAL PROJECT

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' EARTH AND FIRE '

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Introduction



*W*hile having a cup of tea
This thought came in my mind
Who is a creator of this form?
Which keeps my tea so warm?

Almost a year back while having tea on a railway station in those earthenware cups I develop a hidden interest in how they make those small tea cups?

I remember the first day I handle clay; it was more like I am having fun than learning anything. Almost for 15 days I was learning knitting. At the end of 15th day when I asked my master how long it will take me to understand 'clay?'

He replied in very polite manner 'if you got to know anytime in your life tell me also'. That one sentence made me continue the exploration. And still I am exploring.

EARTH AND FIRE my special project was one of the best opportunities I ever got to learn about pottery.

Earth and Fire



In the ancient times considerable note was made of understanding the elements of nature namely, fire, water, wind and earth. The philosophers show them as a reflection of the universe and that they play a great role in the cosmic plan. Every day we warm our selves by fire, wash ourselves in water, feel the wind in our hair and walk upon the earth. Yet many will be amused that these same elements can be interpreted in various ways in relation to our daily lives. These elements are not only felt around us but have certainly become a way to express themselves in many ways within our “nature”, like air for thought, fire for desire, water for emotions, and earth for stability.

As a part of my special project I concentrated on earth and fire. What I understood out of fire was flame, light. Enlightenment and earth meant solid, rock and ceramic.

FIRE: fire is enthusiastic, warming and a spark of life. It is a desire. It is the most powerful of energy sources and represents the spirit. It is the flame that flickers and glows in the sun, it attracts the eye. Fire is red and signifies delight, a zest for living and the light by which we see. It is dynamic, moving, vital, and brilliant.

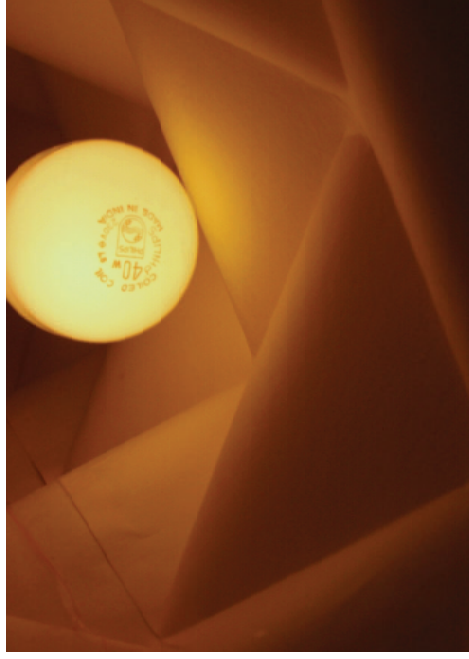
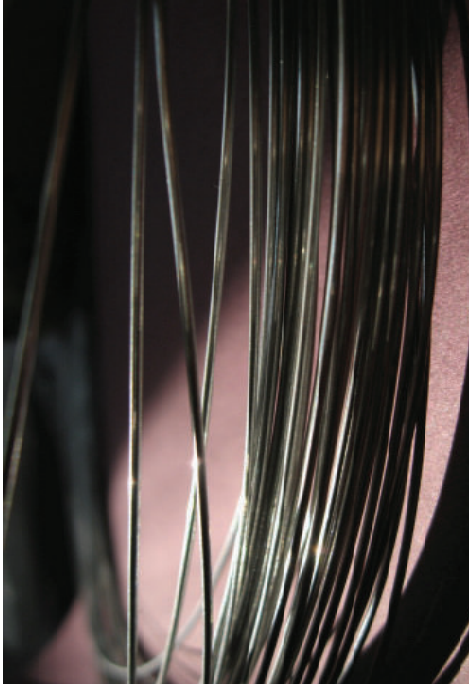
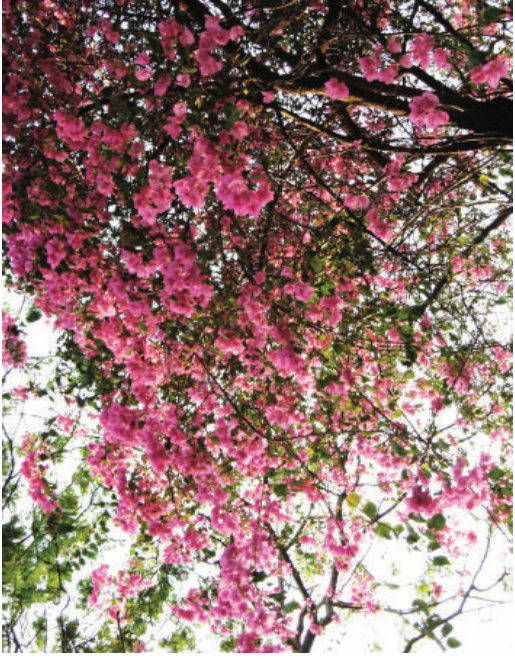
EARTH: is the foundation on which we build our life. It is the core of our senses and the colour of life. It is the root of all being. Earth is reliable and has an understanding of life. It is rich and dark, strong and yet tender while nurturing the roots giving substance to the happiness we need.

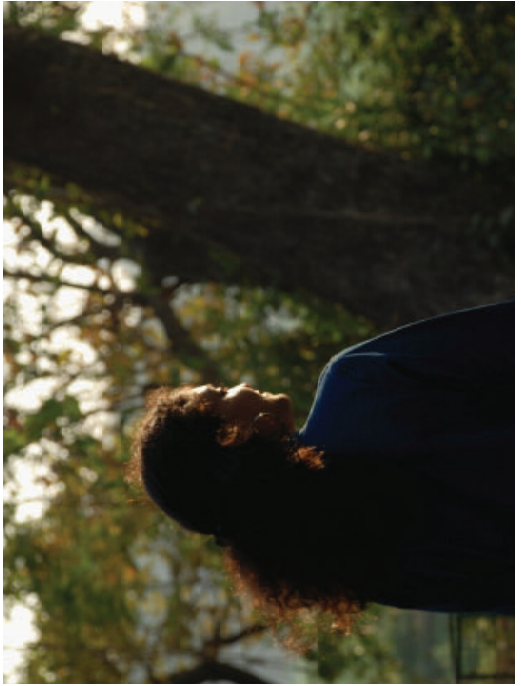
Earth is about stability, recognition, natural laws, dignity, respect strength, understanding, acceptance and nourishment. It is the foundation on which we build our life. So making earth my foundation I decided to create objects that emitted the zest of light.

Study of Light



In the very beginning I studied light and how it affects the appearance of the objects through photography.





Beginning

*A*s the wheel turns in motion
The layman can't understand
Oh, what is this magic
She holds in her hands?

A piece of earth before her
Turns to beauty they say
This girl with small hands
Truly has a way.z

Yes this was my experience when I started practicing again in IDC. I got introduced to wheel pottery in May 08 as I took pottery as a subject for project 1. Almost for 40 days continuously I was learning and experiencing wheel pottery. Ceramist Naren Kesarwani guided me through out the project.

Almost after two months when again I touched clay, it was tough. And when I started working I felt my clay is dancing on wheel. Truly I was not able to handle the clay. For me hand built process is a dialogue between hand and the clay. An individual language in which, the whole body is involved in speaking and listening to the clay.

I do remember all my first pot babies were off centered. So many times many of my pots did suicide while cutting off. After practicing for couple of days I got my hands on wheel.



The Creative Process



*L*umps of plastic clay

Turning counterclockwise, particle aligned
Centred, coned and then tipped over
Climbing into cylinder, urns
Flying wide into bowls,
Centrifugal force pushing with gravity -
Turning round that still point
A spinning mass of wet and tired mud.

The subject of clay on potter's wheel is never ending; there is always something new to express with boundless creative energy shifting from different methods and different mediums and forever searching for new ideas. The project was about creating positive and negative spaces in pots. There were basically two ways I explored, first was by doing it using basic geometrical shapes, using symmetry and uniform cutting. While the second way was abstract; it was handmade pottery using intuitive design.

Cutting of Pots



*I*t was as hard as killing your own pots. Yes after making those beautiful pots with the warmth of your hand, your hands are suppose to cut it? Though it will look more beautiful after processing, nobody likes wounding their creations. Yes it was very difficult in the beginning...but as a part of assignment I was suppose to start somewhere.

First few pots were devoted to know what a leather hard stage is. Leather-hard stage refers to a specific stage during the drying of a pot. At this stage, the clay is still visibly damp but has dried enough to be able to be handled without deformation. And after that a bunch of pots sacrificed in knowing cutting and what the appropriate tools of cutting are. Those were the easily available tools ever. Few of they were steel pipes, paper cutters, hair pins and so on.

I remember Raja Sir told me once 'if anytime you make a pot which you don't want to give anyone, then that pot has got your true involvement'. And I remember how I felt on a day when I saw the biggest pot I made was broken. That day I was so disheartened and happy.

What I Learnt?



The project helped me learning many things. Few of them were ceramics as a material, pottery as a traditional craft, light as a source of visibility and many more. Few good things I polished by doing this special project are,

- Improving my understanding of pottery
- Form exploration
- Understanding of material
- understanding of light
- Improving my photography abilities

My Explorations



