

## Beginning of Glazing in Ceramic

Ceramics decorations are always welcome in our home. The combination of their shapes and colors makes make them even more unique and elegant. Find out how the ceramics were created in the beginning of time.

At first all pottery was hardened by drying in the sun, but the increasing use of fire soon brought out the fact that a fire-baked clay vessel becomes as hard as stone. Man had no time for luxury then: every thing was made strictly for utilitarian purposes. Thousands of years were to pass before he found that different districts produce different colors of clay, which led to the use of decoration.

These ancient discoveries have been the base upon which the ceramics of the last 4000 years have been built.

Pottery-making, however, did not become a complete art until the technique of glazing was mastered. Simple clay is porous after being fired it will hold water for some time, but the liquid will leak slowly through the air spaces between the clay particles. Glazing not only made ceramics more durable and eye-worthy, but also watertight.

Glazes are superficial layers of molten material which have been fired on the clay substance. They are as varied as the many kinds of pottery, and it must never be forgotten that each type of ceramic body is at its best with its appropriate glaze.

The early Egyptians, Syrians and Persians are generally credited with developing the first practical glazing material a very uncertain alkaline. Pioneer pottery-makers found that glazes often changed the natural clay colors. They gradually learned to use iron, manganese and cobalt to tint their wares with breath-taking results. Some of the earliest glazes were colored glass containing copper or iron which produced elegant green, turquoise and yellow vases of ancient Egyptian and Assyrian origin. Marvelous work was wrought with these few materials, but the era of truly fine pottery dawned with the Persian, Egyptian and Syrian work that immediately preceded the Crusades.

By this time, the art of glazing pottery with a clear soda-lime had been thoroughly learned by Middle East artisans. This permitted a new and revolutionary coloring technique known as under-glazing that is, the painting of pottery decorations before the glaze is fired. After being removed from the kiln, the designs could be seen in radiant hues, glowing through the transparent glaze.

Vases, tiles, oil lamps and ceremonial plates, shaped in good plastic clay, were covered with a white silicious coating, fit to receive glazes of this kind, giving the best possible ground for the painted colors then known.

While Middle East ceramists were producing their beautiful masterpieces, other cultures throughout the world were also experimenting, creating new and wondrous works of art from clay and fire. Just as the potter's wheel was discovered independently by many races, so was the use of molds and liquefied clay, known today as slip.

From a traditional making of the ceramics until the ceramics were made with glazing. There is the art of making the ceramic which is still surviving.

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### About the Author

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