

## MODULE – 5

Other Mediums  
of Painting



Notes



10

# PAINTING ON CLAY

Dear learner, in the previous lesson you have learnt about the Painting on Cloth. In this lesson, you will learn about the Painting on Clay. The Kumbhkar, potter is also called Prajapati, and Vishwakarma, creator of the world. According to Atharva Veda, Brahma first created the potter, so that the things which are not on the earth could be shaped by him. The potter plays an important role in the life of the people. From the prehistoric period, the pot, as the vessels have been the symbol of the mother. The association of the Earth with the great mother has ancient origin. The Pots are fired or unbaked depending on the ritual. At the time sowing of seed and harvesting, in rites of birth, to decorate the bridal homes or in rituals to the dead, the pot is used as part of the ritual. Icons of the virgin mother Earth are made of clay, installed, worshipped and then cast into the water or offered to the sites of goddess. In addition to utensils and figures of gods and goddesses, potters in india make many other terracotta objects such as horses, elephants, tigers, bulls, camels, cows, houses, cowherds, and men with musical instruments, figures of mother and child, men and women.



## OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- explain Clay paintings as a meaningful folk art form;
- explain the background of Clay painting and objects;
- identify the different forms of clay objects prepared by the potters;
- identify the media and materials used to paint the clay objects.

## 10.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

First you need to know the general description of clay painting. Clay items are made in each and every pockets of India. Each geographical region is known for its distinct and unique identity yet all are connected with some basic thread of pan Indian identity. Delhi and Jaipur (Rajasthan) for example are famous for blue pottery; clay, terracotta and pottery of Jammu and Kashmir are very attractive and speak in volumes about the artistic flavour of the people; Huqqah craft of Haryana and parts of western Uttar Pradesh have their own history, heritage and charm; terracotta jewellery is now getting the attention from the fashion loving men and women from all corners of India; terracotta of Kutch exhibits the taste and colour of the land and attracts the buyers from other parts of the world; Longpi coiled pottery of Manipur has been making this small and beautiful state of the north-east India popular everywhere; painted terracotta of Gujarat is extremely wonderful; Karnataka is famous for pottery and terracotta.



Notes

## 10.2 MATERIAL REQUIRED FOR CLAY PAINTING

A learner should have the following materials for clay paintings. The media and materials for clay painting are simple, imbibing and very few.

- Clay pots/objects
- Paper plate
- Assorted paintbrushes
- Bowl with water
- Putty knife
- Paper towels
- Cotton swabs or cotton cloth
- Acrylic sealer
- Graphite tracing paper
- Maker
- High-gloss exterior enamel spray paint
- Pencil

## 10.3 TRADITIONAL METHOD OF CLAY PAINTING

Let us learn the different types of the traditional method of clay painting. The raw material for painting on clay surface is ordinary clay, derived from the beds of water bodies like rivers, lakes and ponds. The clay is cleaned, mixed and then shaped either by hand, wheel or moulded into desired objects. The items are dried, fired and glazed as per the requirements. The clay or terracotta products are graded according to their colour, strength and water absorption capacity.



Notes

Painting with a deep artistic sense turns plain pots into eyes-catching containers, add colour to the home, and adds the beauty of the plants or flowers.

#### Method of Saucer Painting of Kalighat (Sara Chitra)

A saucer is made of clay and terracotta. The backside of the saucer is used as the ground for painting. A coat of white clay is given on the surface. Figures and objects are drawn with the help of a pencil. Then the face and other parts of the figures are coloured, one colour at a time. The colours are made from vegetables and earth. Tamarind glue is used as the binder. A coat of varnish is given to achieve glaze.

#### Toys of Krishna Nagar, West Bengal

These toys are very famous for the realistic presentation of human and animal figures which are made of clay. These are small in size but full of detail and very realistic colours. Toys are painted in bright colour after finishing. A coat of gum extracted from boiled tamarind seeds give strain and smooth finish. The colours are made from locally available vegetables and flowers.

#### Painted Clay Horses of Kapaikudi, Tamil Nadu

**Chettinad:** The clay horses of Ayyanap. A mixture of clay, sand, straw and paddy husk is kneaded and shaped in a specified order and fired in a kiln. The horses are coloured in various shades. These clay horses are traditional offerings in Ayyanar temple. The colours are obtained mainly from minerals and flowers along with earth colours.

#### Painted Clay of Morela

This traditional art form originated in the village of Morela in Rajasthan. The terracotta figures are made hollow. The most famous items are plaques that depict the image of gods and goddesses. This clay is mixed with alumina, silica and lime and kneaded to form a dough. Figures are made through the technique like pinching, rolling, pressing etc. When the plaques are ready, they are dried in a furnace for nine days. These are painted with mineral and stone colours after that.

### PRACTICAL EXERCISE 1

In this exercise, you will learn about the Terracottan Pot Painting.

**Step 1:** Cover your work surface. Students are advised to use a plastic cloth, a layer of newspaper or an old vinyl tablecloth. Now scrub a terracotta pot. Use a stiff brush to smooth bumps and imperfections. Alternatively, sand the pot lightly with fine sandpaper.



Notes



Fig. 10.1

Wipe the pot with a damp cotton cloth. This will remove all traces of dust and grit. Let the pot dry before painting.

**Step 2:** Seal the inside of the terracotta pot. This is done by spraying 2 to 3 coats of clear acrylic spray paint. The clear paint seals the pot and prevents moisture from leaching through to the outside after the pot. Let the pot dry thoroughly. Then apply a second coat. After that coat dries, apply a final coat.



Fig. 10.2

**Step 3:** Layer the pot with primer paint as its first coating. Now paint the outside of the pot. Next use a thin coat of high gloss exterior enamel paint. Extend the paint to the top 2 inches of the inside of the pot. Let the pot dry thoroughly. Then apply a second coat. After that coat dries, apply a final coat.



Notes



Fig. 10.3

**Step 4:** Add design: If desired, use a sponge dipped in high gloss exterior paint in contrasting colours to paint the design on the terracotta pot. Cut the sponge into shapes such as squares, stars or circles, or use the sponge to dab on a texture. For example, a sponge cut into narrow strips can be used to paint horizontal or vertical stripes on the pot.



Fig. 10.4

**Step 5:** Seal the pot with a coat of clear acrylic paints. The sealer protects them from scratches, adds durability and makes the pot easier to keep clean. Allow the sealer to dry completely, and then spray on a second coat.



Notes



Fig. 10.5

Set the pot aside to dry properly for at least 2 to 3 days before planting.



Fig. 10.6

This is another example of Pot Painting.

## PRACTICAL EXERCISE 2

Let us learn another artwork that is Painting on Clay Board.

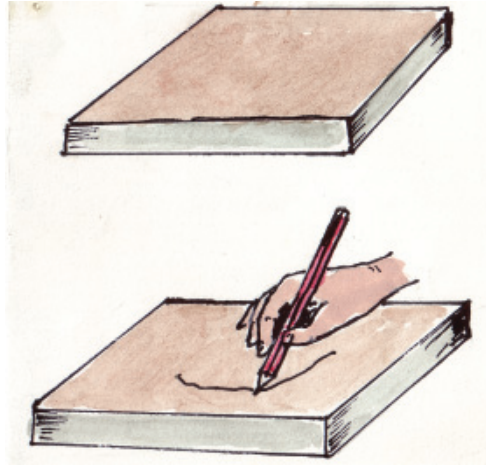
How to apply acrylic or watercolour paint on clay board? Clay board is a type of steady panel that allows artists to combine translucent and opaque painting techniques with etching. Paint can be applied to white clay board in many different ways - a brush, sponge or putty knife. The paint on clay board can also be removed or etched away to create unique textures and realistic paintings.

**Step 1:** Just like using a regular stretched canvas, you need to determine the size of the clay board before you begin. This is an important step to remember for



Notes

watercolour artists who are used to cutting and cropping watercolour paper to the size of their final painting.



**Fig. 10.7**

Sketch the basic outlines and main shapes of your painting with a pencil, if you desire. Since the clay board is manufactured to be ready to paint, you do not need to prepare the board for painting. Your pencil lines will show up as a guide when you begin to paint on the clay board.

**Step 2:** Start with a thin coat of watercolour paint in a paintbrush for background colours. If you choose to use acrylic paint, remember that acrylic can take on both translucent and opaque properties, so you must thin out your paint to create an underlying, translucent colour.



**Fig. 10.8**

Apply another coat of acrylic or watercolour paint to block out the main shapes in your painting. Allow the paint to dry.

**Step 3:** Use an etching needle or scribe to etch details into your paintings. When you scratch through the paint, the etched lines will show up white, making it easy to see the details you are creating.

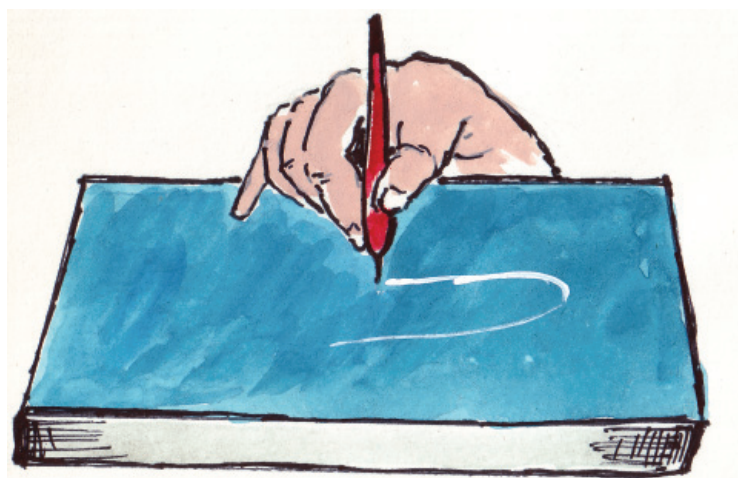


Fig. 10.9

**Step 4:** Brush the next layer of acrylic or watercolour paint onto your clay board, painting over the etched areas. The etched lines begin to add texture and depth to the painting.



Fig. 10.10

**Step 5:** Continue this process until you have completed your painting. You can finish your painting with etched lines that you want to leave white as a contrast to your painting, or let the etched lines be coloured in your painting. Also, you can paint on a clay wall.



Notes





Notes

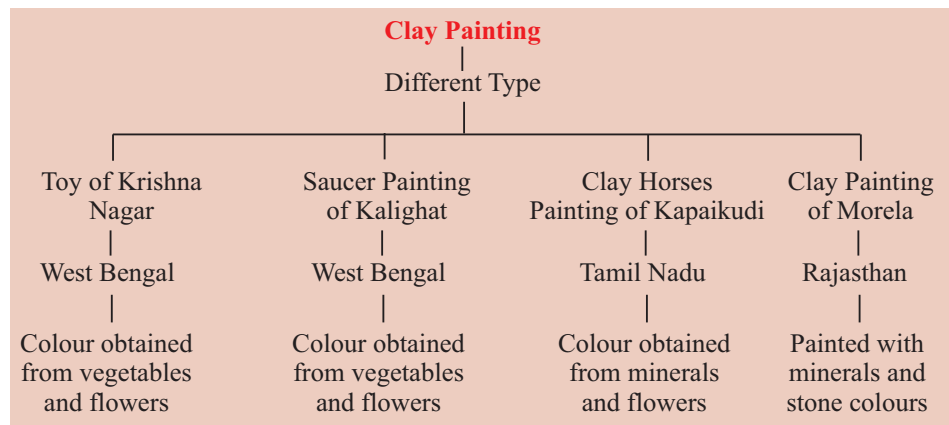


Fig. 10.11

This is another example of Clay Board Painting.



**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**



**TERMINAL EXERCISE**

1. Identify the various forms of clay objects in the different geographical or cultural regions in India. Paint some of them.
2. Paint a flower pot using acrylic paints and use simple local design.
3. Paint a terracotta sculpture in popular style and submit.
4. Paint on clay board and submit.

## GLOSSARY

1. Acrylic paint : It is fast drying paint containing pigment suspension in acrylic polymer emulsion. It can be diluted with water but become water-resistant.
2. Belief : An acceptance that a statement is true or that something exists.
3. Huqqah : An Eastern smoking pipe, very popular in Indian villages, designed with a long tube passing through an urn of water that cools the smoke as it is drawn through.
4. Ingredient : Component part or element
5. Kumbhkar : The potters (Kumhars) derive their name from the Sanskrit word Kumbhar, meaning earthen pot maker.
6. Longpi : Coiled pottery of Manipur. They are all black, simple and almost minimalistic in their design.
7. Prajapati : In Hindu mythology, the potters are the descendants of Lord Prajapati Daksha, son of Lord Brahma. Therefore, they are also known as Prajapati.
8. Putty knife : A flexible blade tool used for scraping and applying putty.
9. Rituals : The body of ceremonies or rites used in a place of worship.
10. Sandpaper : Heavy paper coated on one side with sand or other abrasive material, used for smoothing surface.
11. Sealer : As an undercoat of paint or varnish used to size a surface.
12. Terracotta : A type of earthenware, a clay-based unglazed or glazed ceramic, where the fire body is porous. Its uses include vessels, toys, sculptures and surface embellishment in building construction.
13. Visvakarma : Creator of the world (In Indian tradition, a potter is compared with Visvakrama, and addressed as Visvakarma).



Notes