

# A Historical Journey Of Indian Terracotta From Indus Civilization Up To Contemporary Art

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## 1.0 Abstract:

*In this research paper, the researcher wants to examine the artistic visual language of Indian terracotta Arts, which were conceptualized from Indus to contemporary. The investigator being associated with a concise history of sculpture or terracotta arts, is aware of circumstances in which artists of successive generations have struggled for the sociological and formal problems in innovation and terracotta art making. The main objective research paper is to present a concise history of Prehistoric to present contemporary times terracotta arts in India from different states, as well as a comprehensive overview of developments in the material aspects of pottery and other terracotta from its origins in the early first century to the present. Terracotta the oldest medium and the most friendly medium form the time of Indus valley to the other states of India. this will help in introducing terracotta of different states in India, artists and craftsman has created wonder from clay in the form of toys, architecture, jewelry. Both traditional and contemporary innovations were observed in the light of the continuity between the terracotta method, i.e. its materials and methods of production in relation to its' form. In accordance with this study*

**Keywords:** *Terracotta, Innovation, Architecture, Coil, Slab, Slip Casting, Pottery, Toys, Modeling, K.G. Subramanyam, Glazing*

**2.0 Introduction:** In this research paper researcher want to talk about the journey of Indian terracotta from Indus valley civilization to the traditional artworks done in the modern time and the different technique used by the traditional and contemporary artist of India and how hardwork the all have done to represent india in the whole world.

**3.0 Methodological Approach:** This research paper deals with traditional and modern Indian terracotta arts and the variables are not directly in the researcher's control as an art product. This author is interested to discuss a general area of his interest in the Indian Sculptural Arts in this research. Serious attempts are made in the first step to understand the problem taken and to rephrase it from an empirical point of view into practical terms. In the second step, the experts must follow all feasible and proven methods and techniques and match their consistency with this problem. Ultimately, various methods and techniques were systematically evaluated for his investigation, such as a mixture of descriptive, empirical, qualitative, quantitative, theoretical, historical, longitudinal tools and observational tools to obtain multi-faceted information and accurate solution to the research problem.

**4.0 Purpose of the Research:** The current problem of research revolves around our contemporary life. The art produce of last nine decades has a strong impact on the later development of sculptural art activity in our country. The serious thinkers raised the question of the socio-cultural and formalistic problem faced by contemporary Indian sculptural artists of the post-independence period through their writings and lectures.

**5.0 Scope of the Research Problem:** The investigator believes the problem area is very vast. There is still a chance, a possibility for sculptors, social scientists and art historians to improve the knowledge standard. The lack of professional written content and qualified analysis was a weakness for this investigator. The shift that took place in the art trends and developed from the first to the second stage of experimentation and subsequent creative journey the respective thought processes of the graphic artists of the corresponding phases must be balanced. This investigation has the potential to provide the present generation's art enthusiasts with multifaceted information that has remained elusive to this date generation

**6.0 Analysis of the Material Evidences:** K.G. Subramanyan, Jyotindr Jain, O C Gangoly, A. Goswami, Arundhati Banerji, Surendra Kumar, Ratan Parimoo, Keshav Malik, A.S. Raman, R. Shiv Kumar, Jostana Bhatt, PR Daroz, and others as writers and thinkers have evaluated the terracotta artists of in great detail by highlighting that sculptural art is nonrepresentational art practice for innovation and continuity Here main focus is given to practices and some ideological standpoints in India, terracotta as a creative medium

**6.1 Art of Indus valley:** This civilization was mostly civilized on the bank of the river Indus. so this civilization is also called Indus valley civilization and the most important cities of this culture was Harappa and mohenjodaro. In fact, as the people of this civilization was great worshiper of hindu god and godess , and that can be seen in thir works which was created from clay and terracotta. The use of air ,water, earth, fire, and they only use five element in terracotta which the formed.the commonly make toys hindu gods , vases , human figure Figure 2 in the form of toys Figure 1. Mother goddesses, male gods and terracotta carts and terracotta sculptures and wheels were excavated from various sites of the Indus Valley civilization such as Birhaana , Mehrgarh, Mohenjodaro, Harappa etc.,

The terracotta seals were also made by the artist of Indus with the motifs of animals, human figure and god on this seals.

**6.2 Terracotta Art In Bengal:** bishnupur city located in bankura district of Bengal The craftsmen of bankura make terracotta figure No. 3 Horses has a rich tradition of art and crafts and the rural areas of bankura state creates sculptures including well baked terracotta utensils and also the terracotta horses and other objects and practical . Some cities are famous for the terracotta art form figure No. 4 and the temples of bishnupur are also famous for building terracotta temple and these temples are very beautifully constructed by the people and all temples are indo Islamic style and there are deul and ratna types of temple. And the depiction of mythological stories, floral and geometrical pattern on these temples .

**6.3 Terracotta Art of Bihar And Jharkhand:** The Potter community, known as potters, is commonly found in large settlements in Jharkhand. There are wide varieties of items made for domestic use for decorative items. A large-sized pot is very famous that is used to make Mahua wine (it is a locally made wine) as well as local beer made of rice. Deogarh has attractive black gleaming pottery. Ceiling tiles, formal water jars, clay cups, long-necked vases, and pots are other usefull items. Craftsman during the festive season. Brightly colored terracotta animals, sculptures and Figure No. 5 clay shrines make up. Women in Nunihat design large numbing terracotta jewellery. The tradition of soil and terracotta in

Bihar is of mauryan period. Some traditions are still followed in this craft and each village, district and region has its own style of pottery. The creation of toys and images is closely related with seasonal festivals and other religious ceremonies. Clay elephants are very famous and are placed at the top of the roof as it symbolizes marriage. Some clay toys are specially made for children and artists make them without any sharp turns or waves. Elephants, reptiles, horses are among the favorite objects

**6.4 Terracotta Art in Gujrat:** An art of pottery is well known among Gujarat's oldest and most appreciated arts and crafts. This art is performed by ordinary rural locals who master pthis art of adapting the soil into beautiful and well-proportioned pottery. After the formation of these utensils, they are then painted with bright colours that enhance the beauty of the pot. Artists of this art are generally from Kutch and are famous all over the world for creating a wide range of Figure No .6 terracotta toys or horses, not only for their pottery. Sabarkantha is a village in Poshina known for its sacred terracotta figures. These figures are considered to be an integral part of rituals that are commonly practiced by their tribal communities like Garsia tribals. These terracotta horses are called horse dev have a unique place in these rituals and are regarded as deity messengers in many different cultures. These terracotta horses are symbols of the fulfillment of desires and it is true that these terracotta horses have stood here for decades and decades.

**6.5 Terracotta Art of Madhya Pradesh:** The terracotta pottery of Madhya Pradesh is wonderful in style and representation. The potter made by the tribal people of Bastar is really remarkable. These people are far from the complexities of modern civilization. They are thus blessed with simplicity and deep realization of the basic values of the life system as well as an enormous respect for their gods and rituals. The art of terracotta marks the first human effort of craftsmanship. That is why this art is so popular among the tribals of the country. The traditional Figure No. 7 statues of elephants, snakes, birds as well as horses from Bastar are unique in their style. There is an interesting practice among tribes. They often provide terracotta pieces painted to different animals to the local deity in lieu of sacrifice.

**6.6 Terracotta Art of Tamil Nadu:** Terracotta art in Tamil Nadu is originally famous for its magnificent Figure No .8 six-metre-high horses. Religious places upto Ayanar are very common in the State of Tamil Nadu. The soul of Ayar in the temples of the aiyar life-size terracotta horses is placed at shrines to provide transport for soldiers, enabling them to travel through villages and fields at night to be right against evil. The styles of horses vary from region to region: some are more realistic or more abstract, but they are all complete with tapping and rein and being 'ready to go' is a moment's appearance at notice. Because the potter's primary task is to make ships for the village, sculptural forms are dictated by pot-making techniques and formed by coiling, beating and modeling.

**6.7 Terracotta Art and Craft of Rajasthan:** Rajasthan is also famous for pottery and Figure No. 9 Jaipur, Sikar, Ajmer and Bharatpur, artists are very religious and make beautiful terracotta horses for religious offerings. The Nohar Centre of Bikaner is famous for terracotta products and there are also artists and design utensils working with lac in Bikaner. Special rich effects are transferred using gold. Alwar artists show their skills by making thin pottery of paper, known as qazi pottery, and the items made are very light in their weight. Geometric etching can be detected in Pokhran pottery that retains traditional styles.

**6.8 Terracotta Craft of Odisha:** Terracotta art in Odisha goes back to the 4th century BC and tribal artisans create unique designs using special soils that have many buyers both at

home and abroad. Animal sculptures of bulls, horses and elephants are molded and highlighted and left in their clay color. Other items used for household such as jars, plates, tiles, toys, utensils, candle stands, etc., are also made with unique tribal touches. Jewelry such as bangles and necklace sets are also popular items.

**6.9 Terracotta Art and Craft of Jammu And Kashmir:** In this north state, there are two forms of terracotta art figure 10. While one, built in Ladakh, with lord buddha's symbols, sculptures and images is mainly designed to different monasteries, the other place of tea kettles, barley bribes, kitchen stoves, oil lamps, etc. These objects are finely molded and brilliantly colored and used for practical purposes as well as home decoration. The kettles are specially made with its beak, handle, lid as well as a blaze. The tools used to make them are simple, made of leather, stone and wood. Another unique element is the clay mask which is made using fabric, waste paper, flour and glue

**7.0 Indian Contemporary Terracotta Methods, Innovations and Artists:** Indian terracotta and its myriad form has a fascinating history and brings out a range of perspectives, topics, discussions and methods. The document is an attempt to discuss its various art forms and practices in depth in its historical, cultural, developmental and professional context. According to the objectives of the study, the researcher noted the systematic and even observational studies of the countries offered by experienced artists, historians and literature, who carefully identified changes in the field of art in India over time. It's not that I am.

This paper examines alternative approaches to be applied by Indian artists through experimentation and innovative methods. They in particular worked extensively together with traditional instruments and forms in various media and in the visual arts. Alternative approaches are used by artists because of the different requirements of their creative needs based on their socio-political circumstances. In general, in the creative process it will be very boring and arbitrary if the artist works only in limited forms of medium or limited. When the artist searches for alternatives the results will be very fresh and interesting and will give new dimensions to the artwork with their visual language. The works of art are created with new vocabulary and unrelated variations of materials and scenes. As we witness artists through history in the visual arts have embraced and explored many themes of their time, which are sociological, cultural, religious, geographical and personal subjects in Western art and Indian art practice. The artists selected here and the researchers who work based on their process how they chose alternative approaches to content, themes, representation, form and execution. For research purposes, the researcher has carefully chosen to analyze and explore the artist's creative process from India. The research paper discussed some artists in detail from traditional to alternative approaches. Why and what changes, in their expression before and after the results.

K.G. Subramanian, Vivan Sundaram, Subodh Gupta, Talur L.N. and Figure No. 15 Sudharshan Shetty and the researcher's own art process and transition. Researchers will formulate and present changes in a structure-stages, technical, media, context, change and process.

KG Subramanian Figure No. 10, 11,12,13, Indian cultural background, folk elements in his work with new perspectives and has worked with many indigenous mediums and many alternative methods in his art process. Vivan Sundaram Figure No. 14 chose in his work with avant-garde attitude options such as the new format and the new media, which have been introduced to India and practiced for many decades. He has used various materials and mediums in his works with alternative approaches where he broke traditional methods in the visual arts. Subodh Gupta is a young Indian contemporary artist with tremendous

potential and innovation in his work. He's done a lot of experiments on the average artist. art with many experiments in various instruments, shapes, materials and transport. L.N. Tallur Figure No 16 and 17 cooperates with Indian tradition with archaeological and cultural aspects, supporting with international trends with new technologies that have a youthful and exploratory attitude to its trade. It deals with cultural wars, cultural identity, politics and ecological issues that are fashionable.

**8.0 Conclusion: Findings and Recommendations:** If we look at the general character of terracotta from its aesthetic point of view and the development as a creative art, we will notice that making a visual on a terracotta surface is quite similar to the development of sculpture. The fact is that both terracotta and sculpture are basically making a visual on a three-dimensional surface. They differ from each other in the process of making the images and in the methods and materials. The Indian terracotta of the Indus era to contemporary has embraced many styles and treatments, isms and ideologies, doctrines and languages of various schools or 'Gharanas' and from realism to abstract expression. Along with four major methods and materials practiced widely such as coil, slab and slip recently a new language and aesthetic has developed in making images with the help of computer mechanism 3D Printers.

In this conclusion Finding the selected artists K.G. Subramanyan, Vivan Sundaram, , Subodh Gupta, Tallur and Researcher works and their works are analyzed with perspective of alternative approaches how they have used in their work and created something different and fresh artworks in idea of building new visual vocabulary. The art methods, techniques, and art patronizations, exhibitions, gallery system, various methods how the artists have explored to achieve something new in their work through alternative ways

It is strongly recommended that question must be asked to terracotta artists for their comments on this problem besides touching the intentional part of the artists of the same taste from the successive generation

Terracotta being the youngest among the cluster of plastic arts, now it can at least be claimed that Indian terracotta is at the crossroads and is on the threshold of breaking new ground

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**10.0 Image Gallery:**



**Figure No .1** Female figure with painted ornaments from Harappa Image Source Retrieved on 24 March 2020 from [www.harappa.com](http://www.harappa.com) size: (W x H x D): 4.8 x 8.1 x 3.1 cm.



**Figure No .2** Early female figurine with painted features from Harappa, Image Source Retrieved on 24 March 2020 from [www.harappa.com](http://www.harappa.com),size (W x H x D): 3.7 x 7.9 x 2.4 cm.



**Figure No .3** The terracotta and Bankura horse of Bengal, Image Source Retrieved on 24 March 2020 from [media.tradeholding.com](http://media.tradeholding.com), size 6 inches to 4 feet.



**Figure No .4** Madan-Mohan Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura, Image Source Retrieved on 24 March 2020 from amitguha.blog.

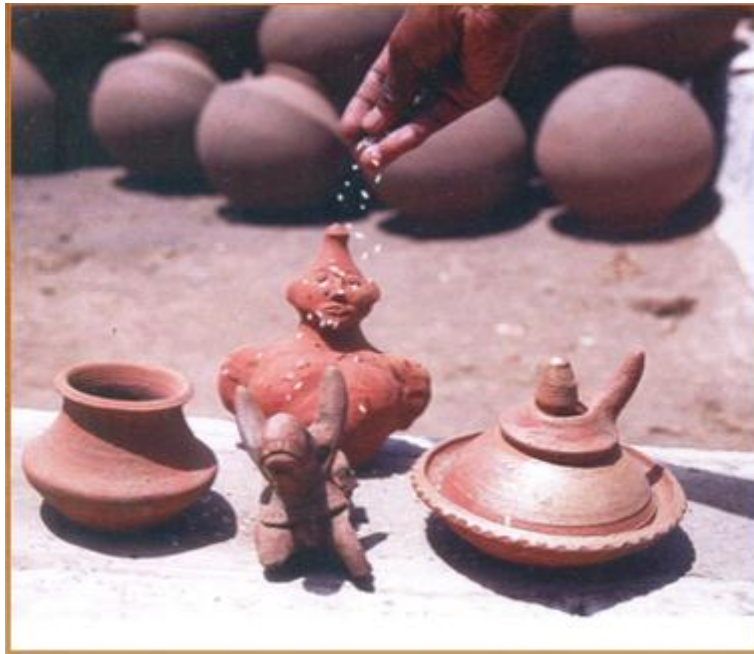


**Figure No .5** Temples of Maluti in Jharkhand, Image Source Retrieved on 24 March 2020 from dailypioneer.com

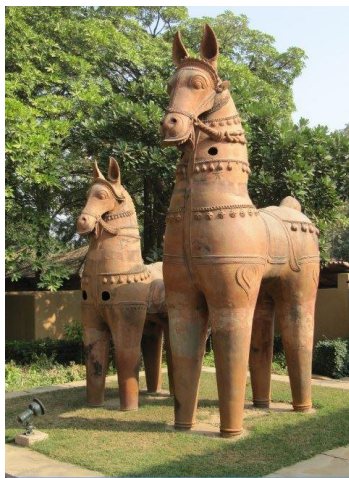


**Figure No .6** Terracotta horses, Source Retrieved on 24 March 2020 from www.historyspeaks.co.in





**Figure No .7** Terracotta toys and pots, Source Retrieved on 24 March 2020 from [shreyasbalayatanmuseum.weebly.com](http://shreyasbalayatanmuseum.weebly.com)



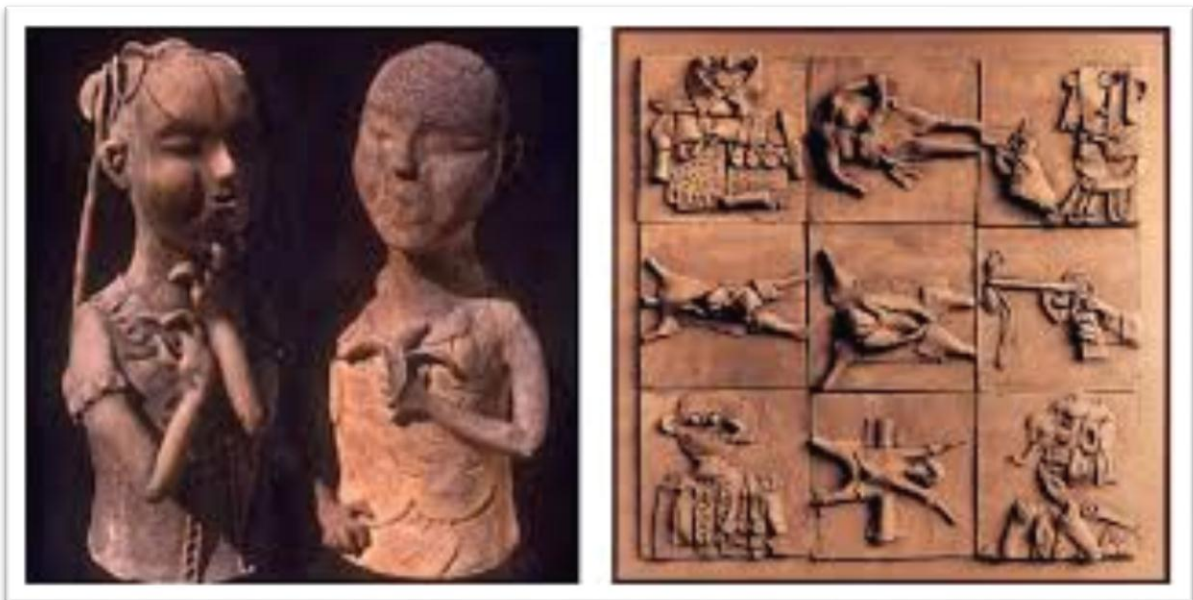
**Figure No .8** Temples of Ayanaar life-sized terracotta horses, Image Source Retrieved on 24 March 2020 from [www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com)



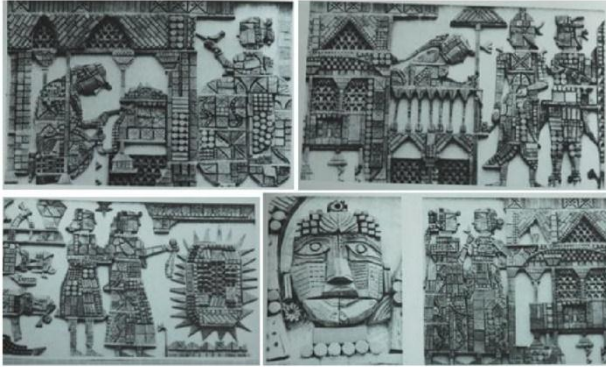
**Figure No .9** Terracotta artwork Rajasthan, Image Source Retrieved on 25 March 2020 from [ohmyrajasthan.com](http://ohmyrajasthan.com)



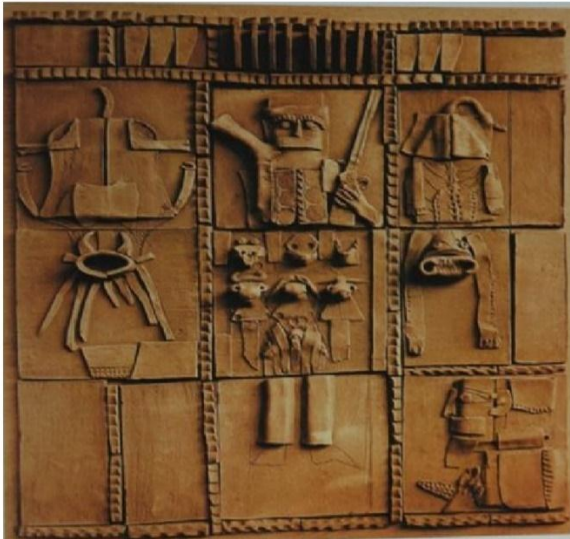
**Figure No.10** Terracotta animal figure, Semthan (Courtesy: Private collection) Source Retrieved on 25 March 2020 from [www.sahapedia.org](http://www.sahapedia.org)



**Figure No. 11** K.G. Subramanyan., Suresh Jayaram. (2020) ‘*What you see when you see: Clay: A modernist take on tradition*’ Perspectives on the Arts, Bangalore mirror Mar 2020. Image Source Retrieved on 23 March 2020 from online article published in Bangalore mirror bangaloremirror.indiatimes.com



**Figure No. 12** K.G. Subramanyan., ‘*The King of the Dark Chamber*’ Mural Art at Ravindralaya, Lucknow, 1963, Image courtesy Sodhganga



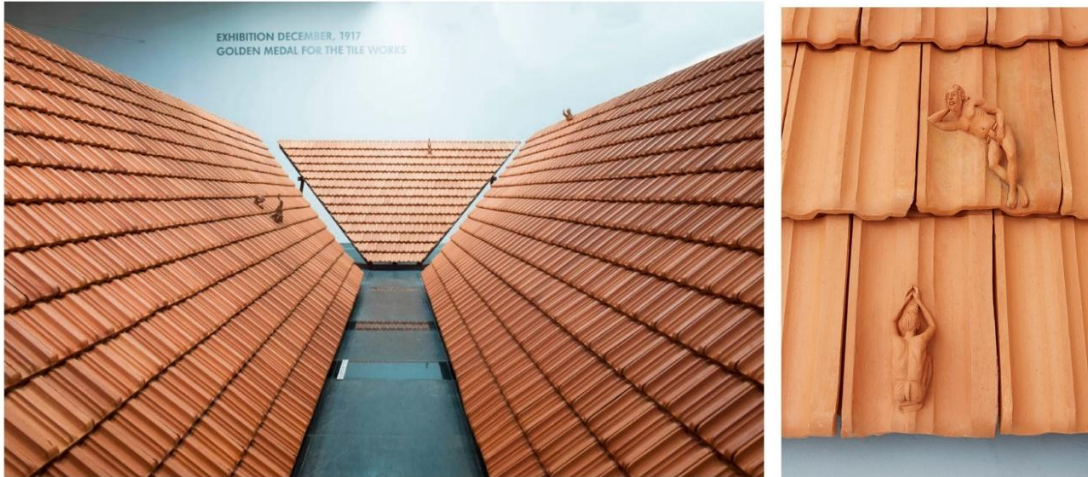
**Figure No. 13** K.G. Subramanyan., (2003) ‘*Hunter*’ Terracotta Relief



**Figure No. 14** Vivan Sundaram., (2018) One and the Many (detail), (from 409 Ramkinkars). 400 terracotta figurines, 2015. 800 x 480 x 150cm, approx. height of each figurine: 30cm. Collection the Artist. Photo by Gireesh G.V. *Disjunctures* (Curated by Deepak Ananth)  
09 June – 07 October 2018 Show at Haus der Kunst in Munich, Germany Image Courtesy to cobosocial.com



**Figure No 15** Sudhrashan Shetty., Terracotta Installation, Exhibition of sculptural installations by Sudarshan Shetty.



**Figure No. 16** L.N. Tallur, *Veni, Vidi, Vici (I came, I saw, I conquered)* 2&3 Media, Terracotta roof tiles, iron, photographs; Mission 21 archives Basel, wall text Size; 165x925x367cm, Source of Image Retrieved form Google Art Projects.



**Figure No. 17** L.N. Tallur, *'Balanced Diet'* Terracotta, 51 x 25 x 28 cm Courtesy and Source of Image Retrieved form Nature Morte Gallery.