

Art Heritage Presents

unconstrained alchemy

B R Pandit

with contributions by Abhay & Khushboo Pandit

Ceramic sculptures and vessels featuring
organic forms, vibrant glazes &
intricate textures

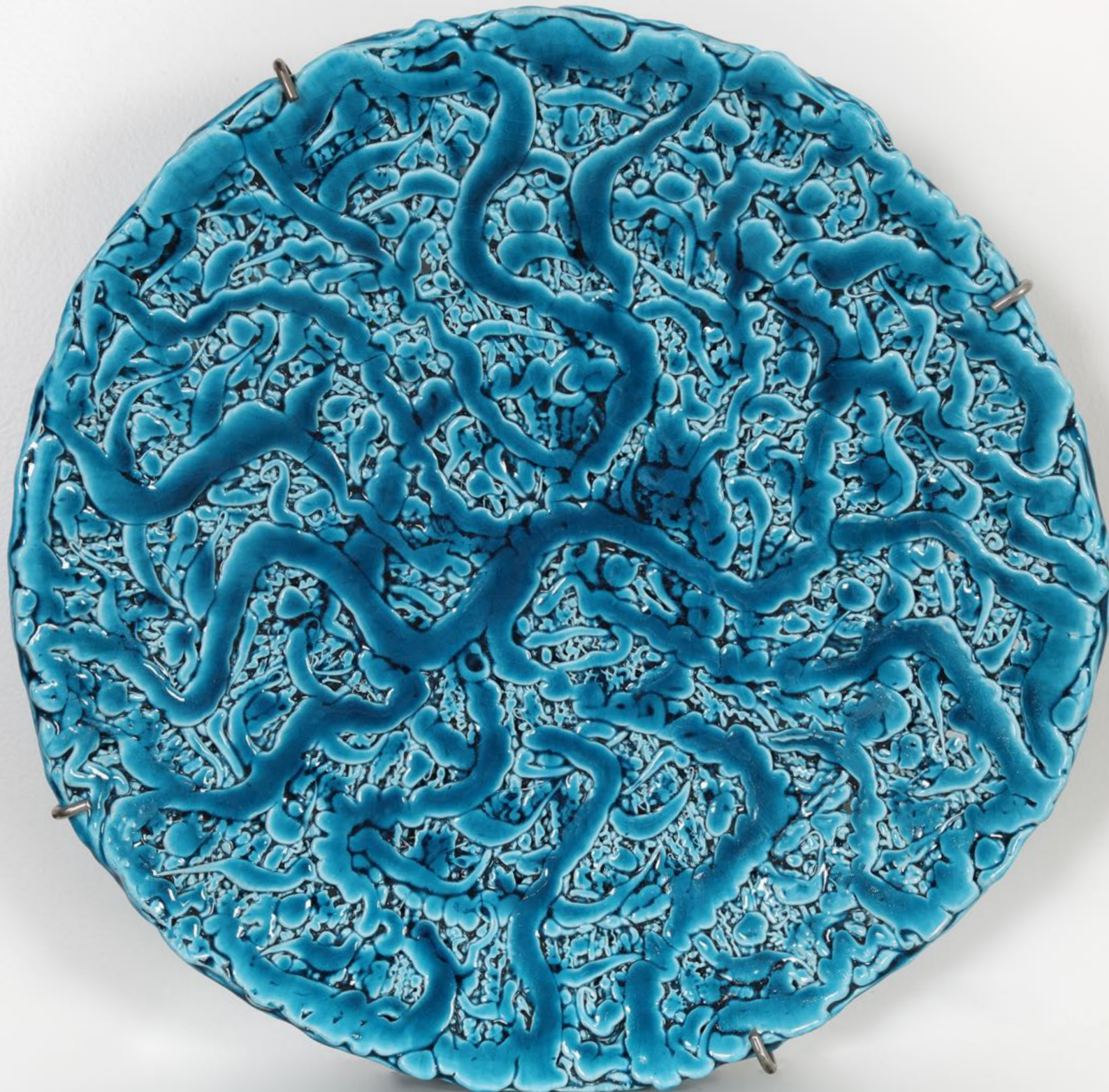
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2024



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SOLD

Canvas, 2024
Copper turquoise porcelain
17 inches diameter

“ [B R] Pandit’s studio stands as an important embodiment of a hundred years of social change in the Indian art world[his] is the trajectory of someone born into a caste of potters, who lost their calling in the village to the intensive agricultural demands of the Green Revolution, yet, profited from the slew of policies still in existence in a post-Gandhian India for the preservation and improvement of the lot of Indian craftspeople, which allowed him to grow into an artist who is today represented in art museums and by gallerists.”

*Naman Ahuja, The Pandit Studio: Another Indian Modern,
Art Heritage, 2018*

Unconstrained Alchemy, 2024

Placed carefully just past the front door of a home, a bold, shimmering ceramic work by B R Pandit greets a future visitor. Procured at Art Heritage, at one of the many exhibitions the gallery has done, the work reached Delhi along with hundreds of others, after a multi-day long journey from Panditji's studio just outside Mumbai. The packing and loading of the ceramic works is also an activity that takes several days of planning and execution and considerable labour. Though the production of the works themselves is a culmination of years of experimentation and perseverance, alongside a 'trade practice,' Panditji's journey started several decades ago.

Vase, 2024
Turquoise soda fire stoneware
15.5 x dia. 21.9 inches

SOLD



SOLD



Bottles, 2024, Copper red ceramic
(1) 6.5 x 3 dia. inches (2) 7.5 x 3.5 dia. inches (3) 6 x 4.5 dia. inches

Brahmdeo Ram Pandit's (b. 1949, Boram Bagh, Bihar) childhood saw the birth and growth of an agrarian way of life that challenged the tradition of pottery that several generations, including his grandfather, had maintained. His father, besides cultivating the family-owned agricultural land, carried on with his potter's trade, and it was here that the young B R Pandit took up his father's vocation. At nineteen years, Panditji began a formal journey into the world of ceramics, guided along the way by mentors, teachers, and colleagues from all over India and abroad, including Laxman Ajgaonkar, Shoji Hamada, Mr. Vasudevan, Mr. Yadav, V. D. Sharma, Ira Chaudhari, Gurcharan Singh, and Nirmala Patwardhan, to name just a few. Through the years, Panditji himself taught and supported an unending number of young ceramicists while concurrently passing on his knowledge of the science and art of clay to another generation of his own family, including Abhay, his son, as well as Khushboo, his daughter-in-law, all the while supported by his wife, Devki Pandit.

"Panditji is a glazing master," notes Dr. Naman Ahuja in his essay for Art Heritage entitled, *The Pandit Studio: Another Indian Modern* (2018). The process of glazing and firing are what Panditji loves most in his craft, known for two processes in particular: copper red reduction and soda firing. He loves reds, and his repertoire of glazes

includes a range of shades — for example, from a muted dark-red matt to a sparkling scarlet gloss. In the soda-firing technique, he sprays a solution of sodium bicarbonate into the kiln through a small opening. The spray vaporizes instantly, settling on and interacting with the surfaces of the pots. The results are magical: blues, greens, copper golds, reds; the interplay of colours and the subtle nuances, which even a discerning eye can sometimes miss. His repertoire also includes *raku* (smoke firing), that his son Abhay introduced him to following his return from the Charles Wallace Scholarship in the United Kingdom. In addition to the glazes, the panoply of textures grip the viewer, including uninterrupted smooth surfaces that contrast with others that have prickly or rough edges. The permutations and combinations between and within individual works seem infinite.

Caught in the desire to forever innovate and experiment, this exhibition includes an explosion of porcelain clay body work, previously seen only at a smaller scale. In them, one can appreciate Panditji's innate drive, even today, to push the boundaries and properties of a material he has known all his life. Bathed in a glistening turquoise blue-green, a result of bisque firing and glazing with a copper oxide barium carbonate, intricate clay coils overlap, creating abstract and undulating patterns – reminiscent of a *jali*-like structure, never permitting the observer's eye to rest. These interweaving soft coils are fashioned into multiple forms, from vessels – some with a distinctive East Asian aesthetic that harks back to his trips to Japan all those years ago – to platters and sculptures, at a larger scale than ever before.

The variety of artworks in **Unconstrained Alchemy** reflects multiple journeys – that of an artist's practice by itself, a transference of knowledge and aesthetics between generations, and a larger conversation in the ceramic world between form and medium, utility and art.



Sculpture, 2024
Saggar fire ceramic
27 x 20 x 9 inches



B R Pandit and Abhay Pandit
The Shape of Things, Art
Heritage, 2018-19

Art Heritage's Engagement with Ceramics

Ceramics have regularly been showcased at Art Heritage since its inception in 1977, including exhibitions of some of the pioneers and well-established names in the field: K. G. Subramanyan (1978-79, terracotta show), Kristine Michael (1988-89, 1999-2000), Himmat Shah (1989-90), P. R. Daroz (1990-91, 96-97), Jyotsna Bhatt (2000-01), Devi Prasad (1994-95, 97-98, 2001-02), and Ira Chaudhuri (2000-01), to name a few. Furthermore, as an institution that serves to promote young and emerging talent, in addition to regularly placing works by younger artists in group shows, our annual emerging artist *On the Threshold of Time* show (2016-17) was almost exclusively devoted to ceramics.

In addition to hosting exhibitions involving ceramics, it has been important to engage with our audience through scholarship. The Art Heritage annual and show-specific catalogs include seminal articles by both the artists themselves, as well as scholars in the field. Devi Prasad's educational piece, *My Kinsman, Common Clay* (1997-98), Kristine Michael's curation of five artists, *Doors of Perception - Out of the Earth, Into the Fire* (2003-04), and Dr. Naman Ahuja's essay on the Pandit's workshop in Mumbai, *The Pandit Studio: Another Indian Modern* (2018), are just a few essays that contextualize not only the state of ceramics

of their time—several of the themes cited remain relevant today—but also provide deep analysis of the artists' practice and oeuvre.

The first Indian Ceramics Triennale in Jaipur in 2018, followed by a second edition in 2023 in New Delhi, along with several gallery shows featuring ceramics, has not only raised the visibility of the art form, but also begun to demonstrate to audiences, art lovers, and collectors alike the breadth of the discipline. Over the last two years, two shows at the gallery—*The Firing Line* and *Shape Shifting: Fluid Geometries in Ceramics*—both curated by Kristine Michael, have sought to explore and contribute to an understanding of ceramics as both a medium and a shape.

Art Heritage's association with B. R. Pandit and the Pandit family as a whole dates back almost two decades. Over the years, the gallery has witnessed, firsthand, Panditji's evolving practice, the infusion of new ideas and techniques in his work, and the impact of interactions between multiple generations. *Unconstrained Alchemy* continues our relationship with a master.



Sculpture, 2024
Stoneware
22.5 x 17.5 dia. inches



B R Pandit and Abhay Pandit
Art Heritage, 2008

Vase, 2024
Raku smoke ceramic
16 x 12 dia. inches



Line Vase, 2024
Turquoise porcelain
16.5 x 12 dia. inches





Vase, 2024
Coloured porcelain
14.5 x 14 dia. inches

SOLD



Sculpture, 2024
Ceramic
13 x 7 dia. inches

SOLD



SOLD

Bottle, 2024
Copper red ceramic
9 x 6 dia. inches

“How should a beginner proceed to collect? It is best to adopt an experimental attitude. Start with something that appeals to you for any reason whatever, as, for instance, because you have read about it or seen it at a friend’s house. Look at it, study it, learn what you can about it and the artist who made it. Then go on to buy others in the same way. Have the courage of your own taste.”

*A Guide to the Collecting and Care of Original Prints, 1976
Carl Zigrosser and Christa M. Gaehde*



Vase, 2024
Soda fire stoneware
24 x 8 dia. inches

SOLD

SOLD

Vase, 2024
Copper red ceramic
7.75 x 13 dia. inches





SOLD

Vase, 2024
Saggur fire
11.75 x 9.25 dia. inches



Turquoise Line Platter, 2024
Ceramic
19 inches diameter

SOLD



Clay Canvas, 2024
Turquoise line ceramic
15.5 inches diameter

“To gain control over a chosen medium, a student must persist in the face of many doubts and failures. A potter must become proficient in throwing and hand building, as well as learning about different clay bodies, glazes, firing practices and kiln building. Much of this learning comes with frequent frustration - every potter has stories of kiln loads lost and glazes gone bad.....One must serve a long apprenticeship to the material and its processes. The learning never stops. The first intuitive glimmer of recognition matures into an investment in one’s own life, but gaining this maturity demands an unwavering motivation. It should come as no surprise then that many craftsmen develop an unshakable loyalty to their medium..... They only emerge through constant search and self-discovery.”

Kristine Michael, Doors of Perception - Out of the Earth, Into the Fire, Art Heritage (2003-04)

Sculpture, 2024
Copper turquoise porcelain
19 dia. x 6 inches



SOLD

Line Canvas, 2024
Metallic turquoise, ceramic
27 inches diameter





Sculpture, 2024
Manganese dioxide ceramic
24 x 11 inches
(front and back)

SOLD



SOLD

Sculpture, 2024
Ceramic
16.5 x 8 x 7 inches



SOLD

Vase, 2024
Copper fumes ceramic
12.25 x 10 dia. inches



SOLD

“..... both ceramics and glass denote a class of objects that have been made substantially by hand, utilizing the hand itself, hand tools and to some extent power tools. This involvement of hand-work remains both a definition and a limitation of craft. Also to some degree craft can be identified by the use of traditional craft materials, techniques and addressing a traditional craft context.clay as material, throwing on the potter’s wheel, hand building, pit firing, glaze decoration, figurative sculpture and vessels constitute a traditional locus of contemporary ceramic art. The triad of traditional material, technique and context continues to provide a center and reference for contemporary ceramics and glass....”

Kristine Michael, Doors of Perception - Out of the Earth, Into the Fire, Art Heritage (2003-04)





Brahmdeo Ram Pandit

b. 1949, Bihar

Education:

1969-81 Trained at Sekho Devra Ashram (Sarvodaya Ashram), Bihar; Khadi Village Pottery Institute, Karnataka; Shri L.R. Ajgaonkar, Aaj Studio Pottery, Mumbai; Handicrafts Teachers Training College, Mumbai; Gandhian S.K. Mirmiras, Maharashtra; Sir J. J. School of Art, Mumbai; Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi.

Solo Exhibitions

- 2023 *Clay of Beauty*, Retrospective, Bihar Museum
- 2022 *Play of Clay*, Cymroza Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 1992 Habitat Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 1988 Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 1987 Sophia Polytechnic Art Gallery, Mumbai

Group Exhibitions

- 2017 Upendra Maharathi Institute, Patna
- 2015 Cymroza Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 2015 India Art Fair, New Delhi
- 2014 Art Heritage, New Delhi
- 2012 Art Heritage, New Delhi
- 2012 Cymroza Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 2011 Ministry of Textiles Handicrafts, New Delhi
- 2010 Cymroza Art Gallery Mumbai
- 2010 Art Heritage, New Delhi
- 2008 Art Heritage, New Delhi
- 2008 India Art Summit, New Delhi
- 2008 Cymroza Art Gallery Mumbai
- 2008 Lemongrasshopper Art Gallery, Ahmedabad
- 2007 Shrishti Art Gallery, Hyderabad
- 2006 Cymroza Art Gallery, Mumbai

- 2004 Delhi Blue Pottery Trust, New Delhi
- 2003 Art Heritage, New Delhi
- 2003 NGMA, Mumbai
- 2002 Cymroza Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 2000 Bilmat Zeramics Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 1998-97 Cymroza Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 1994 Cymroza Art Gallery, Mumbai

Permanent Installations:

- 2014 *Seascape*, Terminal 2, Mumbai International Airport
- 2018 Bapu Sabagarh Gandhi Maidan, Patna

Awards:

- 2013 Padma Shri, New Delhi
- 2008 Shilp Guru, New Delhi
- 2012 Bihar Pravashi Shree, Bihar
- 2007 Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay Lifetime Award, Mumbai
- 2000 Mira Bhayander Gaurav Puraskar, Mumbai
- 2000 Life Time award, Smt. Kamla Mehta School, Mumbai
- 1997 All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, New Delhi
- 1991 Maharashtra Rajya Purashkar, Mumbai
- 1991 Lifestyle and Cultural Award, City Board of Education, Yokohama, Japan
- 1989 Maharashtra State Award, Mumbai
- 1987 Maharashtra Rajya Hastkala Mandal, Mumbai
- 1986 Maharashtra Rajya Hastkala Pardarshan, Prastipatra, Kolhapur
- 1985 Maharashtra Rajya Hastkala Mandal Udyog Sanchalaya Award, Mumbai
- 1979 Maharashtra Udyog Sanchalaya State Award, Mumbai
- 1978 Maharashtra State Award, Mumbai
- 1972 Rajya Puraskara student of the year, Sir J. J. School of Art, Mumbai

Collections:

Prince of Wales, Mumbai; Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal; Bapu Sabagarh Gandhi Maidan, Patna; Google Art and Culture, USA, UK, India; Several private collections in India and abroad

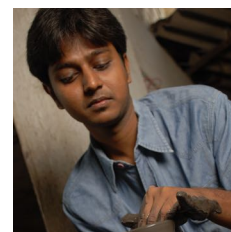
Books:

Hands of Clay, Mumbai, 2018
Ceramic Artwork, Ed: Emmanuel Cooper, Thames

and Hudson, UK, 2010
Mitti-Kam: Brahmdeo Ram Pandit,
 Paramparik Karigar, Tata Press Mumbai, 2005

Documentary film:

Handmade In India - the life and work of Brahmdeo Ram Pandit and his pottery



Abhay Pandit (b. 1978) graduated from Sir J.J. School of Art with a Bachelor in Fine Arts (1999), received the Charles Wallace India Trust Award (2005), studying ceramics under Peter Fraser, and trained with David Roberts in *raku* smoke ceramics (2009). He completed an apprenticeship at Golden Bridge Pottery in Pondicherry (1999-2000) with Ray Meeker and Deborah Smith. Abhay has participated in numerous workshops and residencies, including a prestigious ceramic residency at Fule International Ceramic Art Museums (FLICAM) in China (2013) and workshops in India led by noted artists like P. R. Daroz. He has exhibited extensively, including shows at Cymroza Art Gallery (Mumbai) and Art Heritage (New Delhi), at the India Art Fair (2015), the National Gallery of Modern Art, and a solo exhibition, *Cityscape*, at Cymroza Art Gallery (2004). Pandit's works have also been featured on international platforms, such as a group exhibition in England sponsored by the British Council in 2005. His many awards include the National Award from the Government of India (2018). Abhay's works are part of several permanent collections, and he contributed to a large-scale installation titled *Seascape* at the Mumbai International Airport and at FLICAM in China. His works have been featured in international magazines like *Ceramics Art* and *Perception*. Abhay Pandit lives and works in Mumbai.



Khushboo Abhay Pandit (b. 1986) studied ceramics under the guidance of artist David Roberts in England (2009) and Brahmdeo Ram Pandit, a Padma Shri awardee (2013). Pandit has participated in notable workshops, including one led by New Zealand ceramic artist Duncan in Pune (2007) and a British Council-sponsored ceramic workshop at Sir J.J. School of Art (2007). In 2018, she represented India as a delegate at the Bonsai Art Convention in Saitama, Japan. Her works have been featured in several exhibitions across India, including an exhibition of contemporary ceramic art at Art Motif Gallery (New Delhi, 2024) and a 2023 group exhibition at Bihar Museum. She has also exhibited at Tao Art Gallery (2020), Piramal Art Museum (2017), and Jehangir Art Gallery (2017), as well as at prestigious venues like Bharat Bhawan (2015) and India Art Summit at Pragati Maidan (2011). In 2006, her work was showcased at Cymroza Art Gallery in Mumbai. Khushboo has received critical acclaim, winning the All India Gold Award in Ceramics from the Prafulla Dahanukar Art Foundation (2016). Additionally, Pandit has contributed to the book *Hands of Clay*, which chronicles the journey of her mentor, Brahmdeo Ram Pandit. Khushboo Abhay Pandit lives and works in Mumbai.



SOLD

Vase, 2024
Ash Glaze stoneware
19.75 x 7 dia. inches



ART HERITAGE