

From earth to elegance

THE ALLURE OF ARTISANAL TERRACOTTA



that our local pottery heritage has immense potential in its raw, rustic appeal but it needs to be attuned to global aesthetics, and therein comes niche stores like Boho Bangladesh or Paul's by artist Suman Paul. They are giving our deshi clay an upscale portfolio.

Artisanal terracotta

Boho Bangladesh makes terracotta lifestyle potteries that connect with our intention of green living and reducing our carbon footprint. Their products mostly have an ancient shape and rough texture but with a definite contemporary look regarding colours and patterns. Natural and with an earthy look, products of Boho

eco-friendly manufacturing processes, and striving to reduce our ecological footprint every step of the way. From organic cotton clothing to biodegradable packaging, our products are thoughtfully designed to minimise environmental impact without compromising on quality or style," says Poroma Shahrin, creative director of Boho Bangladesh.

"Our products will not be perfect for all settings, especially those who like polished bling or art deco inspired looks. We are more suitable for edgy, rustic interior designs. Our products are nature-inspired, rough, aged, and casual in design with a range of variations on the style, including

paint and twined rope, evokes a sense of timeless beauty and craftsmanship.

"The Stone Series is a celebration of the raw beauty of natural stones and rocks. This collection offers a diverse range of pottery that blends tradition with contemporary design. Each piece in this collection is meticulously handcrafted by the finest local artisans of Bangladesh, who have masterfully captured the unique textures

Bangladesh's workshop is in Cox's Bazar and it is evident how the sea has influenced their designs. Products like big outdoor pots are in the pipeline. Their clientele is mostly architects, interior consultants, a good chunk of diplomats, and local consumers who prefer earthy aesthetics.

Suman Paul's Studio Ceramic is a Facebook page for arts and crafts where a n d m a d e earthenware, stoneware, and glazed ceramic products are on sale by the graduate from the Department of Ceramics, Faculty of Fine Arts, Suman Paul himself. His canvas is mainly everyday tableware, planters, and dolls.

His are artworks that ooze a sense of warm finish, filling your room or dining table with colour emphasising the natural characteristics of his workmanship. He has an animal series of planters called Metamorphosis which can be pre-ordered. His collection "Story of Round Space" is glazed terracotta and stoneware dining plates with designs inspired, maybe by a water lily, a pearl, or even a roadside flower. These beauties are made at a melt temperature of 1180c. His online venture is very niche and has a dedicated clientele who understands and appreciates art.

Opposing traditional lacklustre earthenware

Such artisanal small businesses in Bangladesh are seeing the light of day, while traditional local potter's age-old trade suffers. Most of the local potters work as freelancers and make lacklustre items for the local market. Even if rural potters make arty products, marketing for them becomes a sore point. It is at this juncture that places like Bangla Matti come in handy.

"Linking the maker to market is what Bangla Matti does in a broad spectrum. We have a warehouse in Rayerbazar, Mohammadpur, where we bring in the best of Bangladesh's pottery. Each district has its design and specialty and we have access to such unique products from 60 potters throughout the country," says Shishir Kumar Pal, owner of Bangla Matti.

He adds that the general terracotta market is in tatters, however, potters trying to modernise their craft by opting for home décor or dining ware are doing brisk business.

"There is a difference between commercial product and art product; while one is of reasonable price the other being done by an artist is naturally priced high. Those who choose to modernise their clay products have a demand in the domestic market. But the majority of the potter community is still churning out general mundane wares that have almost zero appeal," Pal explains.

"We want to explore the rustic, raw beauty of nature in its form to design a full lifestyle range of products for the global market. Remodelling or upscaling the local terracotta forms and styles with a touch of modernity that appeals to foreigners," Poroma Shahrin adds.

Loving terracotta is one thing but indulging in its kitsch glamour and making it a part of your bohemian lifestyle is a different ball game. Whatever it may be, let the burnt-ochre terracotta products be a part of you.



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A charcoal black druid's bowl with a rough and aged look, caught my attention while surfing social media. Initially, I thought it must be an antique piece of medieval pottery up for sale on some transcontinental site, but instead, I found it to be a local product from the brand Boho Bangladesh, promoting a sustainable natural lifestyle; it blew my mind.

Imagine this beautiful handcrafted terracotta bowl, inspired by the textured elegance of Trachyte rock, placed inside your spa-inspired bath. The reddish-orange tint, and the glamorous black glint of burnt clay on flower pots, tableware, jewellery, and decorative pieces are hard to resist. Be it a fancy Baishakh lunch, a puja feast, or even a ladies' shutki-only lunch, the table spread must flaunt terracotta crockery.

Presenting our age-old ochre-coloured terracotta products with an edgy, stylish look has earned its merits with people inclined to bring the outdoors to the indoors. Earthy interiors honing flea market ideas and bohemian looks are quite the rage in Dhaka homes.

People are sold to the idea of made-by-hand, very special, natural, and recyclable artisanal products.

The green and organic impression of terracotta invokes in people a fondness of giving a chic makeover to the pastoral Bangladeshi way of living; however, niche their number is.

ASM Asaduzzaman, chief executive officer of Boho Bangladesh, feels

are inspired by the sea, stones, shells, and other such raw elements found in nature.

"Our story began with a simple yet profound realisation -- the choices we make today shape the world of tomorrow. Guided by this ethos, we meticulously curate every aspect of our brand, from carefully sourcing raw materials, prioritising

Greek, coastal, cottage, and modern rustic," explains Asaduzzaman.

Regardless of the variation, the rustic style of their products highlights rugged, natural beauty. Symbiosis is a stunning decorative terracotta collection inspired by the ancient Bengal Kangra style; the classic shape of the collection is further enhanced by handcrafted clay garlands.

Their Old Mocha series is crafted with aromatic coffee beans and boasting all the rich shades of Mocha, this collection is a true celebration of warmth and comfort. For example, the Twine Mocha Urn with real coffee

and earthy tones that define the essence of these natural elements," shares Shahrin.

Boho Bangladesh celebrates the beauty of imperfection found within nature's weathered artistry, appreciating the charm of careless beauty. They practise ethical consumerism, and are committed to living harmoniously with nature, vouches the power couple of Boho.

These unique pottery items are found in the multi-brand store The Muslim, under IconX Lifestyle Ltd at Le Meridien, Dhaka, and can also be collected from their online store. Boho