

QUINCHAMALI, VILLAGE OF POTTERS (Chile)

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GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND ORIGINS OF THE PEOPLE.

In the Central Valley of the eighth region, between hills and valleys watered by Ñuble river about 35 miles south-west of the city of Chillán and north of the Bío-Bío river, is this rural town of about five thousand inhabitants engaged in agricultural work and pottery, ceramics, Quinchamalí.

The word Quinchamalí native language, mean girls paired. For some locals Quinchamalí name comes from the decomposition of the word, thatch: house and Mali: witch, which means witch house.

Quinchamalí village, originally Mapuche village, has undergone a process of mestizaje to adopt many of the cultural norms of the European population. These indigenous people strongly influenced by Western and urban society was a phenomenon of cultural syncretism.

Witness to the fusion Mapuche and Spanish cultures, these people are identified by the black pottery made by women, women's real kingdom that equates to the time of living men work in agriculture in the area.

Its inhabitants are dedicated to working the land in the cultivation of vines, vegetables and fruits, but this town is best known for its pottery tradition which goes back over four hundred years.

This black clay pottery, hand made, with the help of rustic elements, has achieved fame in Chile and has come far from its borders in the international field.

TECHNOLOGY TRADITION.

This technological tradition addresses the manufacturing systems, processes of learning, knowledge transfer and its relation to identity aspects.

The first demonstrations were purely utilitarian, made by Mapuche artisans, and later joined the anthropomorphic figure and also the zoomorphic.

Mapuche purely production has disappeared almost entirely. The ceramic work of the mixed population from indigenous populations has been strongly influenced by Western and urban society.

The ceramic manufacturing process is little changed, at least since the nineteenth century to the present, the system of delivery of the piece remains the same since ancient times indicating that it has continued with the original ceramic manufacturing processes Mapuche.

There are entire families that have dedicated their lives to working in clay, modeling clay associating the feminine hands over time. The female image rises powerfully dominate the work of the pottery.

The woman is the hub around which the family moves to which is attached to fire the home, the intimate and domestic. It is she who must share the task home, raising children, the manufacture and sale of ceramics in local and urban areas.

The operational sequences are transmitted from generation to generation, in a context of learning within the family group. As a child learns to make the potter ceramics by the office transferred by the mother, which in turn learned from her mother and so on for generations. Along with the technical ideas are transmitted, social behaviors and traditions.

Always respecting tradition, there is interest Quinchamalí potters to innovate and change the operational chain of manufacture they have learned, this is linked to the increased level of expertise, strategies to differentiate themselves from other pottery or an attempt to be more

competitive.

ART AND TECHNIQUE.

Currently, there are certain parts that are recognized as collective creations which have been passed from generation to generation, is the case with the guitar—which appeared in the mid-nineteenth century and the author is not known. The same applies to one of the most typical, the three-legged piggy, which through legends we know their Mapuche origin but not its author.

As for the pictures that decorate the pieces no one knows at what moment they appeared, only to be drawn from long ago.

There are beliefs associated with the process of creation where fantasy is involved. These artisans are very strong belief of many witch stories that are related to his work with clay.

The treatment is performed to achieve the perfect finish to their objects, both utilitarian and decorative, comes from the clay that is extracted from the earth at this place. Potters shape pottery pieces with their own hands using simple tools like pieces of wood, stone, leather and nails.

Among the most popular utilitarian forms are different types of pots and fountains, pots, jars and jugs. While in the decorative objects include human figures as the singer or guitarist, and zoomorphic figures as the jar duck, the little pig with three legs, the horse, cow, goat, turkey and others.

Each piece is assembled according to their own characteristics, which determine its time of manufacture. For example, the three-legged piggy, it is the body, ears, feet and tail separately and then assemble using the same clay as glue diluted. This requires several days.

Some of these figures have designs on their surface that generally try phytomorphic or incised geometric designs done in white to contrast with the glossy black surface of the pieces. This decorative incised design strategy has been widely used in Quinchamalí and is precisely the trait that unifies identitarian household appliances with subsequent figurative and decorative creations. The incised design is within the expression of incised black-painted ceramics, and found expression in pre-Columbian cultures.

COLLECTION OF RAW MATERIAL AND ITS PROCESS.

The raw material is extracted from near the village. Usually it is women who collect the clay at the base of the backwaters and streams. Also, the clay of gray or black color characteristic of this pottery is obtained in small local mines.

Almost all the pottery is manufactured in the dry season, in summer, which is when moisture conditions are optimal to extract the clay subsoil and proceed to dry.

TREATMENT OF RAW MATERIALS.

Pick up the clay, dried in the sun on cold weather and shade in the summer. Then the clay is wet with water and impurities is drawn as sticks and stones, carefully and add to this the scraping of stones or sand. Also there have been some clays that can be manipulated directly without adding any other material.

For the process of making dough or pasta have used various types of clays and gravels which are then mixed together, a significant percentage of black clay (50%), a lower percentage of yellow clay (30%), and finally the volcanic ash which is a black volcanic sand between 15 and 20%. Recently there have been using clay from other areas due to depletion of traditional mines.

The preparation of the dough and its raw materials depends on the forms to be manufactured, are made of fine consistency pastes for small parts and other thicker consistency for larger pieces. Prepared the dough is rolled on the floor and stepped with the feet until a cohesive, homogeneous mixture, suitable for modeling.

CERAMIC FORMS AND DECORATION

The ceramic forms were probably created them from the colonial times (XVII) to the early twentieth century. The types of forms are utilitarian, adapted to rural needs and tastes and colonial traditions as pots, pans, plates, jugs. But there is also an important production characterized by the production of ornamental types like the guitar-or a singer, the rider or huaso anthropomorphic forms that are represented by a woman with a guitar and a rider on horseback that are linked with folklore in Chile, the piglets, the mates and other zoomorphic kind pieces such as goats, turkeys, roosters and cows.

This activity is made especially for women, and relatively domestic contexts. The model is also in the kitchens of their homes, on a simple table, preparing each piece using the technique of warping and beaten.

His tools are simple: a piece of pumpkin as a spoon, a knife, a stone, a piece of wood, which is a piece cordovan (wet piece of leather) and hands.

After mixing the dough begins to separate into pieces and then build both round and oval shapes to build the foundations of the figures, are oval to round the animals and for other forms. The day after this operation and can start working on the final piece.

For a guitar-shaped, for example, is part of an oval and defines the body, then head and the hat and guitar, and then to the finish and smoothed with a river stone.

Finishing stages of a piece:

There are various stages of completion of the piece once assembled. While still wet the polishing is done with a piece of leather that is moistened with water called cordovan, later to return to match the piece using a river stone.

Then comes the bath which is glued on the application of a clay slurry diluted with water and free of sand that allows smooth polished and even.

In Quinchamalí uses two types of gluing, the red that is applied to wet the entire piece and white being applied after cooking on this decorative engravings.

Before you get the parts to the texture of leather (hard and wet) are subject to a slip bath or gluingovens is a red earth.

The next step is honing consisting of rubbing the piece with a smooth stone, it polishes several times as it loses moisture, leaving it completely polished. It is important that this operation be conducted in a humidity of the room, not very green (wet) or too dry.

Another step is the polishing that is to coat the piece with oil and rub with a river stone, hard and very smooth, to polish it. The more traditional craftsmen using chicken fat oil that allows a more intense final glow. Technique that is passed from mothers to daughters.

As a final step of pre-cooking stage is the decoration is done with a needle or metal tip, drawing the surface of the pieces with incised line. Formerly used for tips of spines perform this decorative work. His recurring themes are drawings phytomorphic, but sometimes also include the name of his people and country, and in most cases their own.

When the pieces are in the process of drying is when you make these decorations imitating incised geometric or vegetables.

Then comes the final drying conducted under the ceiling so that the parts are guarded. Formerly they covered with green leaves, but today or plastic bags are used for the drying of these will be relatively slow and steady.

Finally, the vessels are discovered and allowed to dry until almost completely dehydrated.

PROCESS OF COOKING AND NEW GLUE.

In the cooking stage should be noted that these potters do not use ovens for baking their parts, but a simple bonfire outdoors or indoors in houses, which also used to heat meals or stove.

The cooking process begins by putting the pieces in a basket or wire basket that hangs from a roof beam on the fire to be heated gradually over four to five hours. Formerly the wicker basket was

(burns easily), but has been replaced by a metal mesh. As ceramics are dried and are taking heat from the smoke wire basket it goes down and so the pieces are slowly acquiring more temperature and thus avoiding to fracture. Once hot pots, there is a new foundation with wood under them and put up cow dung covering parts. The cooking fuel allows an increase animal even temperature and maintains a stable calorific longer than wood. Cooking time depends on the amount of vessels, but does not exceed one hour normally.

While still glowing pieces after firing, the color red or cast iron are removed and undergo a reduction process, also called black or smoking process. Covered, for several minutes, with horse dung shredded (oily) or pine needles (resin) that generate plenty of smoke, thus producing smoke which gives the characteristic black Quinchamalí parts.

It is also used straw and dried leaves for smoking, but horse dung gives excellent results.

After smoking and once the jars are cool and clean is the process of a new sizing method involves applying a white slip on the geometric and plant cuts made previously. Parts are painted with white color be a part of this in the incisions of the furnishings made before cooking. The color excess is removed from the surface of the piece with a cloth leaving only the bleached incisions, marking the end of the process.

FORM OF MARKETING

Until the fifties of the twentieth century these potters ceramic parts sporadically exchanged, visits to nearby farms and ranches, to supply the rural population in exchange for agricultural products. Later these groups came into contact with urban populations and began to transform the patterns of trade, monetary pattern oriented.

At present there is strong interest from the community to publicize the work of potters and customs of Quinchamalí. They organize festivals of Greda, where artisans invite all to participate with an exhibition of his pieces and work in the public eye in the process of making them. They're very attractive economically because they have large numbers of people in urban areas.

CONCLUSIONS.

Maintaining the tradition of ceramic technology is conditioned by cultural principles. Although working groups ceramics have lost some of their traditions, continue to manufacture the vessels in the same way as their ancestors. Ceramic technology, being a relatively marginal activity from a social perspective and economic, is not so influenced by the profound changes that have had mixed populations.

Quinchamalí left demonstrated a tremendous willingness to defend their craft, along with all the cloak of tradition that accompanies it, hand the devastating current technology.

They feel proud to be able to give people back their own economic progress to keep alive what their ancestors started more than three hundred years.

References:

Visit Quinchamalí staff.

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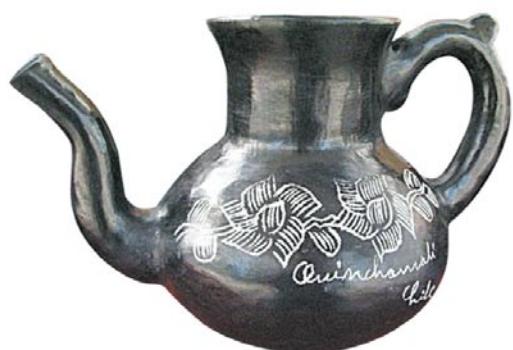
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POTTERY IMAGES

Utilitarian pieces



Jarro



Olla

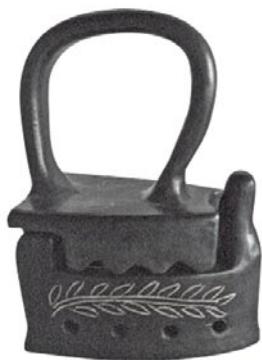


Vasija



Vasijas ave

Figurative pieces



Plancha



Guitarrera 1



Guitarrera 2



Huaso



Ave



Pavo



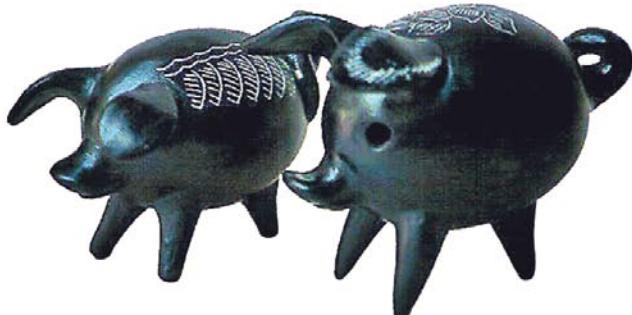
Gallina



Cabra



Mate cabra



Cerdos tres patas



Cerdo tres patas