

## Origins of Salt Glaze Pottery

Salt glazing as an art has been around for centuries. This art originated in the fourteenth or early fifteenth century Germany. Later, its popularity also spread to the United States and most other parts of the world. Stone and clay pottery was already being used extensively in these places, as a piece of art or for a variety of storage purposes, and the finishing provided by the salt glaze method only added to its popularity. The process of salt glazing pottery is itself quite intriguing. Pots are manufactured and dried in the usual process. Then begins the interesting step where they are placed in large kilns and the firing process is begun. The temperature increases gradually as the fire intensifies over a period of fifteen to twenty hours and the kiln becomes blazing hot. Now, rock salt is thrown into the kiln through little openings provided for that purpose. Due to its chemical composition, the salt explodes when it meets the fire and then gets converted into vapour. The effect of this vapour on the clay is what gives the glazed effect. Not only that, the firing and final glaze achieved by each pot is based on several factors like its position in the kiln and the amount of vapour it receives, to name just a few. Hence there are subtle differences in each pot as compared to the other, with the one receiving more vapour and having a more glazed effect than the other, even if they belong to the same dinner set. The ones that have a lesser glaze also have their own character, hence they are also appealing too. Basically, the side of the pot facing the fire receives more vapour as that is where the vapour hits first. So this side tends to have a greater glazed effect as compared to the opposite side. This ensures a unique look to almost every part of a large set. Though salt glaze pottery was primarily used for dinnerware or kitchen utensils, they were later manufactured also for purely decorative purposes, especially in nineteenth century England. The more popular ones had designs such as village scenes, windmills, local animals and so on, which became very popular as souvenirs that are brought home by tourists from those places. These were usually painted white and the figures in blue. Today handmade salt glaze clayware is not so common due to substitutes that have a shorter and simpler manufacturing cycle, but at the industrial level, salt fired pottery is still manufactured. Where the pottery is not only for functional purposes, but has more of an artistic value, salt glaze pottery is experimented with on a regular basis. This is why it is quite popular among studio potters, who are more artists than potters. They have the luxury of experimenting with the effect of the method on varying shades at varying temperatures and atmospheric conditions and the results are seldom disappointing. In the present times, salt glazed pottery is still very popular as an art form.

## About the Author

Victor Epan is an expert consultant for pottery, antiques, and figurines. When shopping for pottery, antiques and figurines, we recommend only the best online stores: <http://www.pottery.com> , <http://www.selltheantiques.com> , and <http://www.sellfigurines.com> .

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