

## **An Extraordinary Pottery Studio in India-Pondicherry: Golden Bridge Pottery**

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Since the beginning of the 16. Century, India has been an attractive target for some strong Western countries seeking for new sources. Still after the unforgettable independence of the country in 1947 it kept its attractiveness thanks to the rich culture and natural sources that it owns and its people's need for new investigations.

The country's strong roots in pottery making has yet been another issue for Western artists seeking for an authentic location in amalgamating their knowledge and skills in studio pottery with the country's pottery making traditions, enthusiastic citizens and various artists. This fact has been the key point for Ray Meeker and Deborah Smith to establish their pottery studio 'Golden Bridge Pottery' in Pondicherry, the formal colony of French, in 1971. Since that time they kept producing their glazed stoneware pottery by hand and firing their boutique products in a wood-kiln, using traditional techniques, local sources and employing Indian nationals. This studio was the first workshop of its own in Southern India. Since that time they continued their studio production and at the same time trained a wide range of people varying from educated Indians to uneducated villagers and Western artists for a seven months compact course period, equal to a distilled BFA in ceramics. Thus a generation has been trained by them and today professes in this area. Since 1997 many workshops have been organized by Meeker and Smith hosting significant potters in Golden Bridge Pottery, a cross-cultural place inspiring a generation since more than 40 years.

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