

Crafts, profession of excellence

Ceramic

Related professional – **Ferdinando Franco**

Workshop: **Archetipo Salone d'arte e tattoo, Bovino**



Although pottery was already used in **Roman times**, in Italy the first workshops of ceramic artisans were born only in the **Middle Ages**. In particular, Tuscany and Emilia Romagna were the cradle of the **production of interior tiles**. From the 15th century, ceramic became the most used covering material on the floors and walls of churches, palaces and public offices, which still retain the glazed decorations that partly reflect the Arab and partly Renaissance style. In a short time, in short, ceramics became a **flag of the Italian Renaissance**, both in architecture and in sculpture. Great artists such as Pollaiuolo, Donatello or the Della Robbia date back to this period. In Puglia, on the route of the Via Appia Nuova, Laterza, a city active in this sector since the

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Middle Ages, is one of the most interesting centres for the production of glazed ceramics and the famous majolica, which differs from the most ancient ceramic productions for the white tin coating. Covered with a glossy varnish. The variety of styles, from the compendary to the historiated, from the monochrome to the polychromy, testify to the commercial success, finally the Laertine historiated with scenes of knights and the particular choice of turquoise colours on white enamel, with inserts in yellow and green (late 18th century), still define its identity today.

Further north of Puglia, between the Valle del Fortore and the Tavoliere, in over 1400 archaeological points, distributed chronologically from Prehistory to the Middle Ages, over 35000 ceramic fragments were found which can be traced back to different ceramic classes and related to phases that span a very wide chronological period, from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages; the most represented class, but also with greater interpretation difficulties, is that of common ceramics. Among these, the most characteristic is the black-painted ceramic. Typical of Apulian production are wedding cups, secret flasks, mugs, and anthropomorphic bottles. The most original expression of majolica is the typical “ciarla” or jar with a lid with large handles.

What are the skills and expertise of professionals in this profession?

The craftsman of modelling, firing, and decorating ceramic artefacts handcrafted ceramic artefacts, using the tools of drawing, modelling, moulding, decoration, and adapting materials and machinery to the type of processing. He designs and manufactures the clay and plaster form as a single piece and for serial reproduction, or reproduction of pre-existing objects, using various shaping, moulding, and coating techniques. He or she designs and realises the decoration, also reproducing pre-existing motifs. In the case of small or very small artisan activities, he often personally promotes and sells the products made by joining marketing networks of typical products.



Some materials used in this profession.

For the creation of ceramic products, the following types of clay are chosen:

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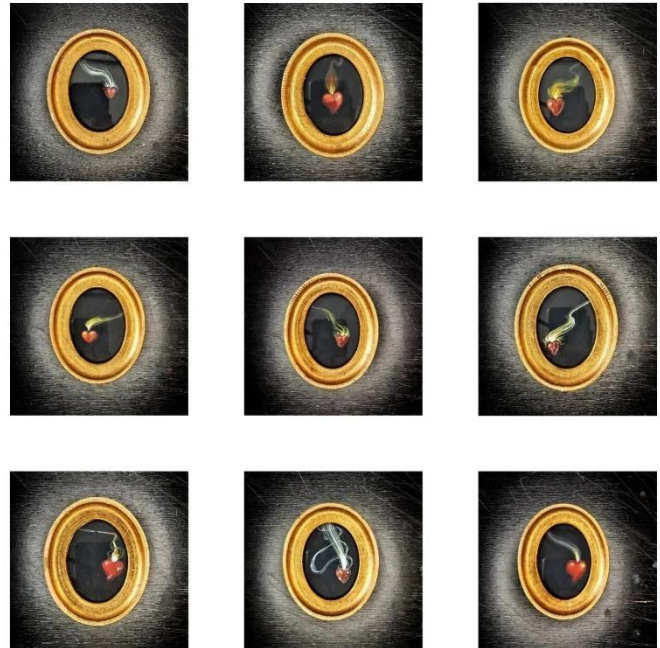
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- Baked, air-dried clay, or polymer clay. Objects made with this technique do not require a furnace, as they can be air-dried or baked in a regular oven. Considering the expense, small items such as jewellery or decorative items are usually made. Baking and air-drying clays have a similar appearance to regular clay.

- Handmade with normal clay. As for handmade ceramic objects, the possibilities are endless.

- Modeled on a lathe with normal clay. Again, you need a furnace and when you can work quickly with the lathe.

The tools used in this profession are wooden slats of various sizes on which to place the ceramic to prevent it from sticking to a smooth surface during processing and on which also to allow our pieces to dry when they are finished. Small iron lathes to have an all-around view of our object: thanks to these tools, which allow the product to rotate. Also, wooden tools: modelling spatulas, sticks, compasses, and templates. Metal tools: sights, modelling sights, clay cutting wire, turners, hands, steel scraper, graffiti tools, perforator, graffiti brush, and lathe gauge. Plastic tools: turning rubber, sponge.

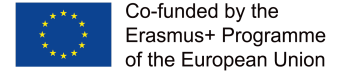


What markets are related to this profession?

Interior design market and jewellery. Both individuals and the public turn directly to the craftsman to create their works. For interior design and jewellery, these will be collaborations related to creating objects used in living and/or office spaces or personal ornamental objects.

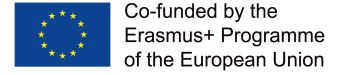
Where to learn the profession.

Higher secondary education qualification with an artistic focus or a qualifying professional training course attendance. Subsequently, it is important to carry out internship experiences at one or more ceramic production companies and / or a training-work experience, for example, through an apprenticeship contract.



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