

From Oblivion to success, traditional majolica Gorky Gonzalez



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Behind the stone wall and two wooden doors on the facade, the shop remains in almost total silence, just listening to the chirping of some birds alternating with the screams of a trio of parrots that echo between stored ceramics the side of the aisles.

Vases, tubs, pots, plates, trays, majolica pottery figures in white, predominantly in blue patterned as is traditional for such parts, a technique that came to Mexico with the Spanish conquest and the craftsman for 51 years after Gorky Gonzalez rescued of nearly 80 years of not occur in Guanajuato.

Sitting at the desk in his office on the top floor of the shop, his son Gorky Gonzalez was born Ono recounts how his father's workshop started and now he leads and manages.

"My grandfather was a sculptor Rodolfo Gonzalez and that's where my dad had his first contact with the mud, you helped make molds for sculptures or sculptures that are first made in clay, in 1962 my dad put a smelter craft and then went on a scholarship to study in Japan, he met my mother-tells serene and friendly voice-studied with teachers beyond Tsuji Seimei and Kei Fujiwara, considered treasures living in that country. "

Upon his return from Japan, Gorky González father installed an antique shop, where by chance came a few pots that seemed quite unusual: "I asked my grandfather:" Hey Dad, what these pots do, or where they come from or Who makes them? And my grandfather were told that for many years in the direction of San Luisito "he said.

Thus, González father became interested in technical rescue and keep alive this majolica ceramic manufacturing technique and set up his small workshop in the back of the Ex Hacienda de Montenegro, and amply achieved his goal as the date has brought a host of awards, prizes and rewarding experiences.

National Prize of Arts and Sciences 1992

Among the exhibitions and fairs in which he has participated, are the New York gallery in 1966 and the new central building of Tokyo in 1967. In 1968 participated in the Montreal Expo in Canada.

In 1970 he was recognized with a permanent display in the Museum of Popular Arts National Fund for the Promotion of Handicrafts and in 1990 was presented in the New World Ceramics Festival in Italy and 2002 in the Museo Franz Mayer.

The workshop also has garnered several awards, including first place in the Home Fair 1964, the first National Folk Art in Aguascalientes in 1975, the National Award for Tourism and Hospitality in 1977, and in 1994 obtained The Silver Pípila granted Ivory Lions Club most distinguished citizen.

All this experience and dedication to the rescue, promotion and retention of a craft technique that was pretty much dead in the state, earned him the National Prize of Arts and Sciences in the category of Arts and Popular Traditions 1992.

"They evaluated which was a technique that had already been rescued and many career doing and that somehow a tradition continued driving toward Mexico Guanajuato and to the world, I think that was the idea for which the jury decided on my dad ", said Gonzalez Ono.

After winning the award, in January 1993, González Ono, recently graduated from the Technological Institute of Monterrey as industrial and systems engineer, took over the business.

He grew up amid the production of ceramics and learned the trade and the functioning of the workshop: "I grew up in the mud," he said, which has gradually been implemented improvements in production but especially in marketing.

"When I graduated in December 92 Technological, I see the need for the workshop was modernized in several ways, first in the administrative matter, then the question of production, since childhood I have been mixed with clay, and took a few courses where I specialize more in ceramic bodies and glazes, then that with the engineering base helps me understand a little more these processes, "he said.

"The first thing I did was put a computer (the workshop)," he replies without hesitation and complicit laughter breaks the serenity of his face, then to question him what first made to take charge of the workshop.

"I put the computer and made a simple system to manage the shop in Fox Pro, a programming language for years to standardize and have quality control, I slowly getting into the shop until I focused on sales because I realized that that's where the drum rhythm of the business ", he said.

Then he began to seek new business channels to place the product in other markets and focused on exports: "I sold abroad but the strategy was to make a trade more aggressively".

"When I come here I start the company to seek other sales channels, which treat Europe, Asia try something but the best result gives us is with our neighboring United States, Europe and Asia is very little that is exported "he recalled.

Currently has customers all over the country, from Cabo San Lucas in Baja California Sur, through the Federal District and to the Yucatan Peninsula in Cancun, Quintana Roo, as well as clients in the United States.

In both cases, most of their clients are small galleries devoted to the sale of gifts and some kitchen items, and the National Fund for the Promotion of Handicrafts (Fonart) and the Museo de Arte Popular (MAP), and some department stores such as El Palacio de Hierro said.

Two lines

Gorky Gonzalez currently produces two lines of ceramics, traditional and "gogo", both are working in three main techniques: turning (about 95% of the round pieces), drained and pressed, they give an opportunity to create more varied articles .

"Traditional line are always designs with some adaptations and is unusual in that it is all hand painted and everything is turning, the line is more contemporary gogo are smooth colors without losing the feeling of earth colors but they are pistoleados and parts are in molds, "he said.

Ono Gonzalez said that for a company to be successful must have a differentiated product and also a quality customer care, be flexible with the market even though sometimes it represents some risk.

"I think the secret of business is to go step by step, now I do it makes me doubtful that from one year to another can make significant progress, unless you have a sensational product, a flagship product," he said.

This philosophy and dedication have built the prestige and recognition of Traditional Pottery Gorky Gonzalez, who can boast as recent anecdote that made the dishes in which food is served in turn to then Pope Benedict XVI, during his visit to Guanajuato last year which ended in a record time of two weeks.

"One important thing is to always majolica was made by a group of people, that's why my dad likes to sign with the AT, meaning traditional pottery and pottery involves many people, is directed by Gorky Gonzalez yes , but all signs as AT Guanajuato Mexico, has always loved to share the achievement with the name of pottery ".