

Manises, Creative City of Ceramics

Manises is a Mediterranean town located in the metropolitan area of Valencia (Spain). It is located on the right bank of the Turia River and belongs to the region of L'Horta Sud. Since November 8, 2021, Manises is part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of crafts and folk art, for its historic ceramics, which date back to the fourteenth century. Currently, the city organizes numerous events throughout the year which revolve around the world of ceramics.

Among the international activities, the **Manises International Ceramics Biennial** stands out, one of the most important contemporary ceramics competitions in Europe, which will hold its 16th edition in the spring of 2024. It has a wide worldwide projection and artists from many countries have participated in the last editions.

This year the **Manises International Ceramics Film Festival** was created, which aims to provide an overview of current cinema whose theme focuses on ceramics from any point of view: as a material, as a





craft or industrial tradition, whether present or historical, as an artistic production or simply as a starting point to let the imagination fly. The next edition will be held in the spring of 2024, together with the Manises International Ceramics Biennial.

For more than ten years, the Ceramology Association has been carrying out regular archaeological excavations, which have boosted the **Archaeological Volunteer Camp** focused on young people and university students. The uninterrupted production of ceramics in Manises since the fourteenth century has led to the preservation of numerous archaeological relics of this activity. Most of the testimonies are located in the Obradors neighborhood. This is an archaeological area where ceramic evidence dating back more than seven centuries can be found. In the subsoil of this area of the municipality you can read the history of the most important medieval ceramic production center in Europe.

Manises also organizes festive and popular activities such as the **Ceramics Parade**, which has been held annually for more than a century. The parade travels through the main streets of the city in floats while giving the public ceramic objects made by local artisans.

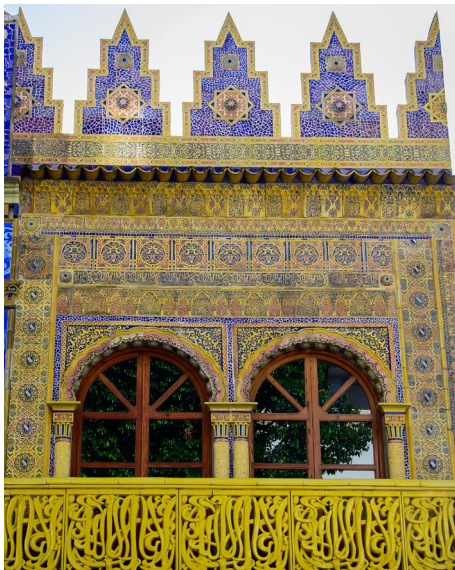
The **Ceramics Festival** has also been held since 1972. During these days, artisans and artists turn the city into an amazing ceramic scene and make demonstrations in the streets where visitors can participate by making clay pieces or buying those already exhibited. Since the city was nominated as a UNESCO Creative City, many other creative cities, such as

Barcelos (Portugal), Paducah (United States of America), Madaba (Jordan), and Kütahya (Türkiye), have participated with Manises, contributing to a global and international approach to the event.

Moreover, there are several ceramic exhibitions that can be visited in Manises every year. Currently, in commemoration of the second anniversary as a UNESCO Creative City, there are two exhibitions that can be visited until the end of January 2024.

On the one hand, the National Association of Ceramic Professionals (ANPEC) is exhibiting “**Joguets en ceràmica**” (Toys in ceramics). It is an interpretation of games, toys and emblematic characters through exclusive ceramic pieces.

On the other hand, the Manises locality has invited the creative city of Barcelos (Portugal) to exhibit a representation of its most characteristic ceramics: “**O mundo fantástico do Figurado de barro de Barcelos**” (The fantastic world of Barcelos clay figurines). This exhibition presents handcrafted figurines that reflect the oral traditions, the collective memory and the cultural heritage of the inhabitants of this Portuguese town.



Manises was the first city in Spain to receive the UNESCO Creative City designation in the field of crafts and folk art. And it continues to be **the only one**, even after the latest nominations. Positioning ceramic creativity as a driver of sustainable urban development, social inclusion and cultural influence becomes an essential objective for this Valencian municipality.

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(Focal Points of Manises)

