

FRITSON TOLEDO | NAVAJO

Fritson Toledo has been sharing his artistic vision with people through metalsmithing for over forty years now. Fritson is a Navajo artist who has been working as a serious silversmith since he was a teenager. He later became a goldsmith while employed by Les Baker, a well-known southwestern jewelry designer and fabricator.

He was born in Cuba, New Mexico in September of 1961 to Mae and Chee Toledo, but he grew up in Torreon, NM. Growing up in a farming community located in a valley framed by the Jemez Mountains, Fritson would pass his time drawing.

Although he comes from a family of weavers, Fritson found his artistic voice at a very early age while observing his father working in their home as a silversmith. However, he is self-taught due to the fact that his father was not known to be a tolerant man nor a person who would have the patience to teach. After his father completed his work day, Fritson would teach himself using his father's tools on the pieces of scrap silver he left behind. Borrowing tools from his father did not continue for long and Fritson also learned how to make his own tools and stamps for silversmithing.

An industrious young man, Fritson made his first shank and shot ring around the age of twelve. It was a gift for his mother. He shared his knowledge with his peers and was teaching a silversmith class at his high school at fifteen and sixteen years old. Fritson found that by marrying his three skill sets: drawing, silver and metalsmithing, he could open many doors for himself both artistically and professionally.

Through the years, his style has evolved in a manner that defies categories. Allowing himself to be influenced by the natural world around him rather than trends and the works of other silversmiths enabled Fritson to develop his elusive style. Designs inspired by his daily contact with nature and patterns in the world around him drawn on paper were later realized through silver or gold and stone.

Mr. Toledo is now a proud father of two boys and shares his passion for metal and silversmithing with one of his sons while sharing his love for muscle cars with both. We can only hope that the magic Fritson Toledo has created over the past forty years through metals and stones continue to flourish through his son's hands for new generations to enjoy.

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