

PAULINE ROMERO | JEMEZ PUEBLO

Pauline Romero is a diverse and award-winning potter from Jemez Pueblo celebrated for her graceful, refined lined works. Born to Persingula R. Tosa on September 25, 1962, Pauline was named Anita “Pauline” Romero. As a teenager, Pauline began learning the traditional Jemez Pueblo methods of pottery making from her grandmother, Lupe M. Romero, as well as from her mother. Although Pauline has carved out her own niche as a contemporary pueblo potter with her uniquely stylized works, she still incorporates the same design motifs her mentors taught her years ago in her works today.

While Pauline was growing up her community was in a transitional period with respect to their artistic expressions through pottery. Descendants of the ancient Anasazi people, Jemez Pueblo was best known for their black on white pottery made for many years before Spanish contact. Gradually, Jemez Pueblo’s production of its long-standing pottery traditions had completely eroded by the early 1700’s. Two hundred years later, in the early 1900’s Jemez Pueblo experienced a revival of pottery making inspired mainly by Zia Pueblo designs. Similarly, the emergence of the tourist trade in the Southwest spurred another new direction for Jemez Pueblo potters. Beginning around the 1930’s, Jemez potters started painting their pots made for tourists with commercial poster paints.



By the time Pauline was born some Jemez potters were using acrylic paints to adorn their pots while others were beginning to look in a different direction. As a young girl, Pauline witnessed many potters in her community looking back into their cultures history for their path forward as Pueblo potters in the 20th Century. Traditional Jemez Pueblo pottery making methods of hand coiling and firing were once again commonly used by a significant number of Jemez potters that were producing high-quality works by the 1970’s. These forward thinking individuals not only assisted in preserving their culture’s traditions, but they simultaneously opened the door creatively speaking for generations to come.

Collectors of contemporary Jemez Pueblo pottery are familiar with the vast diversity amongst the many Jemez potters. From the distinguished forms being made to the various slips and design techniques now being employed by Jemez potters, their creative expression seems limitless even within the constraints of only using traditional pottery making methods. Likewise, Pauline has managed to continue this stewardship of Jemez Pueblo pottery traditions for her own work as well as her children’s generation simply by following her own artistic vision while employing the traditional techniques her mother and grandmother taught her and sharing them all with her daughter.

Pauline’s pottery has evolved into her singular style of elegantly lined pots with superbly polished redware and tanware over the past forty plus years. Although her preferred forms have changed over the years moving from nicely shaped bowls and vases to swirled melon shaped forms she still maintains the traditional methods in her construction. Her most recent works tend to exhibit much of her experience employing various techniques, design methods and most with her signature soft red and creamy buff slips. Pauline also uses on occasion the Sgraffito technique to share her inherited butterfly and feather designs on the surface of some of her works. Her

cultures affinity for the diversity that Pueblo pottery has to offer has been enjoyed by Pauline as she maintains her excellent style throughout the years while simultaneously upholding her culture's traditions.

While competing at the Santa Fe Indian Market, the New Mexico State Fair and the Inter-tribal Indian Ceremonial, Pauline has won first and second place awards. Pauline has had the honor of having her works included in the following publications as well as others: Gregory Schaaf's "*Southern Pueblo Pottery: 2000 Artist Biographies*", Allan Hayes' and Jon Blom's "*Southwestern Pottery: Anasazi to Zuni*"; and Guy Berger's and Nancy Schiffer's "*Pueblo & Navajo Contemporary Pottery: And Directory of Artists*". Although her works are sumptuous in appearance, they are quite affordable in price. She signs her pottery as: Pauline Romero, Jemez.

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