

CANDELARIA SUAZO | SANTA CLARA PUEBLO

Candelaria Suazo is a full-blooded Native American Indian potter from the pueblos Santa Clara and San Juan and her tribal affiliation is with Santa Clara Pueblo. She was born in the late 1950's into a family of potters. Candelaria acquired the fundamentals of traditional pottery making from her mother, Santanita Suazo. Likewise, she gained inspiration to continue learning the art from her sisters, Margie Naranjo, the late Martha Huangooah, Mae Tapia and Shirley Duran. Furthermore, her aunts, Dolores Curran and Geri Naranjo, also greatly influenced her work.



Candelaria has been actively making pottery since 1987, well over thirty years. She currently specializes in Sgraffito (Sgraffito in Italian means "to scratch") two-tone styles. Like many Santa Clara potters, Candelaria begins by gathering her clay within the pueblo then removing impurities before she begins the process of making her pottery. She rolls coils of clay that she then shapes into her desired forms. The pottery is then air dried and polished with a smooth polishing stone and red slip. While the clay is still malleable yet dry to the touch, Candelaria will carve her designs into the pot using Sgraffito tools (precise carving tools made out of sharp stainless-steel blades attached to a hardwood handle).

Candelaria's expertise in firing traditional Santa Clara pottery can be witnessed by viewing any one of her miniature two-tone styled pots. The same clay sources and polishing techniques are used for the redware and blackware pottery. The method of firing is the only difference. So in order to achieve two-toned pottery using traditional techniques, Candelaria needs to employ the reduction and oxidizing firing methods in one firing session. Simply put, a reduction fire reduces the available oxygen in the fire producing a black surface while maintaining the pottery's high polish and painted designs. Conversely, an oxidizing fire maintains the available oxygen in the firing process producing red pottery. In this manner, Candelaria manages to fire miniature forms that have a beautiful, highly polished black surface that moves to red in specific areas, highlighting her Sgraffito designs.

Candelaria has said that she "enjoys making pottery because (she) want(s) to keep up the traditional art of pottery making that the pueblo of Santa Clara is known for." She has exhibited at the Eight Northern Pueblos Show and has won several ribbons for first, second and third places. Candelaria's work has also been published in: American Artist Series: Pueblo Indian Pottery (750 Artist Biographies) by Gregory Schaaf.

SOURCIES CITED:

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https://www.antiqueamericanindianart.com/store/p2332/500118_Candeleria_Suazo_Turtle_Pottery.html