



Home Grown

Known for creating large, hand-built vessels, Margaret Tafoya favored local materials, techniques, and imagery. Devoted to pottery traditions native to the Santa Clara Pueblo in New Mexico, she refused to use a potter's wheel.



Jar, ca. 1965

Take a closer look

Margaret Tafoya (1904–2001) decorated her pottery with relief carvings of traditional symbols. Examine the jar closely to locate imagery Tafoya incorporated.

Something to talk about

The artist's highly polished pots blur the line between utilitarian object and artwork. Consider items in your own home. In which pieces do you value function over form? Vice versa?

In her own words

"When I was small, like all pueblo children, we sit around Mother's side when she is making pottery. We get a piece of clay and try to make animals or maybe bowls...and whether we knew it or not, through our playing with clay we learned pottery making."

Who knew?

Tafoya's family reflects the matrilineal heritage of her craft. Her mother, Sara Fina Gutierrez Tafoya (1863–1949), developed the pottery style now associated with the Santa Clara Pueblo. Margaret's daughter, Lu Ann Tafoya (b. 1938), also in the museum's collection, continues the tradition.

Margaret Tafoya, *Jar*, ca. 1965; Blackware, 17 x 13 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; © Margaret Tafoya

