

Melissa Antonio, San Fidel, New Mexico

Acoma Pueblo Pottery



Greetings! My name is Melissa Antonio. A member of Acoma Pueblo. I was born in 1965 and raised on the Acoma Reservation. I am a Red Corn and Sun Clan. My parents, Gilbert and Lillie Concho. My husband's name is Daniel Antonio, and I have three children. My family has grown over the past years and I have been blessed with six grandchildren. I am also an in-law to Richard and Mildred Antonio, whom also been a part of my great success.

I was raised in a traditional way and was taught to respect the mother earth, all its creatures and the clay it provides. Growing up, I sparked an interest in becoming an artisan by observing my mother Lillie Concho. She began to teach me at the age of twelve. Learning the process of gathering clay, preparing the clay, and making the natural colors from other natural pigments which were gathered within

Acoma Pueblo itself. I began painting small pots with the traditional Acoma designs, which were the big bold designs, soon after I graduated high school. By the time I was twenty-three, my skills had improved and my art reflected my experience as a fine artisan.

Around 1990, my mother in-law, Mildred Antonio, encouraged me to start learning how to make my own pottery. She taught me the wisdom and strength to put my heart into what I make with my pottery. She also mentioned to me that, it wouldn't be easy the first time around. Grinding and pounding pottery shards, mixing and finally sculpting the pot. Within time, I accomplished making my own pottery.

My inspiration for creating my designs on my pottery came to me when I came across a broken pottery shard. It was a checkerboard design. I imaged how it would actually look on a fully made pottery. Amazingly, my pottery came out beautiful and I was very proud of the art I created. It took time and patience. From that moment on, I started to design my pots with the black and white design. Over the years my design changed and I've added a few more designs such as the kokopelli. However, I always reflected back on that checkerboard design. It's detailed into all my artwork. I sign all my art with M.C. Antonio.

Along my journey as an artist, I've attended many art shows. And incredibly, I did very well. Though there was hardships along the way. I always remembered the advice that was given to me from my family, my mother and my mother-in-law especially when it came to my pottery. I received my first award in 1992 at the New Mexico State Fair. I have attended shows like the Heard Indian Market, Pueblo Grande Market, Santo Domingo Indian Market and recently Santa Fe Indian Market. My art work reflects my talent and I am much honored to have made this job as an artist a lifetime career.

