

# Andrea Fisher

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Fine Pottery

## Rose Gonzales

San Ildefonso



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Rose Gonzales was born into San Juan Pueblo in 1900. She and her sister, Pomasena, were educated at the Santa Fe Indian School and stayed there after their parents died during the swine flu epidemic of 1918. Mary Cata, an elderly female relative, adopted them and returned them to San Juan in 1919. In 1920 Rose married Robert Gonzales and the two sisters moved to Robert's home at San Ildefonso. Robert's mother, Ramona Sanchez Gonzales, taught Rose to make pottery the traditional San Ildefonso way. Years later, Rose passed her knowledge on when she taught her son Tse-Pé, his wife Dora and their daughter Irene the traditional way to make pots.

The early 1920's were an exciting time to be learning to make pottery at San Ildefonso. First Rose learned to make polished blackware, then she learned the new black-on-black technique and the older black-on-red technique. About 1929 Rose began "earnestly making pottery." She slowly perfected her polish, refining her technique on both blackware and redware. Coming as she did from San Juan Pueblo, Rose made especially fine redware.

Rose said it was around 1930 that her husband was out deer hunting and came across an ancient carved pot shard. He brought it home and she studied it, trying to work out how it had been made before carving her first piece. In her words: "I fired it and it came out nice and I started carving." For that reason she is credited as being the innovator of deep carved pottery at San Ildefonso.

Rose used a sharp knife and chisel to carve her pots. After a while she began sanding the edges to create a "cameo" style. She made pots with both square and rounded edges on her carved lines. While she was always selling her pots Rose was also feeding up to eleven people at her kitchen table. During the 1930's and 40's she traded many of her pots for food. When she got older, she sometimes collaborated with her son, Tse-Pé, especially when she was working with two-tone pots.

Rose mostly made black, red and two-tone jars, bowls, wedding vases, cylinders, vases, canteens, plates and bird effigy bowls. Her favorite designs were carved or painted birds, clouds, avanyus, kiva steps, thunderbirds and seeds uncurling. Rose participated many times in shows like the SWAIA Santa Fe Indian Market, Eight Northern Pueblos Arts and Crafts Show, the Gallup Intertribal Ceremonial and the New Mexico State Fair, earning numerous 1st, 2nd and 3rd Place ribbons over the years. Rose passed away in 1989.

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