

Susan Folwell

Class of 1989, Visual Art



Susan Folwell was born and raised in Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico, where she was immersed in the world of traditional pueblo pottery. She began working in clay as a child. Her mother, renown potter Jody Folwell, and her sister Polly Rose Folwell, were both major influences on her interest in pottery in pottery and experimentation. Like her mother Susan is known to incorporate social and political commentary into her ceramics. Susan studied fine art photography at the Idyllwild School of Music and Arts (Idyllwild Arts Academy) in California and later at the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit.

Susan's work is in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian; Museum of Art and Design in NY; Heard Museum, Phoenix; Denver Art Museum; and more. Susan has won "Best of Non-Traditional Pottery" at Santa Fe Indian Market and other awards at Eight Northern Pueblo Indian Market, and the Heard Museum Indian Market and Fair, to name a few. She was one of five American Indian ceramists whose work was featured in the exhibit Free Spirit at the Stedelijk Museum in Hertogenbosch, Norway, in 2006.



Susan broadens her artistic scope with each new body of work she creates. She was one of the first Pueblo potters to begin utilizing acrylic paints on her pottery. She has also moved beyond traditional design elements, winning awards with pieces that have featured images from the "Harry Potter" books on her pottery. Most recently she has begun to deep carve designs into her pottery with stunning results – her vision takes her well beyond the expected. Growing up with the sensibility of making art that was different served Susan Folwell well. Not only was she steeped in traditional ways of honoring the artistic process, she was also a witness to new ideas about what pottery could accomplish, what message the art could carry. As a contemporary potter, Folwell deeply believes it is her duty to show people a new pathway in Native American art. www.susanfolwell.com