

Freddy Santana

Artists' Bio



I am a ceramic artist of Puerto Rican and Mexican descent. For thirty years I have created art. In that time I have taught high school ceramics; I have married, had children; I have gained perspective on my journey and the journeys of those around me. I am grateful for those years because it is through the disparity of my experiences and the time to reflect upon these experiences that I have discovered my voice as an artist. My work represents the exploration of tradition without being limited by that same tradition. I have become inspired by my culture. The philosophies and ideas, the forms and techniques, the images and symbolism reflect both my history and my present. However, I do not seek to replicate tradition, for I am not solely my past. I am the present using modern techniques and materials and struggling with modern themes. As a Latino, I am a confluence of my past, present and future. Sometimes those forces unite in pride and the strength of not just knowing who you are but loving who you are. Sometimes those forces battle each other for dominance and leave me questioning who I am or, more often, who I am supposed to be. My art is who I am and who I am is a mix of tradition and modernity; it is a Aztec technical precision with Taino expression; It is a teacher at a Smart board adorned with a MesoAmerican symbol of rebellion. My current work honors the people who have influenced me. Gustavo Perez's minimalist style taught me that the absence of elements can shine a light on the beauty of ideas. Enrique Chagoya and Virgil Ortiz both inspired me with their modernization of images of antiquity. Latinos are progress. The fastest growing demographic of entrepreneurs in the United States are Latino. However, it has made me hungry to connect to my past. I need to see my culture's antiquities and see how it simultaneously exists in the modern day. To see where we come from informs who we are and where we are going. My art is as much a map as it is an artifact because I am both a map and an artifact. I am a present and a past. I have made the most important discovery. I now know what I don't know and I want to know it.