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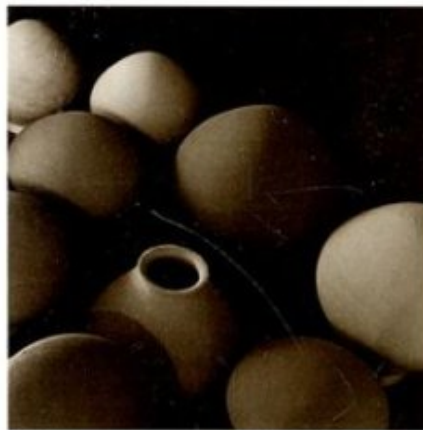
*Sandra S. Smith*

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### *Portraits of Clay*

*Potters of Mata Ortiz*

*by Sandra S. Smith*



*Introduction by  
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Not long ago, pottery was a lost art in Chihuahua, Mexico. But in the 1970s, near the ruins of Casas Grandes, an art revolution was born. Inspired by ancient pottery fragments from a tradition that had disappeared before the arrival of the first Europeans, a self-taught woodcutter-turned-artist reinvented an entire ceramic technology. Today Casas Grandes pottery, made by hand from local clays and mineral colors by a handful of artists, claims high prices and sets the standard for contemporary pottery. Photographer Sandra Smith traveled to Mata Ortiz to photograph the potters and to record their reflections on their work. Her portraits document their techniquescollecting and preparing the clay,

forming by hand, sanding, and painting. They also capture intimate moments between artists and their art. For anyone who has ever admired Casas Grandes pottery, *Portraits of Clay* is a beautiful introduction to the potters and their work.

Language NotesText: English, SpanishFrom the Inside FlapNot long ago, pottery was a lost art in Chihuahua, Mexico. But in the 1970s, near the ruins of Casas Grandes, an art revolution was born. Inspired by ancient pottery fragments from a tradition that had disappeared before the arrival of the first Europeans, a self-taught woodcutter-turned-artist reinvented an entire ceramic technology. Today Casas Grandes pottery, made by hand from local clays and mineral colors by a handful of artists, claims high prices and sets the standard for contemporary pottery. Photographer Sandra Smith traveled to Mata OrtA-z to photograph the potters and to record their reflections on their work. Her portraits document their techniques--collecting and preparing the clay, forming by hand, sanding, and painting. They also capture intimate moments between artists and their art. For anyone who has ever admired Casas Grandes pottery, "Portraits of Clay" is a beautiful introduction to the potters and their work.About the AuthorSandra S. Smith is a photographer living in Tucson, Arizona. Her exhibition on the potters of Mata Ortiz is currently on display at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago.