



**Bowl with Avanyu design**

**Date**  
c. 1925-43

**Primary Maker**  
Maria Poveka Martinez

**Medium**  
San Ildefonso black-on-black terracotta

**Description**  
Black-on-black pottery was a style that was produced by the Pueblo peoples during the Neolithic period. The peoples of the nearby Santa Clara Pueblo were still producing the highly burnished black on black pottery since the 1600s. While Santa Clara’s pots are deeply carved and incised, those of San Ildefonso are generally not carved and are painted with pigments to cause un-polished designs on a polished surface. The clay itself is not jet

black, but rather caused by smothering the fire surrounding the pottery during the outdoor firing process, trapping the smoke and thus depositing it into the clay. Julian Martinez, husband of Maria Martinez, began by decorating Maria's pots and in 1918 finished his first decorated black ware pot with a matte background and a polish Avanyu design. Many of his patterns were adopted from ancient vessels of the Pueblos, including birds, roadrunner tracks, rain, feathers, clouds, mountains, and kiva steps. Depicted here, the avanyu, or water serpent, is important in the culture and cosmology of the Tewa Pueblos. This bowl bears the joint signature "Marie + Julian," dating it to 1925-1943.

**Dimensions**  
Overall: 4 x 4 3/4 x 4 3/4 in. (10.2 x 12.1 x 12.1 cm)