

Art-to-Art Palette *Journal*



"Tea Cozy"

A PORTRAIT OF MERYL RUTH



Artist will show you the magic

Children are naturally drawn to the anticipation of the unknown. For the high school art students of *Deering High School* in Portland, Maine, the trick to the magic slowly unfolds before their eyes as an idea becomes a thought, a thought becomes a drawing and the drawing becomes reality.

“*I did that?*” is the common response from students as their completed pottery pieces are displayed. After weeks of learning, working and reworking the time-involved process of making a perfect plate or bowl from a mound of clay, the journey is over and the secret to the magic has been revealed. Most students are in awe of their accomplishment but teacher, **Meryl Ruth** sees much more than a finished project; the experience itself is where the magic trick lies.



“Be-U-Tea-Ful-Dreamer”

“Kids come in here with that high school attitude of ‘whatever’ but as time goes on, they forget the fact that they are a junior working beside a freshman or that they are just here because they have to be,” says Meryl after seeing students come and grow for twenty-seven years.

Artist-Educator Ruth is challenged with kids that live in a world filled with immediate gratification, but feels that the different mediums of art provides a release for many students that have never known anything else. She also teaches art in overall media to include drawing, painting, ceramics and soft cut printmaking.

“The soft-cut alone takes a full week not to mention some areas that have to be done over,” says Ruth in her job of teaching patience as well as art. There will always be those that refuse to open their minds but for the most part, at the end of the day, Meryl finds her ultimate goal of bringing out the best in students, a success.

Ruth only teaches part-time in order to give herself the gratification of creativity with her own work.

“Porcelain Grace” is the name of her design business and Meryl has a studio attached to her home that overlooks a serene lake and calls her studio the *“Sanctuary of Prayer.”* Each morning begins with a 30-minute session of meditation to clear her mind in preparation of a new precious day.

Her unique, colorful teapots have won numerous awards both at home and around the country, as artist Ruth uses the best in life to bring a joyous display of a world so often spoiled by trauma and heartache.

“Teapots are the most difficult type of vessel to conquer and perfect,” says Meryl when asked why this object was selected. *“The body, handle, spout and lid all have to flow together perfectly and I find the challenge exciting.”*

Currently one of her teapots is on display at the *University of Southern Maine Area Gallery* on the Woodbury Campus in Portland, Maine that is sponsored by the *Maine Art Educators*. Upcoming events include 100 Teapots V at the

Baltimore Clayworks Gallery and the *Niche Awards Exhibit* in Philadelphia. Visit her website for dates and times at www.merylruth.com.



Unlike many artists, Meryl Ruth begins each ceramic piece from an idea that is hand sketched. You will find lots of instructional material on her website. Take your own backstage tour for a preview of the secrets in the magic as only this talented artist can teach.



"Trained as a painter, I evolved into a ceramic artist, opening me to unrealized new avenues of expression. Among my construction techniques are hand-building and form altering, as well as throwing on the wheel. I also carve, use press mold and slip casting and other image transfer techniques like photo silk-screening. I fire my work multiple times in an oxidation kiln. My signature work has been that of the whimsical teapot. The gradual metamorphosis in my work over time is shown by the increasing intricacy and complexity of my recent works.

My creativity emerges on the subconscious level. Many of my artistic visions come from meditation which I practice consistently. From the silent subconscious I find an unlimited abundance of conceptual and artistic wealth from which I can draw on when I return to the real world. To me this is a kind of sacred experience where I can escape daily workaday burdens in order to focus and concentrate." MERYL RUTH