



Mary Murray Bio

Mary Murray began her life as a Laguna Beach artist ten years ago, after retiring from a 30 year career in engineering computer systems. She began with a 10 week sabbatical, "to see whether this was a dream or a hallucination", and made the decision to take on this new life when she experienced the welcoming arts community in Laguna Beach.

Her work began in ceramics, which had been a part time hobby in the past. But when she discovered that she could fire fused glass in her kiln she fell in love with the medium. Glaze colors had always been a frustration, and now the deep rich palette that glass offered, with its wonderful play with light, was an immediate draw. Mary's designs began as a play with color, but soon incorporated her whimsical free representations of subjects from nature. "Many people do not attempt to create representational pieces with cut glass because it is so difficult and time consuming to achieve. I find that I need to let go of perfection in imitating an object or scene and instead go with the flow and use the chunky abstraction of the cut pieces to advantage, allowing a somewhat abstract look that captures the mood or essence of what I want to portray. I think that the physical limitations of working with cut glass have actually helped me develop from my detail oriented engineering background into an expressive, more abstract space. "

While continually focusing on fused glass, Mary has been experimenting with other mediums. She has been working in her woodshop inherited from her father, and has also has been studying watercolor. She feels that the painting experience has enhanced her appreciation and use of color in her glass work. She thinks of each glass piece she creates as a painting in its composition and use of color. She feels fortunate to have the freedom not to focus on a single "product line" with her art, but instead can go where the spirit takes her and hopefully grow as an artist.

Mary has participated in the Sawdust Festival in 2006, the Sawdust Winter Fantasy in 2004 to 2010, and several Sawdust Open Studio tours. Since 2005 she has created 10 different sets of tableware at the Studio Arts Gallery. Her tableware installations have been unique, each using the entire table as a canvas and creating pieces that incorporate a theme including "Koi Pond", "Back Bay", "Tropical Flora", "Wildflowers", "Seascape", "Plein Air", and the currently showing "Water Worlds". She feels that tableware is an interesting medium. While a table is often simply decorative and functional, the table in a room can provide a great opportunity for art. It is a large expanse, it is changeable, it can be used to create the mood in a room, and it is often central to entertaining and times of celebration and enjoyment. Her fused tableware is combined with blown glass stemware, glassware, and center pieces by John Barber and other artists to create a magical experience.