

Occidental Artist's Meditation Altar Art



Melissa McCann, a fused glass artist from Occidental, has created a series of meditation altar art. These round altar sculptures can have a soothing and uplifting effect on the observer. These pieces have been incorporated in altars in a spiritual center in Santa Rosa as well as meditation altars in Petaluma.

Melissa began in interest in art as a potter. She was a psychotherapist and used pottery as a concrete and grounded artistic outlet. In 2001 she began making fused glass. The work in that medium coincided with a health scare that led her to retire from psychotherapy in 2003. After that she devoted herself to developing her spiritual side through meditation and movement and to pursuing her love of glass art.

The round altar pieces were originally inspired by the dream catchers of the native cultures. Their look has changed and evolved over time to include glimpses of Egyptian and Asian cultures as well.

In fact, fused glass is an ancient art form dating from the time of the early Egyptians. Now it is also called "kiln formed glass" or "warm glass", because it is not cold, like stained glass, or hot, like blown glass. The process involves layering colored glass and accent pieces and firing them in a kiln at temperatures approaching 1500 degrees. Melissa's pieces go through successive firings at varying temperatures to get the textures she envisions.

Though Melissa makes practical forms such as bowls, coasters, nightlights and jewelry, she gets the most enjoyment from creating these special altar pieces.

You can see examples of Melissa's art at Hand Goods in Occidental, John Rizzi Gallery in Guerneville, and Local Color Gallery in Bodega Bay. She currently is showing at the Kendall Jackson Wine Center in Fulton until June 15th. Melissa will also again be participating in the Art At The Source open studio event the first two weekends in June. She will be opening up her home in Occidental (#63) to people who want to see her work and meet the artist. She is also hosting Tim Fleming an innovative fine art photographer at this West Sonoma County art event sponsored by the Sebastopol Center for the Arts.



In her glass art she tries to capture landscape planes and geometrical patterns that appear in the valleys, mountains, streets and oceans. As a child in the Brandywine Valley of Delaware, and as she has traveled in America, Europe and Mexico, she has been drawn to the structure of life, the repeating forms that provide the skeleton to artistic expression in every tradition – the Native American, the European, the Asian, the North American. Her hope is that in producing art which blends traditions and defies cultural categorization, she brings to the viewer a sense of common aesthetic sense as human beings.

Barracks Artists

Trade Arms for Art

By Caren Catterall

The institutional green building on Finely Avenue seems unremarkable. Long, featureless hallways with many closed doors do not tell the whole tale of the colorful activities happening behind them. Here and there a brightly painted door jam implies color leaking out of the room. The art hanging in the halls is your only clue that this is no longer a military barracks but a thriving art community. This year, six Barracks Artists will be participating in Art at the Source Open Studios, and offering an opportunity for the public to see what is behind some of those doors. The annual open studio tour will be held two weekends, June 6 & 7, 13 & 14 from 10-5.

Built in 1943, the building was part of the historical Navel Auxiliary Air Station Santa Rosa, an outlying airfield for Alameda Air Station. The site included 498 acres with two 7,000 foot concrete runways. 21 squadrons were trained here to fight in WW2, but the war ended soon after it was built. The station saw renewed activity during the Korean War but was decommissioned following that war. The city used the Santa Rosa Air Center as an airport until the newer one was built. For a time it was used by FEMA and the Army Reserves, to plan for emergencies such as nuclear attacks. In 1984 the property was sold into private hands. Some of the old runways are still visible out back, but others have been torn up for housing and business development.

Eleven acres at this end of the base has been saved from development by the Tiger Salamander habitat issues, and the area retains a bucolic countryside atmosphere. In the mornings, hot air balloons use the landing strip to set down. Wild life abounds, including hawks and hundreds of swallows who come annually to build their nests. The open vistas are stunning for viewing weather and sunsets.

In 1985 Greg Brown leased several buildings from the owner to create an art community, calling it The Studio Santa Rosa. Over the years the population and activities have fluctuated. At one point, when artists were allowed to live in their studios, there were frequent art shows and open studios, social gatherings, and

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OPEN STUDIOS
June 6, 7 & June 13, 14 ^{10am} - 5pm
in Forestville

Come and visit these open studios, talk with artists, view beautiful gardens, and rest on a hot day with cool refreshments.

Fabulous Art Showing



CARLA SARVIS - kilnformed art glass
STUDIO 8



MARILYN BATCHELLER - large oil paintings, fine art prints
STUDIO 7



LORRAINE CHAPMAN - silk paintings & mixed media
STUDIO 9A



JULS O'HARE - oil, acrylic, abstract, figurative
STUDIO 9B

Map & Info: www.artatthesource.org
sponsored by Sebastopol Center for the Arts

www.sonomacountycalendar.com

Your all-month-long updates with FULL TEXT & Google Map links so you can find your way to these great events!