

Carly Wright
721 Bozenkil Rd.
Altamont NY 12009

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ARTIST RESUME

SUMMARY

A Studio Art Jewelry Designer with 22 years experience exhibiting in nationally juried shows. Has pursued a specific study of Champlevé and Cloisonné techniques in enameling since 1972.

B.P.A. Empire State College 1978

Penland School of Crafts, received scholarship 1980-84

EXPERIENCE

1980-present Self Employed. Founded Carly Wright Enamels. Designs and markets both one of a kind and limited edition works at upscale Craft Shows and to over 100 Craft Galleries throughout the United States and abroad. Developed innovative technique in enameling using a matte finish and ultra-thin layering. Highly motivated and self disciplined as demonstrated through consistently expanding business.

JURIED CRAFT SHOWS

American Craft Council Shows 1988-Present

Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show 1990-, 1994

Crafts at the Castle, Boston. 1994-1997, 2001

Long's Park Art and Craft Festival 1996-2001

Guilford Handcraft Show 1985 -97

WBAI Holiday Craft Show NYC 1990-94

Paradise City Arts Festival 1996-2001

Smithsonian Craft Show 2000

Metalsmith Magazine: Exhibition in Print 1997 Selected Artist

JUROR

Guilford Handcraft Show 1992

Berkshire Craft Show 1993

American Craft Council Shows 2000

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

SNAG (Society of North American Goldsmiths)

ACC (American Craft Council)

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ARTIST STATEMENT

My jewelry is inspired by the natural world. I am fascinated by cliffs revealing layers of sedimentary rock. I believe that the images that I see on my daily walks, give me a vocabulary. I often stop to sketch , or pick up a stone or a piece of bark. These small objects sit on my drawing table for weeks, sometimes years. When I sit down to design new pieces I look to them for inspiration, and try to convey something of what I see in them to others. I am also drawn to architectural symbols such as windows or doors. The creation of art begins for me as a journey into a intuitive and playful part of myself. I strive to remain open to the creative process and let the pieces that I make come through me. To some degree I will influence this creation with the experience I have as a designer and perhaps more importantly through my experiences of being alive. My sketches are loose, fluid, fast, using drafting and colored pencils . Often these sketches also sit unused for many weeks until I am ready to hone the designs to working drawings . It is the second phase of the process where I look for the beautiful line, and the design elements that I find interesting. My work is often described as painterly. I don't feel that I am a jewelry designer more than I am an artist working on a very small scale with materials I fell in love with at age nineteen.

I saw my first enamels at a local craft fair some 26 years ago and was inspired to purchase a kiln and sign up for a class. My quest for knowledge took me to Buffalo to study with renowned enamelist Bill Helwig, and on to an apprenticeship with Philadelphia jeweler Barbara Mail. I attended Empire State College, a university without walls program associated with the State University of New York System. Through this program I was able to concentrate in the study of my chosen media of enameling, and earned a BPA (the equivalent of a BFA) degree in 1978. I continued my study at the Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina where I was a scholarship student from 1980-84.

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WORK PROCESS

Enameling can be a tedious media, requiring painstaking attention to surface preparation and firing times. The average time a piece is in the kiln is 40-60 seconds, with only an 8 second leeway between the enamel being fired to maturity, and the underlying metal beginning to break down and melt. Firing time is critical as the melting point of silver is 1640 degrees, and the enamel fuses at 1550 degrees. The transparent enamels I work with are imported from Austria, Japan and France. These glass enamels are specifically designed to tolerate the rapid changes in temperature that occur when a piece is fired, and is brought from 70 degrees to 1600 degrees in a matter of seconds. The enamels fuse to the metal in a similar way that a glaze fused to a pot.

The technique that I specialize in is Champlévé. This is a French term, though the technique dates back as far as the Byzantine Enamels of the 12th century and before. In this technique, recessed areas are created for the enamel, either by construction, casting, etching, or engraving. In my work I utilize the two former techniques.

I begin by transferring my design to a sheet of 22g Sterling silver. Areas to be enameled are pierced out of the interior of the sheet of Silver. This cut out sheet is then sweat-soldered to a backing sheet, also of Sterling Silver. The outside edges of the piece are cut to the specifications of the design, accent pieces of 18k gold are soldered into place, and the piece is heated and quenched in acid several times to raise a layer of Fine Silver to the surface. (Fine Silver is too soft to work with, and Sterling Silver has the hardness that I need, but is alloyed with nickel etc, which does not bond well with enamel.) The enamel is ground to the consistency of fine sand, washed and mixed with water. A thin layer of enamel called Flux is applied first using a tiny watercolor brush. I often put down a layer of pure 24k Gold and/or Fine Silver foil over the Flux. The light that is reflected off the crinkled surfaces of the foil shining from behind the enamel will help to create the effect of mysterious and luminous muted windows of color. As many as thirty firings of colored transparent enamel may be required for the recessed areas to be overfilled slightly. The piece is then ground down flat with the surface of the metal.

At this point the piece is refired to heal the scratches created by the grinding process and the enamel emerges from the kiln with a smooth and glossy surface. The final soldering, such as pin backings or earring posts is done at this time. In my work I prefer a matte finish on the enamel, and achieve this either by immersion in an acid solution, or in the case of the one of a kind pieces, with hand-sanding.

Finally, the Silver is oxidized to a steely gray color by dipping it into a malodorous solution of Liver of Sulfur. I then rub the surface with pumice or steel wool to burnish it to a soft glow.