



Pat Aiken

I live in Serra Mesa, a community centrally located in San Diego, California. I began enameling in 1975 when a cloisonné bowl seen in a local gallery rekindled childhood memories of enamelware in my home. The brilliant colors, intricate designs, and permanence of enameling captivated me. I completed my AA in Fine

Arts at San Diego Community College, my BA in Applied Arts with an emphasis in enameling at San Diego State University, and taught enameling from 1989 to 2012 through the San Diego Community College District Continuing Education Program.

When I retired from teaching, I began to explore more of the metalworking process of forming sheets of copper into bowls. I remember my college days when I stood for hours hammering and shaping copper for several assigned projects: a number of small bowls and a tall stitched and soldered vase. The entire process was fascinating, but that is where I left most of my newly learned skills of moving metal – in the Metals Department.

So, once again, I picked up my hammer, put in my earplugs, and pounded on a sandbag or small anvil to discover new ways to shape the pinkish metal into a round and fluted object. It's exciting to take a flat sheet of metal and move it in various directions to form another object. Sometimes the metal moves where it is intended – other times, it takes on a life of its own. After each bowl is formed, it is introduced to the fire of the kiln for color application and additional surface treatment.

My fascination with color and detail carry over into other art disciplines such as polymer clay art. Interestingly, each medium requires a heat source – one an ordinary kitchen oven at 275° F. to harden the polymer clay, the other a high-firing kiln at 1500° F. to fuse powdered glass onto a metal surface (enameling). Other art interests include metalwork, knitting, fiber arts, sewing, and papermaking.

My enamels have been exhibited in local, national and international shows. I have worked with elementary school art programs, chaired school art shows, and currently do collaborative work with three other enamelists. I am a member of several art guilds including The San Diego Enamel Guild, the Enamelist Society, and the San Diego Polymer Clay Guild.

I am also a member of Art Telling, a group of artists in Spanish Village Art Center in San Diego, California, who share ideas, inspiration and artwork. The Art Tellers select a word each month and set a goal to produce a piece of art based on that word. It can be challenging, as well as inspiring, but the process of discovery is a reward in itself. Many of the current pieces reflect this exploration and discovery and invite the viewer into a world of words and works.