

Georgia Metal Clay Guild

Newsletter ~ February 2018

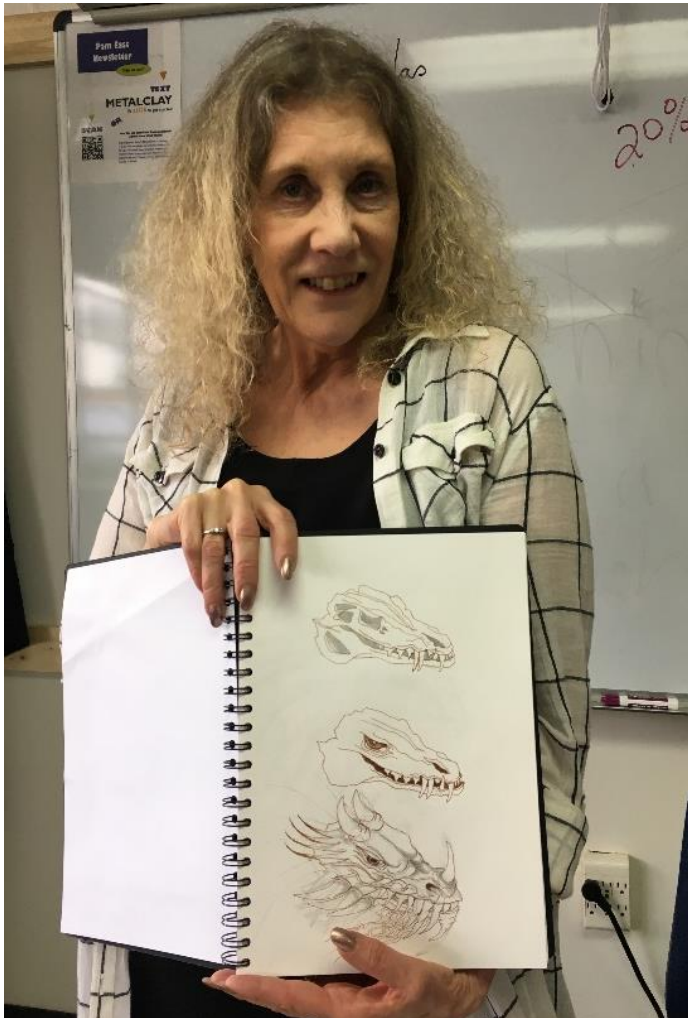
February Program

Carol Douglas was finally here! Sculpting in Metal Clay.

For months and months, we talked about Carol Douglas, an internationally renowned metal clay sculptor from the UK, coming to the U.S. to present the February Guild program. A lucky lot of us were finally able to register for her 3-day workshop at Spruill. Was that in July? On Valentine's Day she came to our meeting and regaled us with her incredible work.

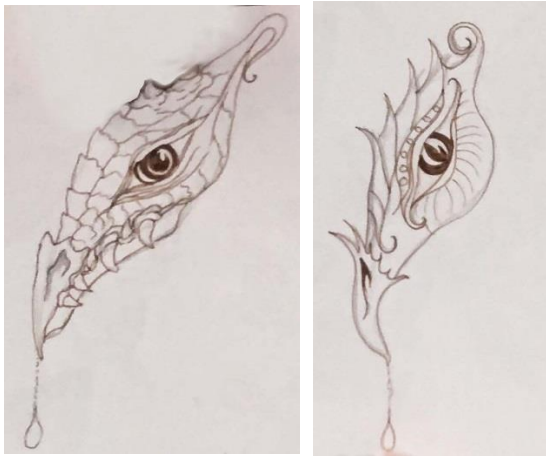


You have seen these pictures of some of her pieces in the Newsletter. The first thing that was striking when we saw and handled her work in person, is that photographs just cannot catch the true nature of her pieces! A camera does not capture the intricate tiny details or deeper character of her subjects.



Carol presented a very unique program. She started with telling us what must happen before you start any sculpting project! As she says, “fantasy is based in reality”. If you wish to create a dragon piece, for instance, you must consider the structure. To do this she starts with a skull. In this case, she figured a crocodile skull with its reptilian characteristics would provide a good basis for a dragon head. This is her research into the reality that will underlie the fantasy.

After sketching the proper skull, she adds the eye and the fleshy parts like the muscles that overlay the bone. Then you can go wild. Add all the elements you think might be found on a dragon! Erase anything that doesn't work – like the rhinoceros horn that she figured didn't sit too well on a dragon. And all those pokey bits won't do well on jewelry if that is the goal.



These are the more stylized versions of the dragon that could be made into jewelry! All built from the research and reality underlying them.

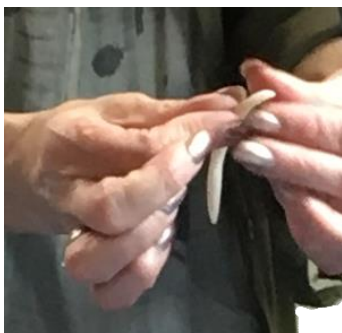
The drawings and ideas included in her sketch book would probably be annotated and questions put down. How to incorporate a bail? How to make the eye? Will it be a glass cabochon? Dichroic glass? Going to do any lamp work? Is it going to be a gem stone, or is it just going to be sculpted? She's thinking and asking herself these kinds of questions all the time. And she has a reference to return to.

Carol's background is in art education. She is also a very fine ceramicist and came to metal clay with all that modeling background. Developing students' skills and insights has given her a unique and advantageous view of creativity and how to enhance it.

Carol always works from a story as the background. It doesn't have to be a literal story, but she works in literal stories of myth and magic and fairy stories. They aren't always her stories. One such is Beauty and the Beast. But, usually there's some twist as she writes them down. Some wonderful critic once told her that her work had terrible backs and she should send them out for a professional to finish! Her answer to that is she always makes two fronts! Like this Beauty and the Beast piece.



She read a couple of her stories that have inspired her pieces. One was about a dragonrider wannabe who practiced on an iguana! Stories and Guided Meditations are important ways of developing your creativity and giving life to your creations.



Then some lessons in sculpting itself. First, one must practice making balls and sausages! Balls and coils form the foundation of much that can be made. She demonstrated with some polymer clay showing how to roll the coils from fat to very very thin. Then in most cases, the sausage is thinned along one side. These form the basis for an eye when sculpting a face. As can be seen here, a thin coil under a ball and a flattened and fitted one on top makes an eye! It's a matter of practice, practice, practice!



Here is her face book page!

As she says, making elfin, fairy and alien faces is a very different process than making a pretty face! A pretty face must follow all the proportions and other laws that define portraiture.

But eyes all start the same!

It was an incredible opportunity to meet and learn from such an artist. We have Pam to thank for imposing on her friend and making the contact and arrangements for both the Guild presentation and for her 3-day course at Spruill, where she was her assistant. Thank you, Pam!

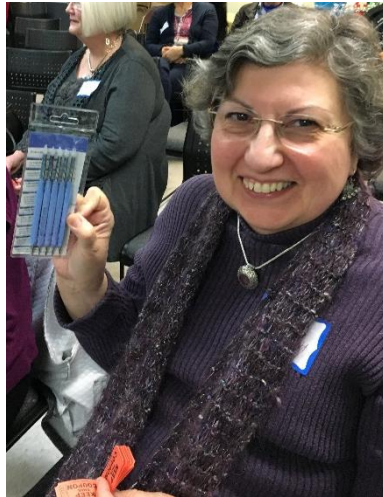
Those of us who were also fortunate enough to take her course found it to be beyond amazing. Thank you, Carol!



Raffle

The GMCG donated two packets of clay shaping tools.

These winners seem quite familiar. Ellen Levy and Kiki Thomas show their new tools. Ladies, we are going to have to inspect your tickets in the future. They must have been imbued with fairy dust!



The big prize for the evening was a complete sculpting tool kit in a special tool chest. Among other things, the chest contained shapers and scrapers and Carol's special tool – pins! There were even several English chocolate eggs in there. The Coup de grâce was two 50-gram packets of copper clay. Pat Lillie was the proud and lucky winner.

Thanks to GMCG, Jackie Comet and Carol Douglas for this donation!



Announcements

Open Studio has moved to Thursdays for Winter term. Members of the GMCG may come to Spruill Center for the Arts to participate. Open Studio is held in room 3 at this point. Attendees have access to all metal clay tools and equipment. Supplies are available for purchase. The fee for Metal Clay Open Studio is \$5 per hour. Proceeds are used to purchase additional tools and supplies for the metal clay program. The fee must be paid in cash as there is no current way to accept checks. Open Studio is from 2pm to 5pm.

Don't forget – **we can always use volunteers!** Become involved so the same 5-6 people don't determine everything you'd like to do. Don't forget (please!!) to send in your tips or a little blurb (pictures are good too!) about some favorite tool you've found or created. You guys are awesome – you have lots of them – let's share.

Check This Out with Jackie!

Because Jackie Comet is our shopper without equal, and is always finding neat stuff cheap, we decided to give Jackie a column where she will clue us in on some of this!

It's that time of year again. Spring is in the air! We have a nice easy idea for your recycling of your bubble tubes. First have fun blowing bubbles then wash out the tube, remove the wand and wahla! You have a safe place to store and carry long tools. They come in different colors too – helps with separating similar items.

You can carry your paint brushes by stuffing the tubes with Styrofoam first and poke your brush handles into it. This helps keep brushes from touching. Also put the plastic tubes on the top of brushes to protect them as well. Any container with brushes should not be put in your tool bag head down. You can keep brushes used for different purposes separated and labeled. Don't mix silver, copper, or overlay brushes!

Let's give a big shout to Janell Steven for sharing this great idea with us!
THANK YOU, Janell.

The tubes pictured are \$1 from Michael's arts & crafts

Some prior items from Jackie's Corner will be for sale at the Guild meetings.



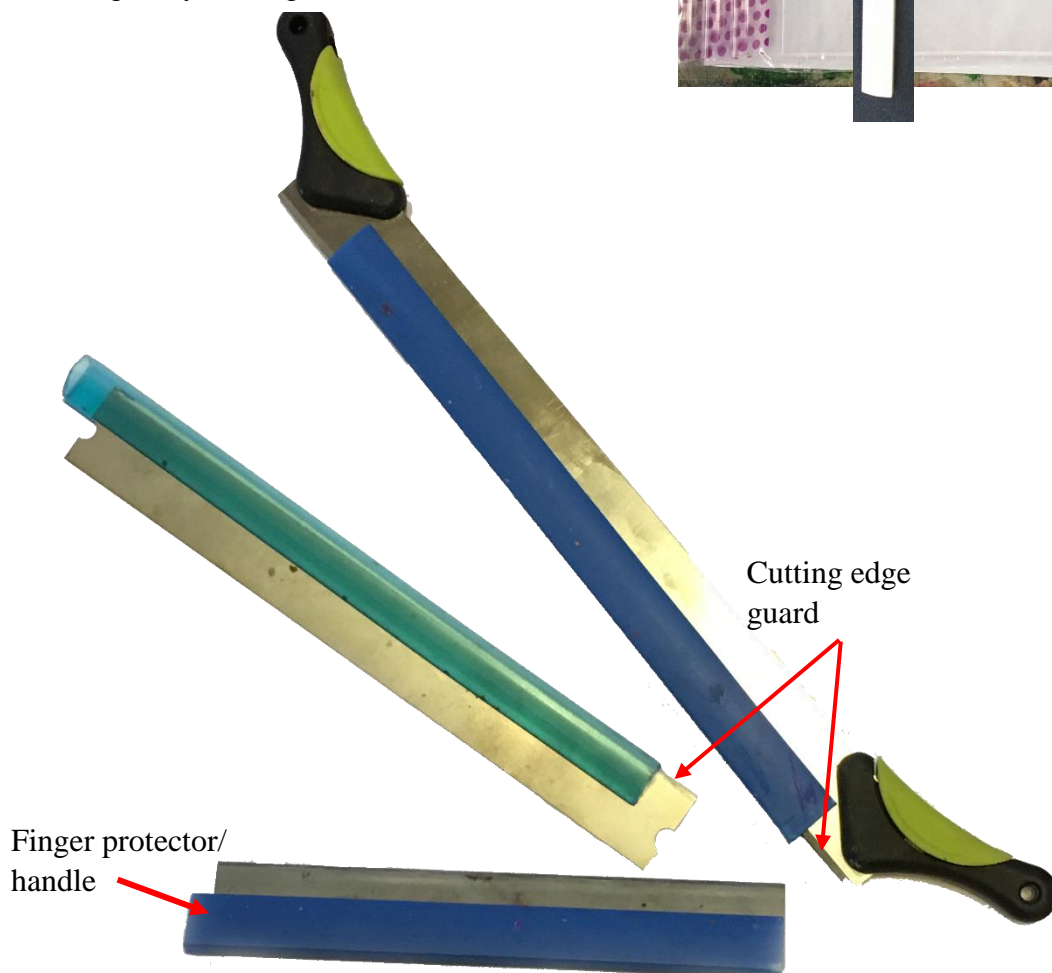
Tips and Tricks

Sometimes the simplest, cheapest things have an unexpected utility.

The long blades that we use to cut straight or curved edges in silver clay and polymer clay are both sharp and delicate. The tissue blades in particular are dangerously sharp but can be damaged and dulled very easily.

Probably you have an old report cover lying around, especially if you have kids making reports. The kind you need has the plastic rib along the back that slips over the papers to hold them in the cover.

Remove the rib. The rib will slip over your cutting blades and can be cut to any length to fit any blade. Depending on which edge you put them on they can protect the edge or your fingers.



Finger protector/
handle

Cutting edge
guard

March Program – Touch of Gold - Pam East



The March meeting will be held on Wednesday the 7th at 7pm. Pam East will present our program. She will demonstrate how to use Art Clay Gold paste to add 24K gold accents to silver. See how you can add real gold to your piece—at a fraction of what it would cost if these elements were constructed out of gold.

March Raffle Item

During the demo, Pam will open a brand-new package of gold paste. The Guild is donating the remaining paste as this month's raffle prize. This is a \$175 value! You don't want to miss this meeting!



Note: Some people have approached me about obtaining past Newsletters. If any of you have joined lately and would like any of the earlier Newsletters; or if you've missed or misplaced one, just email me at phcac@gsu.edu and let me know what issue(s) you want, and I'll email them to you. I think someone asked me about one during our class – but I must have lost the email address. Please send it to me again.