

Red Point Artists Assn members 'Artist Spotlight' featuring Ceramic and Glass Artist Janette Loughrey
Thank you, Janette, for agreeing to be our first artist spotlight.

• Firstly, when did you start to create? Were you born with a paint palette/ piece of clay in your hand, or did your interest in art develop over time?

I had a beautifully artistic mother that opened creative doors to us, both with her own work and her encouragement. I have always been interested in art, painting, creating, colouring. I found my first piece of clay when I was eight. I used to love digging it up and making things. I guess my commitment to clay as my chosen media was during my first year out teaching and the art teacher opened the world of clay to me.

• In a few sentences please describe your work

My ceramic work is basically domestic ware that is highly decorated with brightly coloured designs with a third firing of gold. It can be a useful object or just decorative. With my fused glass work I try and replicate the same style of patterning

• What is your background, have you worked at any other jobs whilst being an artist?

I had a school teaching career for the first 10 years of my working life, spent several years overseas working in whatever job I could, this included secretarial, industrial work to working behind the bar. Once I returned to Australia I began my full time ceramic career creating work for galleries and department stores, running various workshops around the country and opening a business/gallery with colleagues - the Pottery Place and Art For Art's Sake Gallery. I also started a 10-year stint teaching ceramics part time at West Wollongong TAFE. This was followed by another 10 years at Sydney Institute - Gymea Campus. During that 20 years I worked at the Inner-City Clay workers Gallery. An excellent training. During this time, I kept up my art practice except for my overseas experience.

• Did you go to art school or have any formal training in the arts?

My initial training was a night pottery course at West Wollongong TAFE supplemented with many workshops being offered around the state. In 1985 I resigned from school teaching and did my formal ceramic training at St George TAFE.

• What media do you prefer, and how did you come to use it as your primary one?

Pottery is, and always will be my preferred medium, however it has taken its toll on my body and now I have moved to more fused glass work and silk painting with a modified pottery programme.

• What inspires you as an artist?

Like many artists I'm inspired by everything around me - nature, animals, colour, design, other artists work can be inspirational, what I have absorbed as I have travelled over the last 30 years.

• What do you like about your work?

I love how a domestic item such as the simple bowl or mug can have a little something special about it- it's colour, design, touch of gold, to make it not just a mug or bowl but a piece that can be admired as well as being serviceable. I also enjoy sharing the decorative style in all my working mediums - pottery, glass and silk.

• What images or things keep you company in your work space?

The beautiful view of my back yard, from my studio windows, is always with me. I have installed several large, mosaic, garden pieces that represent things I have done and places I have loved visiting in my life. They inspire me to go forward.

• What is your daily routine when working?

I love starting the day with a walk, bike ride or swim, it prepares you mentally and physically to seize the day. If throwing, I would prepare my clay and weight up throwing balls the previous day, so I am fresh to start throwing. I would work on a 6 to 8-week cycle where I would throw for 2 days, turn and handle for the next 2 days then decorate for several weeks. This is followed by a week of firing, a bisque, glaze and gold lustre.

• Do you have a favourite artist?

My favourite Australian potters are Sandy Lockwood and Gail Nichols for their beautiful throwing style, approach to clay and their salt and wood fired work. Steve and Janine Harrison are a world role model for all of us, with their green approach to everything in life.

• What's the best advice you would give to someone beginning their artistic careers?

Keep your mind open, remember lots of little steps make up the big picture, never be scared to take on the challenge and believe in yourself.

I do believe having a tertiary education and a few years teaching gave me a solid grounding both mentally and financially to step into a full-time artist career. My teaching experience opened many doors in teaching ceramics, both workshops, Teacher Training Australia and TAFE teaching. Working in a co-operative gallery for 25 years gave me the skills and confidence to open my own gallery.

- Janette thank you for giving us all some insight into your very interesting artistic career, and for being our first artist spotlight.
- You can view Jannette's fabulous artworks in her art studio / showroom @ Red Point Artists Art Precinct
100 Wentworth St Port Kembla
Interview with Janette Loughrey
Linda Brown 2020