

Caryl Hallett

How did you start?

Since childhood I have always been a maker and enjoyed creating. I have fond memories of my Naini (grandmother) teaching me to sew, and making things out of collections I gathered from the woods and seaside near where I grew up on the North Wales coast. I always liked to draw and make scrapbooks of things I noticed. Following school and university I went into primary teaching and loved creating an environment where children could explore their innate creativity. After 20 years in education I took the plunge and changed direction. I wanted to rediscover my own creative interests and I embarked on various stained glass courses around the country, as it was something I had always been curious about. I was lucky enough to secure an informal apprenticeship and continued to hone my skills and absorb knowledge through a hunger to improve and make this my path. I absolutely love what I do and can't imagine doing anything else now!

What do you love most about what you do?

I love the whole process from design to completion. It's such a joy to work with glass and manipulate its relationship with light. I get to work on a variety of projects and with all sorts of people, from schools bursting with excited children, architects with great ideas for buildings, to individuals looking to enhance their homes with the beauty of stained glass. Having control and flexibility over my time and work schedule is also a significant blessing and not to be underestimated.

What inspires you?

Always a tricky question for me, as so much seems to set me off on a path! Sometimes it's the coastal landscapes, sharp lines and majestic skies of my childhood environment. Since living in Yorkshire I've loved taking inspiration from the rich textures of the Dales and the bleak beauty of the Moors, but there is as much to be found in a single leaf or bare winter branch in the garden. I like to respond to feelings and search for meaning and resonance in my artwork. Often it's the sheer beauty of the glass itself that begins the creative process. There is always so much to awaken interest and start me off!

What are you currently working on?

I have a few residential projects at the moment and the prospect of an interesting church renovation in the new year. Along with a group of local artists and friends, I am part of the mini Open Studios we are holding in Harrogate on the last weekend of November. We are showing some of our work that would make lovely Christmas gifts. I am showing some of my 3D pieces at the Biscuit Factory gallery in Newcastle too, so that's exciting for me.

What do you love most about Yorkshire?

I love the fact that you are only a short distance away from the countryside wherever you are. There is always a sense of balance – coffee in town while watching people go by, and a solitary stroll in the rolling hills, all within a few hours. The locals are pretty friendly too – northern and proud!

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