



Carol in her studio at Mills College (MFA 1981)

Living with Cancer

Carol had practiced knitting and needlework since childhood. To pass the time, she began knitting blankets for charity hospital patients. A friend introduced her to the craft of felting knitted objects. She explored the possibilities of the craft, designing felted quivers to contain her knitting needles and felted handbags and slippers as gifts. In the thirty-fourth month she had an epiphany: she could apply the craft of knitting-felting to the art of sculpture.

In the next fourteen months she made over a hundred vases, bowls, jars, pitchers and pots by this process - applying herself enthusiastically and diligently, in spite of the cancer. She awoke daily anticipating the work in progress, with a mental list of several future designs. The results reflect the scope of Carol's imagination - from sublimely beautiful to elegant to whimsical, even absurd - and her mastery of craft - free standing knitted vessels up to 24 inches in height.

She studied classical pottery design. She knitted test swatches to determine the shrinkage of the yarns she used. Needle size was also a shrinkage factor to be determined. The number of strands of yarn affected the rigidity of the final vessel - also an effect to be determined experimentally. She knitted freehand, recording afterward the pattern as knitted. Complex designs - the plaids - she sketched on graph paper before starting. Friends helped by operating the washing machine. She couldn't be on her feet for the one to two hours needed to shrink the vessels.

Her work culminated in an exhibition at the Kondos Gallery at City College of Sacramento in October, 2005. Carol was hospitalized at the time of the opening and unable to travel after her release. The vessel she was knitting at the time was never finished.

www.CDoyleArt.com

Carol Meyer Doyle

January 1946 - January 2006

Carol devoted her life to the study, practice and teaching of art - especially painting and printmaking. In September of 2001 she was diagnosed with **stage 3 inflammatory breast cancer**. From that moment, the disease and its treatment were a constant presence. Difficulties arising from her initial chemotherapy left her bedridden and wheelchair-bound for the rest of her life, delaying her mastectomy, and reducing its effectiveness. Cancer cells were found in the margins.

The disability hampered her radiation therapy and subsequent chemotherapies. The cancer became evident on the skin of her chest and back, like a rash, advancing and receding depending on the effectiveness of the treatment. Of several chemo regimes she endured, two were initially effective, actually causing the cancer to retreat, but they eventually lost effectiveness and the cancer resumed its advance. It also spread to her chest cavity, resulting in fluid buildup, which had to be drained. And supplemental oxygen, and hair loss, and lymphedema, and tachycardia. Carol faced all of these setbacks with the same clear-headed intelligence, patience and humor as she had lived, pre-cancer.

From early-on, she was physically unable to paint or to operate her etching press, but finally, a small miracle: she discovered an art regime that she could pursue while bedridden.



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Ninety knitted vessels in Carol's Menlo Park studio. She knitted about 110 vessels in fourteen months while under treatment for inflammatory breast cancer.