



Gallery

Karen's art is featured at national galleries,.: [Horizon Fine Arts](#), Jackson Hole, WY. Collectors find her work at shows in [Homewood](#), Northstar, Gold Country, and [Mammoth Lake](#).

Honors

Karen's work has been accepted in every Explore This!4, 3, 2, 1 Experimental Colored Pencil International Competitions in 2007, 2005, 2003, and 2001. Karen's work also appears in [Colored Pencil Exploration](#), published by North Light Books in 2003.

Karen happily accepts commissioned work.



Karen Lilly



Rainbow Skies



Sedona Memories



Coffee Berry



Dragon Rising from Peony



Longevity Wishes



About the Artist

Karen is that rare bird, a California native, who has nested all of her life in this state. Born and raised in Turlock, she married Gene and moved off to San Jose where they lived happily for the next 29 years. There she taught English at Cupertino High School until 1997 while taking advantage of art classes in the Bay Area. In 1998 they oversaw the completion of their new home in the outskirts of Nevada City. Always an avid outdoor lover and sportswoman, Karen tries to bring her love of nature into her studio, combining the best of both worlds.

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Lilly Creations

www.lillycreations.net

Nevada City, CA 95959

(530) 477-9183



Gourd as "canvas"

Turning a dried gourd into a work of fine art is a delight for this artist. Karen uses a graphite pencil to freehand objects from the drawing table onto the newly cleaned surface of the gourd. She then wood burns whatever hard lines are needed before laying in contours with warm gray colored pencil to shape the subject matter. At this point the real fun begins as Karen applies layer after layer of colored pencil to achieve the desired effect.

Once the art work is finished, Karen buffs the gourd with a clean dry cloth and sprays at least three fine coats of an acrylic spray. The entire process takes any where from days to months to complete, She hopes that you can see that each work is a labor of love.

The sensuality of gourds please both the hand and the eye; gourds seem to say "pick me up and touch me." Good news then, that their fragile appearance is deceptive. Like most of us, they don't like to be dropped, nor is extreme sunlight good for them.

Karen happily accepts commissioned work. Contact karen@lillycreations.net.



From the Artist

Some of my earliest memories center around drawing, painting or coloring. Art has always made me happy. While living in San Jose, I was fortunate enough to take a gourd crafting class from Kris Thoeni during which I fell in love with gourds themselves. Traditional gourd decorating methods, however, began to lose their excitement for me.

Then one morning during a vacation from high school English teaching, I was doing my daily walk around the neighborhood park, thinking about my desire to do a colored pencil painting of the oak leaves carpeting the area. The idea hit me with such force that it stopped me mid-stride: *why not use my newly cleaned gourd as a canvas and take advantage of all its irregularities and quirks, a mirror of the oak leaves' textures?* What a happy idea that turned out to be (although it did change my walking habits). Now my eyes are usually focused on the ground, searching for a unique leaf or flower to draw.

So many gourds, so many leaves and flowers, so little time. . . what a grand predicament.