



Artist's creations are light-catchers

By J. NIELSEN / Correspondent

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For stained glass artist Carol Krah, her work is all about three-dimensionality and the play of light.

With plant motifs one of her main themes, leaves splay out in every direction, catching light from all angles. Her creations, shown in several galleries, are collectibles.

"The most beautiful thing about her stained glass, it becomes three-dimensional. Her form breaks the two-dimensional pane," said Maggie Duffy, manager at Florida Craftsman Gallery, whose patrons marvel at Krah's work.

Several of her pieces will be on view and for sale during the Creative Arts Association of Lakewood Ranch 12th annual Fall Show & Sale on Saturday.

With nature an omnipresent subject, Krah's creative process involves observations before making her original designs.

"When you put it together, you want it to look natural," Krah said.

Making glass look natural is tricky. Krah said she wastes a lot of glass through trial and error, working with about a quarter-inch pieces, cutting, grinding then soldering them together with foil made of 60 percent tin and 40 percent lead.

A series of soldering burns on her arms from attaching each piece of glass is proof it is not an easy pursuit.

"It's a delicate operation," she said. "There's a lot of breath holding."

There are few straight lines in nature. Making stained glass three-dimensional is her own take on the art form.

"I want to be the only person doing three-dimensional stuff," she said. "I like the movement."

Krah, 60, started working in stained glass in 1992. Home with two small children in New Jersey, she was looking for adult conversation, took a class and fell in love with stained glass.

"It's so miraculous and it's always so powerful," she said.

Moving to Lakewood Ranch with her family and husband, Ken, in 2001, Krah became a member of the Creative Arts Association of Lakewood Ranch soon after its inception in 2003. Believing all artists need to mingle and learn from one another, the group's fall show is an opportune venue for members to show their work.

After she had given most of her work away, she started selling, creating large hanging plants, challenging the interplay of light and color. She also makes Christmas ornaments, business card holders and specialty mirrors.

"She does really pretty stained glass," Christina Sutor of ArtCenter Manatee said. "Her ornaments are all different colors and people love it."

Krah's inspiration also comes from the famous Tiffany Windows and frequent visits to Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, where she photographs, then plans how to re-create.

Making her hanging planters, with leaves splaying out, the glass seems more sculpture than a flat piece. Figuring out how to anchor each piece is a challenge Krah enjoys.

"It's all about the light," she said.



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