

Interview of the Week for

Ruth Collis at

The Art Colony Online:

<http://community.art-is-fun.com/forum/topics/profile-of-the-week-ruth-collis>

Profile of the Week: Ruth Collis



Posted by [Meg Mackenzie](#) on January 23, 2013 at 3:05am in [Portfolios of the Week](#)



Welcome to Portfolio of the Week. We are delighted to present Ruth Collis from Ontario, CA, USA.

Ruth's artwork reflect her unique style and techniques. She continues to experiment to push the boundaries of her favourite medium.

To see more of Ruth's artwork, please visit: <http://community.art-is-fun.com/photo/photo/listForContributor?scre...>

Please join us for this interview with Ruth.



How would you describe your art?

Sculptural paintings of high impasto relief.

How long have you been an artist and how did you become an artist?

My whole life I've been drawing and shut off from society, without a TV growing up, and wished many times not to have this creative gene that seems to bring social unrelating and financial challenge. Yet I still do what's true to me: searching for that one place where I can be me.



My guy says Talent is what you are born with, and Skill is something you develop. I went to school for Graphic Design but found less meaning in that. Went to Fine Art for passion, but not knowing the way of money instead of waiting on galleries and their long lists to decide my future, I put up my own websites to showcase my fine art work utilizing my graphic design skills.

Then found myself with a serious health issue where I was off work for a year—that gave me time to do all these tests with the thick paint and do what I've always been wanting. It literally gave me something exciting to wake up to... to see how the paint has dried now with the color shift gone.

What is your favorite medium and why?

I have not been able to find the end of discoveries with this thick paint (impasto) and the more I think about it and find new things this paint can do, the more I see personality traits that line this acrylic medium up with who I am.

I want to create a Personality Medium Test to help people find their medium faster, based on their personality characteristics. For example, like this medium, I am complex. Just when I think I've learned myself/this medium, it shows a new side, like almost requiring an assembly line of canvases to use the extra paint mixed. I often find myself doing multiple things while one is drying.

The medium does amazing wonders but takes a long time to set up, just like how I boot up slowly in the morning. This medium is also for those who like to plan ahead and can see past its color shift. I like to plan out my environments in advance and have a plan for most paintings before I create them, rather than just paint on the fly.

What are some of the challenges in working in your preferred medium?



Major color shift is about the only drawback of this thicker paint medium. Deep blue turns a literal 20 shades lighter to a light blue as the Gel becomes milky white then dries clear, returning the blue to its original deep color after drying. So how to visualize the right colors in front of you when they appear totally different? I have found I can take some mixed Gel with paint color and put a swipe on the bottle I use to hold the extra mix, then tape over the swipe of paint while wet, so that it dries the

right color right there on the bottle. That way, I know what shade it will dry to when thinking of what colors to use. The tape is for keeping the dried piece of paint on the bottle... when squeezing the bottle, the paint swipe tends to fall off when dry.





Pick one work of art from your Art Colony portfolio and tell us the story behind it. Why does this piece have meaning to you? What steps did you take to create the piece?

"The \$500 Paint Palette." I have so many works of art, each with a description on its own page here at this site, so I would like to talk about the palette that makes the actual art and how different it is. I continually find new forms on the palette that I have to then transfer to a canvas. It started back when I hid 5 \$100 bills in my palette, then poured old paint over them. I didn't care for banks back then and wanted to save literal cash, so disguised the money right out in plain site. No one knew. This became one valuable palette I made sure wasn't discarded over time!

Then little sister, Debbie, came down to visit from out of state and we needed some extra cash to do stuff. So out came my secret. It was a thrill to hear her reaction: "What? Hidden money in your palette? Won't the paint have stuck to the paper bill? How will you be able to find the bills if lost in the paint? What if you cut into the money & make it unusable?" I carefully felt then cut with exacto knife along the edges to reveal a safe bill rolled in ziplock bag. That was the most fun to see her eyes open in surprise!



Before that, my other sister, Esther, would excitedly ask me if she could peel the paint off the palette this time. Now I have found a way to use this paint-skin peeled off as a palette itself, or cut up into a myriad of uses to add back into a painting.



Tell us about one medium, technique or style that you would like to try working with (that you have not tried before) and why you would like to try this.

I just discovered this Crystal Mortar that is a clear gel with texture, not an opaque gritty paste, but gritty that dries clear, which means with just a hint of color added, all kinds of colorful crystals could be made, added to jellyfish strings, or a colorful cave discovery. I sent away for 2 of these outrageously expensive and tiny jars with that rare feeling of you being the only one to discover the next gold and what can be done with it, but no one knows, and it's eating you up inside with excitement!

How do you make time for art?

By being child-free and choosing the life I want that has fewer sacrifices than those sacrifices that have already been taken from me, and by staying part-

time at the real job to have time enough to find that which would be fulfilling to me. It is hard to see everyone else move up in life doing what I could not force myself to, and now they have all these things and a better life because of it, but I had to stay true to myself and visions. I am happier doing something creative for myself most every day.

If you could imagine the “perfect art day” for yourself, what would it be like?

Wow, it would definitely have to be working in the environment this medium seems to take. I do wonder at its full potential, which seems to need an assembly line in a large warehouse, with 4 tables laid out in a square fashion.

Multiple canvases are already laid out for 30 people, but it's just me, or 1 artist managing this. There is a rollable paint rack, brush and palette center that just moves along this table of canvases as I paint backgrounds and use up extra paint that took a while to mix once, but can now be used on many canvases without waste. In the center of the tables are rows and rows of stackable organizing boxes to hold these completed paintings flat to dry without any dust settling on them.

As I complete each painting going around the room, they are placed in these drying racks. From drying (I'd have a team to set this all up), I'd go to photographing them, then to a gallery/auction room where sales people sell them.

I basically would like a peaceful environment to do art that is large enough to see the possibilities of what all this thick paint can do, and quiet enough to enjoy it and be inspired, and to share that with others who respect and are looking for the same. To be allowed to create without restraint. I wonder what that would be like. I guess we all would, but I don't want to live my life in wonder, rather than actually living it.

If you could spend 24 hours with one artist, living or historical, who would you want to spend the day with and why? What would the two of you do?

Well Van Gogh was the only impasto artist I know of in history, but I would ask him nothing about art and mostly about his mental state. "What the heck were you thinking cutting off your ear? Don't you know there are more things in life than just art?! You can get attention by being involved in others lives!"

Maybe it would be cool to make a movie on bringing Van Gogh back to the future, to show him how thick they make gels and pastes of today, and how the drying time of oils is down to 2-4 days touch-dry now.

I might hang out with [Ev McTaggart](#) on the Art Colony here, who has already said we could challenge each other to a thick paint duel with referee! I know some kind of paint would go flying.

I saw [Elizabeth Jane Letourneau's](#) crackle paste samples and got all excited at trying a whole new medium (google eyes)! My BF just rolls his eyes.



Tags: [Profile](#), [collis](#), [impasto](#), [portfolio](#), [ruth](#)

Views: 338

Replies to This Discussion



Reply by [Meg Mackenzie](#) on January 23, 2013 at 3:06am

Ruth, thank you for sharing your ideas with us in this interview. I am quite taken with your bubblegum picture (the little seascape). I can see why you would be put off bubblegum having created this!



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on January 23, 2013 at 3:41am

Wow Meg, you really captured the sculptural effects of my work here. Is nice to see the selection another would pick for display. Surprised the last loaded Sea Anemone corner made it here, but very glad! I must say your editing layout is superb as usual, & think you were able to organize some of my rambling very well. I don't know how you do that. To summarize is so hard for me. Thank you so much for all you do here behind the scenes & the encouragement given.

Yeah, chewing the bubblegum wasn't the greatest after awhile, but man, the outcome! (I certainly

wouldn't want to handle someone else's chewed gum! Ick! So had to do it myself.) I guess it was the beginnings of the 3D forms.



Reply by [Cat Demkiw](#) on January 23, 2013 at 3:44pm

Ruth the art world is a very lucky place to have you in it. Your creativity continues to amaze me and you truly are an artist. I love your philosophy and being true to yourself is outstanding. CONGRATULATIONS and all the best to you and your future. Cat



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on January 23, 2013 at 4:09pm

Awe, Cat, you're amazing. I hope being true to myself pays off.

For those interested in more thick impasto type art I haven't been able to upload yet, there are many paintings here:

http://www.ruthcollis.com/new_paintings_-_not_added_to_site_yet.html

Please tell me ones you would like to try or methods you'd be interested in & I will do my best to show.



Reply by [Wanda Sue Bailey](#) on January 23, 2013 at 6:59pm

Ruth, You Rock Girl!! ") Looking forward to seeing all you do in the future..



Reply by [Raven Amadeo-Vittone](#) on January 23, 2013 at 8:54pm

Ruth, I am so proud of you and your art - totally amazing! Keep going!!!



Reply by [Stacy Woolsey](#) on January 23, 2013 at 11:24pm

Congratulations Ruth! You are a unique person with a unique style =) Love it!



Reply by [Nelson Failing](#) on January 23, 2013 at 11:33pm

CONGRATS RUTH....what a wonderful interview...so glad you and your works were finally featured...hats off to you my friend....wishing you only good things to come your way....aloha



Reply by [Ev McTaggart](#) on January 23, 2013 at 11:46pm

LOL. Ruth, I'd be honoured to share your special 24 hours! Funny girl! Keep on experimenting and reporting.



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on January 24, 2013 at 2:00am

Wow, you all are the best & so glad to have met each one of you. Stacy, I just know we are connected by your impasto sunflowers. I have got to try my hand at that flower I keep thinking about.

Wanda, I got some exciting things coming up you were talking about! Did some light molding paste tests and have been able to make some small formations!

Thanks Raven, that really makes me feel touched deeply. Not many have been proud of me. I really needed that so much. <3

Ha ha Ev! Hey, noticed we mentioned each other in our interviews weeks ago without knowing the other had one?!

NELSON! Aloha! You hang in there. I am excited that Nelson has allowed a venture with me in designing some very exquisite & exotic sea creatures on templates with me for others to learn how to paint, & hope he will let me rave here in the forum about them soon, once fully available & that it will increase his popularity too. You just hang on, Nelson. I will get these things together still. Got lots of pressures, but hang on! Blessings to all of you.



Reply by [Nelson Failing](#) on January 24, 2013 at 10:06pm

I'm still here my friend....hanging in there....LOL...just havent done much in the way of artworks...jus havent come out of that artist block yet...best of luck to you my dear...aloha



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on January 24, 2013 at 10:11pm

Artist Block? I wish I knew what causes this & if it's different each for different people. I must find that thread on it when I can get some time.



Reply by [Nelson Failing](#) on January 25, 2013 at 1:39am

yeah it seems i can go for months and not produce any artwork and then when the moment hits me there's no stopping me but then its usually short lived...no more that a month at the longest...when i was younger i could draw and create things every single day but now its a whole different story...oh well, thats the story of my artistic life....LOL



Reply by [sharon oppenheimer](#) on January 25, 2013 at 4:39am

Wonderful interview Ruth. Your work is always interesting and very unique. Congratulations !!!



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on January 25, 2013 at 1:13pm

Thank you Sharon, I know we both are inspired by use of color.

Nelson, this topic is of highest interest to me in any forum, I have realized. Do you find that right before the artistic flow, you will have seen something that inspired you? Do you have lists of ideas you want to create that you gather on a regular basis, kind of thing?



Reply by [Ev McTaggart](#) on January 25, 2013 at 1:23pm

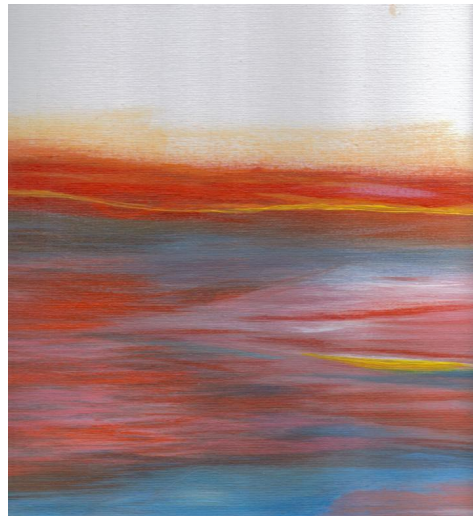
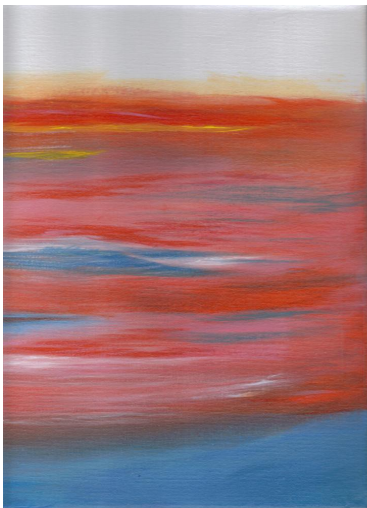
I find The Art Colony is a great source of inspiration. Every time I come on here I see something that triggers another idea for a painting somewhere down the road. I'm not saying that I find things I want to copy, but things that I look at and say, "What if I.....?" Now I have quite a few pages sketched out in my ideas notebook. So, just think, Ruth. Every time someone sees this interview or any of your posts, you could be inspiring a future artist.



Reply by [Wanda Sue Bailey](#) on January 25, 2013 at 2:23pm

(This is upside down..(of course))

Yesterday coming home we were facing the West late in the afternoon. I have never in all my life seen a more beautiful sunset and seeing it thru a lot of trees at times. As soon as I got home I tried desperately to capture some of the color on canvas but of course no paint could ever capture the colors I saw. I've scanned each side of the canvas to give you an idea of what I painted last night. Wish I could get the whole canvas on the scanner. Don't know exactly how I will paint the bottom of it. Trees with bare limbs probably.



Reply by [sharon oppenheimer](#) on January 25, 2013 at 2:40pm

This is a mazing Wanda. I can picture what it must have looked like in person. I love the feeling of seeing something in nature that makes you want to run home and create. Looking forward to seeing the finished work but it is beautiful as it is.



Reply by [Wanda Sue Bailey](#) on January 25, 2013 at 4:47pm

Sharon in all my years I've never been so enthralled with the beauty of a sunset and we got to see it in many different settings as we drove. The prettiest, through the sparse woods. Normally we do not come home that route but I wanted to go to my old home town and just see the changes and that's how we happened to be on that road at just the right time. ")



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on January 25, 2013 at 6:38pm

A camera helps to capture the moment so that when you do go to paint it, you can look back many times to remember what it looked like. A camera can also get your whole canvas in the picture a scanner can't, if you have bigger work. Taking the art out in the sunlight will get the best lighting.

It killed me for so long to not have a camera with me to capture "all the different scenes or settings" as you call it, and a camera with quality. A dear friend finally helped me into a smartphone that is a camera & cell phone in one, & has been such a blessing so far for just the very thing you mentioned. Looks very beautiful, Wanda, just imagining all the colors that you saw. Good job still!



Reply by [Wanda Sue Bailey](#) on January 25, 2013 at 8:00pm

I usually use a camera to photograph my paintings outside but today we have an Ice Storm. The trees, bushes, everything covered in ice. My husband fell getting the morning paper and had to have many sutures in the back of his head. It's been a scary day.



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on January 26, 2013 at 12:00am

OMG!! That's terrible & can be lethal the farther you get away from being a youngster! Ha.. never knew how trecherous getting the paper can be! Got cleats or those spikey shoes? How 'bout one of those sticky rubber hands to grab it but be more durable (good invention, if not for thieves swiping something with it). I got this hand reacher for grabbing stuff that falls behind the bed or reach shoes up high, but that doesn't take care of walking out there. Maybe they could be nice & bring it to your door (fat chance here in California). You guys be careful... best wishes to you!



Reply by [Wanda Sue Bailey](#) on January 26, 2013 at 12:33am

Ruth I think he was totally thrown off guard by the icy driveway. We got in late and did not see the weather forecast and it rained icy rain all night. He fell shortly after he went out the door. It sure has been a hectic day and looks to be a restless night. Thank God for a good Dr. who even called tonight to see if he was doing ok..Geesh, didn't know there were any of those left!! I like all of those suggestions you made, especially the spikey shoes and the hand grabber..I need that myself.

Who would have thought after that beautiful day yesterday and the gorgeous sunset that we would have awakened to an Ice Wonder Land. But we live up a little mountain and often we have the ice when 10 miles from us they don't . Enjoy sunny CA!!



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on January 26, 2013 at 12:56am

Ev, on your note about saying "What if I...", well first thing I find when looking up "prevent artist block" in the search engines is actually a really good link for once & without all the usual answers, & found the same "What if I do this or that..." question listed:

<http://painting.about.com/cs/inspiration/a/artistsblock.htm>

I like to do tests for inspiration, & when I haven't done that in awhile, I get achin' to, because of asking that question: "What would happen if I did this... How would it turn out?" This is only one method of attack going on what was mentioned here, I know.

Nelson, don't you watch the Victoria's Secret fashion show? OMG, this last year was a garden theme. What frilly fun could that be? Every year is on the internet in video somewhere. I know there are truly many things else that can damper one's spirit that go on in life, but when you have an overload of inspiration & push yourself to draw even stick figures, or even pictorially describing an emotion, you can turn the creative faucet on & off at will, not wait, no matter what you are going through, because an overload of inspiration means there's so many ideas you could try that you can't turn it off. It's overflowing. Lookup your most favorite thing on Pinterest.com. Go ahead. If you aren't there for days, then it's something else.



Reply by [priyanka rastogi](#) on January 26, 2013 at 1:30pm

congrates Ruth.....you are really very talented...love ur work!



Reply by [Sharon Gilbertson](#) on January 26, 2013 at 4:27pm

AWESOME!!! Congratulations Ruth!! Hugs, Sharon



Reply by [Nelson Failing](#) on January 26, 2013 at 6:35pm

Thanx Ruth for your thoughts and suggestions...i really appreciate it...



Reply by [Nelson Failing](#) on January 26, 2013 at 6:54pm

I see alot of things and think about new ideas all the time but i jus cant seem to get started...being on pinterest hasnt help either...my favorite show is back, Project Runway so maybe jus maybe this might help....

Ruth Collis said:

Thank you Sharon, I know we both are inspired by use of color.

Nelson, this topic is of highest interest to me in any forum, I have realized. Do you find that right before the artistic flow, you will have seen something that inspired you? Do you have lists of ideas you want to create that you gather on a regular basis, kind of thing?



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on January 26, 2013 at 8:48pm

Oh I remember seeing some really chic designs on that show & they put down the best one I just loved. The guy was really talented, & it amazes me the fashions they come up with, but so stressful to watch! Lots of pressure for them. But they do come up with some incredible designs. Nelson you have really piqued my interest & I must find the answer now! I might message you if you don't mind. This man (Nelson) is so incredibly talented & I am so grateful to have done some template work with him that I look forward to showing off soon. Would like to get a video clip or two together on it to show some fun in a short demo.

I am really grateful for the people here that I've had a chance to see all your work. Hugs to you, Sharon, thank you! You are so cheery.

Thank you, Priyanka, I just love your colors I'm seeing & of course the 3D emblems. Just wonderful & exciting. Looking forward to seeing more. Thanks so much for stopping by.



Reply by [Stacy Woolsey](#) on January 26, 2013 at 11:23pm

Yeah, I'm planning on having a vacation at home this summer and maybe try a little more of that. Spent too much time in classes and traveling over the last few years and I really need a break full of "me" time.

Ruth Collis said:

Wow, you all are the best & so glad to have met each one of you. Stacy, I just know we are connected by your impasto sunflowers. I have got to try my hand at that flower I keep thinking about.



Reply by [Iveta Autratová](#) on January 27, 2013 at 12:59pm

Dear Ruth, your work is so special and excellent! Love to see your news :o)). Thank you so much for sharing your **own** and thank you that I know you! All the best for you my friend!!!!!!!!!!



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on January 27, 2013 at 4:45pm

Wow, you rock, Iveta. Nice to see your signature style of commenting again! :o))

Oh cool then Stacy... looking forward to seeing your next creations, especially if impasto (as it seems I am really drawn to that)!



Reply by [Tirtha Sankar Bharadwaj](#) on January 27, 2013 at 11:03pm

Magnificent....congratulations Ruth :)...loved reading your interview.....loved it.....I think I am glad to be able to see your artworks.....love you technique and thank you art colony for sharing with us :)



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on January 27, 2013 at 11:38pm

Wow, such lovely words, Tirtha. You seem like a person full of feeling & emotion when I look at your paintings & creative work, then very thoughtful in written word. I would have not expected you to like a 3D/abstract form of mine, from your paintings of detail & realism. Thank you for your kindness very much.



Reply by [Esther Lee](#) on January 28, 2013 at 3:27pm

Awesome, Ruth! I love everything, especially the goldfish picture frame & the sea anemone; such cool ideas. Love how you curled the roses around the edges. The possibilities with this medium are truly endless...I thought "what if" to every one of your pieces, so I know you are inspiring others. We are all very proud of you! Don't ever think otherwise :) Very interesting interview...love the \$500 palette and the bubble gum one that started it all...keep up the good work! You're the Van Gogh of our time, hehe



Reply by [Ev McTaggart](#) on January 28, 2013 at 3:31pm

I love that little goldfish, too! (S)he's adorable.



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on January 29, 2013 at 6:56pm

ESTHER! You made it here & even signed up! Everyone, this is my little sister who made beaded jewelry with me when we were little. I made the designs while she sold them in Jr. High... or tried too. Kids loved them so much they would steal them. :(Now Esther makes the designs as a business & sells them everywhere. And now she's heading a Valentine show & has made time out of all that craziness to reply here! Thank you so much & to all of you who took time.

I am in tears over your wonderful comments, Esther, & hope that I could have a better outcome than Van Gogh, where I can see benefit while alive. I have often thought about some similarities... with all the noise insanity around me & deaf guy at work, I have often wished to not hear, or have my ears cut off, & how lucky the deaf guy is, to be in peace, until I can just change my situation. But I would truly hope I could live the potential & reach of this medium. Thank you for such a kind thing to say. Van Gogh has certainly affected lives ages past, but I would hope for that in the now, as you say.

That was cool to know you saw the "What if's" that made each piece & that you took time to read the thread here. I don't know if that would inspire all, but maybe to the experimentive types, they might use that approach with question in mind as to what else can be made by trying this...

Thank you Esther, bless you.



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on January 29, 2013 at 9:20pm

These Micro Paintings came about by wondering how to fit a sample of what I do in something inexpensive for people to try a little something of. I looked for sheets of all my tests & found some actually useable things.

It reminds me of the story of how chips were made by this restaurant near me.. I think it was them... The lady had all these broken tacos she didn't know what to do with, & put them together with their salsa on the side. People loved them so much it became a hit & asked for more of these. I don't remember how many billion pounds of chips were made after that; but I am finding many uses for tests you would think to discard. I hope to write a book one day on it, or at least a report first. Am collecting data on it now. Thanks, I will have to add these Micro Paintings to the list!



Reply by [Esther Lee](#) on January 30, 2013 at 1:40am

Yeah, I had to make an account to comment (so annoying) but the ideas here are interesting and love how you all encourage each other. I made a blog entry on my succulent gardens...not exactly art, but they do require an artistic balance & design: <http://community.art-is-fun.com/profiles/blogs/succulent-gardens>

Thanks for the sweet intro to all your friends, I felt so honored :) Keep up the good work!!

Esther



Reply by [kip franks](#) on February 19, 2013 at 9:48pm

Ruth, It took me a while, but I finally got to read about your work. What a great story. Your lonlieness must have been a strain when you were young, thank God you had a place to go within your self. Working and experimenting has really given you a path, and what a beautiful path it is. I love your art and your strong spirit. Kip



Reply by [Ruth Collis](#) on February 23, 2013 at 3:17pm

No, I did not have many friends growing up. Thank you, Kip, for your encouragement! I don't think of being lonely really, as much as how amazingly difficult it is to get away from everyone to be alone and in peace. I used to tell each family's side I was at the other for Thansgiving and enjoyed the holiday alone at home or with my boyfriend where we could share being alone together.. ha ha! Now I long for friends that have the same like-mind, like here at TAC. But yeah, experimenting seems to bring that many more discoveries. Thank you for being there Kip!
