

# Maryel Henderson

## Biography

Maryel Henderson grew up on a farm in rural Pennsylvania. As a third grader her school took a field trip to Corning Museum of Glass, and she came up missing from her group. They found her spellbound, watching an artist blowing and shaping molten glass into a beautiful bowl. A seed was planted and at this early age her art career began. Her teacher took note of it and encouraged Maryel's art endeavors. Later that year Maryel took first place in the school's yearly spelling bee and was awarded a hand-blown glass bowl from the museum.

Maryel currently works out of her studio in Fuquay Varina, North Carolina. Her art reflects the love she has for the animals she embraced in her childhood. Intrigued with animals, she flew to Sea World after watching a nature show on sea dragons. With hundreds of reference photos, she flew home and began her series of 12 sea dragon paintings.

She begins a painting with an abstract background, usually in liquid acrylics and inks. She then uses layers of mediums to add texture, often including fibers and gold leaf, and finishes with oil paints to add fine detail in the focal areas. Her paintings have a great sense of balance between colorful explosions and serene settings. If you are looking for subtle surprises and things showing up in unusual contexts, her work never disappoints. She is often asked where she gets her ideas for her work. She always responds that she believes all inspiration comes from God, but that aside, she has a method that she uses that works for her. Right before she goes to sleep, she focuses on fragments of ideas or looks at photos of a subject she wants to paint. When she wakes up, she usually has a solid picture in her mind of how the painting should look or at least begin.

Maryel has an associate's degree from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and a B.S. in Art Education from Mansfield University. Throughout her career she has won numerous awards and honors, showing in places to include the Okinawa Hilton, the Evansville Museum of Arts and Science, and the Owensboro Museum in Kentucky. She received international recognition for her stinkbug jewelry and wrote and illustrated a children's book titled [Squirt Saves the Day- A Stinkbug's Story](#). She has studied under numerous teachers including Michael Bergt and the late Nicholas Simmons, who had a profound impact on her art. As a teenager she went to Chadds Ford with her father to visit an old army buddy and had the opportunity to meet Andrew Wyeth. Her father asked Andrew for any advice he could give his emerging artist daughter. He thought about it for a minute while rubbing his chin, and replied with two words. He looked her in the eye and said, "Be diligent." As a teenager she had no idea what that meant but she soon learned and never forgot it. Over the years this has become her motto and standard as she strives to do that.

Maryel's vivid imagination has served her well, getting her through some dark areas of her childhood and later using it as an impetus and inspiration for all of her work. People who know and love her work have come to expect, and embrace, the unexpected in her paintings. Her future plans include carving a carousel sea dragon and writing and illustrating another children's book.