

# Southwest Art

The Collector's Choice Magazine for 40 years

## MyWorld

A VISIT WITH **TRUDY EVARD CHIDDIX**

AT HER STUDIO IN EVERGREEN, CO

Interview by Bonnie Gangelhoff, Photos by Marc Piscotty



**Describe your studio.** I'm next to a rushing mountain creek and surrounded by pine trees. I enjoy looking out at wildflowers, or snowflakes, or even an occasional elk. I like tools and have many of my favorites hanging on pegboards or scattered about for easy access and inspiration. I use a lot of texture in my work, and I've collected, and made, hundreds of tools for making marks in clay. I also have paddles and rollers, clay stamps with designs that I've carved and fired, seashells, rocks, miscellaneous pieces of hardware, and objects I've found while traveling. My favorite tools at the moment were

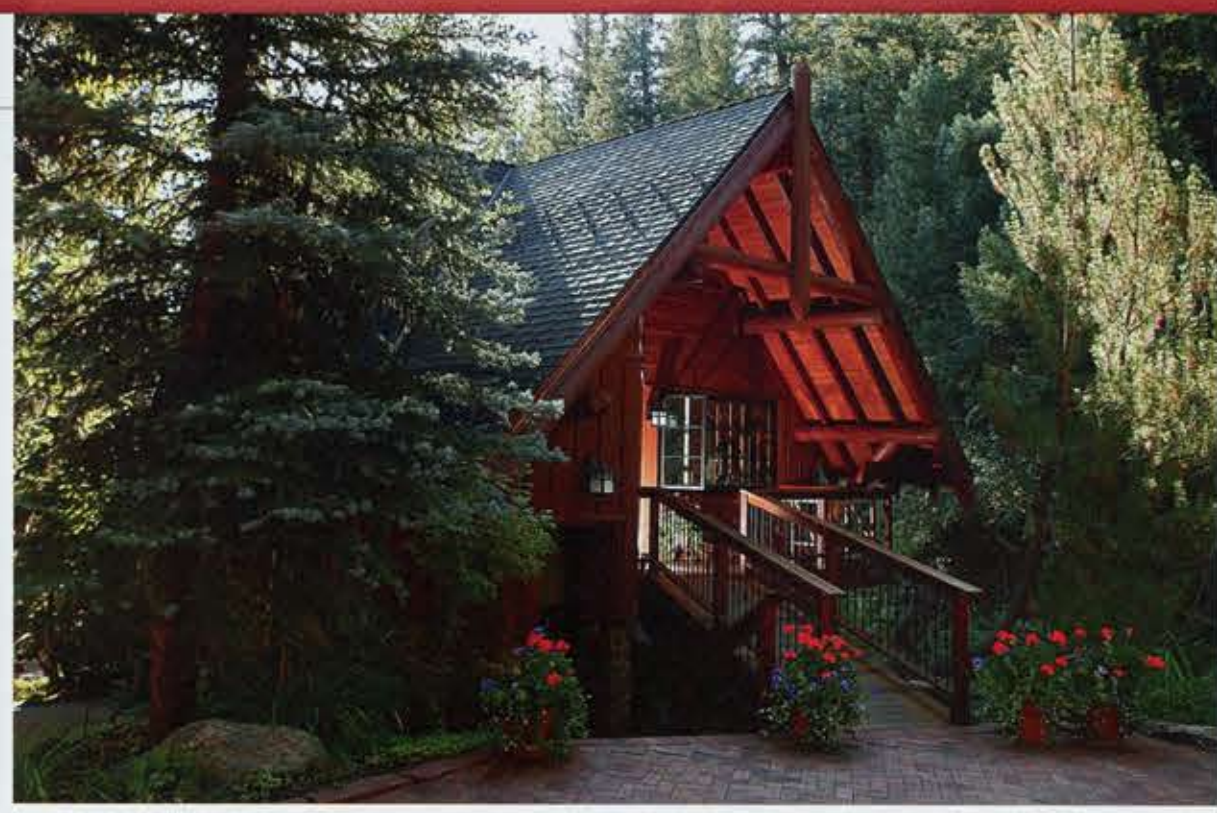
discovered while traveling in India. They are carved wooden blocks intended to print silk for saris, but I press them into soft clay and later stain those textures with a glaze. I like the juxtaposition of these rough surfaces with the shiny glass and other materials that I later add to the clay pieces.

**What else do you keep in your studio?** I have lots of pictures attached to my metal cabinets with magnets. These are mostly images that I find interesting and inspiring—museum postcards, exhibition announcements, snapshots from my travels,

photos of friends' art, and reproductions from magazines. I also have art books and catalogs, a few posters from special exhibitions and art events, and lots of supplies. There are numerous boxes of different types of clay, bins of raw materials and metallic oxides for mixing glazes, sheets of glass, and jars of crushed glass, called frit.

**Do you listen to music while you work?** I listen to music about half of the time. I play mostly instrumental music, and I particularly like mellow jazz, classical, and Hawaiian music. I lived in Hawaii for a few

58 WWW.SOUTHWESTART.COM • DECEMBER 2011



years, so this brings back great memories. Occasionally I listen to music with lyrics, and I enjoy folk/rock female vocalists.

**Why are you drawn to ceramics?** I love that clay is so immediately responsive. It feels good and reacts to the slightest touch. It's an evocative material that can either reveal or conceal the process of creation. I like the metamorphosis that takes place in the kiln, where clay is transformed, by fire, from a soft, malleable material found in creek beds to a hard, durable substance similar to rock. There is something very primal about this process, and it makes me feel connected to the earliest potters as well as to centuries of people who have created with this remarkable material. As I wander through museums, I am awed by what has been made with clay by people from around the globe, and I feel admiration and kinship.

**You also have a studio in San Francisco. How do you split your time?** I spend the summer and part of the winter in Colorado and spring and fall in San Francisco. The seasons inspire me, and this schedule allows me to enjoy what I consider the best of both places. In San Francisco I share a studio with 40 other artists in a very urban neighborhood, and instead of windows focusing on nature, I have only a skylight. But the skylight allows me to see if it's foggy or sunny. At SOMA Artists Studios, each artist has their own room in a converted warehouse, and we stage exhibitions together. I like the camaraderie and sense of community. I also appreciate that I can take a break and walk to wonderful museums. Even though my two studios are located in very different worlds,



I enjoy the balance of these diverse settings and hope this variety energizes my work.

**Do you bring anything with you from studio to studio?** When I move from one studio to another, I always carry a duffel bag with my favorite tools that cannot be duplicated. I love that both studios are organized and set up just for me. They are creative playgrounds. Even if I'm not feeling particularly motivated or inspired, all I have to do is get into the studio and start working on something, and, before I know it, I'm swept up in the creative process and ideas are flowing.

**What impresses you about other artists' works?** I'm most impressed by artists who have a highly developed level of skill in their chosen media but are able to keep their art loose, fresh, and not looking overworked. I prefer art that appears spontaneous and free-spirited, and I constantly strive to loosen up my own process.

**Describe yourself in one word.** Enthusiastic.



**If your studio was on fire, what one thing would you save?** My laptop computer. It contains all of my portfolio images, artist statements, and mailing lists of collectors and contacts. In reality, everything on my computer is backed up, but I still think that's what I'd grab as I dashed from the flames.

**What is the one place people will never find you?** On a double-black-diamond ski slope.

**When you are not working, what do you enjoy doing?** I enjoy hiking, mountain biking, and traveling with my husband and our friends. My favorite vacations are bicycle trips through foreign countries. In the past few years we have bicycled through Vietnam, New Zealand, and France. When traveling I am always looking for artistic inspiration, and I like to visit museums, local marketplaces, and artists' studios when possible. I also enjoy cooking, having dinner parties with friends, and flower-arranging. My interest in flowers has led me to make pieces that specifically include cut flowers, such as my recent Flower Maiden series of figures. <

### representation

Evergreen Fine Art, Evergreen, CO.

DECEMBER 2011 • WWW.SOUTHWESTART.COM 59

Full page ad placed by gallery in Magazine

## TRUDY EVARD CHIDDIX



"Spring Window", Trudy Evard Chiddix, Ceramic and Fused Glass, 34"x20"x7"



EVERGREEN FINE ART

Gallery & Sculpture Garden • Our 20th Year

3042 Evergreen Parkway | Evergreen, Colorado 80439  
303.679.3610 | 800.452.9453 | evergreenfineart.com