



For the past two years, Old Town Crafts has hosted The Creative Palette Convention in the historic, waterfront town of St. Mary's, Georgia. This year's convention attracted more than 1500 people, nationally known artists and instructors, and over 40 vendors. What makes The Creative Palette Convention different from other conventions is that all of the events, classes, and vendors are spread out through the historic buildings that line St. Mary's main street.

The Convention started Thursday, February 12th with classes held Thursday, Friday and Sunday, and vendors exhibiting Saturday. There were over 90 classes offered over three days, nine of which specifically dealt with polymer clay. I taught two polymer clay classes on Friday, and was fortunate enough to be housed in the crown jewel of historic St. Mary's, Orange Hall. Roberta Altshuler of ERA Graphics taught a Simulated Antique Jewelry class, in which students used polymer clay and an assortment of embellishing techniques to create faux antique pendants. I was personally impressed with Bonnie Simonet's Floral Polymer Clay Beaded Bracelet class, in which students used basic cane making techniques to create a simply beautiful floral polymer clay and sterling silver bracelet. Kathy Martin from Postmodern Design taught students how to create a faux ivory carved clay box. Her partner, Chris Burdett, taught the Precious Metal Clay class, in which students created a relic pendant.



Lauren with Sandi Obertin



Suze Weinberg

For many people, the highlight of the convention was the two dinners hosted by Old Town Crafts. The first dinner (Thursday night) featured 15 artists going from table to table demonstrating various tips, tools, and techniques. Each dinner guest received a gift from each artist. Roving artists included Darlene Domel from Stampland of Chicago, Patricia DiBona from DiBona Designs, Lisa Ohmer from European Papers, and me, demonstrating my photo transfer cigar label beads using Gin.

The next night, there was another dinner, "An Evening with the Artists", featuring Susan Pickering Rothamel of US Artquest, Sandi and Jennifer Obertin of Rubber Nature Art Stamps and Suze Weinberg. Susan Pickering Rothamel started the evening off by introducing herself and her "small company" US Artquest. US Artquest released eight new colors of Pearl Ex, two new Printmakers templates (perfect for polymer clay), and a new watercolor palette at HIA just a week before The Creative Palette. In addition, Susan announced that she would be writing a regularly featured column for Expressions Magazine. Sandi and Jennifer Obertin of Rubber Nature Art Stamps talked about their Tool Stamps, as well as their new oven bake clay, which yields results similar to Raku pottery. Suze Weinberg inspired dinner participants by talking about how she got into the business and how her career evolved. In addition, she introduced a new one-pound bottle of Ultra Thick Embossing Enamel and UTEE Flex, which make Ultra Thick Embossing Enamel more pliable. She also released her plans to launch an upcoming series on PBS called Ultimate Crafts. Finally, Fred Mullett capped off the evening by raffling off four pieces of original art.



Lauren with Fred Mullett

Vendors at the convention included ERA Graphics, US Artquest, Rubber Nature Art Stamps, Bonnie's Best Art Tools, and Stamp Oasis. ERA Graphics unveiled several new rubber stamp images. Susan Pickering Rothamel demonstrated various polymer clay techniques in the US Artquest booth, using Pinata Inks, Pearl Ex Powders, and Printmakers texture plates. Sandi and Jennifer Obertin gave participants a chance to try out their new oven bake clay. Stamp Oasis showed off some card samples using Lisa Pavelka's new texture stamp designs. Bonnie's Best Art Tools featured Kemper Clay Cutters, the EZ Squeeze clay gun adapter, Kemper Clay Guns and a small seven piece tool kit perfect for taking your clay projects on the road. Be sure to visit all of these wonderful vendors online to see their new lines (see resource guide below).



I want to personally thank Paula Amari of Old Town Crafts for being such a gracious hostess. Be sure to mark your calendars for February 17 – 20, 2005 for next year's Creative Palette Convention.

Resource Guide

ERA Graphics – www.eragraphics.com
Rubber Nature Art Stamps -- <http://my.execpc.com/~artwalk/rubber.htm>
USArtquest, Inc. – www.usartquest.com
Old Town Crafts – www.oldtowncrafts.com
Bonnie's Best Art Tools – www.coilconnection.com
Suze Weinberg – www.schmoozewithsuze.com
Stamp Oasis -- <http://www.stampoasis.com>

