

# Sparkles, sprinkles and prayers

## Artist's work is her way of 'giving good wishes'

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“Carolynne Gamble incorporates metal foils and paints into her works, as in this piece, titled “A Nek Vision.”

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**P**ainting mandalas brings Carolynne Gamble a sense of harmony that heightens her ability to navigate the dual worlds of art and business. When this multitalented artist steps outside her sphere of art, she helps college students, business people and other artists deal with the business side of art.

“I believe centered, grounded, visual prayer (mandalas) can have an effect and make a difference,” Gamble said. “The mandalas in this show are my personal prayers.”

Gamble's work can be seen in an exhibit, titled "Sparkles and Sprinkles, Mandala Prayers for the Planet," at Jessel Gallery through the month of January. An opening artist reception is scheduled for Sunday from 4-7 p.m.

Gamble, who grew up in northern Idaho and Alaska, earned a master's in fine art at San Francisco State University when the famous sculptor Stephen De Staebler taught there. The young artist planted a foot in the corporate world but kept her artistic vision intact.

She established a comfortable life in Los Gatos, and then, at the urging of her friend Jessel Miller, she moved to Napa in the late 1980s. "The move to Napa, it took a quantum leap of faith," Gamble recalled.

Since coming to Napa, Gamble has become well-known and appreciated for helping other people launch their dreams. For example, she did the layout design and editing for Miller's six children's books. She also helps artists with business planning and promotion.

Gamble works with college students as a business adviser for both Napa Valley and Solano colleges. She is part of a team at Napa Valley College that produces the Youth Entrepreneurship Program and Hospitality Symposium. One of her favorite tasks, connected with this project, is writing student success stories. She also teaches classes at both colleges about the business side of art such as marketing and public relations.

Not all of Gamble's classes involve business. She has also taught classes and workshops in making mandalas.

Gamble's appreciation for mandalas stems from her studies in Eastern religions and metaphysics. "Mandala art represents my personal quest for balance in life — physical, emotional and spiritual," she said.

Though her goals with mandalas are lofty, she said she feels a childlike happiness while creating them. "The pieces are personal icons filled with joy and a spirit of play," she said. "They have intention and purpose."

She enjoys working with paper collage to make her mandalas, and finds it visually appealing to use metallic foils and paints. She applies a nontoxic solvent to the pages of old National Geographic magazines for the paper she uses in the mandala art. The paper collages are weighted down so that the solvent soaks in and softens images on the pages, which gives both the print and pictures an interesting "cosmic" look. She paints on top of this paper with metallic.

Last year, while exhibiting her mandalas at Napa Valley College's Upper Valley Campus, where quilts were also exhibited, she suddenly made a "connection" between quilting and mandala making.

Both quilting design and mandalas use geometric patterns and pieces, colors, layers, texture and symmetry.

"My mother is a lifelong quilter," Gamble said. "It is no wonder I should end up making 'quilt-like' paper collage mandalas — sans the needle."

Gamble's journey toward mandala making included artistic sojourns into painting enormous Georgia O' Keefe-type flowers, triangles and hearts.

For two years Gamble made hearts, with the same intention as the mandalas, and placed them around Napa for people to discover in surprising places.

At one point, an article in the Napa Valley Register questioned where the hearts that were appearing throughout town originated. "It's amazing how many different ways you can paint hearts," she said. "Almost everyone relates to hearts."

Like a Santa Claus in disguise, Gamble loves to distribute good will and cheer. "Everyone who knows me knows about 'pink sprinkles,' which is my way of giving good wishes," Gamble said.

It was painting triangles that led Gamble into mandalas.

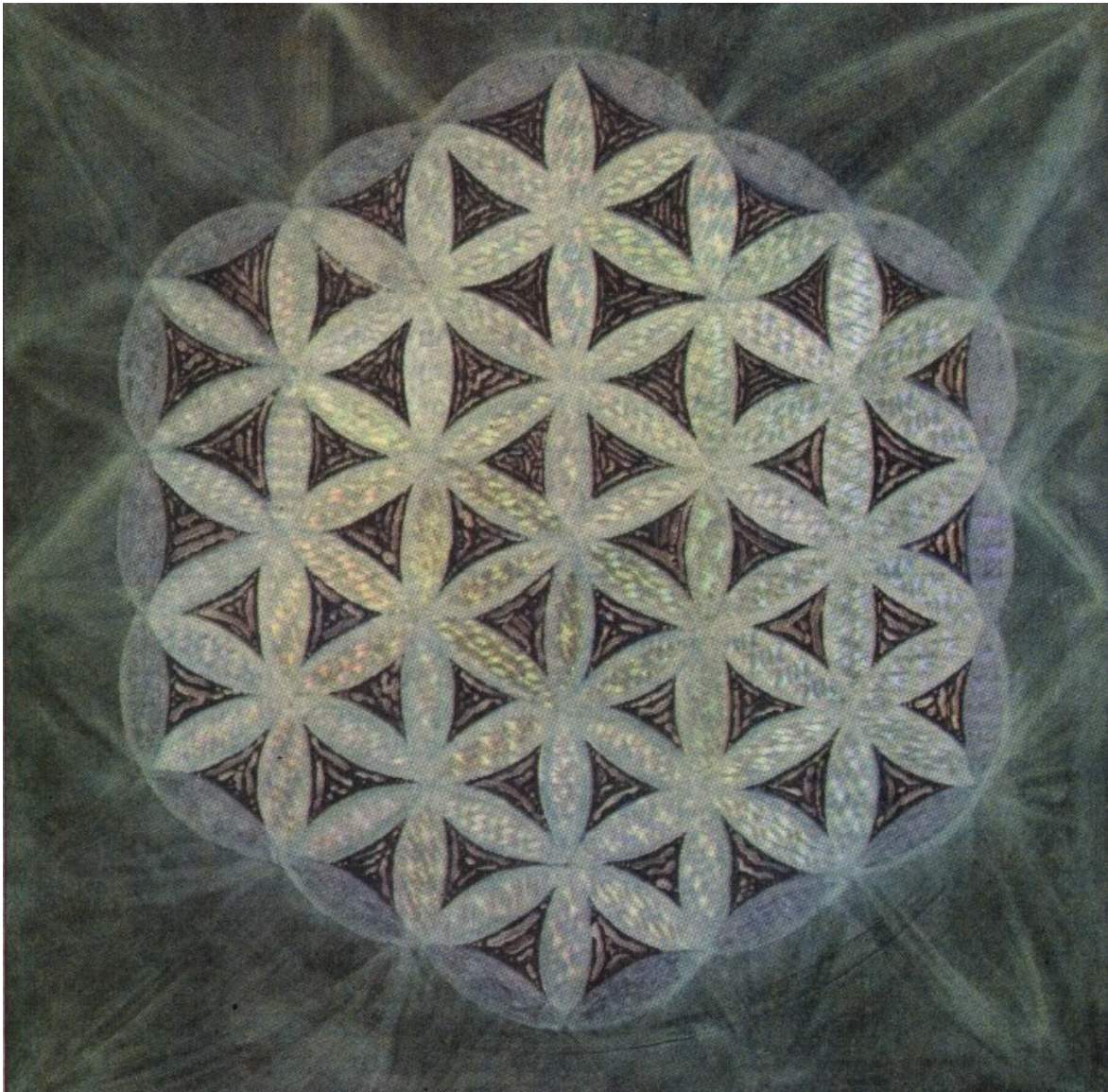
"I took a painting class in process painting and learned to paint from intuition, not from intellect," she said. "Triangles emerged. Geometry is grounded and centered, and I like that exercise."



Artist Carolynne Gamble stands in front of one of her creations, titled "Spokes in the Wheel."



Gamble said her mandalas, like "Time Altered," are her "personal icons."



“Madala art represents my personal quest for balance in life – physical, emotional and spiritual,” says Gamble. This work is titled “Facets of Life.”