

Your Art Connection

Newsletter from the Studio of Sala Faruq

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The Gourdeous Path

How did I end up on the path to gourdeous? Well, over the years I have tried drawing, painting, screen printing and etching but nothing excites me as much as creating art with gourds. I dedicated myself to the art form in 2003 after taking some time off and have been producing gourd creations ever since.

My primary goal on this path is to capture the essence of the medium and transform it into elegant works of art. Additionally, I am challenged to create works that go beyond the traditional confines of what gourd art is.

I mainly create decorative figurative and vessels pieces. My figurative pieces are an affirmation of my cultural heritage. *Beauty Is Here Because I'm Here* (see Fig. 1) represents a mix of the West African cultures of the Asante, Ejagham and Yoruba peoples. My aim with my vessels like *Spirit Bottle* (see Fig. 2) is to create an experience for the viewer that blurs the boundaries between gourd and ceramic art.

As I travel along the gourdeous path, I will share my insights, inspirations and techniques in the issues to follow. I will also keep you abreast of any events and exhibitions where my art can be seen. — **S.F.**



Fig. 1 *Beauty Is Here Because I'm Here*, Gourd/mixed media, 21" x 12", 2004 (left). Photo by Bob Hill.

Fig. 2 *Spirit Bottle*, Gourd, 10" x 7", 2003 (above). Photo by Bob Hill.

How To: The Raku Effect



Fig. 3 *Ife Ife*, Gourd/mixed media, 8½" x 6½", 2004. Photo by Bob Hill.

Iwanted to create the delicate crackle effect seen on raku¹ pottery, but how? During my travels, I came across a product called, "Anita's Fragile Crackle™," that was just the ticket. So, here is how I created the raku effect on the piece, *Ife Ife*² (see Fig. 3).

Materials: Painted gourd, Anita's Fragile Crackle™, paint brushes, Folk Art® acrylic paints, soft cloth and Minwax® Polycrylic Protective Finish®.

Steps: 1. Brush a thick, even coat of Fragile Crackle Step 1 onto the white painted area of gourd only and let dry until clear. 2. Apply a thick, even coat of Fragile Crackle Step 2 and let dry approximately 24 hours. Cracks will appear as Step 2 dries. 3. With a brush, apply Faux Easy dark brown translucent glaze over the crackled surface. Wipe off excess glaze

with a soft, damp cloth to complete the raku effect. 5. After 24 hours, seal entire gourd with several coats of Minwax® Polycrylic Protective Finish®. And voila, raku, Sala style!

¹ Raku is a form of Japanese pottery developed in the 16th century. Characterized by low firing temperatures and crackle glazes, raku ware is used in the Japanese tea ceremony.

² In 2004, *Ife Ife* was selected for a juried exhibition at the Escondido Municipal Gallery, Escondido, CA. Everyone I spoke with at the reception thought my piece was raku ware.

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Photo of artist by
Billie Jo Buehl

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What's New

Besides my vessels and figurative pieces, I have been busy making gourd purses, jewelry and dolls. For the purse (see Fig. 4), I was inspired by the adinkra¹ symbol meaning “love never loses its way home.” I wanted to show the beauty and versatility of gourds by developing a line of jewelry. The necklace shown (see Fig. 5) is my first attempt at creating gourd jewelry. *Marisol* (see Fig. 6) was a bit of fun and whimsy. She is also a prelude to my ultimate vision of creating a life-sized gourd person. To see more of my creations, go to www.afrooriginals.com.

¹ Stamped with traditional symbols, adinkra cloth is made in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa. The symbols are one manifestation of the Akan peoples' complex value system. Each symbol has a unique name and meaning.



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Fig. 4 *Love Never Loses its Way Home*, Gourd/mixed media, 6" x 6", 2006 (top left). Photo by artist.

Fig. 5 *Alma*, 18", Gourd, pearls, silver, 2006 (above). Photo by artist.



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Fig. 6 *Marisol*, Gourd/mixed media, 31" x 10", 2006 (left). Photo by artist.

Exhibits Etc.

View my gourd art
at

Vine to Glass

210-A North Coast Highway
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Questions, comments, to
commission a gourd creation
or to purchase one of my
existing works call
(760) 754-0118 or e-mail
afrooriginals@hotmail.com

Resources

The products mentioned in “How To: The Raku Effect” (page 1) can be purchased at Michaels®, Wal-Mart® and other arts and crafts stores. Gourds are available at Welburn Gourd Farm, Fallbrook, CA (www.welburngourdfarm.com).