

Sam Colt



Early pursuit of technical excellence in classic decorative arts was eventually subsumed into Colt's fulltime practice of creating studio art. In this practice, Colt deconstructs the doctrines of old school decorative paint and mineral finishes by layering and scraping them back to reveal slashes of preparative layers. This interlocking strata of careful workmanship with ever-attendant destruction generate a synergistic backdrop for the decisive carvings of abstract ships, recognizable architectural landscapes, mythical cartography and the incursion of planets that are frequent fliers in her fleet.

Colt is a self-taught artist whose work reflects decades of work with rarified minerals and a mastery of almost-long-lost decorative techniques. She works primarily in grassello -- an Italian marble-and-lime putty classically used to install Venetian Plaster wall surfaces using flexible steel trowels and knives. First trained at the Isabel O'Neil Studio for the Art of the Decorative Finish in Manhattan, she learned to execute the old-world canon of precision English and French decorative finishes like faux bois, trompe l'oeil and gold-leaf, etc. as well as Japanese rice and eggshell lacquer finishes and Noguru Nori. Following this she studied the Italian decorative techniques of sgraffito, grottoesque and grassello under Bob Marx in New York. Upon finishing these courses of study, she developed and installed high-end grassello finishes for polished residences and posh corporate headquarters in NYC, Boston, Palm Beach, San Francisco, and New England. Upon moving to Vermont in 2007 she took up study of Byzantine iconography, tutored by D'mitri Andreyev of the Proposan School of Iconology.

Simultaneously, and from the time she was nine years old, Colt studied and worked with her longtime mentor, David Wiggins; a prolific outlier artist from New Hampshire who also had a career executing murals in New York and New England in the style of the great itinerant Hudson Valley painter Rufus Porter.

This repetitive kintsugi-esque process reflects a lifelong meditation on the arc of the somewhat desperately personal pilgrimage toward living one's truth while making adjustments to course as necessary to weather the law of unintended consequences and, also, the fault-lines of one's own character. The visual sum total of this focus is a body of work that attempts to midwife into visual expression the inexplicable undertow of mystery that winds under the cyclic storms of corporeal experience with a nod toward the promising relief and possible beauty in wreckage.

Colt's studio is located in Montpelier, Vermont and her work is represented by Fine Leaf.