

ROSE CABAT - (1914 -)

"Feelies" are the signature work of Rose Cabat, one of the grande dames of ceramics. Her ceramic artistry is widely known throughout the United States and internationally. From her early childhood in kindergarten where she coiled clay to make pots to her present life in Tucson, Arizona, Cabat has continually pursued solving the mysteries of clay and glaze. Her work is characterized by the glazes of purple, pink, green, blue and brown. They produce a satin matte finish that can only be described as silky. Her porcelain shapes are narrow-necked vases carefully designed to fit into one's hand to enhance the Feelie experience.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT - ROSE CABAT

"I hate to say it, but my hands are guided like a violinist's. With lots of practice, he just does it...I have had a very long and fulfilling career working in clay. Although I no longer have the living support of my loving husband Erni Cabat, I still continue to throw on the wheel, as it is the joy of my life."¹

1. Cabat, Rose, Erni Cabat and Robert M. Quinn *Rose, Erni Cabat Retrospective 1936- 1986*. Tucson, AZ: Tucson Museum of Art: 1986.

RÉSUMÉ - ROSE CABAT

1914	Born New York, City, New York
	High School graduation, Bronx, New York
c. 1941	Greenwich Settlement House, New York City
1951	First National Juried Competition St. Paul Art Center, Minnesota
1956	University of Hawaii
1966	Instructor, State College of Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa
1974	Cabat Studio opened, Tucson, Arizona
1974 - present	Studio Potter

BIOGRAPHY - ROSE CABAT

It is not unimportant in her life that Rose Cabat was born in 1914 in New York City because she lived in the same neighborhood and attended the same school as the boy who eventually became her husband, Erni Cabat. Neighborhood playmates had strong

bonds, becoming close-knit through playing street games such as kick-the-can and stickball. Rose remembers that Erni "was brash and very sure of himself, and he still is. He hasn't changed his character. I didn't care much for him when we were little."¹ But one thing they had in common: their love of creating art. He surely contributed much to the blooming of this ceramic artist.

They were taking night art courses at the Steubenmueller High School. "Erni kept coming around and we started going steady." They were secretly married in court on October 17, 1936. Rose's mother was most upset so the pair got married again, as Erni described it "got married in Jewish", holding a second wedding on January 24, 1937 when both families were present.²

Most of the stories of their lives together primarily reflect Erni, his art education, employment and activities. Among other experiences, he apprenticed himself to Valle Wieselthier, a Viennese potter. She sent him home with a lump of clay and thus began Rose's adult life in ceramic art. Being too busy to work with the clay, Erni left it at home. Rose remembered a pot she coiled in kindergarten so took the lump and turned it into a vase. "Erni came home. He was thrilled and intrigued and he wanted me to make some more." Erni's delight in her work led him to give her a membership in the Greenwich Settlement House. There she found a kick-wheel and began to teach herself to throw on the wheel. Rose, like Erni, had enjoyed drawing as a child. Early in their marriage, he had encouraged her creativity in making copper bowls and jewelry. In a few months, Erni joined her at the Settlement House and by trial and error experimented with glazes and decorating some of Rose's pots.

"Erni used to decorate my pots, but after while I didn't like it. The pots became his pots. He's so much bolder than I am that everything he put his designs on began to look like his work not mine. He would put something on one of my pieces and I'd say 'You changed it and I don't like it.' Erni is mild-mannered. I'm less so. Erni doesn't yell, but his work shouts and mine is quiet."³

In 1942 the Cabats, along with their first child, George, moved to Tucson, Arizona where Erni had a war-related job. The move meant that Rose would have to give up the Settlement House wheel. For a time she made heads and figures but the need for a wheel became quite evident. Erni obtained a wheel converted from a washing machine, but it went clockwise, in the Japanese style, instead of counter-clockwise, the way Rose had learned. So she learned how to throw backwards. Describing the washing machine wheel, Cabat said, "The switch was half-way up, so you had to stand on one leg with the other leg up like a flamingo to turn on the wheel."⁴ Ultimately, Erni bought her a Randall electric wheel, still in use today.

They continued to collaborate in other ways: Erni researched glazes, stacked the kiln, and continued his own primary interest in painting, while Rose focused on producing pottery including wedging the clay and doing her own glazes. In the early 1950's, they applied for and received a license to use deactivated uranium oxide. The glaze was not wholly predictable, in high fire producing various colors from yellow to orange. Their experiments with glazes were greatly advanced because of a trip to Hawaii in 1956 when Rose accompanied Erni to a convention. He offered to take the children back to Tucson so that Rose could attend a ceramics course at the University of Hawaii. In the five-week course, she studied glaze calculation, coming home to teach what she had learned to Erni. Early on she had worked with stoneware and later with porcelain. By

experimenting, they developed a new glaze that seemed to require a very special clay form. "I wanted it to have a more svelte look to go with the glaze." One day, around 1960, after trying many different clays and shapes, it worked. "When I felt it, I said, "That's a feelie!" "⁵

The many years of literally thousands of glaze tests, the efforts to find exactly the right clay body to provide a satiny and not glossy surface finally paid off. People could not resist the individuality and subtle appeal of the feelies' texture and shape. Recognition of Rose as a ceramic artist grew and local recognition spread to national and international recognition. Of the many shows in which her work appeared, a few of the more important ones were:

Objects U.S.A.: The Johnson Wax Collection, 1969. This show traveled three years in Europe.

United State Information Service show in Brazil, 1972. The show was presented in Rio, Sao Paolo, Brasilia, Porto Alegre and Salvador (Bahia).

Iranian-American Invitational, Tehran, Iran, 1972.

Ceramics International '73 sponsored by the Government of the Province of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. ⁶

American Porcelain, New Expressions in an Ancient Art, 1980, sponsored by the Renwick Gallery.

Musee des Artes Decoratifs de La Ville Invitational, Lausanne, Switzerland, 1982. ⁷

Her work has been exhibited at the Smithsonian Institution; the home of Vice President Mondale in Washington, D.C.; Phoenix Art Museum; the Museum of Contemporary Crafts and many other leading national and international museums. ⁸

1. Rose Cabat, Erni Cabat and Robert M. Quinn. *Rose, Erni Cabat Retrospective, 1936-1986*. Tucson, AZ: Tucson Museum of Art. 1986
2. Ibid, 6
3. Ibid. 8
4. Ibid, 8
5. Ibid, 11
6. Ibid, 41
7. Ibid, 42
8. Rose Cabat, Erni Cabat and Robert M. Quinn. *Rose, Erni Cabat Retrospective, 1936-1986*. Tucson, AZ: Tucson Museum of Art. 1986, Addendum to the Catalog, April 1988.

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Books and Catalogs

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Cabat, Rose. *Ceramics*. Tucson, AZ: Tucson Museum of Art, 1987.

Cabat, Rose, Erni Cabat and Robert M.Quinn. *Rose, Erni Cabat, Retrospective 1936-1986*. Tucson, AZ: Tucson Museum of Art, 1986.

Cabat, Rose. *Feelies*. Los Angeles, CA: Couturier Gallery, 2006.

The Grande Dames of Ceramics: Susan Peterson and Friends. Carefree, AZ: Andora Gallery, 2004.

Hartley, Thelma R and Jay Hartley Newman. *The Container Book*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1977.

Musee Des Arts Decoratifs, De la Ville de Lausanne, Switzerland, 1982.

Rogo, David and John Sollo. *Collecting Modern: A Guide to Mid-Century Studio Furniture and Ceramics*. Utah: n.p.: 2001.

Periodicals

" 'Feelies' Find Their Way into Art Museum Through Brazil." *The Arizona Daily Star* (Aug 27,1972): D6.

"Sculpture, Feelies, and 'Animools" in Art Exhibit." *The College Eye*. Cedar Falls, IA (July 22 1966): 1.

Shaw, Patricia J. "The Ceramics of Rose Cabat: An Appraisal." *Arts and Crafts Quarterly* (April 1987): 2, 3, 12-14.

"Tucson Craft Guild: Rose Cabat Has Work on Tour." *Tucson Museum of Art Bulletin* (January/February 1982).

"Women in Clay." *Ceramics Monthly* (April 1973): 26.

GALLERY REPRESENTATION – ROSE CABAT

Artist's Studio, 626 N. 4th Avenue, Tucson AZ 85705

Couturier Gallery, 166 N. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles CA 90036

WEB SITES - ROSE CABAT

<http://www.cabatstudio.com/>

Web site for Rose Cabat.

http://www.couturiergallery.com/Rose%20cabat_bio.htm

Rose Cabat resume at Couturier Gallery web site

http://www.coolhunting.com/archives/2006/06/rose_cabat_cera.php

Article by Evan Orinsten on Rose Cabat collectibles.

<http://artscenecal.com/Announcements/0206/Couturier0206.html>

Lists selected exhibitions and selected bibliography.

<http://asuartmuseum.asu.edu/2005/desertclassics/>

Exhibition of four artists including Rose Cabat, 2005.

<http://artscenecal.com/ArticlesFile/Archive/Articles2006/Articles0306/RCabatA.html>

Marlene Donahoe. "Rose Cabat." 2006 Exhibition, Couturier Gallery.

<http://www.tucsonweekly.com/tucson/ninety-andnible/content?oid=1078096>

Margaret Regan. "Ninety and Nimble." Article describes Cabat's activity and work at 90 years of age.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rose_Cabat

Wikipedia article on Rose Cabat.

<http://www.mmaa.org/Cabat.html>

Minnesota Museum of American Art Cabat images and biography.

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