

CAROLYN BARLOCK

LUSTER & GOLD

From its beginnings in Baghdad in the 9th century, the art of luster remained a closely guarded secret for some 700 years. Traveling along the trade routes that linked Eastern and European worlds, luster's sapphire-blue and ruby-red colors eventually graced the palaces of princes from Persia to Paris. In 16th century Italy, Pope Leo X, prince of the Medici's and patron of Michelangelo and Raphael, so greatly admired the luster of Gubbio, a town near Assisi, that he granted the town's master craftsman permanent exemption from taxes.

A few years later, in the mid-16th century, a treatise on the making of luster was at last widely circulated, thereby ending the art's secrecy but revealing its unpredictable technique. Out of a hundred pieces, fewer than six might be successful. The author of the treatise concluded that, even so, "the art is essentially beautiful and ingenious and when the works are good they are paid for in gold." Not until the 18th century, with the discovery at Meissen of the composition of true porcelain, was it possible to improve the odds of successfully creating this truly golden art.

The centuries-old techniques and the age-old Persian colors are the tradition carried forward by Carolyn Barlock. Her contemporary palette is enhanced with vivid colors that even a de Medici might covet. Pope Leo X would recognize Barlock's amethyst luster made from the amethyst gem, but he would not recognize the Florentine gold finish which is her own technique requiring many applications of 24 carat gold to a chiseled porcelain surface. Each of Carolyn Barlock's porcelain masterpieces is a one-of-a-kind, museum-quality luster, resplendent with gold and representative of ages past and present.

Carolyn Barlock is a member of International Porcelain Artists. She is a master of the ancient technique of Persian luster dating from 9th Century Baghdad and porcelain enamel arts dating from China's Ming Dynasty. Her work may be seen in galleries and in private collections throughout the United States and Europe. She participates in the annual "Sculpture in the Park" juried exhibition at Benson Sculpture Garden in Loveland, Colorado and currently resides in Denver, Colorado.



"CALAKO"