

Rose Sculptures in Paper

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Text by Joanne M. Anderson

Photos courtesy of Janny van der Vliet

In a home studio on a 100-year-old farm in the Drome-Provençale region of southeastern France, a very accomplished, autodidactic artist named Janny van der Vliet handcrafts roses in exquisite detail with paper. A native of The Netherlands, Janny fell in love with southern France when she traveled here as a girl with her parents. For more than a dozen years now, she and her family have resided in the lush countryside with her beloved horses and gardens.

"I started making roses 20 years ago," she says, "when my children were little, and I wanted to make something nice. I wanted to work on my own account and stay home with my children and horses." She studied roses from books and nature, but her story begins much earlier. "Near my primary school was a rosarium (rose garden), and I was affected by the fragrance, which made me start dreaming," she recalls. In high school, Janny seemed to be one of the few who enjoyed art history classes. She also loves drawing, painting, decorating and color combinations.

Janny remembers the wonderful feeling from the first rose she made. "Roses are very willing," she smiles. "I use crepe paper the most, but I like old paper as well. It doesn't matter what kind of paper, although each one has its own technique. I color crepe paper with watercolors, which makes them an exceptionally unique specialty of mine."

A completely self-taught artist, Janny creates roses for home decorations, weddings, special anniversaries and holidays. "My garlands are crafted with the flowers I make tucked in among old French lace and brocante (French for second-hand) flea market stuff. It's a paradise here in France for beautiful flea markets."

Additionally, she enjoys decorating old hats with paper roses and crafting wreaths, hair crowns, corsages and tabletop and hanging bouquets. This region near Provence is also well-known for lavender fields, and Janny creates rustic bouquets with handmade poppies and French lavender. Her roses also grace cakes, and she even makes fake cakes of Styrofoam to decorate. This year, Janny is relaunching her paper peonies.

While most well-known for her roses, Janny's garlands are in high demand and include a variety of paper flowers and colors. "You need a special feeling for color combinations," she explains. "I trust my feelings for colors to produce beautiful results. It's sculpture with paper and coloring the right way."

She is a trendsetter with her roses in France as she was in Holland, and now they sell worldwide via her website. Her roses are different from other paper roses because she designs in intricate detail as they are found in nature ~ tea roses, historical roses, English

roses. "Each one has a different heart," Janny points out. She has participated in many handcrafting shows and gives workshops to share her artistic techniques. "I have given workshops dedicated to roses on special days in old castles or a famous old palace, even at the rose-art market in Grasse, famous for cultivating the roses for Chanel No. 5 perfume," she states.

She paints. She decorates. She gardens. "I have many, many roses in my garden, especially historical roses, like the French rose Pierre de Ronsard." And this unusually talented artist brightens homes and brides and events around the globe with her charming, unique, rose sculptures in paper.

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