

The Making of a Centerpiece

The Kewpies came to life through the pen and ink drawings of Rose Ceil O'Neill. Her Kewpies captured the hearts of children and adults as her drawings took them into the world, in magazines. The stories of their adventures created unforgettable characters. Rose's beautiful Fairies were introduced in stories such as, The Kewpies and the Deserted Farm, September 1911, The Kewpies and Their Fairy Cousins, July 1916, The Kewpies and Food Conservation, September 1918, and The Kewpies and the Sad Fairy, June 1919. Rose's beautiful Fairies also appeared in her Jell-O ad The Magic of Jell-O. Audrey Looman, I.R.O.C.F.'s President, put them together again in the 2008 Kewpiesta Theme, The Kewpies and the Fairies. As with all Kewpiestas a theme needed a centerpiece. This centerpiece began as most of them do, at the Saturday night banquet.

While trying to decide what doll to make and what mold to use to make the fairy I decided that these centerpieces had to be made the way they began, as drawings. This year's centerpieces will feature five different porcelain designs displaying a large variety of Rose's Fairy pictures. Starting with the pen and ink drawings for inspiration, we selected our favorites and began the process of transferring parts of the drawings to the porcelain. Rose left many of her fairies undefined and unfinished trailing off the pages as a Fairy would be disappearing from sight in a flutter of wings and flowing Fairy hair so wings and hair had to be designed and added to the drawings. Kewpies and Kewpieville characters were added to complete the design. Once a drawing took shape on the porcelain it had to be inked in china paint. This was done in the same slow tedious way Rose would have done it using a quill tipped pen and dipping the pen after each line. Once fired this inked drawing became the exciting canvas for color. All of the drawings were in black and white so choosing colors became a challenge.

Colors were applied in layers between kiln firings. First came the pretty pink flesh of the Kewpies which had to be properly blushed and rosy. Fairy gowns and wings were painted in all the colors of the forest. The drawings came to life as the colors were added and after nine months of work a studio was filled with Fairies and Kewpies that will be hard to part with. No two are alike and trying to pick a favorite is practically impossible.

I encourage all of you to come to the banquet ready to take a stroll of the banquet room visiting Kewpie friends and enjoying the beautiful centerpieces. That way you can find your favorite so you know which one to take home with you when your name is called.

Carmen Maher

[2008 Kewpiesta Banquet Centerpieces Picture](#)