



"Nothing ever works the first time. Just be patient."

Prince Edward
Island



INVENTIVE WOMEN BIOGRAPHIES

innovator Debra James Percival

innovation Non-toxic Print Making Methods

About the Innovation

Art making is an industry that poses a number of risks to artists who often use toxic materials to create sculptures, photographs, paintings and prints. The inks used in the various traditional printmaking techniques are particularly hazardous, producing a variety of fumes that are dangerous, as well as requiring solvents for clean up, which are also hazardous.

Debra James Percival is a printmaker who has developed a non-toxic approach to printmaking, which is not only unique, but allows for greater creativity and expression. Non-toxic printmaking is an area of great interest in the art making industry, and, with the aid of the Internet, Debra has collaborated with artists from around the world who are interested in this area. Through research and trial and error, Debra has come up with her own production techniques, and adapted other techniques to suit her own needs.

About the Innovator

An island-born artist, printmaker and art instructor, Debra lives in Charlottetown with her husband and children. She graduated from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1984.

Both an exhibiting artist and a business woman, Debra sells her work under the company name "Expanding Horizons." She is not a traditional printmaker, and often combines fabric and collage in her imagery. Debra works out of a newly-constructed home studio built to her specifications. Setting up an independent studio and making a living as a printmaker and teacher in a small community like PEI is a challenge. She finds that she sells more of her work in the US, and in Large Canadian cities like Toronto.

In recent years she has explored non-toxic printmaking techniques and materials, and is teaching these methods to other artists as well. Debra has discovered that the new techniques and materials can be used in ways that create exciting and vibrant new art. She has discovered that not having to worry about toxic fumes has given her more creative freedom. Though Debra doesn't have a tangible product on which she holds a patent, she is an artistic innovator on two levels: in a practical sense, for the techniques and products she is applying in her work, and for the content and style of the work itself.

