



Rex McDonald

I met an attendee at an equestrian trade show who chatted with me about a design for her gift shop. This was not just any gift shop—it was the American Saddlebred Museum at the Kentucky Horse Park. I dove in and the work began in the spring of 2018. This piece is named after Rex McDonald, the black, five-gaited, stallion born in 1890 in Missouri who is historically considered to be the all-time champion of



the American Saddlebred breed. This photo illustrates the piece in three metals: sterling silver, ancient casting bronze, and a yellow jewelry alloy I named “Golde.” I love designs that don’t quite fit on the shape, so here a hoof and muzzle wander just beyond the perimeter. Rex’s tail is suspended and rests on the hock of his hind left leg. You are just waiting for it to swish to the right.

EILEEN JOHNSON

TEMPI DESIGN STUDIO

Art and technical design have always been a part of Eileen Johnson's life. Raised in Connecticut, her father was a naval architect and her mother was a gifted artist; one could say that artistry and technical design was in her blood.

As a young girl, Eileen had an intense passion to create. At the age of six she received her first sewing machine as a Christmas gift and her little hands became busy creating clothes for all her dolls. A few years later she discovered her other love—horses. The desire to create and her deep passion for horses has remained a constant throughout her life. As a teenager, Eileen began to dabble in jewelry design and took classes that ensured the development of her art. After school, one could always find her at the stables.

Eileen later attended the University of Kentucky where her interest in metalwork and soldering led her to the field of Dental Technology. Trained as a dental laboratory business owner, she was able to successfully meet the needs of her clients and continue to dabble in her jewelry creations. Although dental prosthetics paid the bills, Eileen always dreamed of the day when she could become a full-time artist.

The skills she used daily as a dental technician dovetailed well into jewelry making. A dental crown (or bridge) with metal substructure is custom made, built in wax, and cast by the "Lost Wax Method." It is centrifugally cast, metal sand blasted, and then hand finished and polished. She always completed her work by checking the fit under a microscope, working in fractions

of millimeters on a regular basis. Additionally, she was a dental ceramist, so matching natural colors was part of her talents.

After 25 years as an expert in dental technology, Eileen decided to retire. It made perfect sense that, as she decided to change direction, she'd redirect her skills into jewelry making. In preparation for the shift, Eileen took classes with the American Gemological Institute, including classes like platinum fundamentals and basic stone setting. When the time came, she kept whatever dental equipment she could use for her art and sold the rest.

Tempi Design Studio was born from the word "Tempi," an equestrian term meaning "change," to signify the great change Eileen was making. With Tempi Designs, she is able to combine her two loves—horses and metallurgy—to create magnificent, near 3D works of wearable art. Recently, her portfolio has expanded, almost taking on a mind of its own. Her designs have grown beyond the original equestrian theme to include other animals, nature, and nautical themes. Tempi Design Studio offers jewelry, buckles, buttons, and many accessories (beautiful cuff links!). Additionally, Eileen can create custom works of art from a photo of a beloved horse, as she did with her Rosenthal design.



The Pharoahs Horses Medallion

John Frederick Herring, an English artist, made the original painting called “The Pharaoh’s Horses” in the 1880s. It sold through Sotheby’s for \$1.5 million in the 1990s. The horses are three Arabian stallions pulling a chariot, galloping.

This pocket watch key fob is a family heirloom of my grandfather’s that my aunt/Godmother passed down to me in 2003. The engraving on the back is dated April 1909. She knew I was planning to retire from my dental career and that I had hopes of designing and creating equestrian jewelry. She asked me to do something with the piece. I reworked the design into many variations

(this was the first). This medallion design went on to have smaller pendant, charms, earrings, buckles, and a more contemporary offset square shape series. I still give a story card with any Pharaoh’s Horses purchase, giving a brief rendition of my grandfather’s life, and how this piece arrived to me. I still get emotional when I tell his story.





Dressage Horse Classic



Dressage Horse Classic earrings

I had seen a photo of Courtney King-Dye riding and used her horse as my guide. I wanted to capture the cooperative, yielding horse, ears tuned to the rider, in soft head carriage. This design became insanely popular. It also developed into many sizes and versions, all the way down to a right and left facing earring, ½-inch, round.



Rosenthal

I do try to keep informed of local happenings in the horse world, and follow the horses and annual champions. I had seen this photo of Rosenthal and was intrigued by his presence and jowl. He had passed away suddenly in May (2018) and his legacy made me anxious to create him in my medium. As luck would have it, last fall I ran into Rosenthal's owners, High Point Hanoverians' Klaus Schengber and Larissa Barilar, ringside at Dressage at Devon. I asked if they could stop by my booth to see my work in progress. They were very enthused and within the hour their entire barn crew arrived! They were very happy and surprised to see Rosenthal remembered so. They invited me to their farm to see the stallion's last offspring. Rosenthal is the start of a series dedicated to stallions who have contributed to the sport.



Water Jump

The “airtime” a rider feels while jumping is unique, but the suspension of taking a water drop fence can be especially exhilarating! Here I wanted to show the moments of suspension you feel just before landing, here with a splash. I rode cross country (at lower levels). This design gets many people to just hold it in their hand and feel the details. I still need to develop this design further for a medallion and pendant series.



Driving Pony

I designed this piece from a photo I found in a local monthly paper. I worked the near 3D piece into a brooch. It was another home run! I continued with this design to create a pendant, earrings, and then a buckle. Driving people were thrilled and it kept me hungry for more ideas and all the time it would take to create them.



Paso Fino

I created this piece for a private company who has exclusive rights to the design. It was a difficult creation to capture with all the tack and all the mane. I wanted to be certain there was no question on the breed or tack represented in my work. Pieces went from paper photo to hours of wax carving, to prototypes, mold making, and production. My immediate audience does not really include the Paso crowd, but I was thrilled to make him—a personal favorite.



Lipizzan

Tempel Lipizzan Farm in Wadsworth, Illinois has partnered with Tempi Design Studio. Tempi will design and create exclusive, breed specific designs for the Tempel Farm Gift Shop, along with certain chosen designs from Tempi. Tempel Farms celebrated their 60th Anniversary in 2018 and serves as a Lipizzan breeding farm and classical dressage training center. They promote the art form and educate the public through farm tours and performances throughout the year.



Fancy Jumper

After “Dressage Horse Classic,” I was getting verbally nudged by customers that my next design had to be a jumper. It made sense to me to start representing all the disciplines I could. The original jumper was a large oval medallion that also served as a brooch or stock pin (I then made this belt buckle from the same cast). I remember keeping track of my time spent to create him and counted 22 hours, then I went back to add the tack. The result was another top performer. People who saw the jumper would often say, “I don’t wear jewelry, but I will wear this.”

Tempi

You will often find Eileen locked away in her studio, molding her next vision (or your’s) into life.

