

Meagan Melloy

Author of *Studio Buttons and the Artists Who Make Them*

By
Claudia Chalmers

Meagan Melloy has been collecting buttons for nine years and is about to publish the 3rd edition of her book *Studio Buttons and the Artists Who Make Them*. This collection of studio artists, their creations, and their stories is an important record of button history. It is an invaluable reference for any collector of studio buttons, and includes a collection of photos, identifying marks, dates, and artists. Button collectors owe a great deal of thanks to Ms. Melloy for providing this convenient reference tool. The interesting thing is that although our author is a seasoned button collector of nine years, she is, at present, only nineteen years old.

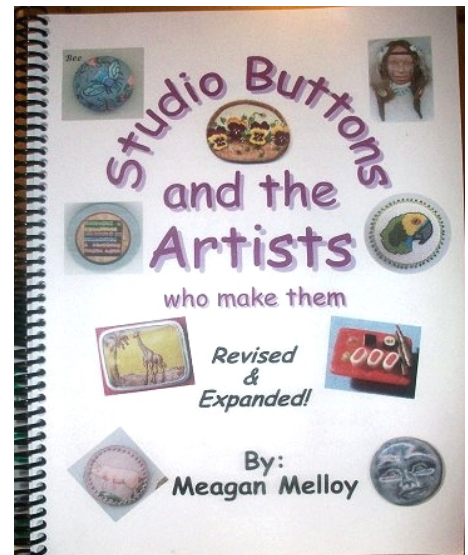
Meagan had her introduction to the button world at age ten. She had spent some time handling buttons previously, though. Once, while visiting a friend of her grandmother's in Montana, she found herself sewing buttons onto scraps of fabric. Meagan also used buttons as manipulatives to help her with her math lessons. So, when her 4-H club required a collecting hobby book, she was open to the idea of collecting buttons. "On one of our homeschooling message boards, my mom came across a girl who needed some buttons for a tray for Nationals and asked if I wanted to contact her," recounts Meagan. "She told me what she needed, and I sent her a couple of buttons. One was a coconut tiger from JoAnn Fabrics, and the other was a fabric sunflower off one of my old dresses. She sent me back information on the National Button Society and local button clubs. I contacted the local button club, who invited me to their meetings, and the rest is history." It is, indeed, Meagan.

At the 2004 National Button Convention in Appleton, Wisconsin, Meagan, then fourteen, presented a program on studio buttons and created the first edition of her book as a reference for juniors. The self-published book was so popular she began to offer it more widely to collectors. The subsequent editions of the book are the result of her continuing research and discovery of new artists. Older entries are updated and expanded and new entries added. She has taken copies of the book to past Nationals "just in case someone wanted one." At the 2008 National Convention, studio button artist Brad Elfrink offered to have the books for sale at the Studio Artists' table and Meagan ended up selling all the copies she had brought. Obviously, this is a reference that collectors have needed for a long time!

Meagan's favorite buttons are ivoroids, lacy and lacy types, and black glass. As is often the case with junior members, she was drawn to the black glass buttons because "you can find so many poking around poke boxes, and as a junior who doesn't like poke boxes?" Limited by funds, as students are, Meagan collects small ivoroids and small lacies, although friends have given her larger treasures along the way as well.

Meagan enjoys studio buttons, considering them just as "beautiful and unique" as the older buttons. When competing she tries hard to abide by the National Button Society guidelines of not exceeding 20% of studio buttons on a tray, but "being a young adult collector (and a poor college student) it is hard . . . to do a tray that totally excludes studio buttons."

When asked if she has a favorite studio button, Meagan's choices carry stories of their own. A cat sitting in a gift box, made of catalin and other materials as embellishment, by Leslie Beauregard, is the first favorite mentioned.



“You can’t have live animals in the dorm so this is the next best thing.” It is a framed sample labeled



“There are two means of refuge from the miseries of life . . . music and cats” (Albert Schweitzer). Another favorite studio button is a 4-leaf clover paperweight by Mary Gaumond. It is also framed with a saying: “Good luck happens when preparedness meets opportunity.”

Meagan is currently a vocal performance music major at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois. She hopes to have the third edition of her book available for sale at the National Button Convention in Denver this August. Those collectors interested in *Studio Buttons and the Artists Who Make Them*, 3rd ed.,

but who are unable to attend Nationals can contact Meagan at meaganpigs@aol.com or write to her at 9652 Lee Blvd., Leawood, KS 66206-2263.

Meagan Melloy serves as a reminder to us all that our junior members are the future of our hobby. For our buttons to be preserved and treasured in the future, we must teach children about them today. Even simple buttons used as math manipulatives or craft supplies can open doors in the mind of a child. An important facet of collecting, studio buttons and their creators, will be recorded thanks to a former junior member and young author, Meagan Melloy.



Meagan then and Meagan now!