

Daniel Harris Artist Statement

Daniel Harris is an award-winning artist, composer, author and sculptor. Harris spent most of his working life as a professional musician and audio engineer; he is also the inventor of a dozen patented electronic interfaces for theatrical productions and media post-production. His creative efforts include four operas, 60 concert music compositions, over a hundred short stories, two novels, a novella and plays, as well as the libretti for his operas. He has created hundreds of paintings, drawings, sculptures and *objects d'art*. He was co-founder of the International Association of Digital Mobile Artists (IADMA), which supplied a platform for creatives making art, music and video on iPhones, iPads and other portable electronic devices. He co-chaired two international meetings of the group at New York University in 2010 and 2011. As an underwater acoustic specialist, Harris was the acoustical and systems designer for Michel Redolfi's successful underwater opera: *Crysalis (Un Opéra Subaquatique)* at Le Festival 38e Rugissants, Grenoble, France 1992 as well as numerous additional multi-media subaquatic productions.

After a serious accident in 2010 he was no longer able to perform music, and redirected his creative interests into writing and visual art. In 2013, at the suggestion of his physical therapist, he began studying ceramics and sculpture with Korean Master Potter, Ki Woon Huh. "I never considered ceramics an art form, but rather a craft for making decorative and utilitarian wares," said Harris; "but Ki's work showed me new possibilities for unique sculptural ceramic art. After acquiring some pottery skills, I began to construct sculptural *objects d'art*. The totems, masks, teapots and most of my pieces tell a story. Each viewer will discover a different story."

I use the traditional Korean method of working with clay. All pieces begin with drawings which initially can be quite rough, but in final stages are quite detailed, especially the decoration. If the piece is unusually complicated, I make a construction drawing or plan. Since I do not use the wheel, all pieces are slab-made and/or hand-formed. After the shape of the piece is finished and smoothed, a cartoon of the decoration is then transferred to the clay. With the porcelain clay I use, the painting is done on damp clay with high fire under glazes. As my decorative designs are often highly detailed, the painting time per piece can be 24-30 hours. Once the clay is dry, it is bisque fired. After the firing, I make corrections & adjustments: repaint areas that burned off, or failed in some way. When I'm satisfied with the painting, an overglaze is then applied; after that, the final firing in a gas kiln at 2400°F.

Of Masks and Heads

Some critics have commented on the number of heads and multiple-headed figures in my paintings. I have a mild form of *prosopagnosia* (facial agnosia): the inability to remember even familiar faces. Dr Oliver Sacks and I would have had some amusing chats! A recent embarrassing event was meeting one of my brothers at the airport, and totally failing to recognize him. Fortunately, after approaching several strangers in total error, that brother recognized *me*. So faces & heads are a personal theme.

My series of Story Masks arose from a quote attributed to the great Mexican writer, Octavio Paz: "Every mark on a man's face tells a story." After studying my own face, I made a porcelain mask of it with 'allegories' inspired by scars, marks, imperfections, blemishes. To date I have made a half-dozen mask drawings and made three as porcelain masks. As in all art, it's a creative fusion of imagination & nature.
