

Ideal Home

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IDEAS, TRENDS, APPLIANCES AND MORE!

Masking In Glory

Masks have been in use since antiquity for both ceremonial and practical purposes. They usually represent supernatural beings, fanciful or imagined figures. A chat with four renowned mask makers

IMPRESSIONS: BENOY SEBASTIAN



BECKIE KRAVETZ

Beckie fell in love with theatre at a young age. She enjoyed doing makeup for herself and other actors. She was always creating art, and her favourite art classes were ceramics and sculpting. Beckie says, "Mask making involves different mediums for the multi-step process of sculpting, moulding, casting and painting". Her favourite is the tactile pleasure of manipulating clay, watching a character emerge under her hands. She has trained herself in theatrical prop-making, working with a variety of materials. Over the years her work has evolved into full-figure sculpture,

often with masks serving as a metaphorical function within the sculpture. She continues to create masks for theaters and galleries. Many of her newest pieces are oversized faces for outdoor display. Her advice to aspiring young mask artists - study facial anatomy, so you have a solid foundation from which to design and sculpt your imaginary characters. Experiment with different clay and mask materials. Use books, museums and the Internet to research mask artists and masks of different cultures for inspiration, materials and techniques.



CECILIA LUNDQVIST

Cecilia's fascination with masks started when as a child she visited this great exhibition called 'Masks - Other Worlds' at a local culture institution in the small Swedish town. It was a wonderfully staged exhibition that took her on a journey through the vast mask collection of a Swedish eccentric anthropologist, accompanied with dramatic sound scapes and suggestive lighting. She says - humans have used them as tools to communicate and connect the everyday life with fantasy or another dimension for thousands of years.

She further mentions that a mask is both an object and a vehicle for story telling - you can hang it on the wall or you can wear it and let it come to life. She is always thinking about ways to combine her two passions: masks and perfume. Her advice to aspiring young mask artists - tell visual stories with your masks. I also highly recommend collaborations with stylists, designers and photographers. Collaborations with the right creative people can result in beautiful imagery and projects that you could not have produced yourself.





DAVID KNEZZ

David always wanted to be an artist in college, but gave it up because he struggled with drawing. In 2004, he was assigned props work for a production of *The Hobbit*, which needed some masks made. He bought a 'How To' book, made the masks and received the compliment, 'You should become a professional mask-maker,' that compliment changed his life. He says, "I couldn't draw, but I could sculpt. I signed up for sculpture classes to hone my skills, opened a website and have been doing it ever since." He mentions, "Mask-making bridges the fine arts and

the performing arts. You can hang it on a wall and admire it, or wear it and immerse yourself in another character." David is always looking for ways to inspire himself. He wants to get into making more abstract masks as well as painting more exotic finishes on the masks. His advice to aspiring young mask artists - hone your sculpting skills. The mask always starts out as a sculpture. Take classes, study great artists. Like any art, you need a foundation. Once you know the muscles that make up a human expression you can be free to add your artist vision to them.





JOANNA MOZDZEN

Joanna was always fascinated by the human face. It is a limitless source of mystery and drama, she believes. It was when she emigrated to Canada, that she discovered clay in her art classes. She says, "I knew that I wanted to pursue a career as an artist, but I feared the art critics. This led me to start making theater masks and eventually my creations progressed to artistic masks and figurative sculptures." She uses clay to create her mask designs. She loves the feeling of wet clay under her fingers. She says, "I am so grateful that I am able to do what I love to do.

Creating art is my life. I am always working on improving my skills, which is a never-ending, life-long process. I would love to see my theater masks used in different plays, and my ceramic masks and sculptures featured in galleries all over the world." Her advice to aspiring young mask artists - it is important to learn how to work properly with clay as a medium. Be patient. When it comes to creating faces, I emphasize the power of observation. It is important to become familiar with the human face if you wish to replicate it in the form of a mask.

