

KIMMY CANTRELL THE MAN BEHIND THE FACES

In a tiny home studio surrounded by clay, brushes, rainbow-colored glazes and abstract images hurriedly sketched on paper, the native Georgian creates faces that not only express our innermost feelings, but also magnify them. Largely self taught, Kimmy manipulates shape, color, dimension and texture to depict powerful, disturbing emotions, such as fear, paranoia and shame. He often incorporates cracks, holes, nails and pieces of copper wire to bring a raw, unrefined element to his work. "The crude asymmetrical appearance of my pieces represents the primitive quality of certain emotions," he states. "I also hope to show the beauty within flaws." According to the artist, there are 'stories' behind every line, wrinkle and scar on the human body. To him, imperfections and the narratives they embody add a dimension that is far more compelling than perfection.

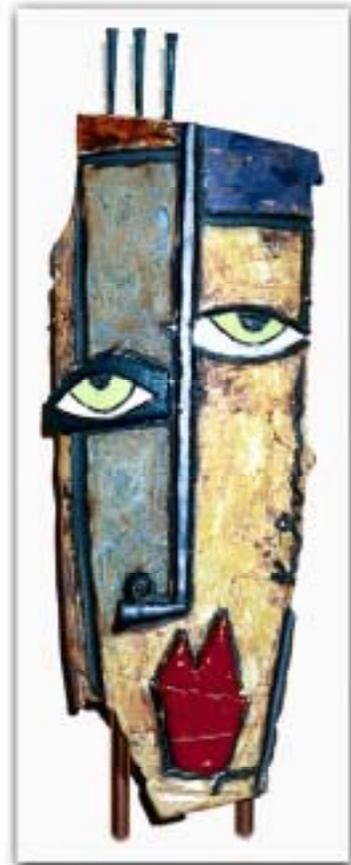
It takes far more than deft hands and fingers for sculptor Kimmy Cantrell to transform lumps of clay into fine works of art. For him, it takes faces. "Facial features and expressions play an integral role in my work," he begins. "We spend our lives hiding behind our faces." He pauses, "Our faces become masks that conceal complex, sometimes dark, aspects of our personalities."

Through his work, the College Park, Georgia artist has commented on many harsh realities. In one sculpture, he exploits the lines and curves of the female form to convey a woman's feelings of inadequacy after a mastectomy. In another, he examines the subject of human captivity. "I want to move people with the passion expressed in my work," he begins. "The more the viewers relate to your work, the more they find themselves entering into a dialogue with it." The artist believes that during this two-way exchange, the viewer projects his own experiences on the art and becomes less the onlooker and more the participant. "I feel I've fulfilled my role as an artist only when I've made that kind of emotional connection with the viewer."

Since he began working as an artist in 1995, Kimmy has received media and public exposure through exhibitions at the Ohio Craft Museum, the North Carolina Central University Art Museum, the National Black Arts Festival, and other festivals in Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Alabama, Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio. His awards include honors from Port Clinton Arts Festival, Raleigh's Artsposure, Atlanta's Dogwood Festival, Tampa's Gasparilla Arts Festival, Tuscaloosa's Kentuck Arts Festival, Baltimore's Artscape, and Charlotte's Festival in the Park.

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