



Nora Jean Gatine, or NJ, is a moderator of MSATClayArt (Miniature Scenes and Things) group at Yahoo. She has such a unique and descriptive way of thinking of life and art that I had to share this. A [WebCam](#) goes with the ramble.

Ok for those who have been here for a long time you know there's some method to my madness. What's this all about these face sculpting, making molds, doing animal prints, doing leaves, flowers and basket weave?



What's the point after all this nattering on about WebCam and getting logs and pix up for you to see?

The point is we are a miniatures list that attacks an idea with polymer clay. Beads notwithstanding, (and you all know I love my beaders), but that's not why we're here. We don't need a big complex and expensive doll house to make a scene. Heck Fire I make a scene each time I'm let out of the crib to prey upon the unsuspecting public. A mini scene can be as small as a pendant.

What's the point? For the majority of the world "out there" outside of the industrial and developed countries, life is man, woman, eat, drink, just like the Chinese make movies about. Out there, there are humans who are still painting their faces, like the tribesmen in New Guinea.



My neighbor Jolie, who grew up in Uganda, laughed like a loon when I told her I don't complain about using coin operated washing machines because it is a lot easier than taking the clothes to the local stream to beat against a rock with a stick. She laughed like a loon for she was that native, as a child, beating clothing on a rock, and thinking for the most part that this was normal and a happy thing to do. Much like milking a goat.



For 60 thousand years the brain of humans have not changed, so say those who measure the inside of skulls. So that means that a hunter and gatherer would feel the same about their babies, their loves, their 90210 petty jealousies from cave to cave. It would stand to reason that all the trappings of modern life is just pupkiss, a different tribal dance, just another gathering of humans all concerned with eating procreating and sleeping out of the rain. Beyond that it's all face paint, music and dancing the dance because the belly was full.

Ever feel like singing after a good meal? Just letting out a tune because you're so happy you're fed? The Japanese do that all the time, fun little practice actually.

These elements I've been reviewing in WebCam and with the pix and logs, to those who haven't joined us yet, are things that are part of the natural world. Civilization is a new gig.

Leaves, flowers, food, faces... that's us in our primitive state, that's not so far away from the memory of our cells. Thousands of years of hunting and gathering and only a couple of hundred years of civilization, some say. Gandhi, when asked about Western Civilization, said, "interesting theory."

The Chinese and the Jews count the years in the 5,000 number. It's all arbitrary, made up, and changeable. What doesn't change is leaves, flowers, food in basic forms, faces and the rest is face paint and the yelp of a happy fed human doing a dance just because they can.



So on to fish and abalone, feathers and more flowers, more leaves and more faces and we can build a whole world with one face. These two faces I show you here evoke emotion from us.

Snakes scare us, have all sorts of bad press in the West for the Garden of Eden. The Snake is revered in the East for it sheds its skin and renews itself, like each year renews itself. But snakes don't get a ho hum reaction, love them or hate them, they are evocative of emotion.

Leaves without color is like dream time, like it's haunting, for the color is missing. This evokes emotion from people, showing them natural things in TV black and white. It would weird out folks who never saw black and white TV before. Natives from the bush would say it looks like night time with a full moon.



There's more to this point, like it's both the same face mold. Why does the wrapped one feel feminine? Because it's not threatening, it's decorated with beads, the leaves are softly falling over clay fabric, it's friendly. The tiger snake face has these metal leaves that point upward with snakes. It's not friendly. Sexy maybe, but not without some risk.

The faces I left emotionless for I wanted to give an example of how color affects emotional impact, how metallic things curved and pointy going up have a different feel than natural color falling softly down. I left emotion out of the faces for the color, other elements, will give a history for that face. The colors will color our emotional reaction to them. These emotionless faces have their own sense of self. You're on their turf.

Mini scenes can be in the space of one pendant.

Manipulating a cane so it can be used in miniature, like the brown basket weave of the snake, is the focus here. Small flowers, pinch pots, food....all this can be utilized in a doll house or room box, but hokey smokes, Bullwinkle, put them on your pendants, hang tea pots from your ears.

So I guess there's a number of points I wanted to make with this whole WebCam review of basic things I'd like all y'all to know and feel comfortable with. We need to sharpen our sculpting. It's imperative if we are going to have original faces to make molds from. That's going to be an ongoing effort on all of our parts.

We need to not be afraid of making a cane; when you get frightened remember the FIST OF DOOM, that's the fist of a confident clayer who isn't afraid to abuse that clay, to pound it into submission. We need to kick out any preconceived notion of what is "permissible" with mini scenes. Screw all that, we're artists here and we are the trend setters, we are the innovators, we only ask ourselves, "Does it make ME happy?" The world will accept what you make if you clay from the heart.



Look to nature and look to the people still living in natural settings, check the past, see the variations on the basic theme of man, woman, eat, drink. Add face paint and your own dance steps.

To that now I'm hungry, off to forage like a smart monkey.

xoxo

NoraJean Gatine

-- *Life is like a lump of clay, both are what you make of it.*