

## BIO

I was born in Homestead, in Pittsburgh in 1956 (Monkey/ Gemini) during a period of labor unrest. I'm talking about my mother, not Homestead. Okay, Homestead too. She was a second-generation Finn and my father was an engineer. I showed an early aptitude for art, which was a good thing because it kept me off the mean streets of our Township housing development. I studied art for several years at the Carnegie Institute under Joseph C. Fitzpatrick, who had also taught Andy Warhol.

I was dissuaded from continuing my studies in fine art by my wise elders, who were experts on all subjects, including career counseling, so I struck a compromise and studied Industrial Design at the University of Cincinnati. I told them it was almost like being an engineer, and they bought it. I plied that trade in the Rust Belt for a few decades, creating manufacturing jobs while designing vases, drinkware, candleholders, car seats, storage containers, tires, doo-dads, what-nots and thingamajigs, for the likes of Sears, Indiana Glass, Candle-Lite, Coca-Cola, FTD, Century, Goodyear, Homco, and many others.

Partway into my design career "the call of the wild" lured me back to making art, and I began painting large, satirical cartoon portraits, at first part-time and eventually full-time. Since then, I have shown my work more than 150 times and have sold lots of paintings. I now reside in Rochester, NY, where I also happen to live, and where I continue to paint more prolifically than ever. I am deeply committed to the three E's: entertaining, enlightening and educating viewers like you through my art.

### Artist Statement

"What is art?" is an old question -- 2000 years old, in fact, if Plato was the first to pose it. I'll not try to answer the 2000-year-old question for you in just a couple minutes, but I can tell you what art is to me. It's what I do. In a song of that name, Donald Fagen sings, "It's not some game I play, it's in my DNA, it's what I do." But what if I didn't? Musician Kamasi Washington's father taught him "To whom much is given, much is required." Nina Simone felt driven to give her gift of musical talent back to the world, if just to "get it off her back". I feel this sense of responsibility, as if I am indebted. So, an artist's simple impulse becomes a drive which become an aspiration, and then hopefully an act of grace. "It's deep beneath my skin, it's what I major in, it's what I do."

I paint satirical cartoon portraits, even if my painting's subject occasionally loses top billing and becomes subordinate to another character or some other theme I discover. I pay honor (or, on

occasion, dishonor) to a pantheon of hero geniuses, creators, teachers, seekers, crackpots and hangers-on, and although most of my subjects are characters from the past, nostalgia is not my intent. The past is history and the future is mystery -- we must accurately interpret the former in order to effectively prepare for the latter, something we don't follow through on very well.

I paint in oils, in a cartoon style. I love the feel, look and smell of oils, and doing new things with ancient materials is a gas. I base my color selections on a "cultural color wheel" of my own invention. (International orange, Hershey brown, Coke red, etc.) My work is hand-made in the USA. Cartoons are universal and I've always avidly loved them. I find them to be an effective vehicle for the kind of funny/serious, stupid/smart, bitter/sweet, mythical/ hear-say, multiple-message work that I produce. If I don't have fun, the viewer won't have fun, and if the viewer won't have fun, I won't have fun.

My paintings start with things I've read, heard or seen, followed by a flash of insight occurring at a mundane moment ("solvitur ambulando", which means "it is solved by walking"), in turn followed by a positive feeling that trips the "yes painting /no painting" switch enough for me to take the leap of faith. "Jump and the net will appear," Julia Cameron says. I deliberately leave loose ends, unresolved details, and unanswered questions that only the paintbrush can work out. At some time during a painting "the funnel flips", when concept becomes synthesis and synthesis becomes execution, and the painting takes on a life of its own with me at its service. Then I learn what my own painting is really about, with its colors, lines, forms and even subjects at times playing several roles and sending multiple messages. A kind of beauty that does more than merely mirror the universal starts to assert itself.