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FOR TIMED RELEASE

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STORY BOOK CANVAS BRING LIFE TO ART

Ann Lyneah Curtis of Masquerade Life Casting is offering for the first time ever her “STORY BOOK” MasterWorks, a melding of two dimensional painted canvases and stoneware life castings. These monumental works are inspired by the mythologies of humankind throughout the ages, re-telling the stories of the likes of Pandora, Medea, and the mystical Genii.

Drawing from her 30 years of life casting custom portraiture, Ms. Curtis embellishes each work in a plethora of stylized adornments. From Medea’s body of armour and the Mermaid’s sea shells, to the Enchanted Portal’s Winged Faerie, these works display Ann’s creative mastery of the life casting process that literally jumps from the canvas artistry that is the “story-book page” of each piece.

Ann Lyneah Curtis will be showing these original artworks in Ann Arbor from July 16th to 19th at the State Street Art Festival, Booth 362 on Liberty Street between Thompson & Maynard, she is also available for personal castings either at the show or by appointment by calling (734) 996-4438.

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BIOGRAPHY

Life casting artist, Ann Lyneah Curtis of Masquerade Face Casting, revels in the joy she brings her client when they view her works of art created from their own features, or those of a loved one. Whether it's a wall mask commissioned from a simple face casting, or the sculptural complexity of a double body casting of two lovers nestled in each others arms, Ann Lyneah Curtis takes the art of portraiture to the next plateau.

Carefully choosing venues from east to west coast, she exhibits in those that best fit her life-style. Traveling for five months out of the year obtaining commissions, Ms. Curtis then fills these orders during the remaining seven months in her hill country home in the heart of Texas.

"I give my client the chance to see themselves for the very first time, as others see them. No other portrait artist offers this kind of exactitude in a final work." Ann's words are prophetic, at a time when two dimensional photographs and mirror images abound, the casting offers you the ability to see yourself in a 3-dimensional form.

This is just the beginning. Back in her studio she uses this mould to create a positive from white stoneware or terra cotta. This final work is adorned utilizing the same ceramic medium. A spray of flowers, a garland of fall leaves or her "Spirit Mask" designs. Unique to her style, personal concepts can be sculpted onto a piece to compliment the portrait and add to the dynamics of the work.

Born and raised in upstate New York, Ann's interest in portraiture began at age 12, when she started by sketching faces from her parent's magazines.

Upon leaving home at 18, she moved to New Orleans where her professional life as a portrait artist began. Working on Jackson Square she honed her skills during the mid 1970's.

In San Antonio, Texas, she opened her first gallery at the age of 21. From here she not only did portraits, but also design work for the community at large. This led to theater work, children's classes and

teaching college workshops in costume and stage make up.

Because of her gallery involvement throughout Texas, the San Antonio Museum of Art requested a submission to it's 100 year time capsule. She offered a face casting that will next see the light of day in 2081 A.D.

In 1986, she decided to take a hiatus from the gallery scene and took a chance on offering the public personal castings directly from their own face.

Beginning with a Renaissance theme faire, in Waxahachie Texas, she was then invited to participate in the Southern California Renaissance Faire. It was here that her work with body casting was begun. As her clientele's tastes evolved, so too did her artistic repertoire. Moving from face castings to kiss castings to double body casting, Ann's work is a testament to the beauty of the human form.

Her myriad of designs now includes hand casting. Creating groupings of two three and four hands cast together. Families united in time for eternity.

Ann's work has been presented on live television, where she cast the host of Detroit station WXZY, Channel 4's Kelly and Company before a studio audience. So impressed was John Kelly that she received a call back to show the Michigan audience his finished life casting. Other live spots have included Los Angeles' KTLA channel 5 casting of reporter Gayle Anderson, Austin Texas ABC channel 24's Morning Show and Austin's FOX affiliate channel 7's Roving Weatherman. Her numerous remotes include Detroit stations WJBK, channel 2's Two On The Town, WDIV channel 4's Riley's World and an OCN remote in Laguna Beach California.

"I get to paint, draw and sculpt with each piece I make. What could be more gratifying than to be able to use all these artistic tools and work directly from the human form?" says Ann Lyneah Curtis. "It truly is the Ultimate Portrait."

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BACKGROUND

The Art of Ancestral Casting has been practiced since the age of the pharaohs as a means to touch the future with the majesty of the past. In Egypt not only were the features cast to duplicate facial characteristics, the whole body was reproduced to create the sarcophagus that was then used as the means to take the soul of the mummified remains into the afterlife.

The first examples of the plaster departure from the skeletal form are found in Jericho. Archaeologists estimate these plaster and jewel encrusted skulls to be 7000 years old. There is no way to tell if these portraits are of great leaders or famous criminals, as the face casting has been used for both through out history.

In a twist on the life casting process, the Romans would use castings to create full sized bronzed statuary. Slaves were told to stand in containers especially made and to strike a pose with a tube for breathing. Plaster would be poured around them. Once the mold was set, molten bronze poured in would replace the flesh and bone in a grisly “lost wax” casting. The slave became a “victim of art”

Another example of Life Castings’ underbelly begins during the French Revolution. As the guillotine was making head way through the French aristocracy, a young woman was making casting of the beheaded. Graphically gruesome, these masks were the inspiration for Madame Toussaud’s Wax Museum.

Unable to rise above the macabre, face castings were used during the nineteenth century to the delight of small girls. Baby dolls made their appearance from the castings of still born children. These tiny faces were used creating sumptuously attired dolls for play.

The first documented evidence of life casting as available to the general public is recorded by Cennino d’Andrea Cennini, in the “Craftsman’s Handbook”, published in 1390. The description given is strikingly similar to the casting process still used today.

In the United States, presidential face castings have been made from George Washington forward. The first actual Life Castings we have examples of are James Madison and Senator Henry Clay. The finished works are a part of the Smithsonian collection

The modern techniques available to life casting artists eliminate all of the discomfort once found in this art form. Plaster gauze bandages shorten the process to a brief 10 minutes, start to finish for a face casting. The resulting casting captures all of the facial detail, so much so that when the casting is viewed with proper lighting, it creates a holographic image, appearing to follow your movements as you pass in front of it.

Ann Lyneah Curtis uses this casting procedure to create her Story Book Masterworks, as well as face, body and hand castings. Her finished work captures detail from eyelash to navel, from a Mona Lisa smile to a full toothy grin. She places her work into the hands of history with a new twist on the oldest form of portraiture.

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ANCESTRAL CASTING FACT SHEET

- 7000 B.C. Mud and skeletal ancestral masks created for ritual worship by the tribes of New Guinea are the first examples in the history human casting.
- 5000 B.C. The first artistic creation from the skull, plaster and jewel encrusted excavated in Jericho.
- 1500 B.C. Body castings used in the production of the sarcophagus that transports the dead to the afterlife in Egypt.
- 150 B.C. Death castings are used in Rome to make statuary and busts, these help families preserve their history. In many instances there would be a special place within the home for these castings.
- 1300 A.D. England begins the tradition of royal castings, displaying the portraits from Edward the second forward in Westminster Abbey.
- 1390 A.D. First documentation of the life casting process, Cennino d'Andrea Cennini's "Il Libro del Arte", the Craftsman's Handbook, details how life castings were performed during the Renaissance. A lengthy and uncomfortable experience that deterred the ready acceptance of life casting for 600 more years.
- 1970's A.D. The art of life casting is revolutionized by the ready availability of plaster impregnated gauze. Taking the actual time of the casting from 45 - 60 minutes, down to only 10 minutes.
- 2000 A.D. The revival of ancestral masking marks the true beginning of a new millennium in portraiture!



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FACE CASTING FAQ.'S

Q: What exactly is a face casting?

A: A face casting captures the detail of a person's features in plaster gauze bandage. It takes about 10 minutes start to finish and I then have a "perfect" mold of the face. This can create a "holographic" illusion with the use of lighting, or I can take this casting back to my studio and use it to create a finished work of art in ceramic. A wall mask, teapot, wedding goblets, even dolls—made from the reduced casting of your face.

Q: How is a face casting made?

A: I use a light coating of vaseline to protect the facial hairs; eyebrows, eyelashes, mustache and beard, then plaster gauze bandage is layered on to the features. It is smoothed over to capture the little details that make up the face. Even teeth can be cast. It takes me less than 10 minutes from start to finish to get an exacting mold. I then use baby wipes to clean them up.

Q: Why would anyone want this done to them?

A: Traditionally it was only nobility and royalty that could afford to have a casting made. They would do it to preserve their ancestry. The process became more accessible and modern techniques brought the casting time down from 45 minutes to 10 minutes. More and more people use it to document the growth of their family. As children grow it makes an excellent way to capture their youth and preserve it for their descendants to see. It offers you the chance to touch people in the future with who you are now, continuing the Royal concept of "Ancestral Masking".

Q: What else do you cast?

A: Anything. My favorite piece is the double body casting. Two people snuggle into each other's arms. This casting takes about 17 to 25 minutes to create, but makes a work of art that's timeless in it's beauty.

Q: What is a person going to pay to have this done to them?

A: My prices start at 35 dollars for the casting of the face. Wall masks in clay start at 125 dollars. The double body casting is \$2,250 total. The average price for a nice wall mask is about \$175.