

# Noriko Kuresumi



## P O R T F O L I O



No. 53 (above) and No. 41 (previous page) from the *Sea of Memory* series of ceramic sculptures by Noriko Kuresumi

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All artwork by Noriko Kuresumi  
Photos by Shin Ono

**Noriko Kuresumi is a Japanese artist based in New York City who creates ceramic sculptures with exquisite, sensual forms inspired by the harmony and balance of the ocean. *X-Ray Mag* interviewed the artist to learn more about her artwork, creative process and perspectives on art and nature.**

*X-RAY MAG: Tell us about yourself, your background and how you became an artist. From whom or what do you gain inspiration for your art and artistic process?*

NK: My background is in painting, but I never studied at an art school. I taught myself both two-dimensional (painting) and three-dimensional (sculpture) art forms. I rely on my own hard work to learn and improve my artwork. I am convinced that I have a "work dependence syndrome" and create my work incessantly, as if I am going mad.

To improve the quality of my artwork, I submitted my work to numerous art competitions. By exposing

my work to the public, I learned a lot and grew in skill. Every time I won a prize, I felt I was getting a little closer to the art scene.

When I was a teenager, I read a book by G.I. Gurdjieff. After reading it, I began to be conscious of my own thinking. The encounter with this book shook me and woke me up from my slumber. Being awoken by this book was very important in inspiring me to become, and continue to be, an artist.

I live in a big city, so I cherish the times I am able to be in the midst of nature. Sometimes I surround myself with nature to relax, and I treasure the times when I feel I am one with nature. After my daily meditation

Close-up detail of *Sea of Memory* No. 23 ceramic sculpture by Noriko Kuresumi



No. 30 (top left), No. 50 (above), No. 54 (left), and close-up detail of No. 4 (right) from the *Sea of Memory* series of ceramic sculptures by Noriko Kuresumi

every morning, I have a positive inner conversation with myself. This might be making me receptive for inspiration, but I really don't know for sure where my inspirations come from.

I would like to think my inspirations come from the Moon. While I am creating my work, I am engulfed by inspiration.

*X-RAY MAG:* Why sea forms in porcelain? How did you come to these themes and how did you develop your style of sculpture?

NK: I was drawn to porcelain clay because of its feminine elegance and



# portfolio

No. 51 (below), No. 49 (right), No. 47 (lower right), and No. 20 (bottom left) from the *Sea of Memory* series of ceramic sculptures by Noriko Kuresumi

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expressive qualities. My sculptures are carefully hand built, reflecting my passion for organic line and contrasting textures. The possibilities of the porcelain clay body continue to inspire me every day.

I have been interested in the influence of the Moon over Earth. I have not learned to scuba dive, but I love to watch the ocean—just being there and absorbing feelings from it.

I want to create work that can reflect my feelings towards the ocean, not just the ocean itself. What I feel about the ocean is that the sea is the origin of life. All lives are connected and support



each other. The way I create my work is by imagining the source of harmony and balance in the ocean.

*X-RAY MAG:* What is your artistic method or creative process?

It might be hard to believe, but I am all thumbs. Yet, my clumsiness became my weapon in striving for perfection. Without having an adventurous or experimental spirit, I learn a lot by failures. Failures bring eventual success!

NK: My creative method is hand building. It involves making organic lines and shapes.

It is not possible for me to draw my finished work in a sketchbook before I start working. It is because I create my work in an ongoing improvisation, like a jazz musician improvising while he is playing his music. My creation is totally guided by the senses and by my feelings; therefore, I am continually communicating viscerally, instinctively and intuitively with inspirations.

The Japanese character for the word "sea" has the character for "mother" in it. The elements in seawater and in amniotic fluid are similar. The Ocean is the mother of the Earth.

In my creative process for my series of sculptures with the theme, "Sea of Memory," I imagine being assimilating into saltwater, floating and resound-





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Close-up details of No. 32 (far left), No. 26 (left), No. 48 (below) and No. 32 (bottom left) from the *Sea of Memory* series of ceramic sculptures by Noriko Kuresumi

living creatures are connected and exist in harmony on Earth. If we lose one of these segments on Earth, the entire balance and harmony would crumble.

*X-RAY MAG:* What is the message or experience you want viewers of your artwork to have or understand?

ing with the rhythm of the tides coming and going. The spring tide caused by the moon's gravitational pull is the source of life. I create, guided by images of the organic forms under the sea.

*X-RAY MAG:* What are your thoughts on ocean conservation and coral reef management, and how does your artwork relate to these issues?

NK: It is very good to know that Starbucks and McDonald's have decided to stop using plastic straws. It is a small step to stop plastic garbage polluting the oceans, but it is a great start.

And we, as individuals, have to be conscious and take responsibility not to pollute the Earth such as by choosing non-polluting detergents, removing garbage from places where we enjoy nature, and sorting out garbage accordingly.

The Earth is living—the forests, rivers, lakes and oceans. Natural environments and all





Detail of *Sea of Memory No. 33* ceramic sculpture by Noriko Kuresumi

NK: It only happens when audiences experience some feeling inside of them while viewing my work.

If my art works are able to knock on the door and open some sensibility in my audiences, I would be very happy.

*X-RAY MAG: What are the challenges and/or benefits of being an artist in the world today?*

NK: For me, art is a quest for the source of life. Who am I? Where do I come from? How do humans become human? My quest is expressed by a combination of words, beauty, balance and harmony.

Every time I discover, seeing differently from what I did previously during my quest, I find a new, elevated

passion to develop myself further. The quest is my source of spring and fire in my life. My endless quest is my advantage—to reach my ultimate goal of beauty, balance and harmony in my work.

*X-RAY MAG: How do viewers, adults and kids respond to your works? What feedback or insights have you gained from the process of showing your work to various audiences?*

NK: Many children try to touch my work with their index fingers. I realized that when I was young, my index finger expressed my curiosity as well. I always learn from little audiences. They point out things that adults do not notice.

*X-RAY MAG: What are your upcoming projects, art courses or events?*

NK: I have had solo shows several times for my paintings; and my sculptures have been exhibited numerous times, all over the country, but never in a solo show. I hope to have a solo show for my sculptures in the near future—although, at this time, there is no definite plan for one yet.

*X-RAY MAG: Is there anything else you would like to tell our readers about yourself and your artwork?*

NK: Thank you for reading my interview to the end. If you want to know more about me and my artwork, please go to my website: [NorikoKuresumi.com](http://NorikoKuresumi.com). ■



*Sea Creature No. 1* ceramic sculpture by Noriko Kuresumi