

Shayne Greco



P O R T F O L I O

PREVIOUS PAGE: *Ceramic Double Lobster Platter*, by Shayne Greco. Hand-built Mediterranean glazed pottery, 22 x 15 x 7 inches

Large Ceramic Octopus Bowl, by Shayne Greco. Hand-built Mediterranean glazed pottery, 11 x 13 x 7 inches

Shayne Greco



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All artwork and photos by Shayne Greco

American artist and sculptor, Shayne Greco, creates mesmerizing sculptures of marine life forms adorning functional stone pottery built totally by hand from start to finish. X-RAY MAG interviewed the artist based in North Carolina to find out more about his creative process and inspiration from the sea.

X-RAY MAG: Tell us about yourself, your background and how you became an artist.

SG: I have always been inclined towards the arts since I was small. We had a GREAT arts program in high school, after which I attended Savannah College of Art and Design for a degree in painting. I really fell back into ceramics by chance when I needed a dinner platter for myself and couldn't really afford the one I wanted. I decided I would make one and it turned out to be a hit!



X-RAY MAG: Why marine life? How did you come to this theme in your work and how did you develop your style of sculpture?

SG: I live near the ocean. I have always been fascinated by aquatic creatures. It's like there is a whole new alien world right under the surface. The octopus was my first design. I then branched out to other designs with crabs, lobsters, seahorses, etc.

X-RAY MAG: What is your artistic method or creative process? Briefly, please describe in step-by-step terms for the layman, how you create your artworks.

SG: I always start a new design with a few sketches. It must make sense in my head before I can create it in three dimensions. Drawing it on paper always helps me work out the kinks and lets me visualize the elements coming together as a work of art.

Ceramic Seahorse Vase, by Shayne Greco Hand-built Mediterranean glazed pottery, 9 x 17 x 19 inches



The artist at work with assistant in studio

There are basically two components to my designs: the "vessel" and the creature(s). The vessel is made first using the coil technique. Then the creature (made by hand in many different pieces) is attached piece by piece onto the vessel.

X-RAY MAG: It is very special that you use the coil technique in creating your vases. Can you explain this process to our readers and why you use this technique?

SG: The coil technique has been around since pottery began. It is done with long ropes or coils of clay continuously going around and building atop each other to form whatever shape is desired. I



Giant Ceramic Octopus Vase, by Shayne Greco. Hand-built Mediterranean glazed pottery, 19 x 21 x 21 inches; *Ceramic Crab Platter*, by Shayne Greco. Hand-built Mediterranean glazed pottery, 16 x 16 x 4 inches (left)



Nautical Ceramic Octopus Candelabra, by Shayne Greco. Hand-built Mediterranean glazed pottery sculpture, 17 x 17 x 7 inches

Nautical Ceramic Sea Turtle Dinner Plate, by Shayne Greco. Hand-built Mediterranean pottery, 11-inch diameter



spend all my free time diving. I have even been asked if I am a marine biologist. In fact, the first time I have ever snorkeled in clear water was last October in the Florida Keys. It was great to finally get out and swim with some of the creatures I study on a daily basis.

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

SG: When I first began my ceramic line in 2012, I was largely ignorant to much of what we are doing to our oceans. Besides the occasional oil spill on the news, I had no idea of the damage we are causing, spe-

cifically with trash being dumped in the water. I was appalled to discover there are floating masses of trash, the size of small islands, killing off marine species. Focusing on marine life in my pottery has enlightened me to some of the irreversible damage we have done and are still doing. Plastics in particular are a serious problem for our entire ecosystem.

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

SG: My goal is very simple, that is to create beautiful, elegant works of art. If a piece of mine attracts your

love this technique. I am a sculptor at heart. When I am coiling a vessel I feel as though I am able to gain complete control over the shape of the vessel by layering the clay coil by coil.

X-RAY MAG: Do you use photography in the creation of your sculptures?

SG: I do use photography, just not my own. Whenever I am sculpting something new I study the animal by watching videos, looking at still photos and observing the creature in real life.

I can usually find images I need by searching the Internet.

X-RAY MAG: What is your relationship to the underwater world and marine life? Are you a scuba diver or snorkeler and how has this influenced your art? In your relationship with the sea, where have you had your favorite experiences?

SG: Many people have asked this question. It would be natural to assume I'm an avid scuba diver and



Dining table spread using a variety of dish service designs by Shayne Greco

eyes and allows them to move seamlessly over the shape of the vessel and its different elements, then I have succeeded.

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

SG: Challenges—a steady and reliable income is one of the biggest hurdles to any artist. At one point in my young career, I wasn't very far away from the term "starving artist". I am so thankful now to be in a position where I don't have to worry about where my next meal is coming from.

Benefits—being self-employed, writing my own schedule, and doing what I love to do on a daily basis are the perks of being an artist. I literally have the Dream Job!

Large Handmade Ceramic Sea Turtle Vessel Sink, by Shayne Greco Hand-built Mediterranean glazed pottery, 15-inch diameter



Large Handmade Ceramic Splash Vessel Sink, by Shayne Greco. Hand-built Mediterranean glazed pottery, 15-inch diameter

only one incident where someone emailed me in a negative connotation. The email was written in outrage regarding my pricing. They wrote asking how I could charge such ridiculous prices for pottery! And how could it be so expensive!? There were a couple curse words in there as well.

I responded by telling them they were absolutely right. I mean, it is only mud after all.

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

SG: We always have new designs coming out. This season, I think we will be debuting a piece or two featuring moray eels. I am really excited about these! For events, we attend

wholesale trade shows in Atlanta and New York twice a year.

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

SG: Yes, I would not be here if it wasn't for my studio assistants! Janell is my glaze technician and Carolynn and Lindsay work with me in clay creation. They all help me keep up with demand. I literally could not do it without them! ■

For more information and to buy ceramics, visit the Shayne Greco Ceramics website at: ShayneGreco.com. "Like" the artist on Facebook to see what's new and exiting!



Large Handmade Ceramic Octopus Vessel Sink, by Shayne Greco. Hand-built Mediterranean glazed pottery, 15 x 18 x 9 inches (left)

X-RAY MAG: How do people/children respond to your works? What feedback or insights have you gained from the process of showing your work to various audiences?

SG: I am constantly overwhelmed by the positive feedback. I am always humbled when I received random praise from people I don't even know.

Negative feedback is very rare; I can think of

