

# Where Tech Meets Art: Harry's Way

## Unique Skills and Fearless Persistence Define Harry Forsdick's Approach

By Devin Shaw

"I'm not an artist, but I've always loved art," Harry Forsdick tells me while discussing his upcoming exhibition that will be on display in November and December, on the second floor of the Community Center, as a part of the Art@ Cary Library and the Lexington Community Center program.

Harry's childhood inspired and facilitated his love of art, "I grew up outside of New York City, and my parents used to take us into the city all the time to go to the museums and the galleries." Harry continued, "so I grew up looking at the best art in the world at the great museums in New York City. I've always had an interest in art and design."

Art took a backseat to his career, Harry told me, "I was a computer scientist—I worked on the development of the internet. I started that in 1973 when I was coming out of MIT. I then did a bunch of things in the dot com era. Finally, I retired and started doing things around Lexington. I've been retired for about 15 years now."

Once retired, Harry began pursuing some of his latent interests. "I took a few art courses—watercolor painting and drawing—at the library," Harry continued, "I'm a fidgety person, and I've always doodled in any situation where I've had a pen and a piece of paper in front of me. Gradually, I began to draw things that were a little bit more realistic. I discovered that I was not a really good renderer of scenes—looking with my eye and getting the prospective right was really hard for me."

This is where Harry's two passions began to work in unison.

Introduce the iPad Pro, and the app Procreate. Procreate is an app built sketching, painting, and illustrating. Harry tells me, "To speak with candor, some of my art teachers haven't exactly approved of my use of technology to augment my skills, but I'm really good with computers, and I don't really believe in ignoring what artists have done throughout history—though I have immense respect for people that can draw or paint freehand, I'm not so great at that. So, I decided that I don't want to squelch my interest in this, rather, I would try and use computers in the best way

I can while also trying to paint things that are pleasing to me."

There is a modern argument around what constitutes authenticity in art as if real artists should only use brushes or pencils and strictly rely on the unaided eye. Throughout history, famed artists have strayed from the traditionalist view of art—the use of screen printing by Warhol or Rockwell using an opaque projector. Some have even speculated that Johannes Vermeer potentially used a camera obscura to achieve his realism.

After two years of learning the iPad and its tools, Harry began bringing it on trips; he told me, "The first place I took the iPad was Cuba." He continued, "The iPad makes traveling much easier—you have the entire artists kit with you in a portfolio."

Colorful images of tropical locales populate Harry's portfolio, he says, "I have a really nice time sitting outside on the porch, relaxing, with my iPad sketching things... I do a lot when I'm on vacation because it allows me to disengage from the day-to-day activities of being home and concentrate on something else—my art."

The paintings Harry has made have been printed on canvass for display purposes, and while it hangs conventionally, it was built through his unique combination of skills—traditional lessons in fine art and his technical acuity.

Harry tells me, "Art is certainly something that taps into the talents that I developed over a 40-year career. When you're looking at the final picture you don't realize all the details that the artist has gone through—thinking about and correcting—that is also pretty similar to programming, where you refine your solution over time. Programming requires skills in visualization—even if you can't see something you can imagine it in your mind, and that is certainly important in art."

Regardless of how his art is viewed, Harry tells me, "I will do whatever I need to do to make the image convey what I want it to visually."



The #62 Bus alternates with the #76 Bus traveling from Lexington Center into Alewife Station.



Palacio de Bellas Artes CDMX. Performance center. Diego Rivera repainted mural "Man at the Crossroads" that had been destroyed by John D Rockefeller because it depicted Lenin.



Classic car in Cuba. The Cuban car restorers don't hesitate to make the cars more colorful than they were originally.