

A Risky Change: Spotlight on Mark Yale Harris

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Mark Yale Harris, "Crush," cast glass, 11 x 14.5 x 3.5 in.

Now turning 80, artist Mark Yale Harris can look back at the gamble he took at age 59 — when he traded the security of an extremely successful business for the risky career of an artist — and happily declare it paid off.

Mark Yale Harris in his studio, Carbondale, Colorado. Photo credit: Ashton Ray Hansen

Mark Yale Harris, co-founder of Red Roof Inns and founder of AmeriSuites Hotels, made a difficult career decision in mid-life. Though a talented child artist, he followed his parents' exhortations to seek a reliable business degree. He put himself through Ohio State University and then began 30+ years in the hotel business. In the mid-nineties, Harris grappled with continuing his career path or upending his life to go after his true calling.

He chose his new *métier* as an artist. He did have to adjust to being a "nobody" in the art world. However, as a self-made man who had begun with nothing, he knew this dramatic pivot required starting at the bottom. Respectful of this new role, he knew his craftsmanship had to be worthy to earn respect as an artist. While his business acumen was not a transferable skill, his work ethic of discipline and perseverance was.

Mark Yale Harris, "Sweetness," bronze, 28 x 8 x 8 in.

[Related > Read the feature article "Embrace These Qualities to Be Successful in Art" by Mark Yale Harris at [ArtistsOnArt.com](https://www.artistsonart.com).]

He moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, to be mentored by Aleut sculptor Bill Prokopiof, as well as studying with Nez Perce sculptor Doug Hyde (both protégés of the renowned Apache sculptor Allan Houser). With consummate dedication, he learned to sculpt, and over the years honed his technical skills as well as his artistic vision. His evolving body of work in alabaster, marble, limestone, and bronze evokes a duality — the aggressive hard side of life seen in angular lines and the soft side in curves.

Mark Yale Harris, "Whirlwind in the Thorntrees," bronze and fabricated steel, 42 x 10 x 10 in.

Over the past 20 years as an artist, his dream has come to fruition. He has been featured in 100+ solo museum and university exhibitions, including the Royal Academy of London; over 200 group exhibitions; over 120 feature press publications, including *Art & Antiques*; and his work is in numerous prestigious collections worldwide, including the Four Seasons Hotel, Hilton Hotels, the State of New Mexico, and the City of Brooklyn, New York. This second act, returning full circle to a childhood interest, has been as richly rewarding as the first.

Mark Yale Harris, "Half Eaten Apple," bronze, 72 x 24 x 30 in. without base

Mark Yale Harris, "Free Rider," bronze edition and original stone, 12 x 6 x 13 in.

Mark Yale Harris, "Cupcake," bronze, 21 x 13 x 11 in.

Related: [Embrace These Qualities to Be Successful in Art](#), by Mark Yale Harris

Solo exhibitions of contemporary sculptures by Mark Yale Harris:

[Ventana Fine Art](#): Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 28 – October 11 , 2018

[ArtsThrive](#): Art Exhibition & Benefit, Albuquerque Museum, New Mexico, October 21 – December 2, 2018

For additional information, please visit markyaleharris.com.

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