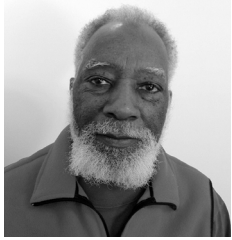


Finding the Authentic Self



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I grew up in a residential neighborhood where I observed all manner of things created from a wide variety of materials. The Atlantic Ice plant made a big impression on me. Two of my uncles worked there as truck drivers delivering ice to businesses. Other businesses provided up-close observation: casket making, saw mill processing wood, concrete block making. The train yard and station were a constant presence. Watching people working charged my battery. It made a huge impression on me. I loved it.

In school I was excellent in art. My Aunt Naomi taught me how to skillfully cut bamboo into sections to make a pop gun. Wood from the casket company was just the right dimension to make kites. Bow and arrows were made from tree limbs and from sticks growing from strong weeds. It was fun and satisfying to turn raw material into a finished product that was beautiful. I watched my Aunt Naomi paint and draw for hours on end. In the same way I was observant of my Grandmother Lydia making quilts on her stretchers and clothing on her Singer foot treadle sewing machine.

I learned the value of creativity by watching people work and focus their attention and energy both individually and as a group. The quality of their being changed as they centered the spirit of themselves and became one with their work.

Observing the human face since early childhood has made me aware of the powerful energy of one's being. What I try to capture in my work is the transcendent nature of full concentration and focus. Ordinary work can project a person into a meditative state and transform them into the work itself. It is a beautiful thing to behold.

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I had some very good teachers: members of my family, people in my neighborhood and great teachers in school throughout my training. All those teachers inspired me to become a teacher.

The process of creativity is a most profound and satisfying activity for the artist, for me. Many times, the most successful outcome reflects communality, a belonging, a sense of the universe.