

My Voice, My Art

by Winsom

Cette artiste, dont l'oeuvre apparaît sur la page couverture, célèbre son identité en tant que femme de couleur et discute de son art en tant qu'expression de son existence.

For women as a group, and women of colour in particular, it is extremely important for us to recover our lost voices. The voices of our grandmothers, mothers, and daughters, must be heard, seen, and acknowledged.

As a visual artist, I try to create an environment where I, as a woman, can freely start to talk about who I am and

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I have been asked to speak by many groups in the past but until recently have turned down the invitations because I had been told I did not pronounce words properly and therefore did not feel that I had the right voice. But today I am celebrating my voice. The voice of an Aboriginal woman in exile. The voice of a visible majority. The voice of a woman of colour. The poetic lilt of mine and my people's voice, rising and falling. Its unexpected pauses and emphases. A voice very unlike the voices you usually hear, the voices of politicians, media personalities, and scholars. Sometime ago in an article I read, it stated that each voice is both the expression of what is unique in the speaker and the evocation of what is shared with others. Sometimes I can tell a person's class background by his or her voice; I can often determine education, country of origin, even the region of that country. In each voice, many voices speak. When most of the voices you hear come from one class or one gender, we lose important reminders of our diversity and our complexity as a species. When I read the article, I had to agree with the writer Bronwen Wallace.

As I enter the 21st century it becomes increasingly important for me as an artist and a woman of colour to find my voice. To be in the forefront of dealing with issues that affect me. Issues of race, gender, and sexual orientation, etc.

As a medium, art has always been a way of expressing what I see, feel and experience, and using creative expression to project my ideas of how I see the world and myself in it. Visual art is one of the most powerful vehicles available to me, and is the only voice some groups have. It represents the essence of who we are and what we are about.

what I have experienced living in a world dominated by men.

Rape, incest, and violence are all issues that I must allow to come to the canvas. Freeing myself was one thing, claiming ownership of that free self was another. Then the experience of discovering myself—or parts of myself through my writing and visual art—gave me a sense of wonder and delight.

In my work, I deal a lot with spirituality, and the lack of it I see in our world. It is important that I talk about the issues that affect me, but it is equally important for me to celebrate the healing and good things that happen. Therefore many of my art pieces deal with celebration. A few years ago a reviewer said that my work was very good but unlike other Black artists, it was not political. When I met her months later I asked her why she had said my work was not political. Her reply was that it was too happy and not angry, it was more of a celebration. She was right, it was a celebration, but she was also very wrong; it was very political. I had gone to another level of consciousness; gone beyond the pain and hurt, reaching out to others, letting them know that I had moved an inch.

In my most recent work "Heads Above the Water Four Aspects" I looked at four central themes: faith, hope, joy and clarity. These represent feelings we've all experienced, but at times have forgotten. Through my art I am giving the world a chance to see, reflect, and change, if even for a short time.

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Winsom's art appears on the front and back cover of this issue.