

Art Autobiography

My earliest art memory brings me back to the age of five. A little friend of mine who lived in the apartment building next to mine invited me to join her at a free art class that was being held for our age group at the local school. This was summertime and we were to start kindergarden in the fall. I was so excited, hoping my mother would allow me to go. The fact that it was free was very important, as I grew up in an immigrant family, very poor. Needless to say, I loved it! I had never used paint or clay before that class. Unfortunately, my artistic abilities have not really progressed since then. I do recall having a Cinderella colouring book (the movie had just come out when I was a small child), and a huge box of crayons that I joyfully used to colour in the beautiful princess pictures. Other than that, my art experiences were limited to art classes at school, once a week and always looked forward to.

I do not have any artistic ability, but I love art. I do not have any musical ability, but I love music. I do not have any dance ability, but I love to dance. No one ever told me I could not. No one ever mocked or embarrassed me for trying.

It was not until I was in university studying occupational therapy that I truly began to appreciate the power of art. I am very fortunate in that part of my training was in projective techniques. How one draws, where the drawings are placed on the paper, what colours are used, what one draws, etc., all have significance. The analysis is very specific, based on the theory that if one is given a blank paper, one will project on to it one's inner thoughts, feelings, hopes, etc., with the goal of gaining insight and better understanding of the patient or client. I can attest that it is a technique that has significant merit. This course was very impactful to me. It helped me "feel" art. The first place I visit whenever I am in a new city

is one of its many art museums because of what I learned in that course.

The above experiences have helped shape my attitude towards art, very positive, almost with a childlike wonder of endless possibilities. Although I have no gifted skill, I believe I have been very successful in art in that I can recognize how personal art is. It has taught me to be more respectful and sensitive to the artist, no matter how young.

Perhaps my definition of art is that it is an expression of the soul. Very often, it comes from somewhere very deep, unbeknownst to the artist until he/she sees it. It is non verbal, yet speaks wonders.