

Artistic Expression For Community Healing

Related the thematic focus of--artistic expression for community healing, please respond to the following questions to represent your biographical background:

1. What is your concept of an art "community" for building creative alliances with individuals across different identities?

2. When did you begin your artistry as as a "life-calling" adventure?

3. What and/or who motivated and/or inspired you to begin your artistic journey for creative expression?

4. What are your thoughts about art as a creating form of inner-healing and human well-being?

(1) Until recently, I have not often thought about this question. Still, upon sustained reflection, I'm inclined to say that one of the most transformative ways to conceptualize an art "community" is to see it as an evolving constituency comprised of oppressed persons intentional about (i) understanding inequitable experiences and relations of power; (ii) building relationships with others similarly positioned/located; (iii) to create and share artistic forms of expression to critique injustice, heal minds and spirits, and nurture just and loving communities.

(2) I think I began (slowly) to think of writing as a possible 'life-calling adventure' during the 1960s Black Student, Black Power, and Black Arts Movements.

(3) I think it was my brief association with Henry Dumas that motivated me most to continue writing.

(4) When I feel most empowered to write—whether poetry, short essays, or short stories—I typically feel like The SPIRIT is ordering my steps and guiding my words.