Journey of Self Love: Autoethnographic Art

Description

The Auto Ethnographer

JOURNEY OF SELF LOVE

My oil on canvas series, â??Journey of Self Love,â?• reflects obstacles Iâ??ve personally had to endure throughout my life as a woman. They are in response to the ongoing pressures â??Iâ??ve experienced in a male-dominated industry and society and the control they have over â??our bodies. Men are not â??â??subjected to or held to theâ?? same standardsâ?? as womenâ??.â?? â??For centuries, men have set the rules and standards for usâ?? and stripped us of our human rightsâ??. My paintings display the idea of unity, the importance of uplifting â??and fighting for â??each otherâ??, â??â??and my journey of self-love. They are also a symbolic representation of my personal ongoing struggles to fight against what society believes I should look like, what my purpose is, what I can or canâ??t do with my body, and who I should be. â??

For many years, women and even little girls have been conditioned and influenced by the media to learn what it means to be a woman, and societyâ??s idea of what true beauty is. There is so much more to us as women other than our looks, and we bring a lot to the table. This is a world where women [and] girls are constantly reminded that they donâ??t belong to themselves â?? that their bodies are not their own nor their power or right to embrace and empower themselves. It is a womanâ??s choice in what she wants to do with her body without being ridiculed.

MEASURE OF SELF LOVE

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â??Measure of Self Loveâ?•

My painting â??Measure of Self Loveâ?• is in response to the ongoing pressures women feel in a male dominated industry and society. Iâ??ve also incorporated purple and green measuring tape, which wraps around the womanâ??s body. The measuring tape represents the struggles with body image, the color purple is associated with royalty, power, independence, and pride. Green is symbolic of rebirth and balance, while pink symbolizes inner peace, femininity, and unconditional love.

I was conditioned by society at an early age, to accept the â??traditionalâ?• standards of beauty (ex: weight, skin, hair). This was a constant struggle in my community, while also battling to embrace and love myself unconditionally. I often compared myself to other women who â??wereâ?? believed to be more favorable. I also remember using cosmetic products such as bleaching cream at the age of 13, in an attempt to make myself lighter as a woman of color. I skipped breakfast and lunch on most days in an attempt to be thinner. I was also â??bullied by children in school because of my skin tone and weight.

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At some point, this becomes traumatizing, creates division, and is also belittling. Women are strong, smart, resilient, and valuable. This painting is a symbolic representation of a womanâ??s ongoing struggle to fight against what society believes is â??a womanâ??s dutyâ?• and the â??traditionalâ?• societal standards of beauty (ex: weight, skin, hair), while also learning to embrace and love herself. This is a serious problem, and it is important for every woman or anyone who identifies to feel beautiful and know that she is valuable and worth it.

STAND TOGETHER, FIGHT TOGETHER

self love
self love

â??Stand Together, Fight Togetherâ?•

Due to set standards and expectations, I often experienced division, invisibility and what being an outcast felt like.â??â?? I also â??battled depression and â??had â??doubts about my self-worth. This was an example of the traumatization it causedâ??, I carried it beyond my childhoodâ??. â??â??At the end of it all, this was to please and attract men, working to seek their approval and acceptance. I was striving to earn love from everyone around me, but the one person who truly matteredâ?¦ myself. It was difficult to accept myself in a society that seemed to be against me.

Throughout my â??elementary, â??middle school, and high school years, this was a familiar feeling, and the media was also a huge influenceâ?? as it still is todayâ??. It took a long time to begin to realize my worth and learn to accept myself. As I grew older, I finally began to realize that there is so much more to me under the surface. My physical appearance doesnâ??t dictate who I am as a person or a woman, nor does it determine my value. â??I am more than my body, and â??I am just as valuable as

any other human being.

FREEDOM

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â??Journey of Self Loveâ?•

I am a versatile artist who creates energy through light and vibrant colors. I aim to capture the beauty of nature, blending boundaries between reality and abstraction. This creates a unique dreamscape atmosphere, providing viewers with a multilayered and immersive visual experience. Living near the Chesapeake Bay, my work is inspired by nature; often depicting the absence of human presence, liberation (â??set freeâ?•) and freedom (â??being freeâ?•). Although my range of work utilizes a variety of different techniques and mediums, they are all inspired by the same subject: freedom.

While nature does inspire me, I also create work to uplift, bring change, unity, hope and to make a statement. I not only depict freedom in my landscape and abstract paintings, but I also associate freedom and liberation in terms of human rights. The social, political and economic issues that are also

present in some of my work, are driven by personal experiences and the need to generally bring forth to the surface the topics and rights worth fighting for.

Visit me online at https://www.bnwart.com/.

Featured image by Britnie Walston I The AutoEthnographer

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