

THE WAY

Speech for Laura Facey Opening of Laboratory of the Ticking Heart Ormsby Hall, Kingston Jamaica

Hello Kingston – How we doing today?!? It's SO good to be back!
Kingston – always a homecoming for me but what an honor to return in this
capacity – Thank You Laura from the bottom of my 'Art!

Was recently reminded of the first time we met – Laura had heard of my
existence downtown and arrived at my Church St loft nervous and dare I say more
than a little paranoid and now here she is – taking Town by storm!

What greater compliment can one artist pay another, in this case the
re-contextualisation of space and make it so firmly their own?

Town and what a storied town it is – mi see Sand in the Room – a true griot of
downtown and founder of ROKTOWA, Bug Hart, Blessed mi see you, the carvers
and carpenters of Laura's atelier mi see you - the room is bristling - just bursting
with talent.

Oh the Lyrics that have been bust here – the words that have coalesced from
these pavements- let's us share just a few:

Dignity, Self Worth, Humanity – This is Why We Fight!
The one and only Marcus Mosiah Garvey
Dignity, Self Worth, Humanity and to this I would add
Beauty, Art & Culture – This is Why We Fight!

Then:

Roger Mais "Love is Everything – it is what created the World- it is what made you
and me Child....& brought us into the world..."

Claude McKay: "Nations, like Plants and Animals Grow and if their Development is
thwarted they are dwarfed and overshadowed..."

Simon Bolivar – the great South American liberator who did some of his best work just a few blocks west from here:

“Nations will March towards the Apex of their greatness at the same pace as their Education. Nations will Soar if their Education Soars they will Regress if it regresses. Nations will fall and sink in Darkness if education is corrupted or completely abandoned...”

& more recently:

Kei Miller: “....the longest song begins like a comma...”

With poetic metaphor like that – who needs wings to Fly?

And here we are together, in the longest song of all – called Life. Surrounded by Beauty, Creative Power, Artistic Achievement, Imagination and Intuition- a True Downtown School of Art, with Power like this – Who needs Wings to Fly??

The Artist’s Story has no beginning and no end. Like a child leaving home sometimes wavering with the breeze, the journey commences and it is here we find the tendrils of Laura’s Heart – wandering through Space and Time – leading us to these eloquent Meanderings that take us into the very Fibre of Wood and its Rings.

Her Heart’s explorations result in a Fantastic Voyage* – where we simultaneously Shrink into the very fibre of the Wood then expand to Stand Beyond ourselves momentarily suspended by Splendour:

To Aspire

To Rise

To Exalt

In the trembling Beauty of our cellular World!

The Thing that unites us all.

The restless and the curious can break boundaries and here we see in each Artwork a lifetime encapsulated:

A lifetime of Movement, a lifetime of Experience, and a lifetime of Spirit – for what is Spirit but the feeling of Awe and Wonder?? And Spirit is the Sparks that fly from the fingers of those that channel Spirituality – who rearrange the Universe to Promote Compassion, Empathy & Deepening Connection to Others!!

Laura, I've said the "S" word – something you know that when it comes to Art I'm usually averse to - as it reduces the work to the amorphous – a type of lowest common denominator, as it means so many different things to different people But if we unpack the word Spirit it means "the Animating Vital Principle in Life" from the Old French esprit which in turn comes from the Latin "Spiritus" Courage, Vigour and Breath – related to Spirare – to Breathe – that which we all Depend on but take so often for granted:

Let us Breathe together & Feel Each Others Hearts beating....!
As this work exhorts us to do.

When you create a sculpture you create the life the sculpture will inspire - always conscious of shape and shaping the desire to improve the life of those that are equally invested in the work. Thus the work becomes a gateway for the Psyche of those who purchase it – improving their lives through form and substance. It's another type of Knowledge that ensures the money invested will give them a beautiful everyday Life – Good Art leads to a Good Life. Good Art brings people together it is sensual and sybaritic, we create Art for those that can't- this gives the Art Patron the ultimate gift the chance to create their own worlds around the Art.

There's so much value in unformulated expression, that you cannot think your way to – Evolution is dependent on understanding something different. We can change the way we think about an idea, Laura has proved that by the way she now moves downtown. Town is not a place to take from, to extract from but to invest in – in the most fundamental way. Yes, we can change the way we think about an idea.

It's a vital part of the Patron's development to understand the Artist's creation (I will leave it to the academic exegetes to attack the work with a verbal sledgehammer) for here we can begin the current journey from the literal to the sublime – from:

Walking Tree which is a massively impressive zinc walking tree that carries it's secrets and us with it, to the Gently creeping conceptuality of "Guide Their Way Home":

A bruised, yet Lucid vessel that holds the Pain we all experience, the Pain of a Nation and despite which, wills us to a safe Port (Home) called the Port of Transcendence where the seekers of The Way Dwell.

And on to the Staggeringly monumental Beauty of the Three Graces:

Mumzel, Petagaye, Finey come forward- bredren, I introduce you to Three young ladies that during their short lives have endured more than their fair share of Pain but in their Grace have dispelled despair – as this work exhorts us to do – and they Stand as the living embodiment of Tenacity, Fortitude and Resilience.

What we Feel

What we Sense

What we Think

as children becomes our Childhood fantasies which in turn become our adult realities - our greatness is exhibited in the Joy of Life – Thank you Angels for all that you are!

Onwards from this Soaring Beauty and its equally scintillating companions in the back room, Hearts of the World - to the truly liberated and majestic apotheosis of five years work - called - Indwell:

Lucid, eloquent and elegant – both male and female, sequestered here in these niches from which I'd like to liberate them, they absorb and expel – they are reminiscent of the vital animating force within us all – they Breathe Life.

They reflect the recent discoveries in marine biology, the life from whence we all came and upon which we depend for the air we breathe – how can something so hard be so soft?? It is a truly sublime Suite of Work that connects us all on a cellular level that allows us to Dive into the Reef of the Mind and move towards love of wisdom and new Ways of being.

Lastly, the free floating suite of drawings which you'll find beyond the interior here were done in a blaze of glory in the last weeks as the artist soared and flew on the power that is this body of work.

In Lakota: Mitakuye Oyasin
In Algonquin: Nogomaq
In Anishanaabe: Gakina Awiiya
In Cherokee: Ea Nigada Qusdi Idadaduha

Meaning, in four languages, "we are all related and respect everything in life"

Like the anthropologists that followed them - Native American cultures espouse the principal of the 7 Generations- the understanding that every decision we make is immediately connected to the 7 Generations before us and the 7 Generations to come.

As we stand amidst this shimmering work we rise together, connected (mindful of the generations to come) and are exhorted to begin a new future, to transition away from the destruction of Petro-Masculinity – that grew and spread with the age of imperial expansionism commencing in 1492 and beginning its long descent after 1945...

After 500 years, as painful as it might be, The time to transition - is Now – we have the Power in this room to steer away from the Dystopic Totalitarianism of modern day Kingston.

The Age of Imperial Decay, the Age of Ecclesiastical Decay can be replaced with Architectural Sculpture, Sculptural Architecture that becomes Spiritual Space for the Everyday, that has the power to improve lives - it is incumbent upon every downtown property owner to understand the Power that Laura has given us today – the Knowledge that we can Touch without being Touched- it is this that brings Power into the Urban landscape.

No more B grade hotels and shopping centers with their endless parking lots that annihilate the energy that lives downtown for the “Straight Line Crazy” of Robert Moses who destroyed much of New York City belongs to the last century or centuries gone. His crashing career became a Symbol of socio-political change with attitudes about race, power and class radically shifting. It fell to the writer Jane Jacobs to quell Moses’s destructive path and remind us that the success of a city is defined by the amount of interactions we experience as we go from A to B in our daily lives – 6 – is the minimum for a successful city.

As I venture out on foot, from Simone’s happening Guest House on East Queen St to Big Tree on Parade for Victuals and on to Arlene’s corner for Jelly, then back via Munchies for a Pit Stop at One Time’s hang spot before stopping at the chill lounge on Mark Lane to complete the circle - I’m surrounded by the Life and Energy that make Kingston so Great.

Perhaps Laura is Kingston’s Jane Jacobs around whose work we can all galvanize and return to the Glory Days of the likes of the Myrtle Bank Hotel – Transition to Solar Power and commence the New Era that awaits Us.

For no matter
How Scrappy we are
No matter
How Bad we Are
We are all in this together
We are walking each other home

We pick the flowers then we draw them
to send them to the end of the World to hold you Dear

Let us not forget
That the
Way to Love
Is to
Love the Way.

My Respect

Melinda Brown

1st May 2022

With Thanks to:

- Dorte Mandrup
- The Taino on whose lands we dwell
- The Indigenous cultures referenced

*Fantastic Voyage was a 1966 sci-fi feature film where the protagonist is under threat, in order to save him, a submarine is shrunken to microscopic size and injected into his bloodstream with a small crew.