Bobbie Rae Jones - Artist Statement

Interdisciplinary MA in Art Education Pre K – Older Adult

Thesis Exhibition

May 15, 2018

NURTURING STRENGTH:

Women's Stories in Portrait

These paintings are the result of a long period of contemplation to discover a solution for how to live in an environment that is seemingly vindictive, competitive, and polarized. The solution gleaned is to notice similarities instead of differences. The dominant theme that is expressed in each painting (a different woman’s story is depicted in each piece), is one that can be experienced by anyone, regardless of race, class or gender. I have discovered that exploring the similarities of our humanity through my paintings, (rather than focusing on our differences), can create a bridge that unites diverse, and often divisive, populations.

Each painting in this series of acrylic paintings depicts narrative and symbolic imagery extracted from the core, or soul, of a woman who lives in my community. The intent is to illustrate the inner strength of a woman-- the golden thread of divine and nurturing force that is needed to endure difficult moments, including childbirth, isolation, transformation, loss, change of roles and

enlightenment. The subject matter of each painting was created from keywords taken from many deep and profound discussions between the artist and the woman in the painting. The interactive component of creating the subject matter of each piece is social engagement. As one of the women said, “we created the painting together.” Over a period of six months, I consulted with these women individually to inform the creation of her painting.

The paintings are painterly, Impressionistic and figural with some realism in fantastical environments. I created the paintings as an act of community building -- especially among this women’s circle. Artworld influences in the use of color, portraiture, and symbolism include the folk and surrealistic style of Frida Kahlo, Pre-Raphaelites, , as well as the mystical imagery of Alex Grey. The spiritual and indigenous inspiration is influenced by visionary artist, Susan Seddon Boulet. Some compositional and figural decisions grew from the work of Cecily Brown. The painterly style and processes of Susan Rothenberg influenced my process. And the metaphysical processes of Traditional Tibetan master artists and societal trauma healing artist Krystof Wodicko have been a core part of my research in creating these works of art.