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A Manifesto: Black Identity, Protest, and Art

Awendela Grantham

A Manifesto: Black Identity, Protest, and Art

Free and a Mystery.
Western artists endeavor . . . and fail to capture the meditations of the Black soul.
We remain elusive.
Our Art is not just art where the faces have been "colored in" brown; it is not simply crude verses typed in pidgin.
It arises out of the collective grief of a race, crying out for freedom.
Our true cry!
We are more than a 3/5 clause.
Powerful murals celebrate "Black Lives Matter."

Our Art enters this fight by asserting our right to community . . . and a future among humanity.
African American identity.
Fools try to sanitize history.
The Black community is not one-dimensionality.
We remain the obscure reflection and conversation about our times.

* * *

Give your passion to the whole community.
We share the responsibility to love our neighbors.
It is imperative that all participate in helping to find solutions for social justice.

The Watts Riot of 1965. . . Americans considered the worst race riot in history.
Violence cycles.
"*Why* are Black people complaining?" they asked.
2020, our parallel history . . . the same lack of understanding . . . and unwillingness to hear.
LET ME EMPHASIZE collective solutions instead of war, when we are overcome by heartbreak and moved to compassion.

We rise to greater love and authority in the passion born of struggle.
Caught in the jaws of the struggle,
Unbroken,
Unshakeable.
The undeniable, unbreakable love that we find in our Art amid the explosive colors of war.

Let our Art arise.

Awendela Grantham