

“Growing Up Black Growing Up Wanda” Wanda Ewing, 2022



Wanda Ewing. *I Have Big Lips*, 1997, Linocut (above)
Wanda Ewing. Detail from *Invisible*, 1997, Linocut (right)

Originally created in 1997 as a thesis project at the San Francisco Art Institute, *Growing Up Black Growing Up Wanda* is a book exploring race, beauty and identity. The linocut print images and text of the book document personal experiences and obstacles Ewing faced as a Black woman coming of age in midwestern Omaha, Nebraska.

Her work is a raw and sharp commentary on the formation of self in the face of oppression. Its stories are specific to Ewing but deeply universal. In her own words: “My work depicts my personal experiences. In doing so, I set the stage for possible dialogue with as many different people as I can about concerns we all share as a collective on a basic, human level.” *Growing Up Black Growing Up Wanda* is an outstanding achievement in the cultivation of this dialogue.

“...concerns we all share as a collective on a basic, human level”



Meet the Artist!

Born in 1970 and raised in Omaha and educated around the United States, both Wanda Ewing and her work traveled around the globe: she felt strongly about the fact that where one has been in the past—literally and figuratively—affects how one proceeds in the future. Ewing encouraged dialogue around questions of who is allowed to make, see, and be seen in visual culture, and whether the arts look like the communities we live in, challenging her audiences to believe in the transformative power of art to conjure images where people might be themselves wherever they can see themselves. Ewing passed away in 2013.

Stream of Consciousness Writing

Wanda Ewing's work is so resonant and striking, in part, because the text and imagery are so honest and raw. This exercise invites you to access your truth.

Writing Prompts

Identity
Body Image
Society
Injustice
Shame
Rage
Love
Beauty
Visible/Invisible
Inside/Outside
Mistakes
Learning
Reality
Fantasy
Destiny
Human



1. Stream of consciousness writing is a time-honored tradition used by creatives. Simply put, stream of consciousness writing is writing out your thoughts exactly as they come to you, quickly, messily, without regard for spelling, penmanship, structure, or any other conventions typical to other writing pursuits. This type of writing is a special tool used to unlock true feelings, creative connections, and honest thoughts. Stream of consciousness writing is a way to get in tune with oneself and free oneself up to higher creative vibrations.

2. Find a place to write that feels comfortable and with minimal distractions. Cultivate a space for comfort and delight; lighting candles, enjoying soft blankets, having a fine, warm beverage are all great enhancements to the experience.

3. Gather your writing materials. Plain, standard sized paper, pen or pencil work fine, but you might also want to experiment with typing in a word processor or speaking into a voice recorder. The mode of entry isn't as important as the method.

4. The method of stream of consciousness writing is as follows. Set a timer, 5 to 15 minutes works well. During that time write freely and continuously. Don't pause, don't edit, don't judge yourself. Let go of proper spelling, punctuation rules, and writing legibly. Just write. Only write. If you'd like, use one or more of the prompts listed, some of which are inspired by Wanda Ewing's work.

5. When you've completed your writing time, gently reflect on what you've uncovered. If you feel so moved, use aspects of your writing to inspire a visual artwork or share your thoughts in conversation with a trusted, loved one. Or simply sit in praise and gratitude of yourself, for taking the time to get in touch with yourself in this intimate and vulnerable way. It takes courage to write a stream of consciousness. Bask in your courage and be well.