

Ted Fullerton on Frederick Hagan

Ted Fullerton 0:00

Mentorship is an organic process that occurs naturally between two individuals, and there's an element of trust and real honesty that is part of that process.

Ted Fullerton 0:12

Fred and I met in 1974, it was my first year at the Ontario College of Art. It was an interesting situation because I had received my timetable, and normally within first year you have fundamental classes, and I had this one class called printmaking. I didn't know what printmaking was, and I certainly wasn't looking forward to it for whatever I perceived it to be. Anyways, Fred walked in with a portfolio of previous graduates' work that were done in printmaking, and I was astounded. I've always been interested in drawing, it's a key component of my work. What Fred was showing extended the idea of drawing for me and the breadth of imagery was just so exciting. Fred spoke about the work in a way that I had never heard anyone speak about work before.

Ted Fullerton 0:58

Our relationship, as it continued through the four years I was at the Ontario College of Art, Fred gave critical input not only in my work in printmaking, but also in drawing and painting. With that input, it was more than just a critique on the work and assessing the value of what I accomplished or didn't accomplish, he offered and instilled a belief within myself. To see an accomplished artist believe in you really instilled something, and that's where mentorship starts to happen. When I finished the college, we ended up going on canoe trips together, we've shared work in the studio together - a strong friendship was developing. So, the aspect of teacher-student was suddenly gone at that point and it was a pure relationship. In light of that ongoing interest in what I was doing, interest in who I was, I see Fred as a very strong mentor in facilitating me becoming engaged professionally within the visual arts.

Ted Fullerton 2:03

One of the things that interested me with regard to Fred's teaching is that he would always bring forward the aspect of 'acquired knowledge' and 'intuitive knowledge' within the creation of an image. 'Acquired knowledge' addresses the idea of a social historical reference, a contemporary reference of what is going on. 'Intuitive knowledge' had to do more with a psychological and physiological aspect of what is being expressed within the work. What was interesting about Fred is he was able to deconstruct that and contextualize that intuitive knowledge and make you aware of where it was coming from, how it was making itself apparent within the work, and really ensuring that you understood that intuition is a very valid and important aspect of what it is you're doing. Now, with regard to Fred, what was interesting about his approach is that the first thing he would do within a critique process is acknowledge the unique experience he was getting from the actual work that you had done. Then he would go in and acknowledge the strengths of what was happening within the work, not only within

Mentor and Me: The Stone Lithographs of Frederick Hagan and Ted Fullerton
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composition, not only with the technical aspect, but within the concept as well. So essentially, he was reinforcing and creating a sense of confidence with regard to what was being done correctly... because you learn more about what you don't know you did, than what you did wrong. At that point, my confidence, other students' confidence, in light of my experience teaching, have been built up to the point where then you can address the areas that needed to be addressed within the work. That as a teaching philosophy is something that I experienced and I had brought forward within my 35 years of teaching.

Ted Fullerton 3:57

The lessons that Fred taught were really quite interesting... he had a very unusual teaching method. I think, for me, the most memorable teaching had to do without a formal situation - I'll give you an example. Through high school and in my first year, I would be doing images that interested me, and I think because of a bit of ridicule in high school with regard to what I was doing, I tended to hide those images... but I was constantly doing them.

So, there I was working, sort of in a corner, drawing on a stone, and the image I was working on had a certain sentimentality to it, it had a kind of general audience appeal. And just off to the side, I had one of these other drawings that were the things that interested me the most. Fred came up behind me, I didn't know he was there, and he said to me, "if I gave a project that had to have a real general audience appeal, you would get an A on this." And then he pulled out the drawing that I had slightly hidden. He said, "if you had come to class with this, which seems to express more of what your voice is, the uniqueness of what you have to say, you would be getting an A++," and then he walked away.