

Statement of an Exhibiting Artist

As educated adults we generally presume that picture books are what we read to children at bedtime and artwork belongs in a gallery which deals with serious matters .

However, being a storyteller of picture books and foreign born, I'd like to broaden that assumption to include young people with old souls and older folks with young souls as attendees of this show.

That said, I shall begin with King Midas' tale, the story of a man who was obsessed with gold. He was promised that everything he touched would turn into this precious metal. His good fortune plunged him into tragedy when this promise of contact turned his own beloved daughter into a shining gold statue, and all his attendants could no longer serve him when he most needed them, because, in time, they too had turned into gold. In our era, we are given to believe that "time is money." The money that we love gives us luxuries and the ability to own things, to be insured safely in our huge mansions, warehouses, museums and libraries - unaware that ownership, in reality, has robbed us of our carefree freedom. Meanwhile, while we, unwittingly, turn all our endowed resources into money, too much of the rest of the world and society as we know it has hit bottom." Can we use money alone to mend our ailing ecosystem, to eliminate toxins from pollutants, heal our broken relationship between races, genders, nations, generations?

Hans Christian Anderson's emperor's nightingale was replaced by a A-I toy nightingale which sang perfectly also predictably .In the case of COVID-19 ,could it ,in fact ,be the wolf in my book "Lon Po Po" (Chinese Red Riding Hood) ? Or might we just be the very blind mice (6 blind men and the elephant) who held only a part of an elephant as being all of it; hanging on to partial truth, eschewing the whole truth. Are these stories not pointing to serious matters? Aside from my numerous pieces on exhibit, I have chosen 23 of my books, each containing themes of my concern over the six decades of storytelling since I set foot on this promised land that I've come to love so deeply over the past seventy years.

I asked myself what is the purpose of our show since most people who attend the library and this gallery are well-informed individuals who know full well the range and depth of the trouble we are facing. Probably many are advocates and activists dedicated to mending our broken system, in their own ways. What can a mere foreign-born citizen offer that could be of any use in this dilemma? Perhaps a slightly different perspective to reveal a possible blind spot in our all too familiar culture?

The following is the perspective of my own New Year's wish that it might point to a way by which I see a faint light in what seems to be a daunting Black Hole . Perhaps the answer lies not just with the ruling from the top ,but in the power of the grassroots with each of us taking a

hard look at what we have always assumed to be our solid foundation and asking if technology and information alone without the wisdom of a larger picture can really pull us out of all this? What if time is not money but Loving Kindness, that we have lost along the way? Perhaps bringing back the baby, "our mutual heart" that we had thrown out with the bath water when science and technology substituted their own myth, and when we abandoned our all-knowing God in our own arrogant self-celebration. Sometimes taking a step back may be the only effective way to going forward, so we might find sanity, hope and confidence in ourselves and our nation again. Just perhaps.

Ed Young

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