

Cultural Daily

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A Farewell to Bacon

John Brantingham · Thursday, December 10th, 2015

I got to know the artist Uncle Bacon a couple of years ago when I began my tenure at the dA Center for the Arts in Pomona's Arts Colony as the writer-in-residence. At the time, we were both starting, me in my position and Bacon as the artist-in-residence. He was a big and loud man, always interesting to talk to, with a ZZ Top beard and a laugh that carried through all three floors of the center. His station was on the second floor, and I usually worked in the basement.

Uncle Bacon was my introduction to the dA and to the Pomona Arts Colony in general. We both taught classes there. I'd be downstairs working quietly underground, and he'd be upstairs working and laughing with whoever popped their head in. He was the consummate teacher, and worked equally well with developmentally disabled children as he did with professional artists.

My introduction to him was through his work with block printing. He did big community projects, like having twenty kids come down to create a piece that unified the different parts of the Pomona Valley. He came to a street festival with a massive sheet of paper, linoleum, and a steam roller. He directed, advised and helped as everyone created their own pieces and then he drove the steamroller over the paper and blocks to press a community piece of art.

He would also be upstairs in his loft working on his own art, and you could sit with him and talk football, art, food, or anything else you felt like talking about. Kids became dreamily happy when you talked about Uncle Bacon, and they'd go running up to work with him while their parents would often go downstairs to work on writing.

He was and is what I think of as the personification of the Pomona Arts Colony. He's more invested in the doing than the product. He is vibrant and alive to the world. He's brash and funny, and I'm going to miss him. No place could contain such a soul for long, and he's moving on. I hope that those of us who remain in the Pomona Arts Colony can keep a bit of his spirit. It is vast.

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