Kerry James Marshall

Kerry James Marshall was born in 1955 in Birmingham, Alabama. As a child, his father used to buy old or broken watches, fix them and then resell them. From this Marshall gained an appreciation for the simplicity in which complex things could be deconstructed.

Marshall went on to study art Otis College of Art and Design in Pasadena, earning his BFA. While in school, Marshall worked to make sure his art never told a story or ever represented a specific image, though over the years his art started showed the struggle to keep the political relevance to the civil rights movement and contemporary African American experiences.

Working in collage, drawing, murals, and even comic books, much of Marshalls art deals with African American life and history, he is quoted talking about his art: “Black people occupy a space, even mundane spaces, in the most fascinating ways. Style is such an integral part of what black people do that just walking is not a simple thing. You've got to walk with style. You've got to talk with a certain rhythm; you've got to do things with some flair. And so in the paintings I try to enact that same tendency toward the theatrical that seems to be so integral a part of the black cultural body.”.

Works cited

Reid, Calvin. "Kerry James Marshall", BOMB Magazine Winter 1998. Retrieved June 6, 2012.