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In his essay "Eye and Mind" French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty wrote that the visible world has within itself "a lining of invisibility." This multi-faceted concept of interiority—a central tenant of Merleau-Ponty's aesthetic theory—allowed him to understand the world with a perspective that looked beyond the scientifically-based phenomenology he had embraced at the beginning of his career.

Since my first evening at Haystack, an analogous sense of interiority—the invisible within the visible—has permeated my feeling and thought while I was there. Within the joy of being in a beautiful place, in a splendidly designed architectural complex that displays an ethical commitment to its natural surroundings, in a community that is filled with great intelligence and much laughter, a rich hidden energy informs experience. Situated in a peaceful spruce and fir forest, above the sweep of the sea, a deep regard for visual form (with a corresponding regard for the form of an individual maker's inner life), an understanding of and commitment to correct materials (with an implied commitment to our physical life, our actual lived life) and a sense of tangible joy (which is a prerequisite for living creatively) seems present as a given, to be expected as a matter of routine.

The freedom of mind that one finds within Haystack's community can, of course, lead to many kinds of change. For me, this freedom has led me toward greater simplicity of form and of content. Haystack's nurturing milieu has helped me to restructure my thinking, to put my emotions in better order, and literally to simplify the design of the work that happened to be at-hand. Most of my time at Haystack has been devoted to book-arts, so the most obvious changes have been in conjunction with my books. In part, these changes and refinements were the consequence of concentrated periods of time lived away from my usual daily pattern, periods in which I learned new skills or honed known skills in new ways. Although I am thankful for that kind of immediate change, a more significant (and less definable) transformation grew gradually from the school's vibrant community—a community in which I never needed to explain or justify my artistic aspirations. Being at Haystack is tremendously reassuring to the creative spirit. The importance of this reassurance cannot be measured.

In recent years, I have transferred my artistic effort from book-arts to photography. Although I continue to design books, I feel that image-making is—and always has been—central to my life. I adore the world of book-arts; but, given my mind-set, I have been somewhat misplaced there. Still, as I have explored photography I have discovered that the shift from one art-form to another is more a shift in ways-and-means than a shift in sensibility. The rigor of book-arts, its attention to detail and to elegant form, its understanding of hand-craft (and eye-craft) as fundamental—these conceptual "interiorities" (and others) are shared, I believe, by all branches of art's aesthetic tree, regardless of how at variance they may seem on the surface. In large measure, this awareness of shared ordering principles has come to me from my Deer Isle experience as I have explored the range of craft studios and craft disciplines on the Haystack campus.