



SEAN ALBERT

My first introduction to Haystack Mountain School of Crafts was during the spring of 1994; I was in the process of finishing my last year of High School at Morse High, located in Bath, Maine. With graduation only a few weeks away, my art teacher, Sandra Crabtree, selected me to attend Haystack's annual Student Craft Institute. A program designed to foster and inspire 70 Maine high school juniors to consider art-making as a choice for college study, a possible career, or a life-long journey.

Due to the fact my best friend was chosen over me to attend the student craft session when we were juniors, I didn't have the opportunity to visit the Haystack until I was a senior. At this point I had already decided to apply to art colleges, much to the dismay of my family, none of whom were artists. My parents believed pursuing a career in art wasn't the best option, thus buying into the well-known starving artist stereotype.

That same spring, shortly before my trip to Haystack, I was granted admission to the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. Of course Sandra supported my decision to continue making art in college, but I still wasn't entirely confident I had made the right choice. My experiences at Haystack would change that for me.

During the three-hour trip up the rocky Maine coast from my hometown, I was magically transported to a beautifully secluded oceanside retreat. Much to my surprise, the Haystack community was thriving with young adults experiencing many of the same unsure emotions I was, unsure of what was next in life. We were all pondering the same questions any seventeen or eighteen-year-old struggles with during such a transitional point in one's life, but everyone was an artist!

During that short spring session I was energized as a maker, and committed to return to such an inspirational place, which I did many more times as a student and later as a teacher. But the most important part of my Haystack experience that spring was the much needed spark of confidence in my own abilities as an artist, which ultimately made my decision to pursue making art a life long commitment. Haystack and the community it grows helped me find a confidence I was determined to capture as a young adult graduating onto adulthood.