

Critical Essay

Comics to Sculpting

Calvin Levi Massey's parents were subject to the Great Migration of the south when Jim Crow laws and Lynching were still going on. Massey's mother noticed right away Massey's gift as a young artist. Massey attended Hussain School of Art; his professor Leanord Nelson pushed Massey and critiqued him very hard because he didn't want him to lose his rare artistic eye and gift. "According to Massey, Nelson and school founder John Hussain created a special program for him only, focusing his training on learning life drawing, composition, and illustration." (232); this pursuit gave Massey the tools to pursue his comic career.

Quattro says that "one of Wertham's strongest complaints was that comics bred racial prejudice, black comic book artists such as Massey, Hollingsworth, Broderick, and others were especially burdened by the criticism"(233). This prejudice showed even in a young Stan Lee's first meeting with Massey when Lee compared Massey's name to an old slave song, "[Massa's in de Cold Ground](#)," which made Massey walk away before Lee brought him back an apologized and offered him a job. Massey made incredible strides through the 1950s and continued throughout his career in sculpting and producing abstract and influential works of art and collaborating with many different projects.

