

Creative 360/ArtShop: Louie Thurston Long Haul Productions // MCACA Creating Connection project

Louie Thurston: Hello, people! My name is Louis John Douglas Thurston. I came to 360 five years ago. I was nervous. I thought I wasn't gonna fit in. I started making jokes, and everybody laughed. Then I fit in.

Allise Noble: My name is Allise Noble, and I'm the coordinator for Express Yourself Art Shop. When he came in as a new student, he already knew what he wanted to make.

Louie Thurston: Oh, yeah! I made New York Giants, Eli number ten, mixed media.

Allise Noble: He had the name and number and stars cut out of wood that he painted and put all around the border.

Louie Thurston: By the way people, I'm a Giant fan. New York number one.

MUSIC

Louie Thurston: Hell yeah! Hell yeah!

I come twice a week. I feel like I'm coming home. Because Allise, Sheri, are like a family.

Sheri Denton: My name is Sheri Denton and I have cerebral palsy. I'm the assistant to Allise here at ArtShop. I also teach several classes.

Louie Thurston: Sheri is inspirational, like a sister to me. Whenever I have an idea, she takes it, and we run with it.

Sheri Denton: Louie spent his entire life basically institutionalized before he came here and was staying with his Aunt, partly because he lost his mom. So there was nobody else that could really take care of him.

Louie Thurston: My favorite artwork is when I made Heaven. I made it 'cos my Aunt passed away, August 17 at 8:07 a.m. My Aunt, she's a

giant in the world. She helped people. I made it to remember her. She's my hero, 'cos she's like a second mother to me.

Allise Noble: So with your piece Heaven that you wanted to dedicate to your Aunt, what gave you the idea to make it kind of three dimensional?

Louie Thurston: I was laying in bed one night. I was brainstormin'. And I came up with the idea.

Allise Noble: You used a lot of different materials, like the cotton for the clouds and some cutout wood pieces that really make it a full scene that popped off the page.

Louie Thurston: I'm a man of God. I believe in the big man upstairs. And that's why I made it. When I was thinking about my Aunt, tears were coming. Then I remember the one song, I Could Not Ask for More. And I kept singing it.

MUSIC

Allise Noble: Does making art help you have an outlet for your emotions?

Louie Thurston: Yes. A lot of people tell me I'm a wimp when I show my emotions. If anybody has a problem with it, screw them. [LAUGHTER IN ROOM] Keep that in! I don't care!

Without this place, there won't be a place where handicapped people will go to do artwork like this. I think I'm an artist, actor, talented, and comedian. My mom always said I'm good lookin'. Even my old girlfriends. I'm on Facebook people! [LAUGHTER]

Allise Noble: Thank you, that was awesome!

MUSIC