



More Than Myself:
At the Crossroads of Art, Culture and the Civil Rights Movement

by Robert Hooks with Lorrie Marlow

Featuring an introduction by Sidney Poitier, who declares, "Now that Robert has finally put his remarkable life between the covers of this extraordinary autobiography, the world can share in the life experiences of this distinguished human being." *More Than Myself*—featuring a star-studded cast of characters—paints a picture of a magical time in which a unique, prickly and oddly heretofore unexamined synergy between the arts, the Civil Rights movement, and politics changed our country forever, and makes the case that those forces need to remain strange bedfellows. As one savvy writer so pithily put it: "Who do Langston Hughes, Tallulah Bankhead, Martin Luther King, Jr., David Susskind, Bayard Rustin and Tab Hunter have in common? Robert Hooks!"

Hooks' hardscrabble journey—starting in the rat-infested Foggy Bottom of Washington, DC and the indentured summer servitude of Southern tobacco farms—mirrors that of an America that was going through its own seismic shifts. Meeting Malcolm X awakened in him a sense of political responsibility, but it was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who personally counseled Robert to "never forget that artists are an integral and vital part of the struggle for civil rights." Hooks went on to become: the founder and producer of three significant arts institutions, most prominently the internationally acclaimed Negro Ensemble Company; a successful black leading man repeatedly tapped to break the color barrier in all media before the term "colorblind casting" even existed; a highly visible political and civil rights activist paying the price for his outspokenness; and *The Hook*, a man often deemed way too charming to women to have somehow raised successive generations of artists.

Quincy Jones, speaking of the period, has written, "We had never seen this kind of Black arts movement since the Harlem Renaissance and Robert's imprint was all over it."

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