"Albers was a beautiful teacher and an impossible person. He wasn't easy to talk to, and I found his criticism so excruciating and so devastating that I never asked for it. Years later, though, I'm still learning what he taught me, because what he taught had to do with the entire visual world. He didn't teach you how to 'do art.' The focus was always on your personal sense of looking. When he taught watercolor, for example, he taught the specific properties of water color—not how to make a good water color picture. When he taught drawing, he taught the efficient functioning of line. Color was about the flexibilities and the complex relationships that color have with one another.

"I consider Albers the most important teacher I've ever had, and I'm sure he considered me one of his poorest students. Coming from Paris, entering in the middle of the term, and showing all that wildness and naivete and hunger, I must have seemed not serious to him, and I don't think he ever realized that it was his discipline that I came for. Besides, my response to what I learned from him was just the opposite of what he intended. When Albers showed me that one color was as good as another and that you were just expressing a personal preference if you thought a certain color would be better, I found that I couldn't decide to use one color instead of another, because I really wasn't interested
in taste. I was so involved with the materials separately that I didn't want painting to be simply an act of employing one color to do something to another color, like using red to intensify green, because that would imply some subordination of red. I was very hesitant about arbitrarily designing forms and selecting colors that would achieve some predetermined result, because I didn't have any ideas to support that sort of thing—I didn't want color to serve me, in other words. That's why I ended up doing the all-white and all-black paintings—one of the reasons, anyway."