

Art Exposed Outside of the Ordinary

By Mirchaye Sahu



Gallery 42 of UDC

Washington, D.C – On March 5, 2014, the UDC Art Program held a reception at Gallery 42 of the main campus of the University of the District of Columbia. This gathering represented a solo exhibition of handmade paper works by a young female artist by the name of Cassi Duvall.

There is a reason why history and art go hand in hand, they inspire each other. Duvall's fascination and curiosity with history led her to experiment new discoveries in the art world. "Dream in Paper", which is the name she gave her collection, evolved over time from her wanting to create a body of work that expressed some of her curiosities about heritage and ancestry.

"I was specifically interested in female ancestors and how the only knowledge I have of them come from stories. And not full stories with beginnings and endings, but pieces of pieces of pieces," Duvall explains. She adds, "I think of genetics and wonder what events came together to get to the human being I am now."

Knowing who and why we are who we are is something that every person may wonder about, however, it isn't always possible to track and gather every information, so imagination is really all there is. Each of her pieces represent pieces of who she is as they are seen in her imagination and dreams.

Making paper was something relatively new to her. It all started last spring with a workshop held by Professor Daniel Venne, Graphic Arts Professor at UDC, which encouraged her to pursue this project further.

“I think what captivated me most about papermaking was the combining of many things to create a new whole. From there on, my mind was on fire with the possibilities of papermaking,” she specifies.



Cassi Duvall (middle), Professor Daniel Venne (right)

At the exhibition Duvall took her time to explain how she goes about to bring her art o life. Papermaking isn't a complicated process, it is rather a seemingly simple process. First, the fiber needs to be selected, then those fibers need to be soaked and beat down, and added to a vat of water to ensure even distribution. Later on, the fibers need to be recollected on a screen. After collection they must be pressed, so that they can bind. Finally, the newly formed sheet dries and the paper is created. This paper can either live a long life as a whole or be re-pulped and become part of a new whole. Duvall relates paper to human beings; “Like paper, we are made of fibers that come from many different places and times.”

Duvall plans to pursue her dream of creating beautiful art and have more exhibitions in the near future. Her exquisite work can be seen on her personal website at www.cassiduvall.com.