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Final assignment for SJU artists



unknown

Dorsky Gallery Curatorial Programs in Long Island City is hosting an exhibit of St. John's University BFA candidates' works. Photo courtesy of Paul Fabozzi

By Kevin Zimmerman

TimesLedger Newspapers

A lot of college officials like to talk about how they provide students with a real-world education which usually entails multiple internships.

At St. John's University in Jamaica Estates, plenty of seniors spend time punching the clock as interns, but within the school's Department of Art and Design, a small group of students spend their last semesters creating paintings, sculptures, videos and photographs and then preparing these works for an exhibition, "In Defense Of," at the Dorsky Gallery Curatorial Programs in Long Island City.

"This is predicated less on individual pieces and more on the overall time commitment of each artist," Paul Fabozzi, professor of fine arts, said. "They present their works weekly and receive critiques and feedback, which then helps them develop editing skills and makes them really think about how the art is going to be in this space."

This year's show includes works by 15 student artists — Dallas Adams, Lucia Burrafato, Evane Corder, Georgina Diaz, Sharlotte Fondeur-Casas, Kristin Hauser, Sabrina Issagholian, Lauren Muggeo, Lourdes Rivera, Kalen Na'il Roach, Caroline Roecker, Elena Suarez, Diamond Watts-Walker, Rebekah Yeh and Kaixi Zhou — working in a variety of mediums.

Each artist begins with a written statement of intent, which explains what they hope to accomplish with their art and how they plan to go about doing it. Then they get to work. Throughout the project they meet with faculty advisers who question many of the artists' decisions before sending them back to the studio.

"We want to force them to justify the work not just aesthetically but also conceptually," Fabozzi said. "We challenge them so they have a clearer sense of how to move forward."



Lucia Burrafato's video installation is titled "Functional Deficit." Photo courtesy of St. John's University's Department of Art and Design



Sabrina Issagholian's piece is titled "Sculpture II (Four Legs)" and includes acrylic spray paint, rhinestones, faux fur and manufactured objects. Photo courtesy St. John's University Department of Art and Design

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For Rivera, moving ahead required looking back.

As the only member of her family born in the United States, Rivera wanted to start a dialogue about that through her artwork using items she gathered during a trip to the Dominican Republic, where she traces her roots, Fabozzi said.

