

Life

New Lamont Gallery Multi-Media Exhibition

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PUBLISHED ONLINE
January 26, 2017 6:46pm

LAST UPDATED
January 26, 2017 7:45pm

WEB EDITOR
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The Lamont Gallery opens its first multi-media exhibition.
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Last Friday, the Lamont Gallery opened its first multi-media exhibition, “Clew: A Rich and Rewarding Disorientation.” Clew was a collaboration of four artists from various disciplines: Deborah Barlow from the fine visual artist, Todd Hearon from poetry and Jung Mi Lee and Jon Sakata from the musical arts. The exhibition consisted of paintings integrated with poetry and an overtoning soundtrack.

The team of transdisciplinary artists was formed by what Barlow called “serendipity.” Barlow was first introduced to Sakata and Lee by Hearon whom she had known for decades through her friendship with his wife. “Like a

lot of things in life, [the team] just came together in a very organic and natural way. As soon as it happened, we all felt how right it was. It just clicked.”

Sakata recalled his visit to Barlow’s studio in Boston with Hearon and Lee. He felt that they were tuned in together despite being from different backgrounds. “Even from different disciplines, we shared certain wavelengths of perception,” he said. Lee agreed, saying that it felt like “immediate comfort.”

The collaboration started off as what Hearon described as a journey of the unknown. “I did not know what I was going to encounter, especially dealing with artists in their own realms, so experimental and adventurous, but that becomes a good thing. Uncertainty becomes possibility,” he said.

“Like a lot of things in life, [the team] just came together in a

All of the artists credited their success to their open-mindedness. “Instead of trying to protect our territory or identity as a visual artist, a poet or a musician, we were willing to transform ourselves and work

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through with one another,” Sakata said.

Hearon proposed the concept of “Clew” to the group. The word “Clew” can mean clue; a ball of yarn; a part of ship’s sail; stretch of wings; or the ball of thread Theseus used to find his way out of the labyrinth. Lamont Gallery Director Lauren O’Neal thought the word choice was fitting. “We wanted visitors to take a journey with us,” she said.

The four artists, along with O’Neal, worked together for almost a year to create their multi-sensory exhibition that enables visitors to experience the richness and complexity of the arts. Hearon said the visitors at “Clew” should be prepared to be disoriented in labyrinth or maze. “When we’re disoriented, we don’t quite know where the directions are anymore, but we can keep going. We might not know where we’re going, but that might lead us to something potentially rich.”

Although some of the work was done off site, the exhibition took a month to set up. “Sometimes you can’t really do anything before you bring it all together and see how things start to dialogue with each other in ways that you can’t foresee. We spent a lot of time playing with and manipulating the space,” O’Neal said.

She praised the exhibition that the four artists had achieved, given that this was a transdisciplinary project. “We all have different committed disciplines and it’s not as easy as to say I’m gonna mix painting with poetry or poetry with sounds. It takes a tremendous collaborative process like around the Harkness table — you listen, build on ideas and expand your thinking,” she said.

O’Neal felt that the Lamont Gallery was very connected to the Exonian community, so the art and knowledge on display symbolized much broader concepts. “I think it represents the way we learn here: we’re grounded in a liberal arts tradition where we’re drawing from science, literature and math, and you’re creating a very holistic base of knowledge,” she said.

The artists encouraged Exonians to visit the exhibition whether they are artistically inclined or not. Both Lee and Sakata, who have been teaching music at PEA for more than two decades, felt that Exonians need to have more diverse experiences and self-experiment from time to time. “It’s sort of a cultural problem of someone coming into, let’s say, an art museum or gallery, thinking that there is already a given meaning or understanding that they need to figure out. That’s complete fiction; it’s an illusion,” Sakata said.

In this sense, Barlow challenged Exonians to stay in the exhibition space for at least an hour and “let it speak to you.” In addition, Lee and Sakata recommended multiple visits to further explore the changes in the space as well as within ourselves. The artists hope that visitors find the disoriented experience of Clew rich and rewarding. The exhibition will be open until Apr.

15, throughout which, there will be be lectures, poetry readings and student performances.

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