

ECSU Art Gallery a celebration of the senses

CLAIRE GALVIN

CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

WINDHAM/WILLIMANTIC — A small, but powerful, art gallery on Eastern Connecticut State University’s campus allows students, faculty and the public to enjoy a rotating collection of local and international artwork.

The ECSU Art Gallery is located in Room 112 of the Fine Arts Instructional Center.

The current exhibit, “Creating Dangerously: Art and Revolution,” opened Jan. 17 and will remain open until March 12.

The exhibit features six artists: Vladimir Cybil Charlier, Sasha Huber, Pascale Monnin, Nyugen E. Smith, Edouard Duval-Carrie and Didier William.

Their work is inspired by Haiti’s long legacy of slavery, revolution, exile and diaspora.

“The Haitian revolution has been somewhat downplayed in contemporary historical accounts,” said gallery director Yulia Tikhonova.

“To my knowledge, the Haitian revolution was one of the premiere revolutions, the best ever where the blacks were able to take the power and hold it for a number of weeks and months.”

Tikhonova said, since then, the world has never stopped hating the Haitians for this



Yulia Tikhonova, director of the ECSU Art Gallery located in the Fine Arts Instructional Center, talks about the current exhibit recently. Roxanne Pandolfi | Staff

success.

Eastern’s permanent art collection serves primarily as a teaching and research tool for students and faculty.

However, it is also open to the public. The collection focuses on contemporary art produced by artists with a connection to New England.

The permanent collection is supplemented by art on loan from other galleries, universities and artists.

For example, one current piece is a tapestry cataloging the Underground Railroad during American slavery on

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loan from the Staten Island Museum.

“I liked this piece a lot because we are in Connecticut,” Tikhonova said.

“There is an underground road here in Connecticut and the importance of this fact and narrative is very important for this idea of freedom.”

Art and art history lecturer Mark McKee said the slavery themes also have a direct connection with Haitian natives.

“The Haitian population is comprised of former slaves, either from the island of Haiti or North America,” McKee said.

“There’s this parallel history there.”

The museum’s exhibits are planned far in advance.

“We’re working on exhibits two years in advance because it takes that long to get it assembled,” McKee



said.

Tikhonova said the next exhibit will focus more on new, digital and multimedia art forms.

Meanwhile, a “University Hour” lecture relating to the Haitian diaspora will be held March 4.

Marie-Celie Agnant is a Montreal-based Haitian writer who has published two novels relating to the immigrant experience. Agnant’s visit to Eastern will be co-sponsored by the Department of World Languages and Cultures.

The time and location of the University Hour are to be determined.

The gallery is open Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursdays from 1 to 7 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 2 to 5 p.m.

More information about Eastern’s art gallery is available at easternct.edu/art-gallery.

Follow Claire Galvin on Twitter - @CGalvinTC.