

David D. Oquendo

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Short Biography

David D. Oquendo is a New Jersey, USA based artist. He was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico – and raised in New Jersey. In 2009, Oquendo completed his undergraduate degree at Rutgers University (Newark Campus), earning a BFA in Painting and a Minor in Art History. While attending Rutgers, Oquendo was mentored by the late Denyse Thomasos; in addition to earning the Creative Achievement in Fine Arts Award – for outstanding accomplishment in fine arts reflecting creativity and dedication.

In 2012, he earned an MFA in Painting from Montclair State University. Oquendo has shown his work in New Jersey, New York, Florida, United Kingdom; as well as created murals throughout New Jersey and New York. Oquendo's most notable exhibitions are a 2016 solo show at Solo(s) Project House in Newark, NJ, a 2017 solo show at the Henao Contemporary Center in Orlando, FL, and a 2018 solo show at The Collective Art Tank in Asbury Park, NJ. Currently David is an Art educator through The Robeson Galleries at Rutgers University, and an Adjunct Professor at Bard Early College in Newark, NJ.

Statement

David D. Oquendo has developed a personal constructed script. He calls this writing system, “Metaphrase”. This “Metaphrase” is a series that includes large-scale wall renderings (indoor and outdoor) and mixed media paintings. The artwork explores the artist’s ideas and questions of identity, language, meditation, religion and life.

The genesis of the series is personal. The artist was diagnosed with a learning disability as a child; causing difficulty in speech, comprehension, translation and writing. The non sequitur has become increasingly fascinating for the artist in regards to idiomatic phrases, music and identity and understanding in oneself through language.

Oquendo believes that language is not only about communicating with one another, it is also a tool to develop meaning in the world around us. Language allows one to categorize, and to normalize; it allows us to look at multifaceted ideas and simplify it. Language also allows us to build a sense of self, a sense of security and comfort in our own being. It lets us believe that we are in fact someone in particular, someone unique. It distinguishes the artist, Oquendo, from you, the audience. Language stabilizes the disarray of existence. But only to a point because of all the possibilities it offers it is also limiting. It doesn’t allow one to articulate the entirety of existence and therefore fails to alleviate the artist’s fear of it. This failure of language, especially language beautifully displayed, to mitigate the artist’s fearful fascination of existence is a major theme in “Metaphrase”. The work is created by the artist, for the artist, yet admired and unraveled by the audience.

Oquendo’s work is primarily influenced by his mentor Denyse Thomasos. Secondary influences are Paul Antonio Attong, CRYPTIK, Chaz Bojorquez and Neils “Shoe” Meulman.

Each letter is a system that has been influenced by Textualis Quadrata with hints of Eastern Kufic and Hebrew calligraphy. Completion finds the balance between obfuscate text and the beauty of calligraphy. With this series, David D. Oquendo challenges the notion of what language must be, how language must be used and how language must look like.

EDUCATION

Montclair State University **2012**
Masters Degree in Fine Arts

Rutgers Newark University **2009**
Bachelors Degree in Fine Arts
Minor in Art History

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2018

“NO QUARTER”, The Collective Art Tank, Asbury Park, NJ

2017

“Metaphrase: This Isn’t Wonderland”, Henao Contemporary Center, Orlando, FL

2016

“Metaphrase: Idioms”, Solo(s) Project House, Newark, NJ

2015

“Square Knot X Square Knot”, C.R.E.A.M Gallery, Brooklyn, New York, NY

2014

“Small & Intimate Work for a Small & Intimate Space”, VaMoose Café, Kearny, NJ

SELECT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2019

“ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS”, Dominican Commissioner of Culture, NYC, NY

2017

“WORD PLAY”, Maloney Gallery at St. Elizabeth College, Morristown, NJ

“TRANSPARENCY”, I.M.A.G.E. Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

2016

“Queen of Angels: When A Church Dies”, Arts & Artifacts of Newark, Newark, NJ

“Mediums: Dormant Purpose”, Femme Curator Arts, Newark, NJ

“Open Orange” at Firehouse Gallery, Orange NJ

“Cinco De Mayo”, Artemisa Gallery, NYC, NY

2015

“ESKFF: Selections from 2011-2015”, Eileen S. Kaminsky Family Foundation, Jersey City, NJ

2014

“The Creative Process in Plain View”, Paul Robeson Galleries, Newark, NJ

“THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS”, Project For Empty Space Newark, NJ

“NEUMANN Will Never DIE”, 321 Newark Street, Hoboken, NJ

“DISCONNECT”, The Farm, NYC, NY

“EMRUPT; International Art Exhibition”, Leigh Wen Fine Art, NYC, NY

2013

“LOVE OVER EVERYTHING”, by Akintola Hanif at *The Metropolitan*, Newark, NJ

“STIGMATA”, by Rodney Gilbert and Yendor Productions, Newark, NJ

2012

“METRO 29”, City Without Walls, Newark, NJ

“Horse Designed by Committee”, White Box, NYC, NY

“Fresh Meat”, Shore Institute of Contemporary Arts, Asbury Park, NJ
“MSU at Goldsmith’s”, Goldsmith’s College, London, UK

2011

“Young Blood”, Amos Eno Gallery, NYC, NY

INSTALLATIONS/MURAL PROJECTS

2019

“JIU-JITSU”, Ironbound Jiu-Jitsu, Newark, NJ

2018

“Glory Of Justice”, Raff & Raff LLC, Paterson, NJ

2017

“Book Of Five Rings”, Essential Jiu-Jitsu, Hartsdale, NY

“Beauty”, The Beauty Parlor & Spa, Dobbs Ferry, NY

2016

“Gateways To Newark {PORTRAITS}”, Newark, NJ

2015

“Clouds Tip Toeing Around A Giant’s Neck”, (Mural) in Conjunction with The Paterson Art Walk, THE ART FACTORY, Paterson, NJ

“You Are Now Here”, The Gateway Project – Concourse Exhibition, Newark, NJ

“NEWark muraLIST”, Yendor Arts, Newark, NJ

2014

“The Fall From Space” (Mural) in Conjunction with The Paterson Art Walk, Paterson, NJ

“The Baby Series: DIENTES”, Solo(s) Project House, Newark, NJ

“Sanctuary” in Conjunction with Newark Open Doors 2014

2012

“Soma, Trickster & Myself”, Paul Robeson Galleries – Messier Gallery, Newark, NJ

“Decide What to Be & Go Be It”, Solo(s) House Project, Newark, NJ

“Monk Puppy”, Rutgers State University, Paul Robeson Galleries, Newark, NJ

RESIDENCIES

2017 - Residency at The Henao Contemporary Center 2017, Orlando FL

2016 - Solo(s) Project House Summer 2016 Residency, Newark NJ

2015 - Eileen S. Kaminsky Family Foundation, Jersey City, NJ

2015 - Barat Foundation Mural Project, Newark, NJ

2015 - The Gateway Project, Newark, NJ

2012 till 2014 - Resident Artist at Solo(s) Project House, Newark, NJ

ART FAIRS

2018 - West Fest Orlando, Orlando, FL

2015 - Highlands Festival at Waterloo, NJ

2013 – Bushwick Open Studios, Brooklyn, NY

2012 - Fountain Art Fair Miami 2012/Miami BASEL, Miami, FL

LECTURES, ARTIST TALKS & SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

2017

“WORD PLAY”, Maloney Gallery at St. Elizabeth College, Morristown, NJ

2014

“Newark Arts Photo Documentary Project”, by Colleen Gutwein

2013

In Conversation, Paul Robeson Galleries, Newark, NJ

Artist Talk on Space + Place, The Gateway Project, Newark, NJ

2012

Artist Talk with Anthony Alvarez. Solo(s) Project House, NJ

Artist Talk with Newark Collegiate Academy. Paul Robeson Galleries, Newark, NJ

2009

401 Show Artist Talk, Paul Robeson Galleries, Newark, NJ

SELECTED PRESS**2018**

“In Writing: David D. Oquendo”, by Lisa Zeiger, “Book & Room” online magazine

2016

“GATEWAYS TO NEWARK: An Interactive Exploration of the Longest Mural in the East Coast”. NewestAmericans.com

“Un-Speaking A Theology of Otherness in David Oquendo’s ‘Metaphrase: Idioms’”, by Eric Valosin, “Not What It Is” online magazine

“Route 21 To Get The Longest Mural On The East Coast”, by Newark Pulse

“Creation of Longest Mural on the East Coast kicked off in Newark”, by Brick City Live Staff

2015

“Highlands Festival at Waterloo Brings Folks Together With Music”, New Jersey Sunday Herald

2014

“Original Murals Cover Gallery Walls”, The Horace Mann Record, by Azure Gao

“Hudson Happenings”, NJ.com, Summer Dawn Hortillosa

“An Abandoned Cubicle Complex Filled with Art”, Hyperallergic, Sharon Adarlo

“Artist Transform Vacant Office Building Into Surreal Artistic Wonderland”, The HuffingtonPost, Priscilla Frank