

David D. Oquendo

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EDUCATION

Montclair State University 2012

- Masters Degree in Fine Arts

Rutgers Newark University 2009

- Bachelors Degree in Fine Arts
- Minor in Art History

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 2020 solo show at Equal Space located in Newark, NJ. Oquendo is currently an Art educator through The Robeson Galleries at Rutgers University, and Head of the Visual Arts Department in Visual Arts at Bard Early College in Newark, NJ.

ARTIST 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), mixed media paintings, as well as sculptures. The artwork explores the artist’s ideas and questions of identity, language, and meditation.

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 Wabi-Sabi aesthetic has become increasingly fascinating for the artist. Wabi-Sabi is a way of living that focuses on finding beauty within the imperfections of life and accepting peacefully the natural cycle of growth and decay. Therefore, Oquendo’s work embraces the worn out, torn and entropy – with an even balance of beauty and craftsmanship.

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, and for the artist, yet admired and deciphered by the audience.

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 obfuscated 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.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2020

“AMOR FATI”, Equal Space, Newark, NJ, USA

2018

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

2017

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

2016

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

2015

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

2014

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

SELECT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2019

"Expresiones Latinx I", Gallery at 14 Maple, Morristown, NJ

"A Collection of Lines", Brick & Mortar Gallery, Easton, PA

“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

“Stay On The F***** Saddle”, Orlando, Florida

“Trust Life, and it will Teach You, in Joy & Sorrow”, Bard HS Early College, 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

2020

“Visual Artist, David Oquendo, Explore The Power Of Language In New Exhibit” by Flisadam Pointer. Envertent.com

<https://www.envertent.com/david-oquendos-amor-fati/>

“Bard Faculty, David Oquendo, exhibits at Equal Space”

<https://www.nps.k12.nj.us/BEH/2020/02/25/bard-faculty-david-oquendo-exhibits-show-at-equal-space/>

2018

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

<http://www.bookandroom.com>

2016

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

<https://gatewaystonewark.com/portraits/artists/david-oquendo/>

“Un-Speaking A Theology of Otherness in David Oquendo’s ‘Metaphrase: Idioms’”, by

Eric Valosin, “Not What It Is”

<https://notwhatitis.com/2016/10/01/un-speaking-a-theology-of-otherness-in-david-oquendos-metaphrase-idioms/>

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

<https://www.newarkpulse.com/news/detail/route-21-to-get-the-longest-mural-on-the-east-coast>

“Newark Murals” Wikipedia.org

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newark,_New_Jersey

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

<https://brickcitylive.com/art/bclstaff/creation-of-longest-mural-on-the-east-coast-kicked-off-in-newark/>

2014

“The Newark Artists: Photo Documentary Project”

<https://www.newarkartsphotodoc.com/david-oquendo>