

A deep dive into the “In the Eye of Belonging” exhibit

By Emma Phillips
Contributing Writer

Last Tuesday, October 5, an opening reception and discussion kicked off the first showing of artist Alisa Sikelianos-Carter’s exhibit *In the Eye of Belonging* in the Nott Memorial. The exhibit offers a number of mixed media pieces that assert Sikelianos-Carter as a talented Afrofuturist artist.

Sikelianos-Carter grew up in upstate New York and attended SUNY Albany for her BA and MA in painting and drawing. She is renowned nationwide for her often luminous and opulent works contrasted with deep blackness. Here at Union College we are honored to host this wonderful display courtesy of Sikelianos-Carter.

Special thanks to Professor Jillmarie Murphy of the Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies department, Professor Lori Marso in Africana Studies, the Interdisciplinary Studies department, and Professor Lorraine Morales Cox in Visual Arts and the Office of Intercultural Affairs for the generous additional funding,



From left to right: “Black is the Color,” and “Moonwalker” by Alisa Sikelianos-Carter.

Robyn Reed Head of Access Services Librarian for helping facilitate, Professor Stacey Robinson of the University of Illinois for enriching the discussion and Professor Hill Butler of the Sociology and Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies Departments for moderating the discussion.

The pieces in the exhibit depict worlds in a future full of rich Black culture. As a whole, the exhibit calls to majesty with a sense of the inter-galactic. Moons, astronauts, and otherworldliness complete the space.

Despite this, the spacial feel is contrasted by the various earthly materials used to create the works themselves. From seeds of the celosia

plant to abalone shells and gemstones such as black Tourmaline and obsidian, every component of the work has an elemental and visual value.

Multi-layered landscapes of black moons punctuate the series of colorful, dynamic hairstyles that make up the “Crown” series. Traditional Black hairstyles entwine together to create beautifully symmetrical and colorful figures full of life and glitter. All works in the exhibit are part of the series “Crowns”, “Black Moon”, and “Future Ancestors” respectively.

In an interview with Professor Deidre Hill Butler who moderated the discussion, the continuing pursuit of di-

versifying art exposure in the community was important to emphasize for Professor Hill Butler as she has worked to diversify and decolonize academic spaces for 30 years. The professor is director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and a co-founder of the Union Coalition for Inclusiveness and Diversity (UCID).

As Union College is a predominantly white institution, Professor Hill Butler believes that the exhibit was especially vital to illustrate the past and looking towards a future where Black stories are told in different hues such as the work Alisa Sikelianos-Carter creates.

She stressed parts of the discussion where W.E.B

Dubois’s concept of a double-consciousness was brought up. Sikelianos-Carter’s identity as a Black, queer woman has special implications and every identity intersects with each other and is perceived differently because of colonial powers.

Connecting to other Black artists, ignoring nay-sayers and “staying persistent” were key points Professor Hill Butler summarized from artist Alisa Sikelianos-Carter when asked to give advice for college-aged Black artists. To the point of finding inspiration and a network of Black artists, Professor Stacey Robinson also contributed saying he did not know his favorite comic book artist was Black, but when he found out from a friend he was elated and continued to thrive doing his art as he pleased with that newfound knowledge.

Finding a niche and others to surround yourself with who support you is a message that Professor Hill Butler believes everyone should learn from. In the pursuit of knowledge and happiness, choosing space and people that are supportive should always be prioritized over others’ opinions.

Return of the Concordiensis Crossword puzzles!

By Dante Sasso Jr.
Editor-in-Chief

Back by popular demand, the Concordiensis Crossword puzzles are here again! Can you solve this Union-themed crossword puzzle? Answers will be published to the Concordiensis Instagram next Thursday, so get to solving!

Down

1. The student-newspaper of Union College since 1877
4. Union College’s current president
5. 16-sided building in the center of campus

Across

2. Athletic center and minerva house
3. Union College’s sports team name
6. Minerva house and building that links to ISEC
7. Sides of the Nott
8. Spring term event in which several crustaceans are consumed with butter

