

ARTS

On Exhibit: 'All Mine' to open at Union's Schaffer Library

Part of the college's Art Installation Series

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Collage images of Prada shoes, Henri Bendel shopping bags, worn Metro cards, beat-up sneakers and discarded fast food toys can be seen throughout Schaffer Library at Union College.

They are the works of Juan Hinojosa and are featured in the exhibit "All Mine," which opens on Friday. It is part of Union College's Art Installation Series, which highlights contemporary artists and invites them to install their work in the Schaffer Library.

Students, faculty, staff and the general public are invited to view the installation process and informally interact with the artist.

Hinojosa has been installing his exhibition since Monday and will be putting on the finishing touches from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday.

Growing up in Queens and as the son of Peruvian immigrants, Hinojosa was obsessed with the consumer-centered culture of America. But he had to be creative.

“You learned to conserve. A cereal box wasn’t just a cereal box,” Hinojosa said.

That plays into his work in “All Mine,” which features carefully composed collaged pieces that delve into the dark side of our need to constantly buy things and where those desires stem from.

“Consumerism is an epidemic,” Hinojosa said.

As a “green artist,” Hinojosa collects discarded objects around New York City, usually somewhere below 60th Street, and uses them in his work. That can mean fabrics, wallpaper, discarded shoes, high-end fashion products and toy snakes. It’s an eclectic mix of materials that the artist keeps carefully organized in his studio, both by color and by size.

Hinojosa jokes that he’s the most organized hoarder you’ll meet.

Hinojosa counts Sigmar Polke, Mark Bradford and Henri Matisse among his artistic influences.

But he also thanks his frugal upbringing for his artistic eye. Hinojosa feels that because he wasn’t given everything, including art supplies, it pushed him to create something out of nothing.

“All Mine,” has given him a chance to show some of his large-scale works, thanks to the sheer size of the Schaffer Library. One piece hung in the library’s hallway, features a shiny leopard-print fabric plastered with pop culture references like Batman mixed with images from Chanel advertisements and handcuffs. The collage is hung on top of discarded wallpaper. Another large-scale work, which Hinojosa was installing when the Gazette spoke with him on Tuesday, features cast-off records, Metro cards, kazoos and other elements.

“Like many people in America, I am conflicted by consumerism, and my artworks are a result of my own bad habits, desires and classic American greed,” Hinojosa said in an artist statement.

The exhibition will be up until March 2020. Hinojosa will give an artist talk from 12:55-1:45 p.m. on Friday at the Learning Commons in the Schaffer Library. For more information visit union.edu/gallery.