ARTS

"Had to have high, high hopes for a living."
HIGH HOPES PANIC! AT THE DISCO

From Bollywood to K-pop, AACC celebrates breadth of student talent

BY EHI OCHE
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER



COURTESY OF DOROTHY HA

In a Saturday evening ceremony that celebrated the 45th anniversary of the Asian American Cultural Center, a dozen student performance groups and artists showcased a variety of Asian-related arts in the basement of the Schwarzman Center.

The Asian American Cultural Center celebrated its 45th anniversary with a student showcase on Saturday evening that featured a dozen student performance groups and student artists.

The showcase was hosted at The Underground through a partnership with the Schwarzman Center and highlighted student visual and performing arts groups from across the Asian diaspora at Yale.

It featured diverse art forms by both undergraduate and graduate student groups, such as music by student bands, individual songs, K-pop and classical Indian dance performances, percussion groups, Bollywood dance groups and even a short film.

"For me, the show itself signifies the larger art forms throughout the Asian American diaspora," Ayushi Das '28, a staffer at the AACC, wrote in a text message to the News, "and how impactful it is for that art to be shown to the broader Yale community."

Joliana Yee, director of the AACC, started off the evening, informing audience members that the AACC is the oldest Asian American cultural center in the Ivy League. Das and AACC Arts Liaison Dorothy Ha '28 served as the night's hosts.

The showcase was the product of many months of planning and outreach between student groups and artists at the AACC and the Yale Schwarzman Center. Organizers prioritized diversity within student acts when planning the event.

"We really wanted to have a diversity of artists and performers that reflected the diversity of the Asian diaspora and the Asian student body here at Yale," Ha said. "Anyone can come and enjoy the show, not just Yale students, which is really, I think, what performance and art is all about."

An audience made up of family, friends and faculty members watched as students expressed themselves and their cultures through music and choreographed dance sequences.

One of the student groups that performed was Yale Club Wushu, a student-run Chinese martial arts organization. In Chinese, Wushu, also known as kung fu, translates to "martial arts" or "art of war" and refers to the contemporary, standardized sport developed in 1950s China.

Yale Wushu blends both traditional and performance-based Chinese martial arts with gymnastics, acrobatics and dance, emphasizing high-flying acrobatics and athletic performance.

"I started doing wushu in seventh grade, and Yale Wushu did a collab with the kung fu school that I was part of when I was in 10th grade," Sofia Donroe '30 said. "That was one of the reasons that I wanted to come to Yale because most colleges don't have this team because it's more of a niche sport."

Donroe said she appreciated the opportunity to experience other groups and see how diverse the Asian community at Yale is.

"I really like watching all the other groups," Donroe said. "It was really fun to do it along with everybody else and celebrate Asian culture."

Several student artworks were also showcased at Saturday's event, displaying a wide variety of art methods, such as oil painting and watercolor works.

Overall, students said they appreciated the opportunity to showcase their cultures and show the broader Yale community their heritage.

"I think that the AACC is important because it's there as a community space and a place where Asian American students and Asian students can feel welcomed and at home but can also celebrate the uniqueness that exists within the Asian diaspora," Ha said. "It's a place to grow, it's a place to learn and it's a place to be yourself."

The Asian American Cultural Center at Yale was established in 1981.

Contact
EHI OCHE *at*
ehi.oche@yale.edu.

REVIEW

Audubon Street exhibit grounds viewers in nature

BY ELLIE KOO
STAFF CRITIC

As you walk right into the community art space 63 Audubon, you encounter a spectacularly forthright work of art. Julie Durkin Marty's "Fire Puddle" has a visual force so immediate that it seems to remind viewers of their own physical presence in the world.

Rendered in pale, icy blues and a deep, fiery magenta, the large-scale canvas is made with acrylic paint mixed with seawater, registering the natural world on its material surface. The painting's texture evokes rippling water, but its driving energy and bursting quality elude the typical tranquility of a puddle.

The vitality emanating from the canvas comes not only from Marty's hand, but from the interactions between the natural salts and organic chemicals that occur when they are incorporated into the work. Its energy is both artistic and natural, intertwining creative human force with one that has existed long before us.

Visual art is not simply about looking, observing and perceiving. Often, what makes an encounter with art so compelling are the sensations that arise through seeing. The experience of art can exceed vision, activating something more bodily. 63 Audubon's current exhibition, "Devotional Alchemy," on view until Nov. 19, takes up that question with particular force. The exhibit prompts: What does art feel like?

The showcase features artists living and working in the New Haven area, whose work is connected by a striking emphasis on tangibility and innovative artistic practice. Across the exhibition, materials seem to exist simultaneously as recognizable motifs and as forms that surpass reality. Materiality asserts itself in disparate ways throughout "Devotional Alchemy." Jason Ting's "Near Radiance," for instance, evokes the rectangular form of a traditional canvas while simultaneously functioning as a digital screen.

A video plays across its surface, with patches of vivid color melting downward in a thick liquid coating. Later, a constellation-like form emerges, at once atmospheric and almost plasmic.

Ting's work offers a tranquil pause from the endless onslaught of rapid imagery in our daily lives, while simultaneously reminding us of our increasingly digital existence. Its meaning and form remain difficult to pin down, shifting between the organic and technological. That unfixed, phenomenological quality allows the work to produce a different encounter with each viewer.

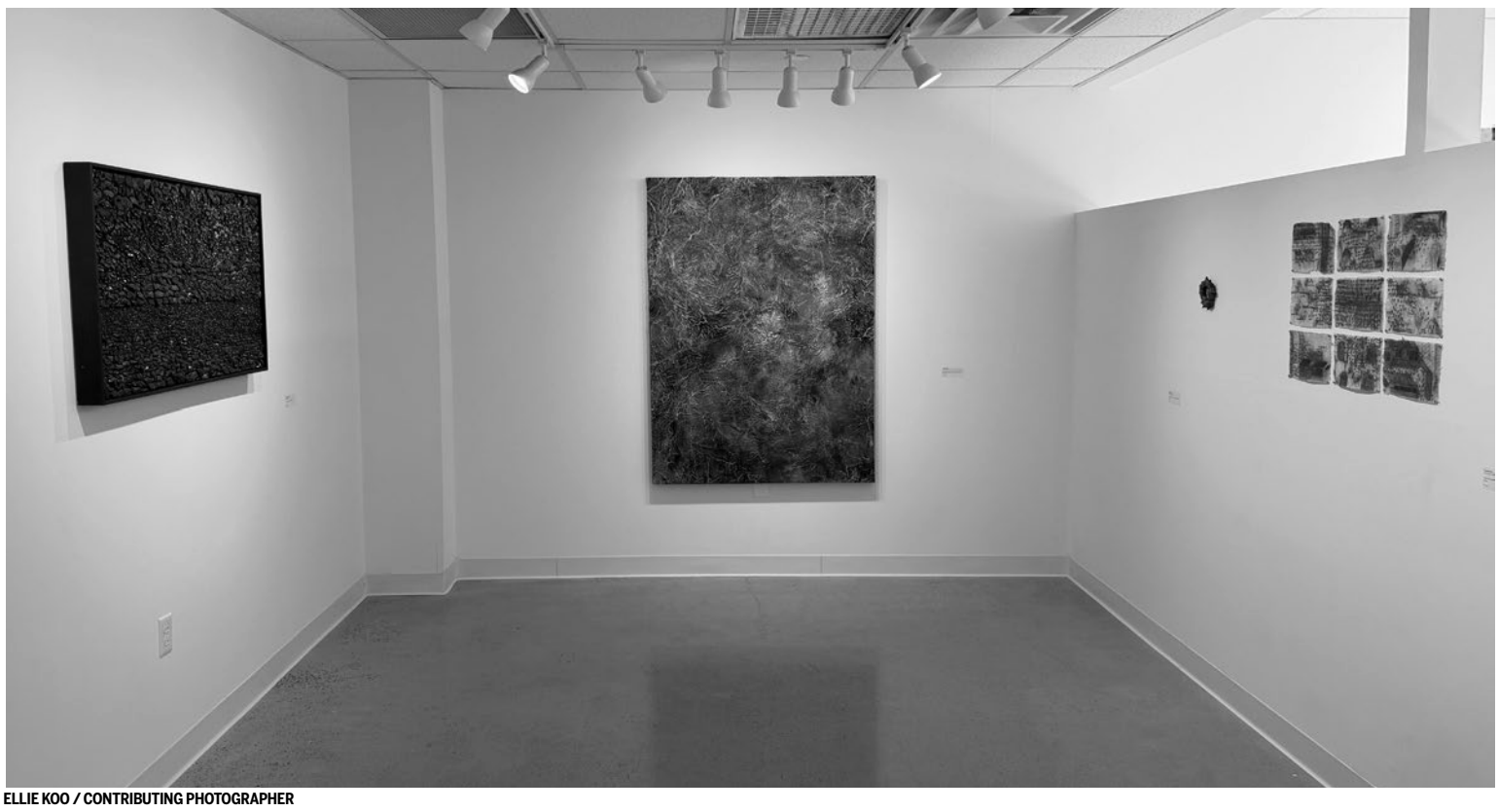
Other pieces evoke the body and its sensations through more recognizable forms. Jean Scott's "Stop Trying to Fix Me!" conjures the nostalgic energy of a geometric, divided schoolroom poster. The work is saturated with childhood references: scribbled lines, coloring that escapes its boundaries and a palette that evokes the vivacity of crayons. Front and center in the grid is a depiction of the children's game "Operation." Yet something more destructive and psychologically charged emerges from these familiar forms. Body parts appear suspended in jars, while surgeons and deformed figures carry enlarged and distorted anatomical parts. The bright colors and unrestrained vitality of the wistful, ingenuous work intensify its disturbing imagery, creating an eerie tension between innocence and violence.

The exhibition's curatorial display is effective, particularly in the ways the works speak to one another through their material and visual qualities. In the closed-off space in the gallery, however, the abundance of empty wall space on the right side minimizes several works, making them feel smaller than their actual scale. The relative isolation allows for sustained close looking but ultimately diminishes rather than elevates their visual and material aura.

In the same room, however, is a particularly bright point of the exhibition. Judith Kruger's "Forest Through the Trees 7 - Rokusho Nocturne" is a large-scale linen canvas incorporating natural elements including malachite, mica, indigo and root starch. The painting's visual language echoes its materials. Organic and tactile, the dusty turquoise surface resembles the topography of a mountain range while also suggesting veins, skin or other bodily textures. Its materials invite an imagined sense of touch that extends far beyond the visual.

What makes "Devotional Alchemy" distinctive is precisely that emphasis on material as not simply a medium, but an active participant in the perceptive experience of art. I find myself repeatedly drawn not to what the works represent or symbolize, but to what they make me feel physically.

At a moment when exhibitions are often deeply engaged with social, political and cultural anxieties, albeit thoughtfully, the show offers a resounding reminder of another reason we come to art: to get lost in the sensations it produces, for the strange pleasure of encountering something that makes us feel physically grounded in the world.



ELLIE KOO / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

The latest exhibit at 63 Audubon showcases works that incorporate diverse innovative materials and evoke a sense of physical presence in viewers' minds. The exhibit, which features various local artists, will be on view through Nov. 19.

Contact
ELLIE KOO *at*
ellie.koo@yale.edu.