

GERING & LÓPEZ GALLERY

Albany Student Press

COURIER OPENS IN UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM

"Click, click, click, clack, clack." Those were the sounds coming from the second floor of the University Art Museum last Tuesday as it opened the new exhibit "Courier," which showcases works of art done on keyboards or through hand calligraphy. As technology continues to progress even further along, "Courier" brings patrons of the Art Museum back to a time when there were no iPods, cell phones, or tablet computers. Pieces like "Typed Shapes" by artist Lee Ethredge highlight how basic technology can produce creative works of art through human hands. Using only one sentence, Ethredge creates shapes by typing tight linear lines onto Japanese paper and develops different shading patterns through spacing and letter variation. Although it may not seem like a difficult technique to mimic, the end result is surprising when one steps back and views the work from a far glance. What Ethredge does can easily be re-created on a computer screen, but the final product would not have had the same attention to detail or required the same effort. His work reminds the viewer that great things can be done without modern technology. Adjacent to "Typed Shapes" is a wall mural of journal entries spanning over a one year period, which quickly caught everyone's attention, even from the first floor. "It was me. Diary." by Daniela Comani depicts major historical events of the twentieth century around the world. Some of the entries included, "August 31st. Lady Diana and her partner are killed in Paris in a car accident. I only wanted to take a picture." and "August 19th. In Moscow, the first Trotskyite show trial begins. The 16 defendants are claimed to be followers of the former revolutionary leader, Leo Trotsky, now living in exile. As such, they stand in opposition to my idea of 'socialism in one country.' The purpose of the show trial is to quench any criticism of my role as a leader." Comani writes all the entries as if she is the person acting them out, and the mural is almost like an old-fashioned display of Twitter updates, put on display for everyone to see.

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Other great works include a collection of pieces by Spanish artist Elena del Rivero titled "Nine Broken Letters." Each letter has been typed or written, using hand-calligraphy, in an ink that looks as if the words have been embossed on to the paper. It is unclear if the letters are written through the perspective of the artist to the receiver or through the perspective of someone else, but each letter talks of the author's yearning love for another during lonely and tough times.

Just a few days after President Philip made his speech announcing the recent University budget cuts, many locals came to the reception to show their support to the University and the arts. "My husband and I are big supporters of SUNY and the arts. We think the recent budget cuts are just tragic," said Georgiana Panton of North Greenbush, while admiring a display of nineteenth century typewriters. "Typewriters will always have a special place in my heart," she said, "when I graduated from high school my parents gave me a Smith Corona typewriter. I remember I knew I was going to college so I took a general class on how to use it. I still use those skills today. I see kids these days today that type slow and I think of how I can still type fast." The works produced through the use of these machines, which no longer have a relevant place in technology, remind the current generation of what can be accomplished through hard detailed work, something we can easily lose. It's easy to create computer generated art, but there is something to be said for taking the time to create art through the work of dedicated and skilled human hands. Courier not only reminds us of the dedication and skill that used to be more appreciated before modern technology came along, but also reminds of what we can still accomplish, without the use of any modern technology.