

RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Office of Communications and Public Affairs

Press Release

January 31, 2014

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ARTIST CURATED PROJECT EXPLORING SELF IN THE COLLECTIONS PRESENTED AT RAMAPO COLLEGE

(MAHWAH, NJ) --- *Fine Tooth Comb: Searching for SELF in the Collections*, an exhibition which collages art by Jersey City artist Nyugen E. Smith with works he has selected from the Ramapo College collections, opens on Wednesday, February 12 in the Kresge Gallery on campus. There will be an opening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. An artist's talk begins at 6 p.m.

Smith was invited to respond to works in the collection. He has created a uniquely personal, yet playful installation with various media. The exhibition includes painting, sculpture, video and site-specific mixed media installations.

The artist states, "My practice investigates the impacts of European colonialism on the African diaspora with a focus on the West Indies. Working with the collections has given me the unique opportunity to have a dialog with the represented artists through their work. Together we examine the psychological implications, amalgamation of language, customs, architecture, etiquette, race, distribution of power and wealth within sociopolitical constructs which share similar origins."

This exhibition will also feature a performance event by Vox vocal ensemble, curated by the artist, on March 11 at 5 p.m. in the Berrie Center's Sharp Theater. Founded in 2009, Vox is the official vocal group of Saint Peter's Preparatory School, where Smith is a member of the faculty in the Fine and Performing Arts department. Since its inception, Vox has performed at numerous concerts around Northern New Jersey, helping communities to raise money for various causes. The choir has performed at numerous benefit concerts and in regional and international choral competitions, including the 7th World Choir Games, where it was awarded a Silver Diploma. Prep Vox, under the direction of Gianpaolo Eleria, envisions itself to be a choir that celebrates vocal music of all shapes and sizes, making the performance in conjunction with this exhibition truly fitting.

Nyugen E. Smith was born in Jersey City, NJ to his Trinidadian mother and Haitian father in 1976. He spent his formative years living with extended family in Trinidad. Smith earned his BA in Fine Art from Seton Hall University and has studied painting and drawing at Studio Arts Centers International in Florence, Italy. His practice is interdisciplinary with emphasis in found object assemblage, drawing and performance. His most recent exhibitions include Biennial of Contemporary Art in Martinique and an installation at SCOPE International Art Fair Special Projects. Smith has exhibited widely in galleries and museums in the United States and internationally. He has participated in panel discussions/artist talks at Studio Museum Harlem, Aljira: A Center for Contemporary Art, Cooper Union, Seton Hall University and University of Massachusetts-Amherst, among others. Smith lives and works in Jersey City, New Jersey.

This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Kresge Gallery is located in the Russ and Angelica Berrie Center for the Performing and Visual Arts at Ramapo College. Hours are Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 1 to 5 p.m. and Wednesday, 1 to 7 p.m. For more information call 201.684.7147.

For a photo, please click on this link:

<http://www.ramapo.edu/news/files/2014/01/image-4.jpeg>

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as sixth in the Best Regional Universities North category for public institutions, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes viewed as a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,000 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers six graduate programs as well as articulated programs with Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.