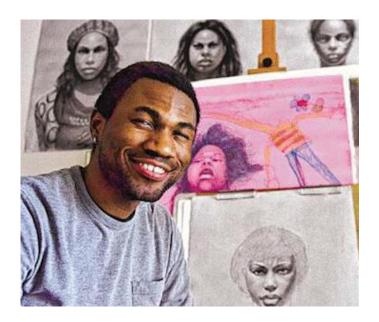


PCCC HEADLINES

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PCCC Art Professor Wins Prestigious Grant from the New Jersey Council on the Arts



Professor Alphonso Dunn
is a recipient of the
New Jersey Council on the Arts
2013 Artist Fellowship

Category: Works on Paper

Professor Dunn (left) with a display of his drawings. Photo courtesy of Alphonso Dunn

Professor Alphonso Dunn is among a select group of artists to receive the 2013 Artist Fellowship from the New Jersey Council on the Arts. The competitive prize is awarded in various categories, and Professor Dunn's drawings won for the "Works on Paper" category.

"I feel very proud," said the instructor, who plans to use his fellowship prize to rent studio space and create about 15 to 20 new pieces. His body of work also includes paintings and graphic design.

A Hackensack resident, Professor Dunn began teaching career at PCCC in 2006, first as an adjunct and now as a full-time instructor of art. He earned his Master in Fine Arts degree from the New York Academy of Art and holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from William Paterson University.

His artwork has been sold at auctions and exhibited widely in galleries and museums, including the New York Academy of Art, Sotheby's in New York, and the Forbes Magazine Galleries. An exhibit of Dunn's portraiture is planned for the PCCC Art Galleries next fall.

He First Planned to Become a Doctor

Professor Dunn originally planned a career in medicine, but changed direction after his graduation from WPU to pursue his lifelong love of art. "I consider myself a late bloomer, but I believe you should do what you love," he said.

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Alphonso Dunn grew up in Jamaica where he loved school and explored his multiple talents. "I loved art, science, math, writing...so many things," he said. As a youngster, he was always drawing. "I drew obsessively and even created my first comic book in second grade," he said.

He immigrated to the U.S. at age 17 and graduated from Eastside High School in Paterson. While at WPU, Dunn tutored other students in science and also worked as an intern at a cosmetics company in Paterson where he assisted with formulations for various products.



Photo by Bernadette Marciniak

Science and Art Both Influence His View of the World

After graduation, Dunn taught high school chemistry in Paterson and special education science classes in Bergen County, but when the time came to make a decision about graduate school, he decided against a medical career. "My family said I should become a doctor, but I never lost my love for art and decided I wanted to give it a chance."

Professor Dunn describes his artwork as "rooted in tradition" and said his favorite period is the beginning of modern art, because he likes "experimenting with tradition."

He sees a strong connection between his artistic and scientific sensibilities, pointing out that scientific concepts, such as atoms, are often rendered in artistic illustrations.

Dunn is also a passionate advocate of drawing, which he feels has often been underrated. "Drawing is central to most art," he said. "If you can draw well, you can do anything."

He is critical of art forms that are hard for the general viewer to grasp. "I believe art fundamentally should have a social function. When it's too abstract I think it becomes selfish and alienates people."

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Professor Dunn's work was selected to illustrate a banner for the New York Academy of Art.

(left) The banner hangs over a street in the Tribeca section of Manhattan.

(right) A close up of the banner and illustration.

Photo by Alphonso Dunn



A Dedicated Educator and Mentor Who Publishes You Tube Tutorials

This inclusive approach is what drives him to teach. "I know a lot of artists who just want to do art, but I could never do art and not teach," said Professor Dunn. "Nothing is more fulfilling than when I feel I started some spark in someone."

To that end, he has published numerous art tutorials on You Tube and is working on the manuscript for an art instruction book about drawing portraits.

Professor Dunn will teach PCCC's first art history course in Fall 2013, and he is excited about the College's planned Fine and Performing Arts program to be introduced in 2014.

"This will fill a need," he said. "I would love to establish a rigorous studio arts option at PCCC. "I've had some very talented students here and would like to see them have the opportunity to develop their talents in a comprehensive arts program."

Yet the artist/professor values the well-rounded approach to life and education that he enjoyed, and he wants the same for his students. "I encourage them to see art in everything they do," he said.

Recognizing that some students may wonder if art is an economically practical career choice, Dunn says, "There's nothing wrong with having a Plan B, but I always say if you do what you love, you will be fulfilled and richer than you could ever imagine."

Read About Professor Dunn in the News