

Dartmouth Artist-in-Residence Eric van Hove Highlights an Intersection of Cultures in New Exhibition



Eric van Hove: The Craft of Art was organized by the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, and the Studio Art Department under the auspices of Dartmouth’s Artist-in-Residence Program. This intimate installation features van Hove’s breakout *V12 Laraki*, an exact but ornate replica of the S-600 Mercedes-Benz V12 engine, along with six ancillary components of the engine, including the newly created *V12 Gearbox*. The museum is also pleased to

present a public discussion between Eric van Hove and Ugochukwu-Smooth Nzewi, Curator of African Art at the Hood Museum of Art, titled “Contemporary Artistic Practice and Nomadism,” on Thursday, April 28, at 5:00 P.M. in the Hood Auditorium, followed by a reception in the lower lobby of the Hanover Inn.

Nzewi, who coordinated *The Craft of Art* with the artist-in-residence, states, “Eric van Hove is an artist who seeks to highlight the intersection of cultures, and his visit to Dartmouth offers students an excellent opportunity to interact with him and to gain critical insight on how art, craft, design, and engineering overlap.”

Recently acquired by the museum, *V12 Laraki* was inspired by the story of Moroccan entrepreneur and designer Abdeslam Laraki, who in 2004 created the Laraki Fulgra, a high-performance sports car built entirely from local materials to help stimulate a homegrown car-manufacturing industry. Unfortunately, Laraki could not produce the car’s engine locally and had to import a Mercedes-Benz V12 engine from Germany. With his work here, van Hove helps Laraki to complete his vision but offers much more as well. Produced in collaboration with several dozen Moroccan craftsmen, *V12 Laraki* and these accompanying sculptures showcase van Hove’s ingenuity and the brilliance of millennium-old Maghreb craftsmanship. In van Hove’s own words: “The meeting of art and craft has always interested me. . . . This engine is a heart. It beats from the hope, the history, the substance, and the heritage of the people who dedicated themselves to it.”

The engine and engine parts reflect van Hove’s abiding interest in bridging cultures and disparate traditions. In the souks, or marketplaces, of old medinas such as Fez, Casablanca, Rabat, and Marrakech, the *savior-faire* of Moroccan craftsmanship is evident in elaborate leatherwork, embroidery, ornate rugs, tiles, furniture, and jewelry. Similarly, the works of arabesque perfection on view here were meticulously handcrafted using different indigenous techniques and a wide range of traditional materials sourced from around Morocco.

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Van Hove remarks, “After working on these two separate sculptures, a replica of a complete 6.2L V12 Mercedes engine and its automatic gear box, for over two years with nearly fifty master Moroccan craftsmen, this is the first time I have seen them together in the same exhibition. I am thrilled that they are now reunited in the Hood Museum of Art’s collection. More importantly, I am so pleased that generations of students from around the world coming to Dartmouth will have the opportunity to see the sculptures.”

Eric van Hove was born in Guelma, Algeria. His early childhood in Yaoundé, the capital city of Cameroon in central Africa, left a lasting impression and a love for the continent of Africa. In 2001, van Hove earned a B.A. from École de Recherche Graphique, Brussels. This was followed by master’s and doctoral degrees in classical Japanese calligraphy from the Tokyo Gakudei University, Tokyo, in 2005 and 2008, respectively. He currently moves between Brussels and Marrakech, Morocco, where he has his art studio. Van Hove has developed a cosmopolitan consciousness that shapes his artistic practice. He works in multiple genres and with a range of media, including installation, performance, writing, photography, video, and sculpture. His creative interventions reflect a nomadic willingness to address local contexts but with frames of reference that manifest universal truths.

This exhibition was generously supported by the Artist-in-Residence Program’s Nathan W. Pearson ’32 and Sons Fund. Additional support was provided by the Hood Museum of Art’s William B. Jaffe and Evelyn A. Hall Fund.

About the Hood Museum of Art

The mission of the Hood Museum of Art, as a teaching museum, is to create an ideal learning environment that fosters transformative encounters with works of art. This dynamic educational and cultural facility houses one of the oldest and largest college collections in the country, with more than 70,000 objects acquired since 1772. Among its most important works are six Assyrian stone reliefs that date from around 900 BCE. The collection also presents art from other ancient cultures, the Americas, Europe, Africa, Papua New Guinea, and many more regions of the world. The Hood seeks to inspire and educate through direct engagement with original works of art and offers access to the rich diversity of its collections through ongoing highlights displays, special exhibitions, an online collections database, and a wide array of programs and events.

About Dartmouth

Founded in 1769, Dartmouth is a member of the Ivy League and consistently ranks among the world’s greatest colleges and universities. Dartmouth has forged a singular identity for combining its deep commitment to outstanding undergraduate liberal arts and graduate and professional education with distinguished research and scholarship in the arts and sciences and its three leading professional schools—the Geisel School of Medicine, Thayer School of Engineering, and the Tuck School of Business.

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Image caption: Dartmouth students in *Eric van Hove: The Craft of Art*, on view in Jaffe-Friede Gallery, Hopkins Center. Photo by Alison Palizzolo.

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