

Shervone Neckles

Workspace Program 2021

DIEU /
DONNE /

Interdisciplinary artist Shervone Neckles draws on her Grenadian background to explore personal and cultural memory. Incorporating sensorially evocative materials into her practice, including textured fabrics, cast personal objects, and foods, Neckles' work takes on an emotional weight that is rooted in historical events.

At Dieu Donn , Neckles experimented with incorporating ingredients from family recipes into her work, mixing food into paper pulp and embedding it onto paper base sheets. The resulting works reveal both expected and unanticipated results, including brightly saturated paper colors extracted from raw ingredients, or dried beans that sprouted while sitting in channels of wet pulp. In bringing these familial recipes into new forms, Neckles translates important personal and cultural stories, relationships, and memories into contemporary narratives.

Memory Works are handmade paper that contains ingredients from Grenadian family recipes. As though preparing a meal, I chop, measure, and combine all the elements, puree them, and then mix them with pulp to transform them into paper works. These recipes are like heirlooms, passed down matrilineally. The vibrant colors come from pumpkin soup, hearty Grenadian stews, leafy green vegetables like callaloo, and dasheen, which are layered on top of one another like Josef Albers' Homage to the Square.

The history of my family's home country is reflected by these ingredients: from its first Amerindian inhabitants who cultivated the vegetation of the land, to enslaved West Africans in the 18th century who brought traditional stews and one-pot meals, to the golden spices of turmeric and saffron introduced by South Asian indentured migrants in the 19th century. The ingredients also tell the story of who I am and where I come from; they recount my family's history as we migrated from Grenada to the United States. In the US, the ingredients we were accustomed to became more scarce and we instead had to improvise with what was available.

The textural works recall the multisensory experience of my mother, aunts, and grandmothers preparing meals during my girlhood. The tastes and smells of these dishes are captured in the fibers of the paper. Like indexical recipes, these works form an archive of my family's traditions. The intuitiveness and expression that I learned in my family's kitchen is now part of my artmaking practice: the preparation, sourcing of materials or ingredients, improvisation, concentration, and experimentation. -Shervone Neckles



Top: Shervone Neckles, *Untitled (Pepper Pot)*, Mixed media pigmented cotton, scotch bonnet pepper, black eye peas, pureed dasheen leaves, green plantain, channa peas, pumpkin, turmeric, saffron, oil down seasoning and fabric trimming, 30 1/2 x 22 x 1/2 inches

Bottom: Shervone Neckles, *Untitled (Morning Porridge) (detail)*, Mixed media pigmented cotton with pureed yellow banana, sweet potato, batata, bulgar wheat, powdered milk, and grated nutmeg, casted paper and fabric trimming, 31 1/2 x 24 x 1/2 inches

About the Artist

Shervone Neckles is an interdisciplinary artist, educator, community worker, and artist advocate, who uses repurposed materials and Afro-Caribbean sensibilities to retell histories and mythologies. By embellishing textiles, assemblage, printmaking, sculpture, and installation, Neckles connects the sacred and scientific, the past and the present, and life with the afterlife. Her work has been shown worldwide in both group and solo exhibitions such as Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art at Snug Harbor, Staten Island, NY; Morris Museum, Morristown, NJ; For Colored Girls Museum, Philadelphia, PA; and Weeksville Heritage Center, Brooklyn, NY as well as internationally in places like New Delhi, India, Queensland, Australia, and Rome, Italy. In 2019, she was featured as part of the Venice Biennale's Grenada Pavilion. She has also participated in residencies internationally including the Youlou Arts Foundation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, WI; Dieu Donn e Workspace Residency, NY; Wave Hill, NY; Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, FL; The Elizabeth Foundation's SHIFT Program, NY; The Center for Book Arts, NY; The Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, ME,

among others. Previous awards include grants from The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Queens Council on the Arts, Foundation for Contemporary Art, Puffin Foundation, Joan Mitchell Foundation, and fellowships from Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop and Manhattan Graphic Center. Her work has been written about in publications including Artnet, Brooklyn Rail, BOMB, Hyperallergic, Huffington Post, and New York Times. In 2020-2022, she presented her public art installation BEACON with Beam Center at Lewis Latimer House Museum, Queens, NY and, funded by Downtown Brooklyn Public Art Commission, at Fulton Plaza, Brooklyn, NY. In 2022, she has a forthcoming solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Jacksonville, FL and, in 2023, a solo exhibition at Engage Projects in Chicago, IL.

About Dieu Donn e

Dieu Donn e is a leading cultural institution dedicated to serving established and emerging artists through the collaborative creation of contemporary art using the process of hand papermaking.

About the Workspace Program

Established in 1990, the Workspace Program offers annual residencies to New York State emerging artists to create new work in handmade paper. The primary goals of this program are to encourage emerging artists to explore the creative possibilities of handmade paper and to develop this art form through a process of collaboration and experimentation. The Workspace Program is presented to the public through an annual exhibition of works produced in this residency program, as well as through print, digital, and online formats. For more information about the Workspace Program, or to learn how to apply, visit www.dieudonne.org.

Support

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Shervone Neckles working in the Dieu Donn e studio, 2021.



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