Cedarville Review Artist Spotlight: Miranda Dyson

Miranda Dyson
Cedarville University, mdyson@cedarville.edu

DigitalCommons@Cedarville provides a publication platform for fully open access journals, which means that all articles are available on the Internet to all users immediately upon publication. However, the opinions and sentiments expressed by the authors of articles published in our journals do not necessarily indicate the endorsement or reflect the views of DigitalCommons@Cedarville, the Centennial Library, or Cedarville University and its employees. The authors are solely responsible for the content of their work. Please address questions to dc@cedarville.edu.

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/cedarvillereview/vol19/iss1/1
Cedarville Review Artist Spotlight: Miranda Dyson

Browse the contents of this issue of Cedarville Review.

Keywords
Cedarville, art, poetry, Miranda Dyson

Creative Commons License
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License.

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/cedarvillereview

Part of the Art and Design Commons, and the Poetry Commons

This interview is available in Cedarville Review: https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/cedarvillereview/vol19/iss1/1
Tell us about yourself. How did you learn about Cedarville?

I learned about Cedarville because my parents were married students and came here. My older sister came here, and I got to know about Cedarville through her program and visiting her. Raised in Massachusetts, and I'm a Studio Art major.

Who has had the biggest influence on you as an artist?

I think I would start with family first and say, my mom. I was not really interested in art for a long time as a career. Mom and I did crafty things, building stuff for gardens or decorating for events. So, I think practically my mom is a really big part of that because she was always the one who was doing those things and teaching me how to do them.

How do your gifts of poetry and visual art inspire one another?

Both are really interesting in that I didn't know that I was geared that way for a long time. With writing specifically, I didn't even realize how much I loved writing until I got to college and

MIRANDA DYSON

INTERVIEW BY NATHAN ROBERTSON
realized that everyone hated speech class and I loved it, everyone hated composition and I thought it was great, and Western Lit was really exciting for me. Then I had the opportunity to take a creative writing class, and I absolutely loved it and didn’t realize how comfortable I would get in that. There are some things that I try to communicate in one that it’s just better. Sometimes I try to make something visually, but it’s way easier for me to just write it out. I think they influence each other in that I will write something to try and process what to do visually. So in order to brainstorm for something visually creative, I’ll write it out. They aren’t super separated for me. You’re always describing visual pieces with words, and then you’re using words to create a picture.

Do you have a preferred medium?

I would say within the last few years I realized how much I love working in 3-D, so it’s not any one particular medium. Everyone always asks, “What’s your particular medium?” I’ll say, “Something that stands off the table.” I really am comfortable using my hands. I think I figured that out even in my working in the theater. I work with Tim Phipps building sets, and I started working on that even before I declared my major in art. That was something that went from, “Oh, that just sounds like a lot of fun,” to, “Oh, I actually love doing this,” and just getting that experience. So, my favorite would be anything I can physically touch and things that are pliable. I love creating organic forms, making things that look natural, that will look like they’re in motion.

How has your love of the arts impacted your effectiveness as a leader on campus?

I think there are different lessons that you learn in making art. So maybe not specifically, “I like clay. Now I’m a leader.” When you’re making art something that I’ve seen is, you can’t isolate yourself and always have your guard up. Be willing to be open and show people what you’re thinking visually or through words. That’s something that directly correlates to leadership. On my committee, how do I show them what I’m thinking? How do I convey that in a way that they can understand? And how am I also able to be vulnerable in sharing? I love seeing how art can relate to community, and seeing how I can create interactive pieces that encourage people to think and have a conversation. A lot of
my pieces come out of conversations that I have with people. So I'll talk to someone at Coffee and Community, and that could be something that influences an art piece that I am working on. I've seen that conversations I'm having are always fueling what I'm making. A lot of what I do on SGA is about learning how to connect people together who wouldn't normally be interacting. How do you show different points of view? That's something that I really love about Coffee and Community. It's all about sharing each other's opinion. A lot of what I do in art is conveying my view to you and figuring out, "How do we work through the fact that we see things differently and still try and find common ground?"

**Family and personal stories seem to play heavily in your artwork; why and how do you incorporate those aspects of your life?**

I think there's an aspect of just being honest and showing what your experiences are. Literally everyone says that, but then when you figure that out yourself, it's like, "Oh wow, this is incredible." What I am personally going through and the people that I'm personally interacting with is a huge part of who I am and what I think about on a daily basis. Who I talk to when I'm processing those ideas, are a huge part of who I am. With my portrait paintings, in particular, I loved being able to finally realize that art becomes so much better when you're enjoying it. And these are literally the people that I enjoy the most. So why wouldn't I make that the topic? Because that's something that is so close to me. That's been part of my life forever and the people that I open up the most to. I think just getting comfortable with saying, "My ordinary is worth exploring, and it's worth trying to articulate." My poem about hair is about as ordinary as it gets. So I think finding things that are ordinary to me is really interesting to flesh out because I can see how it relates to other people and how different it is from other people's ordinary. I have different conceptual pieces as well that are not just related to family but really specific topics and issues. It can be tempting to gravitate towards those to say, "Look, I care about something super deep and super weighty and thoughtful." I'm trying to not reach for something lofty just for the sake of being lofty. That's something that my poetry classes have taught just as much as my art classes. Instead of trying to do something that's super grand and really impressive and for the sake of looking brilliant, let's just grapple
with ordinary and dive into something that you are familiar with. Because I am not familiar with anything lofty, so it comes across as being fake. If you’re trying to be real, then going after fake things isn’t going to end up being impressive.
DAILY BREAD

I bow, asking for daily bread,
Eyeing the clock’s moving hands, sure tomorrow’s bread is going stale already.
Clenching the invisible, the unreal, the unpromised,
My knuckles turn white, muscling the imaginary, willing it to be true.
I’m fairly certain it could/might/probably/ought to be here. Now.
“Today” is when I want to embrace what I want. But I know,
I’ll always have what I need...what I need...what I need...
Carrying rock-solid provisions, my fingers grasp
After wispy possibilities.
Drawing outlines in my mind, I make room for it
At my desk, or in my bank, or on my left hand.
The thoughts that leave rubber tracks in my mind keep circling.
Only long stares at today’s bread halt restlessness.
Holy distractions lovingly placed,
Beautiful detours to today,
To the bread on my table.
My fingers tear the golden crust,
And steam escapes towards my face.
I bite into my piece, dripping with oil,
And taste the truth that
I have what I need.
What I
Need.
MICHAELA
SNAGGED

Something snagged my hair
A stranger’s hand releases a curl.
Smiling eyes study and stare,
Fascinated fingers ruffle and twirl.

A stranger’s hand releases a curl,
I usually smile and ask for their name.
Fascinated fingers ruffle and twirl,
They complain their hair is too tame.

I usually smile and ask for their name.
“It’s easy to find you in a crowd.”
They complain their hair is too tame,
“Natural hair? You must be proud.”

“It’s easy to find you in a crowd.”
“Does it do that by itself?”
“Natural hair? You must be proud.”
“I wish I could have some of your hair myself.”
“Does it do that by itself?”
Poodles have my sympathy.
“I wish I could have some of your hair myself.”
Some compliments come timidly.

Poodles have my sympathy.
“Is it okay to say I like your hair?”
Some compliments come timidly,
Sometimes with a side-long stare.

“Is it okay to say I like your hair?”
A conversation starts turning,
Sometimes with a side-long stare,
Just because someone snagged my hair.
OUR GARDEN

I cover my mouth, my hand
Prevents sharp words from shooting out.
Afraid of scars unplanned.

Why jab, ruffle or upend?
Surrounded by silence, that safe, covering clout.
I cover my mouth, my hand

Picks a white daisy where we’ve gardened.
Why expose weeds that sprout?
Afraid of scars unplanned.

A hedge between me and my friend,
My words are clouds, throwing shadows of doubt.
I cover my mouth, my hand
Halts honesty, our garden’s drought won’t end.
But thundering words have flooded, doused,
Afraid of scars unplanned.

I don’t want grass-stains as my friendship demands
In stifling silence I’m urged to shout!
I cover my mouth, my hand
Shows fear of scars unplanned.
MAIDA SPRINGER KEMP
ODE TO SHARPIES

You sit behind my right ear while I think.
You faithfully collect my thoughts
in black and white bubbles.
I hear your nib squeak out instructions in bullet points,
bold lines shout importance.
You give a page highlighted adventures,
with my orange dragon eating purple fish.
You climb vertical mountains to dot my i’s,
and belay into valleys of calligraphy.
Thank you for adding flowers to notes for my roommate.
For being the legal graffiti at summer camp.
I always enjoy our experiments with temporary tattoos,
When your tip drags across my ankle.
More patient than a pen, you’re determined, visual glue.  
You mark cardboard boxes and mirrors, the corner of my couch,  
and my previously favorite shirt. I’ll forgive you for that.  
You follow my rocky paths of creativity, and lead  
color-coded expeditions.  
We would’ve been friends forever.  
But once I laid you on a desk instead of behind my ear.  
Exposed, someone else snatched you up,  
a thief of dragons and flowers and tattoos.  
Now you’re writing in another hand,  
I hope my fingers won’t be empty forever.
ROLLING HILLS

ARTIST SPOTLIGHTS: MIRANDA DYSON | 69