‘Fascinating’ pairings
Malian images, design exhibits come to Dorsky Museum
Events are often said to occur in threes ... sometimes even exhibition openings.


“The pairing is fascinating,” says Derin Tanyol, interim museum curator, of the dual Malian photography exhibits that give a glimpse into the people of this West African nation and their culture. “Malian Portrait Photography” features black-and-white staged studio works of five photographers, primarily from the 1960s and '70s.

“The backgrounds, such as airports and mosques, are almost purposefully false-looking,” says Tanyol. “And there’s interesting harmony and disharmony between them and the wild patterns on the clothing of the people photographed.”

The Malian people are also the subject of “Photo-Rapide,” but in a more impromptu – and colorful – manner. François Deschamps, who teaches photography and related media at SUNY New Paltz, visited Mali in 2011 on a Fulbright grant with the intent of teaching photography.

“Instead, he decided to travel,” says Tanyol. With a digital camera and printer in tow, he’d let his subjects first view and then choose the photo they favored. He’d then give them a print, sealing the photographer-client relationship.

“There was no exchange of money,” she says. “This was done in the style of journalistic spontaneity.”

The second exhibition, “The Dorsky Collects,” features some 58 artworks from all across the globe in media that ranges from sculptures to prints. These were selected from the more than 1,000 pieces donated over the past five years, largely from collectors, dealers and the artists themselves to continue their legacy.

“We wouldn’t exist without the generosity of our donors,” says Tanyol. “It’s a great opportunity to see how diverse our collection is.”

The entire collection is about 5,500 objects, she says, reflecting a six-decade commitment to building a significant permanent collection based on quality.

“The acquisition committee meets a few times a year,” she says.

Finally, “Russel Wright: The Nature of Design” is a continuation of the show that opened in the fall.

Wright was an industrial designer who worked primarily in ceramics and metal. His home, Manitoga, is in Garrison, just south of Cold Spring, and is a national historic landmark available to tour by appointment.

“There are 57 pieces in ceramic, metal and furnishings,” Tanyol says of the works done between 1945 and '68 that have garnered great comments from the public, possibly because their connecting theme, which was one of Wright’s most pervasive preoccupations and is still relevant today: the relationship of humankind with the natural world.

Although the exhibits open to the public on Wednesday, the opening reception is not until Feb. 2.

“That’s when you should come if you want cheese, crackers and a crowd,” says Tanyol.

IF YOU GO!


When: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Wed.-Sun., opening Jan. 23. Opening reception 5-7 p.m. Feb. 2

Where: Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, SUNY New Paltz, 1 Hawk Drive, New Paltz

Price: Donations suggested

Call: 257-3844

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