

Art Student Has International Acclaim

By Sade Ortuzar



One of her paintings sold for \$1,000. She won top honors at a national art competition in Jamaica. Her solo exhibition attracted more than 200 people.

Just 22, artist Laura-Anne Fung is already making a name for herself in the art world and at Adelphi University, where she's a senior.

Most recently, her 40" x 40" painting entitled, "City Map," was displayed during the summer at Bloomingdales in Garden City's Roosevelt Field Mall. The painting depicts her abstract version of New York City. It's one of about 150 abstract paintings she's created in her young career.

"Vibrant" is how she describes her painting style. "It is colorful, energetic and playful," Fung said.

A painting typically takes anywhere from a couple of hours to a few days to finish. Using oil paint, she carefully blends the bright colors together forming abstract images that depict a story and express emotion. Primary colors, such as red, yellow and blue, are personal favorites of hers and often used in her work. Fung says her hometown Kingston, Jamaica, inspires her work.

"It's not like New York where everyone is on the go, no one says hi," said Fung, who returns to Jamaica during school breaks to visit her parents and older brother. "There, it is warm literally and metaphorically."

It is also where Fung got her start in art. After watching a child prodigy show as an

adolescent, she recalls, "I felt the need to create something."

"I didn't have paint; I had crayons," she said. "Then I just remember having paint and canvas. My parents noticed that I liked being creative, and they started buying supplies for me."

Soon, others began to take notice of her talent.

In her teens, she submitted artworks for the Jamaica Culture Development National Art Competition, winning a gold medal one year and attracting many fans.

"It stuck with me that I was 'Laura the artist,'" Fung said.

Olympia Gallery, widely considered one of Kingston's top places to exhibit art, invited Fung, then 17, to be a part of a group show. Interest in her work continued to build. A year later, Grosvenor Galleries gave her a solo exhibition, which attracted about 200 people. "The gallery never had a turnout like that," Fung said.

According to "Tallawah," a monthly magazine that covers Jamaican culture, the exhibition was a big success. "The work on display was bold, exhibiting bright brush strokes; but perhaps equally impressive was the launch itself," wrote Karen Hutchinson, who reviewed the show. "The decor, the pricing, and the art itself all hinted at a personality worth learning more about."

During exhibits, she sold paintings for \$150 to \$1,000. The priciest painting featured an acrylic canvas and was called "Elizabeth."

Despite her early success, Fung still recognized she had much to learn. Thus, in August 2011 she accepted an art scholarship to attend Adelphi, where she majors in art and minors in business management and art history. Since arriving on campus, she has dazzled professors.

"Laura has natural ability at painting," said Kellyann Monaghan, an art history professor. "She has a facile and fluid hand for painting. She also has a strong eye for color and composition. I think her strongest work so far is in landscape and still-lives."

Jennifer Maloney, an art professor who taught Fung's study abroad course, described her as an ambitious student. "Laura is a determined young artist, she takes risks and experiments. She is very driven and motivated," she said.

Fung said Maloney's course in Florence, Italy, inspired her to take her artistic talent in new directions.

"The architecture was amazing, especially the Brunelleschi's Dome," said Fung. "I might go back to undergrad and get an associate's degree for architecture. Since I am artistic and I like math and physics, it will go well together."

