

TONYA DEE

Artist

Sharon Louden Internship- 'Community' Installation Reflection

July 18, 2014

Reflection of *Community* Installation at the Asheville Art Museum, July 2014

I met Sharon Louden on the second day of installation and she enthusiastically set the tone for the installation. On day one there were questions for the fire marshal regarding the proximity of the installation to the sprinkler system, which is a great point to keep in mind for future projects as an artist.

Go here. Hang this. Hang that. Don't ding. It's fine. I'm fine. No ding.

These were the phrases we all kept repeating to each other throughout the installation process.

I saw the nature of the aluminum fight against our will to control the outcome. I witnessed the birth of a reflecting organic composition. Sharon worked with the material as an extension of herself. She would place the material with such persistence and vigor.

I was fortunate enough to earn Sharon's trust in taking on what seemed impossible at the time. Standing on a 12-foot ladder, drilling through aluminum sheets without dinging them is not an easy task to take on. Sharon had faith in me, without even knowing me. I learned a lot about myself as an artist and with her encouragement I gained confidence in assisting her.

Aesthetically, Sharon's *Community* installation reminds me of artists Julie Mehrtu and Eva Hesse. The intricate matrix of lines in Julie Mehrtu is cross-pollinated with Eva Hesse's raw body reference in the 3rd dimension. The reflective marks she makes with the aluminum in midair remind me of hair, which is also evident in past installations such as the *Attendees*.

As a beginning artist, I am confounded by Sharon's illuminate nature, not only through her personable and upbeat character, but *Community* reflects her positivity and fervor for the arts. As the installation progressed, the other volunteers and I created an inseparable camaraderie. We loved working with Sharon on this beautiful installation for the Asheville Art Museum. The title *Community* is perfect because it not only reflects Asheville's aspirations for a thriving art collective, but also gave the opportunity for local artists/art enthusiasts to collaborate.

The opportunity to work with Sharon Louden has proved to be a life altering experience. Not only did she allow us to help her with the installation process, but also Sharon mentored us with our own personal career goals. I am and will be forever indebted to her guidance.