

Devco captures process

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Published: 1/31/2005

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The appearance of the University's newest residence hall is being shaped through the talents of some of its students.

To make plans for Rockoff Hall more "apartment-like," the New Brunswick Development Corporation - a nonprofit organization that works with the city to create redevelopment projects - commissioned two Mason Gross School of the Arts photographers to take photos of the under-construction residence hall and offer the community their view of the city.

"The project is actually quite unique," said Jamie Lyn Davis, one of the photographers and a graduate student.

"I, along with fellow photographer Deborah Bowie, was asked to shoot my interpretation of New Brunswick in my own style," said Davis, whose work mainly consists of color landscape and architectural studies.

When authorities decided to make the University's Rockoff Hall different from traditional student housing, "we thought that partnership with Mason Gross was the obvious choice," Devco President Chris Paladino, said.

After speaking with Mason Gross Dean George Stauffer, Paladino said a proposal was put into place that included a display of the photographers' work.

Under the proposal, "[The Mason Gross art gallery] will have a show in the spring, called 'Images of New Brunswick and Rutgers,' where there will be exhibits on portraits of people and places in New Brunswick and [at] Rutgers," Paladino said.

Davis and Bowie's art will be part of the show.

"After editing many rolls of film, we hope to include at least 100 images in the project," Davis said. "Though Deborah and I shoot very different artistically, we try and work



Media Credit: Courtesy of Jamie Lyn Davis

Rockoff Hall, above, plans to show artist renditions of the building's construction progress. The residence hall will open in September.

from a sincere place that really represents a community. Our styles really balance."

Not only will their photography be on display at the Mason Gross gallery, but since Davis and Bowie took photographs at Rockoff Hall, their art will also be displayed there when it opens.

"It is our hope that our images not only decorate a building but really represent the New Brunswick community," Davis said.

"[The photos] will serve as part of the public art in the building," Paladino said.

Paladino said the project was really open to Davis' and Bowie's interpretation of the city surrounding them.

"There is no reason to stifle the creativity," he said. "We did not limit them. We had images of people that work and live in New Brunswick and places."

The only thing requested of the photographers was a multi-seasonal project to include fall, winter and spring, Paladino said.

Davis also said she hopes her art will help make the residence hall more of a home than an apartment for students.

"The idea to make this dorm a place that people actually respect and want to live is a smart one," Davis said. "This is not going to be your typical cinder-block dorm, but [instead], a place people want to come home to."

Devco commissioned the work and gave the students a budget to pay for materials, Paladino said.

"We tried to really involve the students," Paladino said. "We had students help pick out designs and furniture, and we held focus groups to discuss student life."

Both Paladino and Davis said they hope this project is another way of uniting the University with its surrounding community.

"This was another way to involve the University community in partnership," Paladino said. "Some of the stuff [the photographers] did in the fall was really quite good," he said, calling Davis and Bowie "very talented women."

"Everyone participating in this project hopes that this makes the bond between Rutgers, the arts community and Devco even stronger," Davis said.

"There is so much talent at the University, and we think this is a great opportunity to highlight their talents," Paladino said. "Maybe next time we will use sculpture or different mediums."