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Monday, March 11th, 2013

International Women's Day Book Signing

Michael Sciandra

On Wednesday, March 6, four women authors came to Purchase to celebrate International Women's Day with a book signing for their collaborative book, "Still Here Thinking of You."

"The attendance was a nice turnout like I expected," said Vicki Adesso, an alumni of Purchase and one of the authors of the book. "I graduated as an Art History Major in 85, and worked in the Neuberger for seven years. I'm very happy to see some students like myself in the audience."

Adesso, along with fellow authors Susan Hodara, Lori Toppel and Joan Potter, were hosted by Kathleen McCormick, professor of literature, the Purchase Writer's Center and the Purchase Literature Society. Their book is a collective memoir in which the authors each tell of the lives of their mothers and how they all grew as writers and as women from the experiences depicted.

"Each story remains distinctive from one another in content, but close to one another in spirit," said McCormick, introducing the writer's to the audience of 22 cumulative students, faculty, and staff. "You will learn so much about the tensions and contradictions that women faced, and even more about these authors, from reading their memoirs."

After their introduction, each author read a short excerpt from their individual sections of the book, followed by questions from the audience, ranging from the most specific questions to their experiences with their mothers to their broadest experiences as female writers.

"We all did this for our own reasons," said Toppel when asked about why she and the fellow authors decided on a collaborative piece. "As for me personally, my mother was difficult and demanding, but through my memoirs I find a place of peace with her."

"We were careful in the beginning, solely sharing our writing," said Potter when asked about the experience behind writing a collaborative book, "but in the six years we've known each other, sharing experiences and bonding over our memories of our mothers, we became friends."

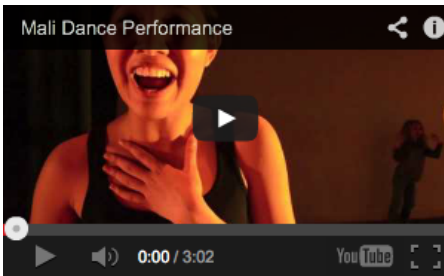
"I always sought out females that were much more responsive and nurturing than my mother," said Hodara, reflecting on how close the group had grown through this novel. "I found nurture with telling my memoirs in this book, and even more in this group."

After the Q&A was over, the authors sat for a signing as well as a less formal chat with the members of the audience.

"I thought the authors were really engaging," said Stephanie Bartolome, a junior creative writing major and president of the Literature Society. "Their experiences and advice gave me many ideas for after college, or more specifically for when I don't have groups to immediately go to for workshops."

"It was a very grounding experience," said Arden Donahue, a senior literature major. "It made me think about my own experience with my mother as well as my relationship with people because of her."

"I thought their stories were very thought provocative," says Hannah Babcock, a junior literature major and anthropology minor. "Their different experiences say so much about mothers in general."



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