

ARTISTS JUDY ANDERSON AND KEVIN DE FOREST ON EXPECTATIONS, THE PLEASURES OF READING ON THE SUBWAY, AND THEIR 2016 ISCP RESIDENCY



This past spring, the MacKenzie Art Gallery and Creative Saskatchewan sent artist Judy Anderson to the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) in New York. Anderson's residency marks the second year these partners have sent a Saskatchewan artist to this renowned international residency following that of 2015 resident artist Zachari Logan.

Judy Anderson is a Cree artist from Gordon First Nation and holds a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) from the University of Regina. Anderson works in a variety of media, including painting, sound, installation, and beadwork, as well as various community engagement projects. As their residencies drew to a close, Anderson spoke with artist and Manitoba Arts Council-sponsored ISCP resident Kevin deForest, who is based in Brandon, about expectations, museum hopping, and the pleasures of reading on the subway.

How was your New York experience in terms of your expectations?

Judy Anderson: I knew there was going to be plenty of art to look at but I was blown away by the amount of art and being able to see art not generally shown at home.

Kevin deForest: I was often surprised at how helpful people could be in general. So the New York experience was not like being on a Seinfeld episode. I was also a bit shocked at how some artists and curators were like a parody or caricature of themselves when speaking about artwork in public forums.

What have you enjoyed the most at ISCP?

KD: Studio time. The staff is really engaged and concerned for the residents. Some really friendly, interesting artists and curators from Europe, Asia, and Canada who make it fun to be there.

JA: The day before Open Studio ISCP has a lunch for the artists in residence and the staff. Following lunch, all studio doors are open so that we can look at each other's art. I absolutely loved this experience because the art is strong and varied and it affirms your own place within the art world.

What have you enjoyed the most at ISCP?

KD: Studio time. The staff is really engaged and concerned for the residents. Some really friendly, interesting artists and curators from Europe, Asia, and Canada who make it fun to be there.

JA: The day before Open Studio ISCP has a lunch for the artists in residence and the staff. Following lunch, all studio doors are open so that we can look at each other's art. I absolutely loved this experience because the art is strong and varied and it affirms your own place within the art world.

What has been your best experience in New York?

KD: Hanging out with friends. Doing everyday stuff is so much more fun and sometimes magical.

JA: Instead of the best I'll share the funniest: Carmine's Pizza delivery person yelling "YUCK" at us as we carried our Tony's Pizza boxes; and a cashier asking us where we were from and then saying, "that's why you are so nice."

Was the residency a confidence-booster for you? Can you explain which experiences contributed to this and how?

KD: I went into a mild panic setting up for the open studio. But in the end I went back into my work and realized there was something worthwhile there to present. The residency is also a great opportunity to meet folks from all over who are going through similar issues in terms of defining themselves in relation to their respective art communities. It's really interesting to hear out some of these conversations and realize the commonalities as well as the differences. That was a confidence builder for me.

JA: Two things boosted my confidence – open studio and the visiting curators/critics. It's true that not everyone will like your art, but here when they do like it they will tell you.

What advice would you give to the next ISCP resident from your region?

JA: Get in on as many studio visits as possible and make a list of the art you want to see. Although everyone is working behind closed doors it is easy to make friends. Bring two really good pair of shoes. Or just one and buy two more!

KD: And have a good plan for what to present at open studios. Outside of that event, it's really up to you in terms of how you want to spend your time. I was keen to be in the studio again, which is always weighed against trying to keep up with all the events and "must-sees", which are never ending. The best experiences I've had are about being in an everyday routine and not trying to see and do it all.

Pick one piece of art that you saw in New York that brought you to your knees. Okay, you can pick three.

KD: Rashaad Newsome – ICON (video installation at the Studio Museum Harlem); Marcel Broodthaers – film loop at MOMA retrospective; Cindy Sherman – Untitled (purple dress) at Mary Boone.

JA: Rodney McMillan exhibition (Studio Museum Harlem); Mark Dion's "The Library for the Birds of New York and other Marvels" (Tanya Bonakdar Gallery); Courtney M Leonard's "Beach #2" at Parrish Art Museum (she is from the Shinnecock Indian Nation and this was the only contemporary Native American artwork that I saw).

Is there something you might miss from your time (at ISCP)?

JA: In no particular order: The art, the people, the food and the studio space.

KD: The reading time on the subway.

Judy Anderson is a Cree artist from the Gordon First Nation who works in multi-media including painting, installation, hand-made paper, sound, community engagement, three-dimensional work, and beadwork. Her practice is based upon family, family issues, the personal, graffiti, representations of Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal spirituality. Judy holds a BA (Hons) and a BFA from the University of Saskatchewan, and a MFA from the University of Regina. She is a Faculty member at the First Nations University of Canada where she teaches both Studio and Indian History, and teaches at the Masters level for the Visual Arts department at the University of Regina.

Kevin Ei-ichi deForest's practice is concerned with the representation of hybrid identity with a focus on his Eurasian heritage. He received his BFA from the University of Manitoba in 1986 and his MFA from Concordia University in 1993. He also studied at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam from 1989 to 1991 and received a Monbusho scholarship to study at Kyoto Seika University from 1997 to 1998.

Recent selected solo exhibitions include *The Estevan Art Gallery and Museum* (upcoming 2018), *Lantern Gallery, Winnipeg* (2015), *Galerie Glendon, York University Toronto* (2010), *Chez le disquaire*, *La Maison des artistes, Winnipeg* (2010). Group exhibitions include *"Brenda Wallace: Passion and Panache"*, *McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario*, (2013), *"Sound and Vision"*, *Plug In ICA, Winnipeg, Manitoba* (2012), *"The Record: Contemporary Vinyl and Art"* - *Nasher Museum of Art, touring Boston ICA, Miami Art Museum, Henry Art Gallery, Seattle*, (2010 – 2012).

Kevin has received numerous production grants from the Manitoba Arts Council, Conseil des arts du Quebec and the Canada Council. He is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Visual and Aboriginal Art at Brandon University.