



Babiche 24

Art & Culture from the Dehcho & beyond...

An OSCS Publication . September 2011

THE 2011 OPEN SKY FESTIVAL

OPEN SKY FESTIVAL 2011

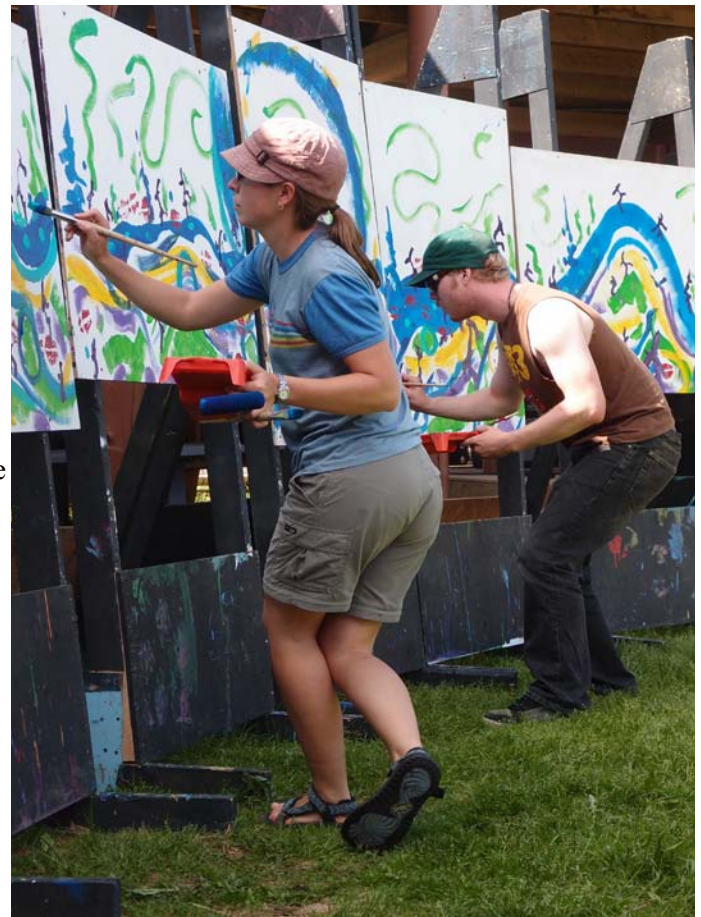
RECAP

Another year has gone by and another Open Sky Festival is in the books. Although it's become a mainstay on the NWT Festival Schedule, each year brings new challenges and opportunities for Fort Simpson's premier summer event.

The main bulk of the 2011 festivities ran from July 1st-3rd with some small events in the days preceding the festival proper. The first of these was the June 30th screening of a short film program curated by the Western Arctic Moving Pictures, the filmmaking cooperative in Yellowknife. The screening included 8 films created by filmmakers from across the north and helped display the wide variety of talented media artists practicing in the Territories today.

The festival officially began with the Opening Reception for the exhibition "Bulldog River Roll" an installation piece by visiting artist Steve DeBruyn. Mr. DeBruyn was brought from London, ON to be the featured artist for OSF 2011. With the help of several community volunteers as well as a lot of scrap material found around town, Steve spent the better part of a week building his "skateboard landscape" into the OSC Gallery. The Opening Night included a Chili Cookout fundraiser followed by a short artist talk. The event was attended by dozens of community members and was punctuated by more than a few children riding the ramps and enjoying the (very functional) art piece.

The main chunk of the festival took place on Saturday and Sunday June 2nd and 3rd and it included performances, workshops and demonstrations by contemporary and traditional artists from the region, the territory and beyond. This year the festival was able to attract participation from 6 Dehcho communities and we hope to build on this



Yellowknife's Borderless Art Movement Perform. (Photo C. Blyth)

trend into the future. Along with Steve Debruyne the line-up of artists featured at the festival included Linda Duford of Hay River, Helen Kotchea from Trout Lake, Diane Nelson from Fort Liard, Berna Matto of Fort Providence, Mary Neyelle, D'Arcy J. Moses & Darcy E. Moses of Wrigley, Tracy Brown & Betty Hardisty from Fort Simpson, and Valerie Conrad, Charissa Alain-Lilly, Patsy Krutko, Alison McCreesh, Patrice Tremblay, George Lessard & Diane Boudreau, from Yellowknife.



The Saturday events were held outdoors at the historic Liidlii Kue First Nation Papal Flats and included musical performances by; Lindsay Waugh (Ft. Simpson, NT), Randy Sibbeston (Ft. Simpson, NT), The Somewhere Something Band (Ft. Simpson, NT), Mary Caroline & Pike Mike (Yellowknife, NT), Tina Roy (Yellowknife, NT), The Fort Simpson Fiddlers & the musical/performance art hybrid Borderless Art Movement (Yellowknife, NT).

Festival audiences were also given the opportunity to participate in several technical workshops including; Comic Book Creation, Wire-Wrap Jewellery, Beginner Fiddling, Moosehair Tufting, Painting Local Birds, & Silk Painting. In addition we held the BioBlitz Digital Photography workshop in partnership with Parks Canada to help celebrate their centennial. The afternoon also included demonstrations of beading, jewellery making, hide smoking, painting and birch bark basketry. The day ended with the annual festival concert & dance fundraiser on Saturday night featuring performances by Sledge Hamster (Hay River, NT) & the expert fiddling of Linda Duford.

day ended with the annual festival concert & dance fundraiser on Saturday night featuring performances by Sledge Hamster (Hay River, NT) & the expert fiddling of Linda Duford.



Top: Moosehair Tufting Workshop with Lucy Simon of Jean Marie River (Photo by Michael Blyth); **Bottom Right:** Tina Roy of Yellowknife Performs (Photo by Michael Blyth); **Bottom Left:** Patrick Tate paints local birds (Photo by Kellie Myers).



The final day of the festival again featured various exhibitors & demonstrators as well as workshops in Natural Dyes, Intermediate Fiddle, Wet Felting, Quillwork, Skateboard Art & Beading a Feather. We also held a second Park Canada workshop entitled “Look, See, Paint”.

The festival came to a close on Sunday with a community feast and more performances by Mary Caroline & Pike Mike, Tina Roy, Kiwi North, The Somewhere Something Plan & Randy Sibbeston as well as a traditional Drum Dance performed by 10 drummers from around the Dehcho.

As in previous years the volunteer hours put in by community members was integral to the festivals success. This year we had 46 people pledge their time and in return Festival volunteers were offered admission to the dance, a 2011 festival t-shirt, & chances to win prizes.

All in all the festival went smoothly once again. The Open Sky Creative Society wants to thank all those who participated and we look forward to seeing you next year (and the year after... and the year after.)

Recap By Ryan Good



Top: Diane Nelson of Fort Liard teaches Silk Painting Workshop;
Middle: Community Members lineup for the Closing Feast and musical performances.
Bottom: Drumdancers from all around the Dehcho close out the festival;

(Photos by Michael Blyth)

AN ARTIST'S JOURNEY TO FORT SIMPSON

By Steve deBruyn

As part of the 2011 Open Sky Festival the OSCS brought in Skateboard Landscape Artist Steve deBruyn for 10 days to build an installation with the help of the community.

When I was contacted by the Open Sky Creative Society about the possibility of traveling to Ft. Simpson to participate in the Open Sky Festival I was quite surprised to say

the least. "Where is this place I've never heard of?" I thought and, of course, immediately decided that I must go. As an artist my work focuses a lot around the aesthetic and architecture of skateboarding; to wit: I make skate ramps and call them art. One might think that a small northern village in the Northwest Territories would have zero interest in what I basically spend all my time doing. After all, there is barely any asphalt there or what could be considered 'skate-able terrain'... or at least I thought that would be the case. They actually have a pretty decent little skate scene there and even a nice little skate park. They also have a thriving little art scene involving an interesting cast of characters. I'm pretty sure most of you who are reading this article will be familiar with Simpson so I will spare you all of those initial reactions I had which you already know about. It's a small place where things are very expensive that is infested with insects. A small place in a strikingly beautiful part of the country inhabited by some of the nicest people I have met so far in my travels. These are the kind of stories I can tell people back home so I'll attempt to give you more of a perspective on my role as an outsider trying to advance my practice and career in such a unique location. I'll attempt here to break this article into an informal list of some of my more significant memories of this whole experience. In no particular order of course.



Steve and his helper Kellie Myers building away (Photo by Michael Blyth)

One of the things about a producing a show in Ft. Simpson for me was the complete lack of materials I usually take for granted. The main example of this was the impossibility of finding available Masonite, paneling or any large, flat, flexible wood. This, used as a surface material is usually the most invaluable material I need to mount an exhibition. While in Simpson it became apparent early on that I was not going to have access to this kind of material. This, rather than being a reason for dismay, became an opportunity to test myself in an attempt to work in a limited way compared to usual.

Of course one place worth mentioning is the dump up the hill. Despite the fact I use materials that are considered to be garbage by their former owners, I



A finished section of Bulldog River Roll (photo by Michael Blyth)

rarely have the opportunity to visit the dump in any given town. This was shown to me, not only as a potential source for materials but also as somewhat of a tourist attraction, especially given my well-known interest in these kinds of things. I think I ended up going there 4 times in total and comfortably knew my way around by the end. No bears though, which I was assured was “really odd” by my guides, who had stories no more than 2 weeks old of 12 or more bears hanging out there at one time.

The opening reception for my exhibition was certainly something to be remembered as well. Though my artwork can be seen as having an obvious attraction to youngsters, having more than a few kids around at an opening is rare. I’m pretty sure most of Simpson’s population of 7-12 years olds showed up for this one. It was all I could do to try to keep calm and cool while 15 rambunctious kids at a time bounced off, jumped on and basically assaulted a structure which I considered to be questionable at best in terms of structural integrity. All went well though and my only regret is not being a better skater myself so I could have put on a bit of a better show (showing off) for Simpson’s future rippers.



Steve deBruyn gives his artist talk (photo by Chuck Blyth)

Overall, this was a very rewarding experience and I’d like to thank the Open Sky Creative Society and all those involved for making my time there so great. I met so many great people and would come back in a minute.

Steve deBruyn is living and working in London, Ontario, Canada. His work can be seen in artist-run centers and wherever else he can jam it into. He has yet to do what he should have done by now and get a website. Until then he can be reached at dunstymcpants@gmail.com.

His Installation entitled “Bulldog River Roll” Exhibited at the OSC Gallery from July 1st - Aug. 26th, 2011.

The Open Sky Creative Society would like to thank all the volunteers and sponsors who made the 11th Annual Open Sky Festival a huge success.

Cover image: Photo by Charles Blyth. Babiche 24 editing, design, & layout by Ryan Good. Printed at *Kopykat North* (Yellowknife, NT) ☎

For more information please contact the Open Sky Creative Society:

(867) 695-3005
Box 575 Fort Simpson, NT
X0E-0N0
open_sky_society@yahoo.ca
www.openskyfestival.ca



Kellie Myers, Martina Norwegian, Madison Kaylo, Amanda Ocko, William Blyth, Freda Blyth, Courtney Waugh, Brendan Tsetso, Steven Boutillier, Kristen Tanche, Chasity Isaiah, Jermaine Gargan, Emily McInnis-Wharton, Darcy Acker, Jennifer Wharton, Denis Legere, Ashley Okrainec, Valerie Nahanni, Christie Horesay, Erin Wyatt, Ken Lambert, Carsen Hardisty, Justin Dalton, Jarret Hardisty, Renee Lamothe Jr, Vanessa Gerlock, Sydney Nahanni-Kwasney, Mike Canney, Diane Nelson, Ken Nowoselski, Tonya Klassen, Brenda Burrill, Courtney Tsetso, Lisa Thurber Tsetso, Hilda Gerlock, Renalyn Pascua-Matte, Pat Waugh, Kathy Tsetso, Dahti Tsetso, Lori Ozmun, Rebecca Rowe, Allyson Skinner, Leona Kraus, Tracy Brown, Lisa Lafferty, & Chris Hewitt.

OPEN SKY FESTIVAL 2011 - SPONSORS

Platinum  Patrimoine canadien Canadian Heritage   Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment

 Canada Council for the Arts Conseil des Arts du Canada  NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ARTS™   Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment

Gold

 **FIRST AIR** The Airline of the North   **ROWE'S** CONSTRUCTION  **Northwestel** Bringing us together.  **ENBRIDGE**

Silver Great Slave / Dehcho Helicopters Diavik Diamond Mines Simpson Air
Kiwi Electric Air Tindi K & K Expediting Northern Store

Copper Dehcho Business Development Centre Kid's Corner Day Care Diavik Diamond Mines Seven Spruce Golf Course



ATTENTION ARTISTS AND TRADITIONAL FINE CRAFTERS WE CAN HELP YOU BUILD YOUR BRAND

Identify your artwork as created and produced in the Northwest Territories. Join with other artists and enroll in the NWT Arts Branding Logo Program to help market your art, fine craft or performances. This Program provides common visual identification and representation for all artists to market their arts and fine crafts.

Price tags, stickers, posters, tent cards and electronic copies of the logo are available for free to those who are registered with the Program.

For more information about the Program and how to join, please visit www.nwtarts.com, e-mail nwtarts@gov.nt.ca or contact your local Industry, Tourism and Investment office toll-free at **1-877-445-2787 (ARTS)**.