Defining Roles: Teacher/Mentor/Crazy Uncle
Dike Blair with Jesus Benavente, Ash Ferlito, Park McArthur, Ian Page, and Marisa Williamson

Aleatoric Affinities: John Cage and Maria Elena González’s Skowhegan Birch #1
Marshall N. Price

The Present Classification
Heather Hart, Steffani Jemison, and Jina Valentine

The Path and the Flash
A conversation with Paul Pfeiffer

Exhibitions from the Archives

Oral History

39 Art School Road
with an original artwork by Sarah Hotchkiss

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Support

Editioned Postcard
by Maria Elena González
Dear Friends,

Whether you are an artist or an art lover, if you are reading this journal you share our belief that it is crucially important to support the future for artmaking. Since 1946, Skowhegan has played an essential role in contemporary culture by providing emerging artists with an intensive nine-week session that is immersive and often transformative. Year after year we are impressed by the caliber, commitment, and enthusiasm of the participants who truly make the most of their time on campus.

This summer was no different. As evidenced during Trustees’ and Governors’ weekend, the class of 2012 embraced their summer and took maximum advantage of Skowhegan’s resources. We could hardly take a step without encountering a performance, installation, or event, and there was a palpable sense of the strong camaraderie that was forged by this intergenerational group of artists. Also of great interest was an exhibition of recently re-discovered landscape works made on campus in the 1950s, ’60s, and ’70s.

Off-campus, Skowhegan has been busy as well. This fall we will complete 15 months of work on a comprehensive strategic and organizational plan. This exercise in self-reflection and assessment has been hugely beneficial. We have emerged with renewed conviction about the importance of Skowhegan’s mission, and the strategies for fulfilling it. Programming between September and May also continues to grow, and in the last year we expanded our activities to the West Coast with three events in Los Angeles. An illuminating Oral History project has begun to capture the stories of individuals who have helped define and develop Skowhegan. Like the small on-campus exhibition, these stories are recording a history that tracks the evolution of contemporary artmaking in America, and Skowhegan’s role therein. Though still in a formative stage, we are eager to see how these archival projects unfold, both as entities on their own, and as complements to the irreplaceable and widely used Lecture Archives.

Skowhegan’s successes are due, in no small part, to our exceptional team. In Maine and New York City, our faculty artists, academic staff, maintenance crew, residence staff, and administrative staff are dedicated and talented professionals, and we are grateful for their commitment. We are also pleased to welcome Katie Sonnenborn who joined Sarah Workneh as Co-Director in late February. Together, their efforts over the past year have been outstanding.

On the following pages, you will discover essays and artworks by members of the sprawling and creative Skowhegan community. We hope you will enjoy reading, and continue to make Skowhegan a part of your cultural life.

Ann Gund
Chair, Board of Trustees

Dave McKenzie
Chair, Board of Governors

Greg Palm
President, Board of Trustees

Maria Elena González
Vice Chair, Board of Governors

From Bill Holmes’s Notebook:
“Every summer is different” is an oft-repeated phrase at Skowhegan and the summer of 2012 was no exception, although it did seem an especially good one. Sarah Workneh and the returning staff noted early on that the 2012 participants were particularly fast out of the gate and exhibited a stronger than usual desire to make collaborative works with a leaning towards performance, and participant organized discussion groups.

So things were well along and in great shape by the third weekend in July when the faculty report to the Trustees and Governors at their summer meeting. Perhaps the only thing not in great shape was the faculty itself. Kate Gilmore, Rochelle Feinstein, Virgil Marti, Cauleen Smith, and I all felt slightly confused. Simply put (and I am oversimplifying here), we felt like a faculty without students. Now, all of us are experienced teachers and used to the pedagogic flexibility necessary to teach students and groups of students of varied ages, experience, and talent. But here we had a large number of talented participants, some of whom were already engaged with an art world that has become increasingly professionalized, and most of whom (seemed) to consider Skowhegan a residency rather than a school.

Each of us responded with a different approach, and Sarah couldn’t have been more sage in guiding us, but I think I speak for all of us in saying that we would have welcomed a little more definition of what the roles, relationships, and even the interactions should have been between faculty and participants.

I attended Skowhegan as a participant in 1974. Skowhegan is remarkable in the ways it has remained consistent, as well as in the ways it has changed. From the standpoint of a framework, the structure of the program has essentially stayed the same, with the magic lying in the particular mix of individual participants and faculty members. In looking at the constellation of art organizations, art education options, residency programs, galleries, museums, alternative venues, and the expanded mobility of emerging artists in gaining/creating access to those opportunities, it seems clear that the experiences of recent faculty and participants at Skowhegan would be partially informed by their experiences in the outside world, and therefore largely different than my own experience 38 years ago. So, if the operating model of Skowhegan is taken for granted—five long-term Residential Faculty, 65 “emerging” visual artists, six Visiting Faculty, formal studio visits, informal events and community—what pedagogical shifts are to be expected in a 66-year old institution that while intentionally removed, exists within a larger system? Perhaps, you understand our confusion.

At the aforementioned board meeting, the Trustees and Governors asked us a number of thoughtful questions and had meaningful observations relating to these issues. I particularly remember Governor Francis Capil (A ’85, F ’03) very pertinent comment that negotiating the relationship between participants and faculty is actually part of what Skowhegan is about. Perhaps I was naïve, but I hadn’t actually considered that shaping Skowhegan’s educational model for this...
Do you think a faculty (or full-summer, artists-in-residence) is a good thing? Would a greater variety with a lot of alone time for individual work, and with an emphasis on the sense of immersion—that would be good. But it should also be clear that there are no significant requirements or formal academic structures. Even the studio visits sometimes felt like afterthoughts. While some of those visits were incredibly important to me, they didn’t feel like school in the same way that having group critiques would have.

Do you think we might have been—consciously or not—or a broader definition of what a “school” could or should be? Do you think that kind of negation should be considered a part of the experience?

**JB:** I’ve always thought of school as being a structurally restricted form of learning. While I do think that Skowhegan has a structure... I don’t know if I would call that structure a school. It’s not a great program that pushes a dogma; it’s not an underdeveloped program that introduces you to the basics. It is more an opportunity to take something we know and do something different with it.

**AF:** I had a tremendous sense of freedom, a spirit of collaboration and much encouragement to expand my ideas and to make use of the available resources at Skowhegan. I felt really lucky to be there, like I was a part of something special. I wish great school had had the same tone.

**PMcA:** I do believe Skowhegan’s charter should state more clearly its pedagogical framework. For example, the switch from “student” to “participant” signaled a change in mission from being a school to becoming more of a professional development opportunity. While the residence itself remains “School of Painting and Sculpture” (signaling the residency’s history), the title does not note all of the ways the residency has changed in keeping with contemporary art in general: markedly interdisciplinary practice, mastery of digital tools and techniques, and an emphasis on socializing rather than classroom time.

**IP:** Skowhegan more closely approaches what I would want out of school in general: that the guidance is optional and that the freedom of self-discipline and comes out of respect, anxiety, enthusiasm, and collaboration for everyone involved, not just of competition. Personally, I gather that each generation manages to define itself to a certain extent and that any charter is left quite vague, as not being the participants go and do. For me, the faculty, who were seemingly confused about their role in relationship to a quasi-autonomously developing momentum with well-established thinkers. Overall, putting any more sense of control of the studio visits.

**MW:** I don’t know how the studio visit system could be changed. It wasn’t a terrible system, but sometimes it felt arbitrary. I imagine in advance of going to Skowhegan that there would be formal critique sessions and there weren’t. I feel that it’s been possible, as well as that for critical. I think many of the other participants would work better. About faculty—my expectations were met. It was a good mix. I think every participant would say they had someone they loved and someone that drove them nuts. Any more structure on formal aspects onto the experience is something I wouldn’t want.

Do you think you a faculty (or full-summer, artists-in-residence) is a good thing? Would a greater variety of temporary artists-in-residence be preferable? If so, how would you formalize interactions between participants and artists-in-residence?

**JB:** I think that full-time, always there, sharing a meal with you faculty is very important. I think having the visiting artists stay a little longer would be great, and very much in the spirit of Skowhegan.

**AF:** I think having long-term resident faculty is a good thing. Ideally I think the same bonding, collaboration, access and support that because of your intimate relationship with the faculty and participants. I think that thinking the distance between people who have only made art for a few years with those who are long hitters in the game is an incredibly powerful thing. I think the benefit of Skowhegan should have far-reaching benefits off-campus and possibly even more positive relationships. The art world at large—a faculty in residence helps enable that.

**IP:** I think having a full-time faculty is an excellent thing. While I’m not a particular fan of the “top-down” kind of critique, I did find a lot of personal resolution resulted from those critiques. I liked the protocol of formalizing the visits in the first half of the summer and then making them voluntary.

**PMcA:** I think a full-time faculty is a great thing. The main reason I came to Skowhegan was for this intergenerational experience. It is rare for emerging artists to work alongside with those who are established. I believe it is very important to formalize interactions, as some participants may be shy or reluctant to solicit visits and, secondly, dinner parties and receptions are weighted heavily towards networking and may not make those new relationships. To me, the visits that resulted from personal resolution resulted from those critiques. I liked the protocol of formalizing the visits in the first half of the summer and then making them voluntary.

**MW:** I think the full-time faculty is completely necessary. I would not change that setup at all. I liked visiting artists, but having a “core family” of participants and faculty seems essential to the experience.
When John Cage declared that “art is the imitation of nature in her manner of operation,” he was not only drawing on ideas articulated by his predecessors in the field of metaphysics such as the Indian philospher and art historian Ananda Coomaraswamy and the medieval theologist and philosopher Thomas Aquinas, but he was also attempting to illustrate an aspect of the process in which he ostentatiously removed his own hand from the creative process, allowing chance to determine any variety of one’s artistic choices. Cage believed that anthropocentric art and music was trivial, and that beyond individuals, nature herself had an inherent expressivity found in elements such as trees, rocks, and water. It is with those ideas in mind that we can reflect on Maria Elena González’s Skowhegan Birch #1, 2012, a multi-disciplinary work in which birch bark forms the blueprint for player piano rolls, and ultimately the music produced by the rolls themselves.

The genesis of Skowhegan Birch #1 came from the Cagean notion of allowing artistic choices to manifest by simply deciding which questions to ask, and was born in a moment of syntactical curiosity in which González wondered how we might better understand the information held within the architecture of the natural world. Could this biological matrix, built on the collective history of evolution and nature’s forward march of time, be translated into a musical vocabulary, and if so, what would that music sound like? In many ways Skowhegan Birch #1 unlocks this history and gives a sonorous voice and an audible consciousness to the rural Maine landscape. González has long been engaged with memory and architecture in her work, and here instead of creating a socio-political iconographic program used by the artist in the form of her recognizable maps, floor plans, carpets, and sculptural towers, she has instead relinquished dominion of her hand and literally allowed the trees to speak for themselves. While the piece remains a type of immersiveness, however unconventional in this format, it shairs with much of Cage’s works a closely established conceptual framework.

Skowhegan Birch #1 is aleatory and its sounds vacillate between brief moments of silence and long, cascading polytonal phrases. But cacophony and dissonance become paradoxical concepts here as a chorus of voices, held for centuries within the trees of the forest, are freed from their confines and finally speak out at all once. Liberated from the constraints of conventional elements of music such as time and key signatures, Skowhegan Birch #1 is a symphony of sensorial efflux. The musical result is an unarranged collection of collected sounds that sing with immediacy and abandon. Cage believed that music could sober and quiet the mind, making it susceptible to divine influences and thus open to the fluency of things that come through our senses. Art, he believed, could help us achieve this state. In the end, it is easy to imagine that, having listened to Skowhegan Birch #1, John Cage would have likely smiled impishly and delighted in the sound of nature’s emancipated music.

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evolve the individual’s power to escape the collective that contains it. “The only way the one belongs to the multiple: always subtracted.” Hence, it represents the whole, and it is a part dependent on the larger collection for its identity. The collection subsumes the singular object into its totality; as a result, the object’s material history is suspended as the object is placed into a greater, atemporal narrative. Within the collection, all things accumulated are reclassified by their association to one another, providing a view of the forest despite the trees.

In 2005, Heather Hart and Jina Valentine organized a performance event entitled The Black Lunch Table—a precedent for the Present Classification. The impetus for this event was their wonderment over the lack of any such table at Skowhegan’s daily group lunches. Together they decided whom they should invite to sit with them for one particular afternoon lunch. In curating the group of participants, Hart and Valentine did some guess-work, inviting as well those artists they thought might identify as Black. Those invited included other residents of African descent, the then director and dean, and several visiting artists. At the table, they discussed issues of being Black in the art world, issues of otherwise in general, their individual relationships with actual and metaphorical Black lunch tables in grade school and higher education...and of course the irony of having these discussions at an invitation-only all-Black lunch table. The hyper-classification, by way of self-segregation, of Skowhegan’s Black residents functioned to both create a forum for topics discussed informally at other occasions, and highlight the fact that no such grouping of like-skinned people had naturally occurred thus far. Within that group of people, subsets included a. those not actually of African descent b. vegetarians c. those pending graduate review d. those whose work explicitly addressed issues of race e. self-identifying as post-Black f. included in the present classification.

In 2010 Stattiﬁ er Jimison organized Future Plan and Program (FPP), a provisional publishing project featuring newly commissioned literary works by visual artists of color. FPP has published texts by Skowhegan alumni including Jimison, Valentine, and Jalal Cynus (A’10). Like Valentine and Hart’s Black Lunch Table, FPP, as a curatorial initiative, posits a clear set of overlapping objectives: first, to create a new publication and presentation opportunities for artists of color; and second, to provide a context for conversation about art and identity, writing and transcribing, politics and performance, that is informed by the authors’ experiences as artists of color. These authors share a number of characteristics: each maintains an active visual arts practice, each is a part of a network of artists whose work is clearly visual arts practice, each is a part of a larger network of artists of which Jimison is also a member. The authors all address issues of race, autobiography, and “otherness” with varying degrees of conspicuousness. Moreover, similarities in style, humor, and tone, as well as overlaps in subject matter and external references, connect their work. As a result of their involvement with FPP, the authors frequently have the opportunity to perform, read, and exhibit together, further strengthening their creative ties and mutual influence. Finally, the authors share a conviction that writing non-fiction as a form of art and cultural theory challenges the perceived roles of practicing visual artists. As a precedent for The Present Classification, FPP likewise creates a tableau upon which seemingly disparate works and artistic pursuits might be considered as interdependent parts of a common narrative. FPP’s corpus is composed of a. former and future bookstore owners b. socialists c. those questioning the meaning of “color”. d. peripherals and students e. ones that from a long way off look like this f. included in the present classification.

Neither the Black Lunch Table nor Future Plan and Program intend to create new parameters for classification; as with The Present Classification, we work exclusively within frameworks already existent. These projects simply serve as tableaus upon which to make those social divisions visible: a. artists “of color” b. those embraced as radical-cliché c. the marginal d. relevant to the larger art-historical narrative e. outsiders f. included in the present classification.

In Jorge Luis Borges’ description of the “Celestial Emporium of Benv advert Knowledge,” in a collage of imaginary Beings, he explains that animals are divided into the following categories:

Ideally classifying systems derive from the unique interdependence of objects within a specific collection, which constitutes its overall character. Accordingly, the classification of stuff in any specific collection will be singular and inapplicable to any other collection.

In “Preface” to The Order of Things, Michel Foucault wonders at the physical impossibility of a meeting ground for all these classified creatures and marvels that perhaps such a space exists only within a space created by language. Within the space of narrative, list, or fantastical description, the dis/similar find common ground and therein find their commonality. In fact, such a space exists within this very text, wherein the concepts unifying disparate elements form a structure, a meeting ground for their coexistence.

The meeting ground can occupy a physical as well as discursive space. The first step in creating The Present Classification is both. We, “the collectors” propose a one-afternoon reenactment of The Black Lunch Table, during which participants would eat, discuss, and restage, in an expanded format, the 2005 event. Meanwhile, the participants would be charged with the task of divining a common narrative out of the objects collected through submissions (including their own objects). Rather than curating the exhibition on the basis of an artistic statement or determining theoretical missive, The Present Classification seeks to let the works self-order within the rather broad grouping of “text art by Black alumnae of Skowhegan.” Of course, this process of ordering and contextualizing texts will be a critical part of the success of the overall exhibition, and that those able to attend the Lunch Table will be charged with scripting a new narrative.

Heather Hart, 37, makes installations that you should touch. She attended Skowhegan in 2005 and received her MFA from Rutgers in 2008. She lives and works in Brooklyn.

Stattiﬁ er Jimison, 35, works in media. She is a 2012-13 artist-in-residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem.

Jina Valentine, 32, works with text and collage. She attended Skowhegan in 2005, received her MFA from Stanford University in 2009, and currently teaches at UMass Dartmouth.
I always enjoy how precisely edited your work is—there’s a real economy of moves, which somehow seems counter-intuitive to this accumulation and to the acceptance of accidents. How do you decide how much information to give the viewer?

It’s a process of condensing things down to what’s essential. Ultimately the piece has to be convincing enough to stimulate the viewer’s interest. You can’t force it. I want the viewers to fi nd their own way into it, and when it isn’t, maybe I’ve suppressed too much, or maybe given away too much.

I remember at Skowhegan you barely spoke during your lecture, you just showed images. But then you answered a lot of questions after. That reminds me of the conversation we had the other day with Walead Beshty regarding the benefi t print project you’re working on for Skowhegan.

We were discussing how there’s more to an artwork than 200 artworks in our archive. Encompassing the entirety of our history, the archive is a survey of American art—its trends, concerns, materials, movements, and techniques. In summer 2010, Skowhegan opened two exhibitions, one on campus and one in downtown Skowhegan, advertised by the poster pictured below, and featuring a painting of Skowhegan’s original barn by John Udvardy (’70), completed while he was a participant. What follows is an email exchange between John and Sarah Workneh that illustrates the importance of the archive as a living history that both captures a moment in time, and has far reaching connections and a life beyond its moment.

Dear John,

I am one of the co-Directors at the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture. I came to Skowhegan in 2010 and in my time there, we have spent considerable time going through the artworks on campus in Maine. We have identifi ed a really beautiful painting of the old Frisco Barn that you made while on campus in 1957. Over the summer, while the program was in session, we curated a small show of works in the collection to show in the town of Skowhegan, as a way to demystify what we do on campus and to link our history to the area. We made the attached poster for the event, featuring your work. While the initial poster was used in town over the course of 2 days, we would now like to use an image of the poster in our upcoming newsletter (4,100 copies). Before we print on such a large scale I wanted to check with you to see if that is okay with you. It is such a remarkable piece, and a really amazing representation of such an important historical space on campus.

This summer I pulled the painting out of the racks to show two curators from the Colby College Museum of Art. Because it is so large and delicate, I didn’t want to put it back without help, so I called learning against the racks in the archive. The next day, I was touring Arlene Shechet, who had just arrived as a Visiting Faculty member; around campus. She stopped to look more closely at your piece which was still out from the day before, and was so excited and a little in shock that it was yours! Completely unexpected, and from what I understand you had lost touch fairly recently when you wrote a letter to her. Synchronicity!

Let me know what you think... and thank you!

Sincerely,

Sarah Workneh

[Image]

On Sep 11, 2012, at 12:18 PM, John Udvardy wrote:

Dear Sarah Workneh,

What a wonderful surprise for me when I opened your letter! As soon as I saw even a small portion of this work — I said to myself OMG that looks exactly like something I might have done! When I saw my name on it, the deja vu and the wonderful sweet memories of it all came flooding back in on me! Believe it or not, but I can almost remember every brush stoke that I made on that piece and recall the wonderful smells and all that bit. What great times and memories I have of my mind opening experiences and training I encountered during that precious summer time at Skowhegan.

Sarah you need not even ask — Of course you may use the work however you wish. I am touched and deeply honored that you wish to extend its life further in this important way, and thank you!

If you could be so kind, I would greatly appreciate it if you could please send me a couple of the posters which you had made, and I am on your mailing list. But a few extra Newsletters would be appreciated! Thank you.

If you see Arlene Shechet again please give her my love and best wishes and congratulations on being there. She is the best! In an interesting way, with Arlene being there it almost completes another circle for me.

During your Summer as faculty at Skowhegan you had a particular way of asking questions at lectures—you seemed to start someplace very far from the point, going down this winding path of seemingly unrelated build up, and then fi nally—the question and the entire track becomes clear and seems absolutely necessary, Do you think this is representative of your process of making as well?

Sarah Workneh sat down with Paul for a quick chat, a kebab, and an unexpected exploding bottle of water.

Sarah Workneh’s poster designed by Nataliya Slinko announcing two exhibitions of works from the Skowhegan Archive & featuring the work of John Udvardy.

Poster designed by Nataliya Slinko announcing two exhibitions of works from the Skowhegan Archive & featuring the work of John Udvardy.
Oral History Project

“Skowhegan is a Xanadu, or Shangri-la in a way, in my consciousness.”
—Bill King

In 2010, Skowhegan began an oral history project that would document and shed light on key moments in our 66-year history, as well as complement the Lecture Archive that now features talks by over 600 faculty artists, dating to 1952. Through in-depth interviews with instrumental members of the community, oral historian Liza Zapol is capturing critical reminiscences and anecdotes ranging from Skowhegan’s genesis and nascent years, to its influence in, and relationships with, the broader art world. Beginning in summer 2013, Oral Histories will be accessible on campus alongside the Lecture Archive.

Initial support for this project has been generously provided by the H. King and Jean Cummings Charitable Trust of the Maine Community Foundation.

Several major archival initiatives are underway, and this summer I immersed myself in Skowhegan’s history. The physicality of the campus experience and the legacy of those who have spent time in Maine is everywhere in this organization, and yet each summer is new and each group redlines what Skowhegan “is.” Our Oral History project demonstrates that a dynamic tension of past-present-future has always been at play in Skowhegan; so too do the artworks that have accumulated over nearly seventy decades that we are beginning to catalogue, study, and share. I am eager to see how these projects unfold, and how they help locate Skowhegan’s story within the larger history of post-war and contemporary art.

Time on campus secured my conviction that Skowhegan’s unique governance structure enables it to identify and support some of the great artists of our time — international, intergenerational, innovative, enthusiastic. Time off campus confirms my suspicion that Skowhegan’s fantasies reach much further than a nine-week program would suggest, and that the conversations, events, installations, and publications created between September and May serve a vital purpose in contemporary art and culture. I appreciate the generous and warm welcome that this community has given me, and look forward to continuing to work together.

Down the Rabbit Hole
Katie Sonnenborn

I can’t say exactly when or how Skowhegan secured itself in my mind as a principal force in the art world. Over many years studying art history and then working at Dia Art Foundation, I came to understand Skowhegan as a place where new art practices emerged, relationships were forged, and artists experienced something entirely unique and important that in turn had a profound impact on the trajectories of contemporary artmaking. I sensed that time spent at Skowhegan had an over-sized impact on those who attended, and—though I am not an artist—had an intuition that I wanted, and would find, a relationship to the School.

For those reasons and more, I was immediately intrigued when approached about the prospect of becoming one of Skowhegan’s Directors. Coming from Dia, a philosophically resonant and similarly mythic institution that works with a few artists in-depth, I was tinfoiled by the prospect of supporting the diversity of artists who are part of Skowhegan’s expansive community. Moreover, Skowhegan’s structural complexity—dual Directors, dual boards, a Maine program, a New York office—was clearly not a simple route, but from the outside suggested a fundamental commitment to structuring the organization in a way that would best ensure its continued success: a plurality of voices, experiences, and contexts would necessarily inform its future.

One suspects a job will be a good fit when ideas start flowing during preliminary discussions, and as Sarah and I began to quietly brainstorm, I found myself spiraling down the rabbit hole before I’d even begun. Little did I know the truly complex universe I was entering into. The last seven months have been inspiring, chaotic, challenging, and fun. I inherited a multi-year strategic and organizational plan that proved an invaluable opportunity for deep reflection and study of virtually every aspect of the institution, as well as an indispensable introduction to the abilities and ambitions of Skowhegan’s staff, boards, and alumni.

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I seem to dread writing my portion of the newsletter. Once again, it’s the final moments before deadline, and I never quite know what to say. I just received a letter from a 2012 participant. He described the attempt at writing about his experience as wordless. Perhaps my procrastination of this task comes from the fact that, in many ways, I feel the same.

Transformative is a somewhat overused word to describe it... and it doesn’t quite do the experience justice—there’s no depth to understanding exactly what that means. We talk about “drinking the kool-aid,” being converts—my favorite joke is “Skowhegan: putting the cult in culture.” It seems impossible to convey to people who haven’t been there, or even those who have, what makes each summer so distinctive and so incredibly moving. Certain elements are always the same, but it is an experience that is so intensely personal that wordless is the only true term one can use to vocalize the experience to another’s ears.

This journal is an attempt to share some things that we thought about, did, failed at, and engaged with this summer, and in what has turned out to be a remarkable year. John Ubarzyk’s touching email in the context of the Oral History; all of the ephemera left behind by the outstanding, inspiring, mind-boggling, hilarious class of 2012; Dike’s conversation, and The Present Classification are all true demonstrations of the strength of what Skowhegan is. Never content to rest on or reify its history or accomplishment, Skowhegan is not static—it’s an inquiry—one that asks questions of itself, its history, its functionality, its place in the world, and most important, how it can retain its “Skowheganness” and yet always be moving. As Dike points out—it changes every day, and yet, as we can see in these pages, it retains its root.

Over the past year, Skowhegan, as an organization, has been engaged in a process of self-reflection, evaluation, and the re-articulation of its core values—embarking on the same quest our participants undertake in the studio each summer. Celebrating where we succeed is amazing, but investigating the areas where we can grow is incredibly exciting. Promoting discourse is a fundamental principle of Skowhegan, and it is one that we, as a community of 3,000 individuals—a staff, boards, a history, and as artists need to engage with in order to ensure new ideas, new engagements, and new dialogues. It is not criticism, it is criticality—and it is what pushes us to question our roles in the world and to be the best versions of ourselves both individually and organizationally. It is what makes the future, in artmaking and beyond.

I am more than pleased and proud to thank the faculty, staff, and participants for everything they did this summer, and all that they will continue to do. I told them at convocation this year that I am a better person for having shared the summer with them. It wasn’t perfect—it was tough at moments, exhausting, frustrating—occasionally it made me question a lot about myself and about the mechanics of the operation, but it’s that full spectrum of emotion that shows that Skowhegan offers something singular. It is all of this combined, 553 words, my attempt to give words, images... texture to the wordless.
ON CAMPUS: 01 Newly installed studio visit schedule boards 02 L-R: Ian Page, Amy Flaherty, Matt Tabor, Ander Mikalson, Monica Cook, Sameera Tampsett, Matt Ager, Ash Ferlito 03 John Walter in studio 04 Felipe Castelblanco Olaya and Jody Wood, collaborative performance 05 Clare Torino in Fresco Studio 06 Michael Taylor in Kordanl Anaranondichai’s studio 07 Fourth of July Parade 08 Jessica Kain at the L.C. Bates Museum 09 Amy Flaherty, performance 10 Collaborative team Chaja Hertog & Nir Nadler at work in their studio 11 Ceaphas Stubbs in studio 12 Shirah Neumann and Becky Sellinger during Becky’s performance in the newly inaugurated Bermant Lab 13 Krape Studio 14 Em Rooney, Justin Plakas, and Lee Brown at Justin and Lee’s performance Business is Booming
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of female participants</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of male participants</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Odds of acceptance into Skowhegan</td>
<td>30:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odds of beating Emre Kocaeli at Ping-Pong</td>
<td>64:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of times participants asked if they could use &quot;explosives&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approximate number of times the word &quot;meta&quot; was used on campus daily</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average number of miles run by participants each week</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average number of beers consumed by participants each week</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of hours Dean Natalya spent building and distributing mouse traps</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants who received fellowships</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age of participants</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of pages copied in the library</td>
<td>1525</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amount of rain in inches in May</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Original drawing by Sarah Hotchkiss ’10
Box Set

Organized by participant Becky Sellinger, the 2012 Box Set is both a time capsule and an exercise in generosity. 65 contributors (participants, faculty, and staff) each produced an edition of 10 items to be contributed. The works were then divided into discreet collections of 8 items, which were then gifted to 84 members of the class, faculty, and staff at convocation. Each item is a reflection of the individual who made it, and each collection a distinct portrait of the summer.
Alumni News

Exhibitions

A selection of news and images from our publicly accessible online Artist Registry which features pages by alumni and past faculty. The following exhibitions occur between November 1, 2011 and October 31, 2012.

1948/1954 Charles Cajar
The same Robert, Brattleboro, Vermont (graduate, thesis)

1953/1957 Penelope Jonkis
Jonits & Stone (group show), Rita Walter Gallery, Providence, MA.

1961 Ditta Baron Heuber
30mm, Photographs from the Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA. Transformation, Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral, Philadelphia, PA.

1965 David Reed
David Reed – Heart of Glass, Kunsthalle Bonn, Bonn, Germany; David Reed – Heart of Glass, Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona, Spain; Stone Gravy (group show curated by Ditta Heuber), Art Garage, New York, NY.

1969 Christy Bergland
The Late Session, Pinhole Show, Great Pond, Saco Museum, Saco, Maine; Creative Photography in the American South, University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee; House/Exhibit, Center for Contemporary Art in the Rockies, Denver, CO.

1972 Colin H. Thomson
Loco Color, Woodlawn Arts Centre, Woodlawn, Ireland.

1974 Jeanne Tintz
Paintings, Gallery 3 Photographers, Vermont Center for Photography, Brattleboro, VT.

2012 Deborah Jones Buck
Snipper Scope, Ziegler Zwei, New York, NY; Annual LPG Art Show, Roswell Fine Arts Gallery, Roswell, NM.

2014/2015 Tabitha Vevers

1980 Melanie Kozel

1991 Kent A. Harned
Ivy Art Gallery, Davis, CA; Susan Heideman

2003-2006, Oil on linen, 44” x 190”

The Double
A one-night, bicoastal screening of video works by Skowhegan alumni

The Double is a visually prominent mechanism for video natural medium for its exploration. The earliest silent films recognized the inherent doubling that occurs through the inquiry. The illusion of a second self became a popular theme in films such as the Titusville and The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari. Through double or mirroring, one is confronted with the illusion of a second self, the bringing of multiple representations of itself into being. This mimetic doubling can result in a sense of construct a second self, a duplication of the original, but not necessarily in the same body or physical form. Although a second self may be seen as a literal duplication of the original, it is also seen as a second self, a reflection of the original. This is the basis for the concept of the double, and it is often seen as a symbol of the duality of human nature. The Double is a natural medium for its exploration, and it is often seen as a symbol of the duality of human nature. It is often seen as a symbol of the duality of human nature.
Brentcod 18th: "Spring/ Summer," oil on canvas, 48"x48". Used copper pipe & Rings, 48"x48"x14.4.

STRENGTH
Frost Art Museum at
Florida International University, Miami, FL.

IN NUMBERS
November 29 –
By Feel: Abstraction: Works on paper from 1950 to the present, Bernard Jacobson
Brent A. Crothers
Nancy Cohen: Precarious Structure as Language
Lee Boroson: Lunar Bower

A CONTINUOUS Intersections Program
Sondheim, Semi-Finalist Exhibition
Sites for Sculpture
Architecture for Art, Hillsdale, New York, NY.
6-7-16 Ginza, Tokyo, Japan.
Celebrating Colby Women: A Colloquium of Women Artists, Santa Fe, NM.

Diame Sukh
The Brucennial 2012

Angela Ellsworth: They May Appear Alone, in 7 Types

Northeastern Suburbs, inフリーなtie, by Kenji Kurosawa (B) in 2012, 150 x 100 cm.

Brentcod 19th: "Spring/ Summer," oil on canvas, 48"x48". Used copper pipe & Rings, 48"x48"x14.4.

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Luis Moren
On a Small Piece of Land, 2010, Mixed Media, 20 x 15 x 2 in, Courtesy of the Artist, Project Gallery, New York, NY.

Shana Moulton
Silo, 2010, Video Installation, 8 min, Courtesy of the Artist, Project Gallery, New York, NY.

Katie Herzog
Klit, 2010, Video Installation, 8 min, Courtesy of the Artist, Project Gallery, New York, NY.

Loki Lopes
Who told you so?! #2 Halleluwah! and Distractions of the Ordinary, 2010, Video Installation, 8 min, Courtesy of the Artist, Project Gallery, New York, NY.

Diana Al-Hadid
Haywire: Site Specific Installation, 2010, Video Installation, 8 min, Courtesy of the Artist, Project Gallery, New York, NY.

Rachel Frank

Sophia Ainslie
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Clare Gill “11. Strut, 2012, oil on canvas on paper,” 17 x 17”

Albright Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT.

Mitchell Squire no 3-srilanka, courtesy of the DEU Art Foundation, New York, NY; National Museum Jemison and Jeronimo Juniper, Austin, TX; New Museum, New York, NY; Michael Squire, Los Angeles, CA; White Cube, London, UK.

Fabian Tabihan Same Same But Different, SGM, Seattle, WA; Same Same But Different, Parallel Art Space, Brooklyn, NY.

Cullen Washington Jr. Superhit, 11TH Biennial, Albuquerque, NM.

Scott Patrick Wiener The Luxury of Distance, 121 Gallery, New York, NY.

Matthew Wilson Sloan Avenue Exhibitions, Drawings Related to Performance Works, BKLYNITECH, New York, NY, 2011. Photo 6th Biennial, Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH.

Amy Bremer Moss and Different Plants, Marshalltown, Iowa; Milwaukee, Wi; Skeletal notions, Thomas Robinson Gallery, Chicago, IL; Paste and Tincture, Small Black Dreams, Queens, NY; Albrecht, Paducah, KY; Where Are My Coifs? Double Weave, San Diego, CA; New Formations 2, USC, Los Angeles, CA.

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Bryan Zegger Queen International 2012: Three Points Make a Triangle, Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadows Corona Park Queens, NY.

Sharona Eliassaf

Maria Walker

Queens International

Fishing from the Beach: Contemporary American Art, MPA Exhibition curated by students from Berea College, Berea, KY; Dumbo Arts Center, Brooklyn, NY.

Michael Menchaca

Café au Lait

Estampas De La Raza: Homecoming, Homeland Gallery, Portland, OR; Richmond, VA; Fatima, Mexico City; Mexico City; Algofine (Group show), New Image Art Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Jean Shin’s “2nd, 3rd, 4th,” 2010, Pilsen, Chicago, IL.

Javier Rodriguez

They don’t know why, but they keep asking to come here... Today, Contemporary, London, Windsor, ON.

Gamalíel Rodríguez

ARCO 3 Panamerican de Bienal de Pintura, Mexico City; Madrid/boy, Collect, Madrid, Spain; Michael Menchaca, The Mephisto, New York, NY.

Andrew Ross

Tell Me With a Smile, John Davis Gallery, New York, NY; The Southside Hub of Design, Artaments, Portland, OR; The Hundred-Handed, West Texas Square Station, Bronx, NY.

Jude Jones

Champion Contemporary Art, Houston, TX; Contemporary Art Fair, Houston, TX; The Hundred-Handed (Dios show), Conduit Gallery, Dallas, TX; Teapot Projects, Co-Lab, Austin, TX.

Pepe Mar

Shirazeh Houshiary: Frost Art Museum, Miami, FL; Texas National 2012, The Coe Art Center, Naschitzsch, TX.

Tyler McPherson

Fishing from the Beach: Contemporary American Art, MPA Exhibition curated by students from Berea College, Berea, KY; Dumbo Arts Center, Brooklyn, NY.

Michael Menchaca

sharona eliassaf, queens international, fishing from the beach: contemporary american art, mpa exhibition curated by students from berea college, berea, ky; dumbo arts center, brooklyn, ny; michael menchaca, cafè au lait, estampas de la raza: homecoming, homeland gallery, portland, or; richmond, va; fatima, mexico city; mexico city; algofine (group show), new image art gallery, los angeles, ca; javier rodriguez, they don’t know why, but they keep asking to come here... today, contemporary, london, windsor, on; gamalíel Rodríguez, ARCO 3 Panamerican de Bienal de Pintura, Mexico City; madrid/boy, collect, madrid, Spain; andrew ross, tell me with a smile, john davis gallery, New York, NY; jude jones, champion contemporary art, Houston, TX; contemporary art fair, Houston, TX; the hundred-hand ed (dios show), conduit gallery, Dallas, TX; teapot projects, co-lab, Austin, TX; pepe mar, shirazeh houshiary: frost art museum, Miami, FL; texas national 2012, the coe art center, naschitzsch, TX.
Residencies

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Support
Thank You!

Unrestricted gifts sustain Skowhegan’s programs and operations, and every dollar earned with our help this year was made possible by the generous contributions of the following foundations and individuals listed below that generously contributed to Skowhegan over the past year. The list is not comprehensive and should be regarded as a representation of the many fine organizations and individuals who have supported Skowhegan. We deeply appreciate their continued support.

$30,000 +

Brian C. Brady, L.A. Foundation
H. King A. Janis Foundation
Charitable Trust

Brian C. Brady, L.A. Foundation
H. King A. Janis Foundation

$20,000 – $29,999

Jan and Allison Brink
Edgar M. Bronfman
Diane Bronfman
Agnes H. Cary
Ann and Graham Gund
A. Robert and Helen Marshall Gund

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Edgar M. Bronfman
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$10,000 – $19,999

George W. Abbot
David Ballent
Lynda Benglis
Christine Boulet
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Baron and Ed Edmunds
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Victoria Lake Salkind
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Heather & Kirk Fagen
H. King A. Janis Foundation
Robert L. Lockard
The Locker Foundation
Victoria Lake Salkind
Donald Mordrich
Robert Gabel

$5,000 – $9,999

Robert Neal, Dunde
Real Estate Partners
Richard T. Perry
Conrie Steenstra
Eliza Seddon-Elston
Seth Oliphant
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Seth Oliphant
W.L.S. Spencer Foundation

Matching Tuition Schools
In 2012, scholarships were provided by the following schools so that current students and in some cases alumni could attend Skowhegan.

California Institute of the Arts
Carnegie Mellon University
Maryland Institute College of Art
Minneapolis College of Art and Design
Rhode Island School of Design
Rutgers University
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
State University of New York, Purchase
Tyler School of Art, Temple University
University of Chicago
University of Iowa
University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Virginia Commonwealth University

$5,000 – $9,999

Collector Patricia Phillips de Cisneros
The Powell and Jo Carole Seiden Foundation
Diana and Gabe Scarselli

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The Powell and Jo Carole Seiden Foundation
Diana and Gabe Scarselli

$3,000 – $4,999

303 Gallery
Ellen Altfest
Dike Blair
Dr. Shoichi Kajima
Sheila Pepe
Thomas Phifer

303 Gallery
Ellen Altfest
Dike Blair
Dr. Shoichi Kajima
Sheila Pepe
Thomas Phifer

$2,000 – $2,999

Aldro Andrade
Commonwealth Cultural Trust
Hope College
Kyes Insurance

Aldro Andrade
Commonwealth Cultural Trust
Hope College
Kyes Insurance

$1,000 – $1,999

Alix Pearlstein
Amanda Thrall
Anika Widman

Alix Pearlstein
Amanda Thrall
Anika Widman

$500 – $999

Thurston and Sharon Twigg-Smith
Michael Werner Gallery
Wade Wilson

Thurston and Sharon Twigg-Smith
Michael Werner Gallery
Wade Wilson

$250 – $499

E.B. Alexander
in the Center for Maine Contemporary Art

E.B. Alexander
in the Center for Maine Contemporary Art

$150 – $249

Steve Appleby
in the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Steve Appleby
in the Philadelphia Museum of Art

$100 – $149

Eleanor Acquavella
Maurice Colton III

Eleanor Acquavella
Maurice Colton III

$50 – $99

Heather Cox
in the Phoenix Art Museum

Heather Cox
in the Phoenix Art Museum

$25 – $49

Michael Armitage
in the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Michael Armitage
in the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

$10 – $24

Fiona Banner
in the North Carolina Museum of Art

Fiona Banner
in the North Carolina Museum of Art

$5 – $9

Christian Schloe
in the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Christian Schloe
in the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Scholarship Grants
A cornerstone of Skowhegan’s success is our confidential admissions process, and our firm commitment to providing scholarship aid to any accepted artist who could not otherwise afford to attend. The egalitarian nature of this program allows Skowhegan, and all of our funders, to invest in the future of artmaking by bringing the most talented and groundbreaking artists together, regardless of their financial means. Since 1989, scholarships were provided to 92% of participants. Skowhegan is deeply grateful to the following foundations and individuals for generously providing funds which sustain the program.

$25,000 and above

The Brown Foundation
The National Endowment for the Arts

$10,000 – $24,999

D. Capobianco & Elfi Schuselka
Gesso Foundation

D. Capobianco & Elfi Schuselka
Gesso Foundation

$5,000 – $9,999

Summer Scholarship Endowment Foundation, Inc.

$1,000 – $4,999

Makita Building & Raymond Lefevre
The William T. Kemper Foundation, as recommended
by Laura Anna Michael Fields
Breea Raccon
Baley W. Symington

Endowed Scholarships
Binghamton University

Endowed Scholarships
Binghamton University

In 2012, scholarships were provided by the following schools so that current students and in some cases alumni could attend Skowhegan.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Society of Fellows

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Society of Fellows

If you are interested in learning more about how to endow Skowhegan, please contact the college at mweller@skowheganart.org or 212.529.0505.

$5,000 – $9,999

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On April 24, 2012, Skowhegan hosted its Annual Awards Dinner in New York City which was attended by over 350 alumni, faculty artists, philanthropists, and friends. Skowhegan Medals were awarded to artists Luis Camnitzer, Mary Heilmann, and Kara Walker, and the Governors’ Award for Outstanding Service to Artists was given to Eli T. Art. Save the date for the 2013 Awards Dinner on April 9th in New York City.
Trustees, Governors, alumni, neighbors, and friends came together in Maine, July 20–22, for a weekend celebration of Skowhegan’s program. Highlights included the revolting costume ball, a lecture by Arlene Shchet, dinner at Red Farm, fresco workshops, studio visits, and beautiful weather, three days straight!

In Memorium


Robert Looker, Sr., husband of Trustee Mary Looker, father of Trustee Robert Looker Jr., and founder of The Looker Foundation, an instrumental Skowhegan supporter. August 30, 1922 – June 28, 2012


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Founded in 1946 by artists for artists, Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture is one of the country’s foremost residency programs. The intensive nine-week summer session, held on our nearly 350-acre campus in Maine, provides a collaborative and rigorous environment for artistic creation, risk-taking, and mentorship, by creating a flexible pedagogical framework that is informed by the School’s history and responsive to the individual needs of each artist. Skowhegan summers have had a lasting impact on the practices of thousands of artists, and the institution plays an integral role in ensuring the vitality of contemporary artmaking.

2013 Session
June 8 – August 10, 2013


Resident Faculty
Matthew Brannon
Marie Lorenz
Sheila Pepe
RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co)
Mickalene Thomas

Visiting Faculty
Charles Atlas
Dona Nelson
Trevor Paglen
Reggie Watts
Paul Mellon Distinguished Fellow
Kate Valk

List as of September 2012, additional Visiting Faculty to be announced.