



ART SEEN: Performance Art Dominates the Watermill Center Benefit

July 30, 2013

by Pat Rogers

DISPATCH - JULY 30, 2013

WATER MILL, NY-

“Devil’s Heaven” may have created the conditions where the hidden can arise but it also provided the backdrop for an intense presentation of 20 avant-garde performances unfolding simultaneously across the grounds of the Watermill Center. The occasion was the Watermill Center’s 20th Annual Summer Benefit. Held on July 27, 2013 the benefit raised \$1.85 million for the non-profit performance lab’s year-round artist residency and education programs.

A second chance to see some of the performances presents itself during [Discover Watermill](#) on Aug. 11. The event is open to the public and is free. Also on view are two exhibitions: “Dieter Meier and The Yello Years” and “Works by Clementine Hunter.” Both were unveiled during the Summer Benefit.

For “Devil’s Heaven,” celebrities and stars from the arts and culture communities turned out to support the avant-garde theater lab founded by Robert Wilson. This year, dinner was hosted by Master of Ceremonies Alan Cumming. Guests included Wilson, Lady Gaga, Winona Ryder, Marina Abramović, Simon de Pury, Hugh Jackman, Cindy Sherman, Bob Colacello, Nicole Miller, Nanette Lepore, Kyle DeWoody, Eugenio Lopez, Maja Hoffmann, Giancarla Berti, Lewis Cullman & Louise Hirschfeld Cullman and others.

During pre-dinner cocktails, it was performance art that dominated “Devil’s Heaven.” The first nod to a Biblical reference greeted guests while checking in. What followed was a series of performances that explored boundaries and pushed viewers to decide how far they might go.

A review of the performances and the art exhibitions written by Gabrielle Selz will publish shortly at Hamptons Art Hub. What follows is a glimpse at the some of the performance art that made “Devil’s Heaven” an enticing place to be. If nudity will bother, then don’t bother scrolling!



“Magnolia” by Trina Merry.

Installed on the face of the building was John Messinger's photography-based artwork. The piece seemed to hint at what was to come through the scattered red panels lying on the ground near the foot of his "Angel's Landing."



"Angel's Landing" by John Messinger.

Stepping across the threshold was the jarring "Remembrance"- a dual location performance piece where redemption didn't seem likely.



"Remembrance" by Carl Lawrence.



"Remembrance" by Carl Lawrence.

Once inside, the mood lightened. Contributing were a series of "Stargazer Beds" by Robert Wilson which allowed guests to participate in the art.



"Stargazer Beds" by Robert Wilson.



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"Stargazer Beds" by Robert Wilson.

Lightness was vanquished as guests began their journey into the woods to discover the art that lie in wait.



Entrance into the woods where “Funerailles de miel” by Lisa Lozano was the first performance installation to confront guests.



“Funerailles de miel” by Lisa Lozano.

Continuing along the path was a series of performance pieces.



“Clementine Hunter in Devil’s Heaven” by Christopher Knowles with Manu Washaus, Anna Graenzer and wooden ice.



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“Amnesia” by Dilek Acay.



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“Enchanted Forest” by Trina Merry.



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“The Tweeting Stick” by Jorg Brinkmann.



“The Unknown” by Nikitas Broukakis.



“Alter” by Loannis Sidiropoulos.



“Enchanted Forest” by Trina Merry



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“My Favorite Food” by Yao Zhang.



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“From Whelping Box” by Matthew Priest. The piece links to last year’s collaborative performance piece by Priest, Branch Nebula and Clare Britton.



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“Solo with Chairs from Medea(2)” by Evangelia Rantou.



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“Telegraph Progress” by Hope Esser.



“Clementine Hunter’s World” by Sophie Beck, Giovanni Firpo, Zachery Schoenhut and Robert Wilson.



“Objectified” by Trina Merry.



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“Objectified” by Trina Merry.



A tent presented artworks for the silent auction.



A final glance at the wooded “theater”

Another type of performance artist made a late-night appearance at cocktail party: Lady Gaga.



Lady Gaga posing with a fan while Robert Wilson looks on.

BASIC FACTS: The Watermill Center is located at 39 Watermill Towd Road, Watermill, NY 11976.
www.watermillcenter.org

“Discover Watermill Day” will take place on Aug 11, 2013 from 3 to 6 p.m. Admission is free and reservations are not required. Many of the performances will be staged for the occasion.

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