



William King Sculptures at East Hampton's Historic Duck Creek Farm

July 11, 2014

by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

The John Little Society opened its first publicly funded art installation at Duck Creek Farm in East Hampton on June 29, presenting a solo show of sculptor William King. On view from sunrise to sunset through August 4, the exhibition of five sculptures by the East Hampton artist was curated by Jess Frost for the John Little Society, with support from East Hampton Town and private donations.

Known for the sense of playfulness in his work, King has been a consistent presence in the New York and East End arts communities for more than six decades. Choosing a different direction from his abstract expressionist peers, King has created figurative works that have resonated for art lovers and critics alike.



“East Side/West Side” by William King, 1972. Aluminum, 124 x 164 x 24 inches. Photo by Hiroyuki Hamada. Courtesy Exhibition Curator Jess Frost.

Writing for The New York Times, Peter Schjeldahl noted in 1973 that “King’s sculpture is formally inventive and sophisticated, and his semi-abstract representations of the human figure obviously distill a lifetime of exceedingly fine observation. Central to his comedy is the revelation of human emotions in a social context.”

Some 40 years later, the April 2014 edition of Artforum included a review of King’s most recent exhibition, in which Barry Schwabsky maintained that “sixty years after William King’s first New York gallery show, his art looks as fresh as ever.”

According to a release from the gallery, the sculptor’s large scale aluminum works at Duck Creek Farm are “elegantly choreographed and engineered, their economical compositions transforming simple geometry into delicate human gesture. The captivating scale, good humor, and humanity in King’s open-air sculpture embody the spirit of public art, engaging our community’s sense of place and rich cultural history.”



“Velo II” by William King, 2009. Aluminum, 127 x 81 x 28 inches. Photo by Hiroyuki Hamada. Courtesy Exhibition Curator Jess Frost.

Duck Creek Farm

Founded in 1795, Duck Creek Farm was originally owned and operated by three generations of the Edwards family. The property was broken up in 1902, but the core of the family’s original farm holdings consisted of 130 acres along the eastern shoreline of Three Mile Harbor.

The abstract artist John Little bought a 7.5 acre lot on the site in 1948, and moved onto it a 19th century barn that he had purchased from the Gardiner family. Using a part of the barn as his studio, he converted another section into an apartment, where many renowned artists of the period spent their summers, including Franz Kline and Robert Motherwell, among others. During the 1950s and ’60s, Little’s barn played an important role in establishing a cohesive artists’ colony in East Hampton.

In a partnership with Alfonso Ossorio and Elizabeth Parker, Little founded the Signa Gallery in East Hampton, an important venue and gathering place for artists and art lovers from 1957 through 1960.

In 2006, East Hampton Town purchased Duck Creek Farm and the John Little Barn using Community Preservation funds. In a 2013 editorial, the East Hampton Star called the purchase of Duck Creek Farm “a model of a sensible and needed public acquisition.” In 2009, three years after making the purchase, the East Hampton Town Board designated the property and the barn a historic landmark.

In the summer of 2013, Duck Creek Farm played host to Sydney Albertini’s installation, “And Also, I Have No Idea,” under the auspices of the Parrish Art Museum’s Road Show series. The Parrish and its Special Projects Curator Andrea Grover established the off-site summer series to present artist installations in venues other than the museum’s new Water Mill home base. Invited artists were requested to make a site-specific work relating to a given site and to the East End community in general.

“And Also, I Have No Idea” was an interactive installation composed of Albertini’s soft sculptures and costumes in the John Little Barn. Visitors were invited to slip into the artist’s costumes and sculptural heads and then to be photographed against the backdrop of the artist’s studio and apartment in the barn.

This summer, Albertini, who lives and works in East Hampton, will present a new installation, “That Left Eye Twitch of Yours Really Turns Me On,” from July 18 to 31 at the Jackson Carriage House at 129 Main Street (corner of Windmill Lane) in Amagansett. An opening reception is scheduled on July 19, from 6 to 8 p.m. (www.sydneyalbertini.com)

The Jackson Carriage House, which is one of the properties of the Amagansett Historical

Association, is another alternative site, like Duck Creek Farm, where artists of the region can show their work. Currently on view through July 12 at the Carriage House is a group show, “Grand Royale,” presented by the Bonac Tonic artist collective.

The John Little Society

The John Little Society was founded by Loring Bolger, Pamela Bicket, Ira Barocas and Zachary Cohen with the idea of continuing—through publicly funded programming at Duck Creek Farm—Little’s mission to bring contemporary art to East Hampton. To that end, the Society is seeking donations in support of arts programming at the historic farm.

While donations of any amount will be appreciated, three categories of sponsorship have been established: Platinum (\$250), Gold (\$100), and Silver (\$50).

All those who wish to support the current William King exhibition and future arts programming at Duck Creek Farm may send checks, made payable to the Town of East Hampton with “Duck Creek Art Exhibition” specified in the memo section, to East Hampton Town, 159 Pantigo Road, East Hampton, NY 11937.

BASIC FACTS: “William King: Sculpture at Duck Creek Farm” is on view from June 29 to August 4, 2014 at Duck Creek Farm and John Little Barn, 367 Three Mile Harbor—Hog Creek Highway, East Hampton, NY 11937.

Continuing scrolling to see photos from the Opening on June 29, 2014:



“Pasta” by William King, 1972. Aluminum, 91 x 198 x 28 inches. Photo by Hiroyuki Hamada. Courtesy Exhibition Curator Jess Frost.



William King. Photo by Hiroyuki Hamada. Courtesy Exhibition Curator Jess Frost.



William King. Photo by Hiroyuki Hamada. Courtesy Exhibition Curator Jess Frost.



William King and Curator Jess Frost. Photo by Hiroyuki Hamada. Courtesy
Exhibition Curator Jess Frost.

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