



VISUAL DIARY: Watermill Center's "Circus of Stillness: The Power over Wild Beasts"

August 5, 2015

by Pat Rogers

Watermill Center's summer benefit "Circus of Stillness: The Power over Wild Beasts" drew over 1,200 guests and raised over \$1.9 million to benefit the Watermill Center's year-round artist residency program, the international summer program, and educational initiatives assisting artists with the development of their works.

Hosted by Watermill Center Artistic Director Robert Wilson, guests attending included Daniel Arsham, Bob Colacello, Christophe de Menil, Diana DiMenna, Bill T. Jones, Bjorn G. Amelan, Fern Mallis, Nicole Miller, Brooke Shields, Dao-Yi Chow, Maxwell Osborne, Anastasiya Siro, Barbara Slifka, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova of Pussy Riot, John Varvatos, Rufus Wainwright and Roger Waters.

The silent and live action included over 125 artworks donated by world-renowned and emerging artists including Marina Abramović, Uta Barth, Annie Leibovitz, María Magdalena Campos-Pons, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Tseng Kwong Chi, Ron Arad, Alberto Borea, James Clar, Michael Dweck, Robert Montgomery, Esterio Segura, Shelter Serra and others.

Artists with ties to the Hamptons were represented in the auction with art donated by Jeff Muhs, Michelle Stuart, Arthur Carter, Mary Ellen Bartley, Brian Kokoska, Ryan Wallace, Ross Watts and others.

The showstopper for the Watermill Center's summer benefit is the durational performance art that unfolds during cocktails. Switching things up, guests viewed the installations as part of the entrance line that began at the Watermill Center entrance and led to the entrance to the courtyard where mingling guests with cocktails congregated among the silent auction, a participatory installation and a performance or two. In prior years, guests were free to embark into the woods of their own accord and experience the performances without the thick of a crowded line urging motion to continue forward.

That said, it still was possible to appreciate the performances created by artists participating in the Watermill Summer Artists Residency program. An international group, many of the performances will be presented again at Discover Watermill Day taking place on Sunday, August 9, 2015 from 3 to 6 p.m.

To see pictures of the performances staged at the Watermill Center's 22nd Summer Benefit, view our slideshow:

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For me, favorite performances were “Is it because I lied when I was 17?” by Khesrau (Kesh) Behroz and “Amidst Endless Repetition” by Matty Davis and “Given” by Shay Arick. All three featured minimal motion but were breathtaking from the impact of conceptual meaning.

“Is it because I lied when I was 17” featured a woman, swaddled in aluminum foil, with a steady rain pouring upon her. Difficult to look upon, it was equally difficult to look away. “Amidst Endless Repetition” spoke directly to the futile nature of “going through the motions” without being conscious demonstrated by the excruciatingly slow turns and steps taken by the two performers with a weight set upon each of their shoulders.

“Given” was a sweet surprise, playing on fairy tale fantasies of romance of love with a couple secreted within an oversized “red apple” preparing for and recovering from the act of a kiss. Their intimacy was witnessed by guest after guest who peered through a face size opening one at a time.

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“Nature’s Hot Spot” by Adriana Dinelescu. Photo by Pat Rogers.

“Nature’s Hot Spot” by Adriana Dinelescu held dramatic sway over the shuffling crowd as its sole performer was shackled to the pinnacle of a staged mountaintop. “Canvas Dance” by Jokubas Nosovas was a crowd-pleaser with its Jackson Pollockesque action painting performance. Instead of throwing paint, the performer used his hair, feet and body as the instruments to transfer paint onto the stage floor while performing a dance of his own making set to music.

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“Canvas Dance” by Jokubas Nosovas performed at the Watermill Center’s Summer Benefit. Photo by Pat Rogers.

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A scene from singer Sierra Casady of Coco Rosie with performances by Watermill Center artist in residences Mariana Kavallieratos, Maria Papadopoulou, Dimitri Kleioris, Paul Girard, Marc Crousillat and Manuel Rueda. Photo by Pat Rogers.

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BASIC FACTS: The 22nd Annual Watermill Summer Benefit "Circus of Stillness: The Power over Wild Beasts" took place on July 25, 2015. Watermill Center is located at 39 Watermill Towd Road, Water Mill, New York 11976. www.watermillcenter.org.

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