

20@ OMI

Celebrating Twenty Years of Creativity and Community

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INTRODUCTION: 20 YEARS OF EXPERIMENTATION

Omi International Art Center didn't come about because of some five-year plan or a strategy hammered out in committee. Rather, Omi was the result of inspiration, improvisation, a lot of hard work and a bit of luck. Throughout this book you'll frequently encounter the words 'experiment' and 'laboratory'—and for good reason. From its beginnings in 1992, Art Omi was conceived of as a laboratory, a place where artists—and later writers, musicians, dancers and architects—could come to experiment. Freed from distractions and obligations, temporarily relieved of the responsibility of putting bread on the table, artists could explore new ideas and new media. You were free to work on a painting or fashion an installation or assemble a collage—there was no governing philosophy or aesthetic. However, you were encouraged to try something new instead of merely continuing work you'd already been doing. Omi was a laboratory in another way in that it brought people together from all around the world in the belief that something very productive and unpredictable was likely to emerge from a mix of nationalities, cultures, ethnicities religions, languages and perspectives. Keep in mind that Omi was born at a time when war had been unleashed in the Balkans and a new term was being added to the sinister vocabulary of carnage: ethnic cleansing.

And who could have expected that a ballet dancer, a jazz dancer and a hip hop dancer would be able to collaborate and yet they did. Or who would have entertained the possibility of a fruitful collaboration between a composer of classical music, a percussionist, and a musician who plays an instrument unknown outside of Central Asia? And yet such collaborations happen all the time at Omi. Unlike most laboratories, however, Omi opens its doors to the public, inviting the public to view the work the artists have created or enjoy performances by musicians and dancers.

The laboratory continues to expand, too; from its humble beginnings in a barn the Omi now boasts a campus consisting of over four hundred acres of woods, pastures, marsh and cropland—some of it that will eventually be used for facilities for new programs. When it began Omi was open only for a few weeks during the summer; now it operates year-round. A small collection of sculptures in the back field has evolved into The Fields, an extensive and expanding sculpture park. The Charles B. Benenson Visitors Center which includes a gallery and a café has been added recently. And while Omi's principal mission has always been to foster creativity it also has an educational role to fulfill as well, a role best exemplified in

one of its newest programs, Education Omi, and also a week-end workshop and summer day camp where kids from neighboring communities can learn about art making from the artists themselves. (Sign up now: there's already a waiting list to get in.)

This book is not intended to be a definitive or comprehensive history of Omi. After all, everyone who has worked at or attended Omi has his or her own 'Omi.' And because of limitations of space and budget, not to mention the nomadic lifestyles of many of our alumni, we were able to offer only a representative sampling of observations and reminiscences. Instead this book hopes to capture and convey what the writer Lawrence Durrell called 'the spirit of the place.'

Our twentieth anniversary, while significant and worth celebrating, is only a way station, a place to pause and catch our breath before moving on into uncharted terrain.

This book would not be possible without the invaluable contributions of a number of individuals associated with Omi, especially Ross Willows, Omi's documentarian, photographer and videographer, who doggedly scoured his hard drives to find most of the photos, and who in addition did much of the layout, and Joan Kaghan who was able to draw upon her technical expertise and considerable experience as a graphic artist, illustrator and book designer to make this book so visually appealing, deftly wedding attractive typefaces, text and pictures to produce a book that evokes the magic and vitality of Omi itself. Fortunately, we were able to rely on Carol Frederick's invaluable editorial services to catch errors, inconsistencies and gaps that the rest of us had overlooked. Thanks must also be extended to program directors past and present who contributed their advice, recollections and photos, and rounded up as many alumni as they could to obtain their recollections: Ruth Adams, Linda Cross, Claudia Cannazzaro, Christopher Morgan, Jeffrey Lependorf, D.W. Gibson, Peter Franck and Blaire Dessent. We also would like to thank all those critics-in-residence, former program directors and past residents of Art Omi who agreed to contribute to this book. Regrettably, space constraints didn't allow us to include everyone's contribution, but their absence in no way implies a lack of appreciation. Omi has benefited—and continues to benefit—from all of those who have passed through its (metaphorical) doors. In their own way they are all experimenters and Omi's lab is better for it.

—Leslie Alan Horvitz, Editor



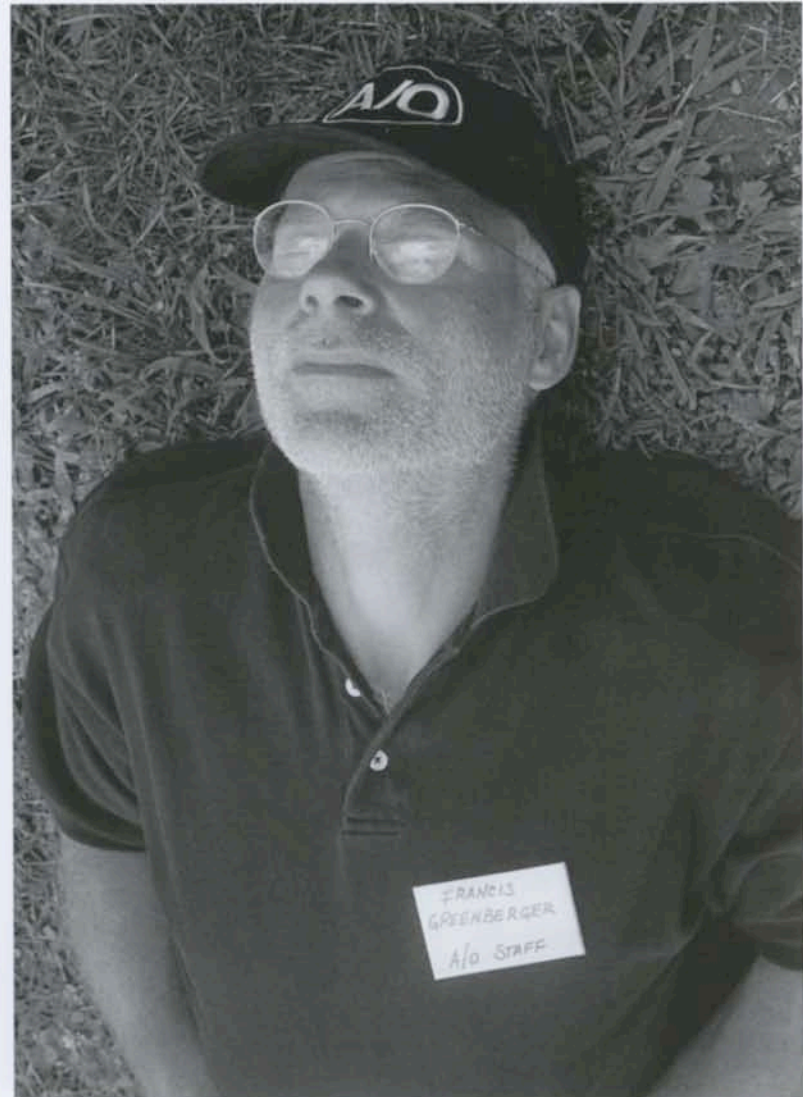
A NEW RESIDENCY

I got involved with Triangle (art residency in New York) and I thought that there were some things that could improve the residency program they were doing but in fact after various discussions it became clear that the other people, particularly Tony Caro, preferred to do it the way it had been. And so I left. And actually one of the things I had thought of was moving to a site the residency owned rather than renting the site we were on. I found a barn but Tony decided he wanted to stay where he was. The owner kept calling me and eventually I bought it without really knowing what I was going to do with it. But one day I was talking to Sandi Slone on the phone and said maybe we should do it ourselves and she encouraged me to do it and that's how we got started.

Other than knowing about other art colonies by name I'd never actually been to them. So I didn't have any iteration of them in mind when I started out. I didn't have any models like Yaddo or MacDowell. It was really born out of my experience running the Triangle board.

I don't remember considering any other name for the residency. It's unassuming and non-prejudicial. I remember that once Sandi Slone said that it had some sort of Indian origin but subsequent to that no one could ever find it.

—Francis Greenburger



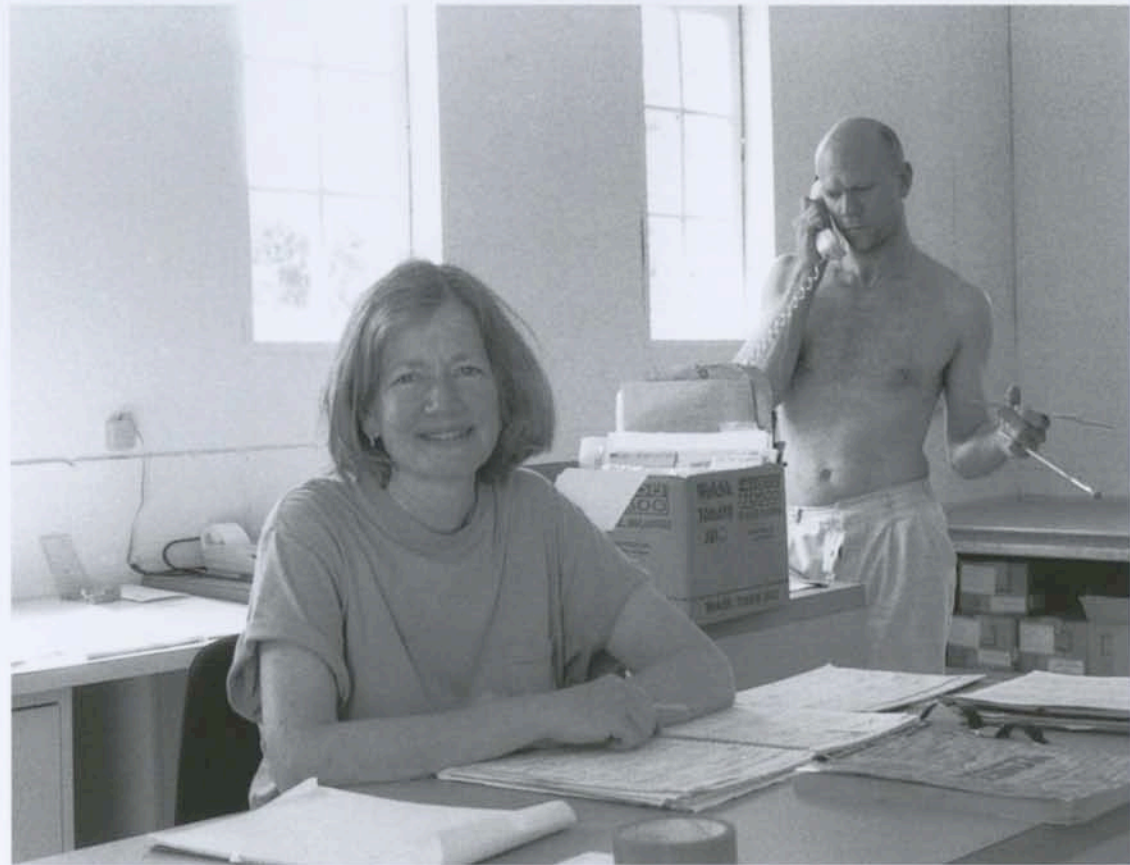
The Early Years

By the time of our first residency session in July 1992, I had become the director. Although the facilities were pretty basic, it was a huge success, with 21 artists from 11 countries. Our first critic-in-residence was Robert C. Morgan. Our first Ledig House, on Country Route 22, just east of the studios, did not have enough bedrooms for everyone. So I contacted friends and neighbors to see if they had extra bedrooms. Somehow, we managed to find enough lodging, with special help from Francis Schools and her family and Randi and Chris Loken. Then, of course, Ross Willows drove around constantly, bringing artists to the studios every morning, bringing them back to freshen up before dinner, then back home each evening, not to mention all the shopping trips for supplies or hopping down the road for a swim at the Pink House. We were a close-knit staff. Ross was there for everyone, Henry Schools was our wise and capable shop manager—and later when he retired, Jed Cleary took that role. And each year there were interns and volunteers who helped make everything work.

Obviously, the food for the artists was critical. Our early efforts were hit and miss. We'll never forget one caterer who tried to make individual omelets at our Open day brunch. Around 150 angry people were standing, waiting in the hot sun for food that wasn't coming. Peter, our son and others quickly drove to Chatham to buy bagels and cream cheese, donuts, etc. so finally there was something to eat. Then we found Carlucci Catering—Tommy Carlucci and his staff have become a wonderful part of Art Omi's nurturing atmosphere.

But, of course, the most important thing was bringing together artists from so many different backgrounds and watching them work. The friendships formed and the artistic interchange have been extraordinary.

—Linda Cross, Director,
Omi International Artists' Residency, 1992–2000



Linda Cross and Volker Blumkowski, Germany, 1992



Residents and directors gather for a group photo in 1993. Seated in the front row are Francis Greenburger (left), Sandi Slone, founding board member (to his right) and Linda Cross, Art Omi's first Director (center). Robert Morgan, Omi's first critic-in-residence, in dark t-shirt and cap, is seated directly behind Linda, and to his left is Raphael Rubinstein, who later served as critic-in-residence, John Cross, one of the founding board members, with glasses, is seated in the second row just to the right of his wife Linda. At top right, in the last row, is Judy Willows (in hat and sunglasses), who would go on to found Music Omi.

THE RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

The evolution that Omi has gone through has been one of circumstance, input and ideas that occurred as we went along. In each case the initiative for a particular program came about when someone had a good idea and where there was a willingness to implement it. That's become a model for the development of other compelling ideas which have the potential to be integrated into our programs. The writers' program, which was the second program, happened relative to the death of Ledig Rowalt. We were sitting around at the memorial service and in discussions with Peter Mayer, a prominent American publisher, and Michael Naumann, the German publisher, this idea came up and we said let's try it and that's how the writers' program came about. Of course we had the physical space for it so we were able to accommodate it. That required a whole different mindset about how to organize it. And in turn the other programs evolved. Music came because of my wife Judy's long interest in music generally. That was an idea that appealed to her and I encouraged her to run with it and she did. And then the sculpture park was a function of all the empty land we had sitting around. I was talking to Andre Emmerich, the gallerist, who was a great friend. Really what happened he was on the board of Omi and we were sitting on the porch of Ledig House and I asked him if it would be possible to donate large scale sculpture. He said well, you know, small sculpture is like jewelry, you can put it anywhere. Large scale sculptures are harder to find a place for and he would be happy to have a place for them. And then it wasn't too much later that Sotheby's purchased his gallery but they didn't want to maintain his sculpture park so we could have our pick of the work that was there.

Nicole Smith is a very talented fitness trainer and dancer and I work out with her once a week and we were chatting and she said why don't you have a dance program? And I said what kind of dance program should we have? And she said well, an improvisational dance company. I wasn't too familiar with a dance improvisational company and we ended up talking about it and she said she would be interested in organizing a program if we'd include it and that's how the dance program got started. She did the first year and she found she couldn't keep the commitment and then we found Christopher Morgan. In the case of the Fields the sculpture park it revolved around Peter Franck and Kathleen Triem's enthusiasm. Architecture evolved from the same kind of thing – I had had an idea that it might be interesting to use some of our land to be the site of other museums that could be devoted to a single artist or single collector. By having a few of them together with The Fields it could be more of a destination – instead of one thing you'd have three or four things. We sort of talked about this in various meetings, batting some ideas around. At some point Peter Barton offered to form an ad hoc committee to study the idea and eventually came back with a thought about having a portion of our exhibition program devoted to sculptures that might be architectural in nature or sculptural in nature. I'm not sure that we've reached a satisfactory conclusion. That program is still in the very early phases. One structure is installed and a second one is being done. It's still evolving and proving itself.

–Francis Greenburger



Dmitri Kaminker, Russia, 1993



Barn Studios

ART OMI

INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS RESIDENCY

I guess the first surprise came when we started Art Omi in 1992 was that we really didn't know what to expect. We had about twenty artists that year. We came up with the idea that we'd like to have some people come to see the work that had been produced during the workshop. We conceived of the notion of Open Day weekend. As luck would have it, it was a very rainy day. We thought it would be a bust but at a certain point a lot more people started arriving. I remember asking John Cross, "What do you think?" To my surprise, he said, "Are you kidding? There's a line of cars going half a mile down Route 22." The police were concerned that we hadn't properly anticipated the number of visitors. We didn't have enough parking spaces or people to facilitate them getting in, but it was a good problem to have. I guess another one of the surprises is how closely our alumni would stay involved with each other. Several years ago Ryzard Wasko, one of our Polish artists who was also an arts organizer, invited me to an exhibition opening in Poznan, Poland. I walked into a garden outside the Artists' Museum and to my shock there were fifteen Omi artists from over the world who'd come to the event as well. That is indicative of the long-term connectivity that has occurred and created a post-Omi experience for our alumni. There was another unintended consequence: We have had artists who formed personal relationships and married and had children.

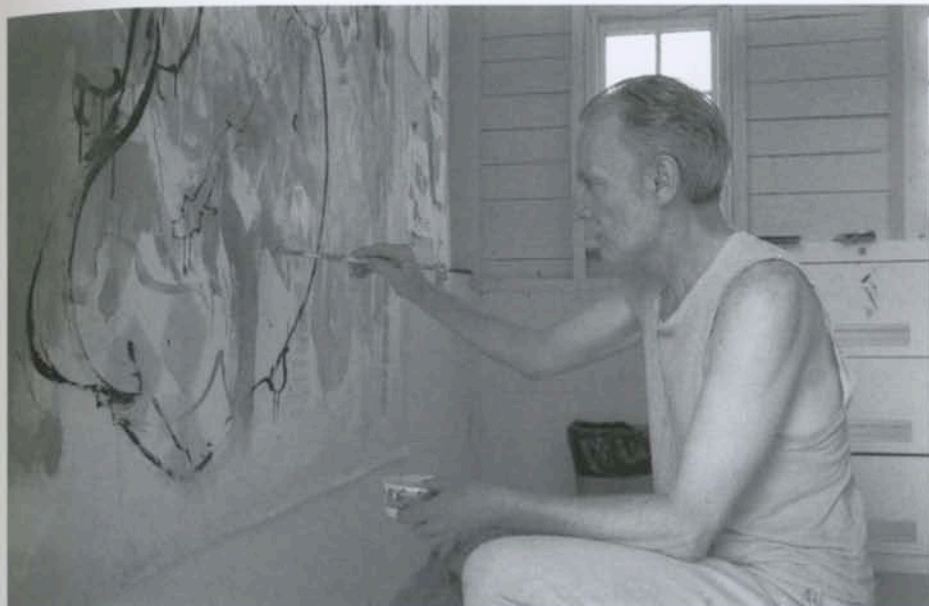
—Francis Greenburger



Ariane Lopez-Huici and Francis Greenburger, 1993

Art Omi was very important for me.... it was the place where I had the opportunity and time to develop my ideas and made my first sculptures, something I always wanted to do for such a long time – ever since I stopped painting. These days I only make lighting sculptures. Gracias, Art Omi for giving me that opportunity.

–Grimanesa Amorós, Peru/US, 1993



Jacques Roch, US, 1993



Ad Jong Park, Korea, 1993

Artists Roaming The Neighborhood: Art Omi In The News

From its inception Art Omi has received favorable, even rapturous coverage in the press. In its early years the coverage was generally limited to local and regional papers but as Omi grew major national and international papers like *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Financial Times* took notice as well. Even before Omi opened its doors in 1992, *The Register-Star* of Hudson, NY, alerted readers to the forthcoming residency, quoting Linda Cross, Omi's first arts administrator, who told its reporter that the focus of the new experiment would be "on developing a dialogue of ideas," adding that "There will be no overall theme to the workshop." Three years later *The Chatham Courier* ran an article which echoed her words, observing that "the residency program operates as a 'think tank.'" In 1994, *The Sunday Gazette*, a Hudson Valley paper, dubbed Omi "A Melting Pot of Art" because of the diversity of the residents' nationalities, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. "This July, a tiny dot on the map called Omi, in the Hudson River Valley's Columbia County, will once again become the center of the universe for some 30 visual artists from around the world," declared *The Register-Star*, a regional outlet, in July 1999, referring to Omi as "a world-renowned arts center." The unique mix of artists drawn to Omi also caught the attention of

Ralph Gardner, a senior writer and columnist for *The Wall Street Journal*. In an article published in the summer of 2010, entitled "Artists Roaming the Neighborhood," he wrote about various odd sightings in and around Omi: "A couple of years ago we spotted a black bear on the edge of the woods behind the house. Just last month a bobcat meandered casually across the back lawn. But the most curious wildlife I've seen upstate are the artists who attend the International Artists Residency at Art Omi, an arts center and sculpture park just down the road from us in Ghent, N.Y.... from the end of June through the middle of July you can spot people in everything from urban hipster flannels and porkpie hats to dashikis as they make their way from their residence high on a hill overlooking the Hudson Valley, to a long, red former dairy barn across the road that has been converted into artists' studios." Gardner felt compelled to add that "Art Omi also throws great parties..."

No sooner had Omi opened its sculpture park – The Fields – than art critics were scouring its grounds. What especially struck them was the presence of avant garde sculptures in such a pastoral setting, as *The Financial Times* put it. In a 2007 review of a show by 20 sculptors headlined "The Shape of Things to Come," its art critic Clare Henry made note

of the park's experimental approach. The works on display, she wrote, pushed "the limits of traditional notions of sculpture in the landscape by seeking out innovative and conceptual art objects..." She went on to observe how works by established sculptors anchored the park, "allowing the rotation of more controversial, sometimes witty, often wacky work." In a July 1999 article for *The New York Times*, art critic Michael Kimmelman wrote that while Omi was off the beaten track, its rural setting also conferred several advantages. Among other things, he said, the atmosphere at the residency was "casual, even a little ramshackle and more communal than, say, Yaddo," a well known art colony. He was particularly captivated by The Fields. "Looking at outdoor sculpture is as much about the virtue of the site as it is about the work of art, whose function includes making you aware of where you are. The Fields, like the entire center, is an excellent enterprise becoming better." *The Times Union* was equally enthusiastic: "The context keeps shifting as you move...; every turn affords a new view of the landscape and the sculpture." And because it was open all year round, the Albany-based paper, advised readers that the park was "great for the unplanned getaway, too."

An artistic group experiment in the works for Omi

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Art in a Barn: Oh, my!

Art Omi residency program operates as a 'think tank

In Geometric Forms, Bending Nature at Will

A Melting Pot of Art

Some Memories of Art Omi

1. My first day directing the artists' program, I ended up in the local emergency room. We were getting ready to eat dinner when the artist from Vietnam, Le Quoc Viet, came to me with his injured eye—he'd accidentally stabbed it with a pen while forcing open his stuck suitcase—it was bleeding. Viet had been living most of his life with monks, was unusual in his generation to have the traditional beetlenut blackened teeth. He didn't speak English at all. I asked the artist from China to translate for us (Viet was a scholar in Mandarin). There was also an artist who left Vietnam for California at the age of eight. He spoke the Vietnamese he knew as a child. The four of us went to the hospital.

We waited in a room for the doctor, the lights were fairly low, and the atmosphere was so calm. A doctor came in suddenly, greeting us in full voice, talking fast and loud. Then he stopped, and immediately spoke in a quieter tone.

It was a strange experience for me, like I'd left my own culture for this new serene one. I didn't realize it till that doctor came in. Then this amazing exchange: when the doctor asked Viet about how it happened, Viet answered through the Chinese artist, in Mandarin. When the question was simpler, about how his eye felt, he turned to the artist who spoke Vietnamese as a child. This went on for a while the same way—emotional, sensory issues in Vietnamese, factual information in Mandarin.

For me, that first group of artists was like that nearly every day—a whole new world through each person (when they weren't hounding me for one thing or another.)

I remember how amazed Viet was to hear all he had to do was take a pill every day. "No herbs? No tea? No change in my diet?" He thought it was the funniest thing.

I never could get him to smoke outside. He had a Marlboro in his mouth almost constantly. He spoke almost no English, and left Omi with 30 friends. From Viet I learned language doesn't have to be a barrier.

2. Sanford House is haunted, but don't ask me about it. Ledig isn't haunted, just really drafty.

3. What I love about being immersed in an artistic community is getting to know both the artists and their work at the same time. It's such a special, rich way to come to know art—and people.

—Ruth Adams



Ruth Adams, Director, Art Omi International Artists' Residency, 2001-2003
Administrative Director, Omi International Arts Center, since 2004, and
OK Hyun

PONDSIDE PRESS MONOTYPE PROJECT

Tamarind Institute Master Printmakers, Melissa and Ted Braggins, of Pondside Press, have developed an excellent reputation as printers and for working professionally with artists and publishers. Each year they come to the residency to offer the artists the opportunity to produce an edition of monotypes. Through individual collaborations each artist experiences the unique qualities and spontaneous techniques of monotype while creating a series of one-of-a-kind impressions. The varied backgrounds and diverse approaches brought by each artist create a rich and energetic atmosphere. The resulting prints are exhibited on Open Day.

Pondside Press is located at 4 Bollenbecker Rd, Rhinebeck, NY 12572,
845-876-5316, www.pondsidepress.com



Melissa Katzman Braggins and Ted Braggins, 1994

EDUCATION OMI

Art for All Seasons

Saturday mornings at the Visitors Center come alive with children of all ages leaving behind cartoons and couches in favor of our weekly art workshops. Kids arrive in rubber boots, geared up and ready to venture into the sculpture park. In winter, sleds trail behind them as they hike through knee-high snow, eager to slide down the gentle slopes of The Fields. An up-close look at a new addition to the park, a walk through the woods, a stop to sketch native plants, a scavenger hunt with clues that lead to different sculptures—these outdoor activities jump start the class and awaken creative spirits. Every Saturday offers a fresh adventure and a theme that encourages kids to think in innovative ways. Back in the gallery, young artists have the opportunity to participate in a hands-on project. Contemporary art, ideas, and media inspire these projects that are open-ended and often experimental. Kids respond most to activities that empower them to make creative choices and nurture their sense of invention. A 'pocket robot' made from technological recyclables; exploration of line and shape through drawing with string and wire after Fields artist Bernar Venet; photographic

self-portraits taken with a high resolution camera and a remote control; 'architect for a day' project incorporating building blocks and shape sketches inspired by structures in *The Fields* by artists Peter Stempel, Tarik Currimbhoy, and Oliver Kruse; 'invent your own color' paintings through free exploration of color mixing on large paper.

Other Education Omi programs that provide arts education to members of our community include partnerships with local public schools, winter and spring break art camps, programs for teens, and free family events.

Many Saturdays during our workshop, the children will find themselves in "The Story Cave", huddled together on a blanket, listening to a good book. Also known as Michael Somoroff's *Illumination I*, "The Story Cave" is a special place where make-believe is at the forefront and imaginations are free to flourish. It is the concept of storytelling, the act of creating fictional scenarios, and the playing of characters that often allow children the most meaningful access to contemporary art.

—Sasha Sicurella, Director





THE RETREAT AT OMI

What started as a simple question from Francis Greenburger has proved to be very successful. One day in 2002, Mr. Greenburger said to my daughter, Nancy, who was then his Executive Assistant, "Do you think we could rent the Center during the winter to raise some money?"

Nancy answered "My mother could do that."

I had just retired to Ghent, New York after 25 years as a Meeting Planner for a large pharmaceutical company and was delighted to have the chance at building a new business.

Initially, the plan was to woo corporate people and not-for-profit groups who needed a space to really get away to an environment that is out of the box and many miles from the tension of the big City.

Some of our first guests included Women with Wisdom, a support group for women in crisis, Stanwich Church of Greenwich Connecticut, Whole Foods Prepared Food Team from the 14th Street store, New York State Department of Environment Control and Four Lane Highway, a location company.

Then some modest advertising on Vacation Rental sites on the web started to bring in the families. The Retreat has 20 bedrooms all told, so even the largest of families could be accommodated. And, since the Retreat is fully handicap accessible, every member can be included.

The Retreat proved to be the perfect spot for a "destination wedding." One bride and her groom, both actors from New York City, made it a four-day event. Each night had a different theme! My favorite was turning the middle room in Ledig House into a Western country bar, complete with hay bales and line dancing. With the construction of the Visitors Center, the weddings got bigger and grander.

But my favorite guest continues to be Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders). This wonderful group of devoted people comes once a year for a week of training when they set up an emergency compound in the barn and at the pond and train several new volunteers before going off to the disaster areas of the world. Bless them!

–Dorothy Randall

IN MEMORIAM

JUDY WILLOWS

1948–1999

When we met sometime back in the Eighties Judy was living in a walkup on East Ninth Street with a bathtub in the kitchen. She'd yet to become a US citizen – she was a transplant from Winnipeg – and so what work she could get tended to be in restaurants which transacted their business mainly in cash. In Toronto she'd managed her own restaurant but she gave no indication that she resented toiling for hours in a hot kitchen for someone else. On the contrary, if there was one thing that Judy suffered from it was an excess of enthusiasm. She refused to be discouraged; if fate insisted on dealing her a bad hand – and it did – she would play it as if it were a royal flush. She lived in defiance of the odds. She was phenomenally loyal and astonishingly generous. When her circumstances changed dramatically – for the better – she insisted on making sure that her friends shared in her good fortune. She had boundless energy. She thought nothing of taking a plane from Bangkok and arriving back in New York in time to host a dinner party. She would travel at the drop of a hat. "You know Israel – you've lived there," she said to me one day, "Why don't we go?" And off we went. My experience was hardly unique. All of her friends could offer similar stories. She was passionate about music – jazz, reggae, rock, world, classical; it didn't matter what category it was so long as it moved her. It was because of her that Music Omi came into being and for years afterwards she oversaw and guided the program. In the last few years of her life she had the chance to run a restaurant again, this time in the West



Village, which she called Mono in honor of her sons Morgan and Noah.

If it weren't for a string of coincidences (or maybe it was something akin to fate) I would never have met Judy and if I hadn't my life would certainly have followed an entirely different course. Our first meeting, in fact, wasn't our first meeting at all. One evening, in the old Cedar Tavern, I noticed an attractive woman sitting alone at the end of the bar. She kept smiling at me. "We've met," she assured me. I told her that she must be mistaken but I was the one who was mistaken. As it turned out, we'd met at a crowded party a week before – a party I'd thrown. She'd come with a friend of a friend. We arranged to meet a week later at another bar in the

Village called Knickerbocker's. But after half an hour of waiting without any sign of her I gave up. I figured that I'd seen the last of her. A few months later, though, I was at another bar called Lady Astor's when a woman sat down next to me and began apologizing. I thought: Who is this woman and why is she apologizing to me? Of course, it was Judy. She said that she'd shown up late at the Knickerbocker's and assuming that I'd given up on her was too embarrassed to call me. I would later find out that she was almost invariably late. After that meeting at Lady Astor's, though, I made sure to wait for Judy no matter how long it took for her to get there. And I would never forget her again.

–Leslie Alan Horvitz

HENRY SCHOOLS

1924–1999

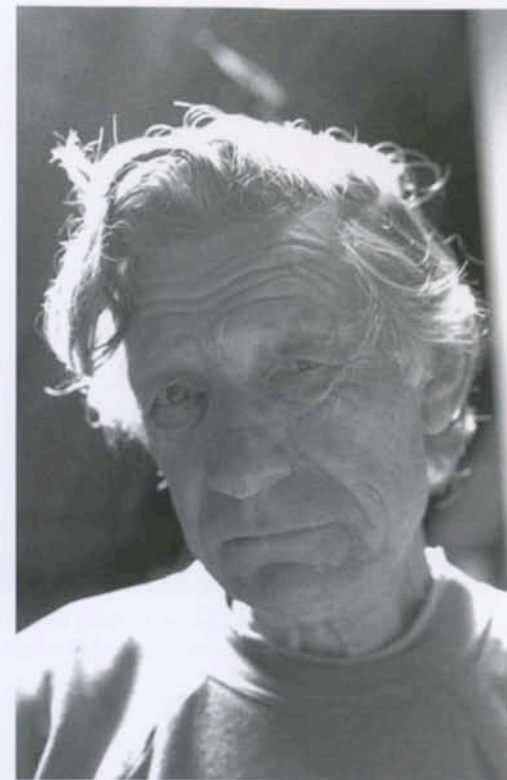
Henry was salty and people would all agree. But he was salty in a good way. He worked from daylight until dark in any season. He was dedicated as hell. That was what Henry was all about. It was just his nature. Anyone who knew Henry you'd think he was three blocks away when he was talking to you. He was very much an outdoor person. He was a big time hunter. When I'd come home from school he'd take me with him to go fishing. He made cutting firewood fun.

We first got involved with Omi because of my mother who has been doing business (in real estate) with Francis Greenburger for close to forty years. Francis asked my father to work on the barn which we did. That was before Omi started. There were even cows up there. Henry was the first to get involved and then he brought his sons along. Francis was comfortable with us. So it was an easy thing to do. I was thrilled to join that first year. We partitioned off the spaces in the barn for artists' studios. Henry did what was necessary to make life more comfortable for the artists. Different artists had different needs. He found whatever the artists needed to work with. If an artist needed metal for sculpture Henry would get it for him. If one of the artists needed stone we'd take him to a quarry in Vermont. My father did this for years. One thing about Henry: he could communicate with anyone easily. It didn't matter whether they spoke English or not. He worked all over the world doing air separation plants, starting them up and teaching people how to run them. Often times he was in a country where they didn't know what he was talking about and they had no idea what he was talking about but he still managed to communicate. The same with Art Omi; he could communicate with those artists like no one I've ever seen, simply with gestures. He probably said a lot of things they didn't understand and it was probably good they didn't. But he did it in a fun way. There wasn't a bad bone in Henry.

–Carl Schools

Some artists can be prima donnas. They wanted quiet. Henry wasn't quiet. One artist (Joanna Przybyla) complained, "How are we supposed to get any work done with all these wild men around here?" meaning Henry. I said, "Wild men are the only kind of men we have here." But later they became friends. When she came back for a visit years later she went to his grave to lay flowers. She wasn't the only one who appreciated Henry and the help he gave. A lot of the artists made some wonderful things for him. Hank worked like hell. He was profane. Once I said to him, "I know you can't get through a sentence without swearing but I didn't know that you couldn't get through a word without swearing." Once on Open Day he got angry because cars were coming in where they weren't supposed to be. "Damn it, why don't you understand you're not supposed to be here!" Henry yelled at the people coming in. I said, "Henry, you can't tell people that, we want people to come." Hank screamed at everyone, he did what he wanted, but he was very conscientious with everyone who worked with him.

–Frances Schools





Holly Hughes, Margaret Benedict, Leslie Horvitz, intern Sophia Vourdoukis, John Cross, Linda Cross, an unidentified friend of Omi and Bruce Altschuler



Jed Cleary, 2002



Judy LaFavor, Bruce Ehrmann, Peter Cross with unidentified man, and Judy Willows



A friend with Morgan Greenburger, Bruce Burke, Chris Burke

Over the past twenty years Art Omi has benefited from a group of amazing staff, volunteers and friends working behind the scenes.

Board members in each program give a significant amount of time to the selection process, which expands every year as the number of applications increases.

The staff that keep the physical plant running have served as far more than building managers: they were on the front-line, hosting, listening, and caring, and offering a warm welcome to hundreds of international residents. All went far beyond the call of duty to make Omi a home away from home.

In the art studios supplies , technical assistance and unfailing cheer were provided by a teams of managers, interns and volunteers.

Adult and teen volunteers have pitched in to make Education Omi the success it is and have contributed to the new public programs at The Fields.



Carlucci's Catering: Roxy Johnson, Jennifer Lawrence, Neil Springer, Cydney Cross, Dayan Moore, Tommy Carlucci



John Schools 1992

SPONSORS

The Paradise Foundation

Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of Art Omi

The Paradise Culture Foundation, which has partnered with Art Omi since 1997, is pleased to join in the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of Art Omi. We are proud that Art Omi has grown with our Foundation as it has become more widely known over the years and has continued to receive positive reviews from the artists. Presently, the Art Omi program has become the representative program of our Foundation in supporting young artists.

The first artist we chose for Omi was Sora Kim. When she first came to the Paradise Culture Foundation, she was an emerging artist just getting her start. For an artist, the opportunity to participate in Omi represented an excellent chance to explore his or her art work and to connect with an international art network. We expected it to be an opportunity to introduce Korea's young and talented artists to the rest of the world. Choosing our first participant for Art Omi posed a challenge because the residency had a short history, the outcome was uncertain at the time, and it was difficult to predict the potential of Sora, who was talented but new to the field. However, the outcome of the match was successful and satisfying. Despite the short history of the program and the artist's career, both demonstrated much potential for future growth. Since then, Sora has become one of South Korea's outstanding artists.

The Foundation has decided to support two artists every year. Candidates are recommended by prominent individuals in the art world. As the artists who participated in the Art Omi program have been received positively, awareness of the Culture Foundation has increased.

In response to this growing awareness, the Foundation held a contest in 2003. Although, only about 20 participants were featured in this contest, the Foundation was lucky enough to discover the artist Yeondoo Jung, who was actively working at the time, and Yoonyoung Park, an emerging artist. For Yoonyoung Park, Art Omi was the steppingstone toward receiving public attention. Later on in 2009, she confirmed our the wisdom of our choice when she received the prestigious Hermes Foundation Missulsang award. The participants in subsequent contests have increased every year. As a result, the contest has become more competitive. To develop this program further, we decided to hold a contest exhibition called "Up-and-Comers." This system deviates from the portfolio-oriented evaluation; to extend the support of the young artists we hold an

exhibition for them to build a network. The first two artists to pass this contest exhibition were Myungjin Song and Kijong Zin.

Since then "Up-and-Comers" and Art Omi have continued to add new artists to their rosters. In 2010, the artists participating at Art Omi—Sungyeon Park and Boyun Jan—have given favorable accounts of their impressive experiences during the residency program. We are confident that the "Up and Comers" exhibition will be recognized as an important event by both the artists and the members of the art community throughout the world.

We would like to thank the founder of the program, Francis Greenburger, Ruth Adams and Blaire Dessent, who developed the program together and lastly, Elisabeth Akkerman, who came to the opening of the "Stranger than Paradise" exhibition. We hope to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Art Omi together.

—Yeon-Jeong Song

Art Omi Australia

I was introduced to Francis at a splendid lunch at his house in 1991. I was so impressed by his concept of an art residency that, upon my return to Australia, I selected our first sculptor, Paul Hopmeier to participate in the 1992 Art Omi workshop. The following year, Bailieu Myer (a member of one of Australia's philanthropic families) agreed to be a co-sponsor followed by American born, Sandra Johnson. Art Omi Australia's successful 2005 Retrospective attracted a crowd of five hundred arts enthusiasts to the envy of Sydney's commercial galleries. I feel privileged to have been so closely involved with Art Omi since its inception and pleased that my daughter Catherine will continue the alignment from her home in Maryland.

—Rosemary Foot

As founder and chairman of Art Omi, I am immensely grateful to Rosemary Foot for having put together her committee to sponsor a residency for an Australian artist each year since the program was established in 1992. Being one of the earliest supporters of Art Omi, Rosemary helped to put Art Omi on the map as an internationally recognized program. The Rosemary Foot Committee sponsorship ensures that Art Omi maintains an ongoing relationship to contemporary art in Australia.

—Francis Greenburger

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FINAL THOUGHTS

We've had a great run and we think that it's been a very good experience. Now and then we debated whether we should have been more formally organized or different kind of staffing, but I think that Omi has been scaled well and we've kept the budget under control and that's important, too. You spend more money on staff and some things would have happened that didn't happen but then we might have had financial problems.

My hope for the future is for Omi to continue to be a place where ideas evolve, whether it's on the level of work that's being created or done there or whether

it's an artist creating a work of art or a writer doing something unusual all the way up the food chain to the programs and direction of Omi so I would hope that twenty years from now we would have found other interesting things, programmatically, that we're exploring. I think the idea of potentially bringing together some other related but separate programs in the arts could benefit us in terms of concentration of activity. Most of all, my hope is to continue the evolution of ideas and foster the freshness that makes Omi a place for individual artists and arts organizers to create.

—Francis Greenburger

