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**The Dresden/Ohio Artist Residency Exchange**

**September 22 – October 26, 2013**

**As Director of Tiger Lily Press, a fine art printmaking cooperative in Cincinnati, Ohio, I was invited to participate in the 16th year of the Dresden/Ohio Artist Residency exchange. I had seen an exhibition of previous years’ participants at the Urban Arts Space in the fall of 2012 while attending the Ohio Printmaker’s Gathering in Columbus. I was impressed with the artists’ work who had been on the exchange and noticed that there were artists from several areas of Ohio, but none that I recognized from Cincinnati. I was hoping to find a way to change that and get one of our amazing local artists invited. To my surprise and delight I received a call from Ken Emerick a few months later inviting me. I was thrilled!**

**Although I have four children, 16, 14, 10, and 7 years old at the time, and the fact that the fall is the single most busy time of the year for us, my husband was immediately willing to take full responsibility for the family duties and refused to allow me to pass up the opportunity. As far as my responsibilities at Tiger Lily, my co-workers were excited and willing to fill in as well, and it turned out that because of our outstanding group of planners for the Ohio Print Gathering hosted by Tiger Lily in May, they were like a well oiled machine prepared to “run the show” in my absence.**

**As I sit down, several weeks after the residency’s completion, to write a review of the experience, I am filled with new life, fresh outlooks on my family, my goals as Director of Tiger Lily Press, my role as an artist in our city, and my responsibilities as an artist in our culture. The residency offered time to achieve a well-needed cohesion for tying all aspects of my life together.**

**The five weeks appears to be a well thought out amount of time to get the most out of the experience. The first couple weeks are spent getting acquainted to and comfortable with the city, the transportation, the Dresden culture and the Grafikwerkstatt and its master printers, Peter, Torsten and Udo. It would be a mistake, however, to let these first days go by without working on your body of prints. Peter helped us jump right in by teaching us their perfected process of Algrafie, a form of plate lithography. I used this opportunity to make two editions to allow the process to really sink in. They were not “masterpieces”, simply an opportunity to engage in a new process and get comfortable with the studio and its surroundings.**

**These first days were also spent hanging our Dresden Exhibition at the Alte Feuerwache Loschwitz. Thanks to my traveling companion from Cleveland, Lisa Schonberg, inquiring in July before the residency, we came prepared with a tube of artwork from home that we used for the show. More communication on this aspect of the program with the artists ahead of time would be helpful. We had to learn to coordinate the exhibition with two other participating exchange artists, and a gallery staff that was sadly suffering with health issues at the time. Despite the challenges it turned out to be a wonderful experience and Lisa and I were grateful to all involved.**

**Once the initial adjustment days and the opening of the exhibition were past us we were able to settle in to a routine with our studio workdays and our daily regimen, enjoying new places to eat, new sites to see and getting to know all the people we were encountering. Mr. Martin Chidiac had taken us on a walking tour of our neighborhood the first day after picking us up from the airport. He kindly pointed out many of the good restaurants, groceries, the art supply store, the bus stops (helping us get our month long bus ticket), etc. I had told him I was vegan before arriving, so he gave me a list of vegan options, which was extremely helpful. So we were able to enjoy exploring all of our local dining options.**

**Martin also kept us busy with invitations to several art openings, which were wonderful to be able to attend. And Peter, Torsten and Udo were continually helpful in teaching us about places to see. There was never lack for entertainment and experiencing the German culture, sites and museums.**

**We met and enjoyed the company of so many artists while we were in Dresden. Liz Maugans arranged to have Paul Barsch, a young local artist who had traveled to Ohio on the residency program a few years back, to be our on the ground contact during our stay. He was wonderful to get to know, bringing several other artists friends and acquaintances to a dinner with us and later an art opening at his gallery STORE. Paul kept in touch with us via email, answering any questions we had throughout our stay. He also helped us arrange our trip to Berlin, getting us our bus tickets to get there, meeting us at the station once in Berlin, helping us take the train to our hotel and then arranging a wonderful dinner at the best vegan restaurant I have ever been to, Kopps on Linienstrasse 94. Much gratitude to Paul!**

**To our surprise there were other exchange artists working at the Grafikwerkstatt while we were there. Berta Guerra Aredal from Sweden, was there on a four-week residency, shared the exhibition with us and also stayed in one of the Raskolnikoff rooms on our floor. Lisa and I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know Berta, enjoying meals with her, a trip to the Saturday Flea Market, learning about her culture and discussing the struggles that lithography is seeing as she teaches it in her country. Christina Angelou was on residency from Greece and also shared the “Frauenpower” exhibition. We only got to spend a few days with her as she got called back to Greece unexpectedly for a teaching job. But the few meals, a Sunday trip to the Dresden museums and hanging the show together were enough to create a memorable relationship. We were welcomed to Greece to visit her anytime. Chris Daniggelis, Tenure Track Professor of Printmaking at the University of Missouri and former Dresden resident artist was back at the Grafikwerkstatt after ten years on a Fulbright scholarship for printmaking. We shared our initial Dresden tour, some meals, a few museum trips and art openings and several great conversations with Chris, some of which explained his sure fire techniques in registration, teaching methods and emails including helpful details of his studio layout. I hope to take a trip to Missouri to learn more first hand in the near future.**

**The flurry of ever-changing local artists that came in and out of the Grafikwerkstatt while we were there was a little overwhelming at first but became a wonderful benefit as time passed. We eventually grew to know the regulars, Wolfgang, Machtild, Frank and the sweet and talented Klaus. It was great to see how many people were inspired by Peter, Torsten and Udo and the atmosphere that they have created. The have a priceless respect and knowledge for the medium and the connection between artist and printer, attributes that I hope to foster now in our printmaking community in Cincinnati. I tried my best to listen to and learn from the German conversations at the tea table and the presses. They happily allowed me to watch the variety of projects going on. I was sure to ask when taking photos or videos and was most often given permission to share them, only understandably denied when there were children on tour in the studio.**

**My goal, and I felt my responsibility, was to share as much of this experience with as many people as possible. Since I have four children in different age levels I was sure to send a couple emails with photos and descriptions of the processes going on at the Grafikwerkstatt to my kids’ teachers. They shared them with their classes while I was on the trip and even allowed it to enhance and inspire their curriculum, including the language, the art, and the culture.**

**Looking ahead, Bishop Fenwick High School where my 17 yr. old attends has asked me to come share the experience and teach monoprinting to the advanced art students, and our second grade teacher at Lakota is using photos I took of the unique Dresden children’s playground next to the Raskolnikoff as a spring lesson on engineering. I plan to make a connection with the Fairfield German School here in Cincinnati to share the experience with the students and ask them to translate the two newspaper reviews our exhibition received and the write up in the monthly Dresden Newsletter where our photo and residency got the front page. I will, of course, be presenting the trip and artwork to the Tiger Lily community at our annual meeting in January as well.**

**As for my art, I created four editions of 10-15 prints each and a series of 12 small monoprints. I used five different presses and worked in Algrafie, letterpress, relief, dry point and monoprinting. Although only a few of the pieces are what I would consider exhibition worthy, the success for me was more the focused research I was able to do with all of the time given to us away from our daily lives and routines at home. The trip helped me connect the dots between the current passions in my life and launched a new conceptual series of work that will carry me for several years.**

**I would encourage future resident artists to follow the advice in the previous reviews. Try very hard not to over pack but bring a warm coat, it was cold for us. Learn some German before going, at least enough to greet people, introduce yourself, etc. It does feel more respectful to at least be trying. Read up a little on Dresden/German history to appreciate where you are going and the conversations that will be taking place. Bring about 400 euros or more with you so you don’t have to worry about money conversion until you are more familiar with your environment. If you are going to pay extra for phone usage be sure you understand what you have otherwise it will just be a frustrating waste of money. A little texting ability was good, but skyping from my computer at the Raskolnikoff was the best tool for communicating with home, and email worked great with local contacts.**

**Be respectful and mindful of teatime and lunch at the studio. It will be some of your favorite memories. Work consistently. Don’t leave a mad rush for the last week. Communicate with Peter, Torsten and Udo about your plans ahead of time so that you are clear what is available and when. Be prepared to work spontaneously on something else if what you need is not available the day you need it. Try to plan so that you travel with your artwork on you there and back. It’s the safest way. However, your travel art tube will count as a carry on so save funds (@ $100 each way) for extra luggage if you can’t pack light.**

**Most importantly, leave time for reflection and contemplation in between all the activity.**

**I think areas for improvement would be encouraging invited artists to get in contact with the previous year’s artists before leaving. The final reports are helpful but the years are not always listed and can be outdated. The most recent visitors would make great educators for the trip.**

**Supreme appreciation and gratitude to The Ohio Arts Council, Zygote Press, The City Of Dresden Cultural Department, The Grafikwerkstatt, The Alte Feuerwache Loschwitz, The Raskolnikoff and to my travel companion and new friend, Lisa Schonberg. The Dresden/Ohio exchange is a priceless gem that I hope continues for years to come.**

**Auf Wiedersehen**!