

NORTH COUNTY NEWS
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Peekskill Project Puts Art All Over The Map

By Tony Seideman

In a few weeks, Peekskill will become one of the focal points of the contemporary art world as more than 50 artists put their works on display.

Projected video, sculpture, prints and paintings, and a variety of art forms and experiences will be on display the weekend of Sept. 13-14.

The displays and exhibits will be held from the northern edge of the city to the waterfront park as part of the Peekskill Project, an ongoing, evolving event sponsored by the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art (HVCCA).

Since it began a few years ago, the HVCCA has rapidly emerged as one of the region's most important and respected contemporary art institutions. The Peekskill Project is one of its most important activities and plays a crucial role in the museum's mission to bring contemporary art to the general public.

There will be two basic elements to the Peekskill Project: an exhibition of works by some of the contemporary art world's heaviest hitters in the museum itself, and a series of exhibits and activities that will take place all over town.

In staging the Peekskill Project, the museum will try to overcome one of contemporary art's greatest contradictions: while the works may be physically available most people find them emotionally and intellectually inaccessible.

"Contemporary art can challenge, inspire and inform said Livia Strauss, HVCCA co-founder and president. "It shouldn't be confined to just museums and galleries. By bringing art to where the people live their daily lives, we hope to connect with as wide an audience as possible."

Much of the city is mobilizing behind the Peekskill Project. This year, for the first time, there will be shuttle buses to take people from location to location. The bus itself will be a traveling exhibition called the "Art Bus" and feature decals based on the work of former graffiti artists.

The buses will travel to a number of different locations where many different kinds of art exhibitions and activities will take place:

Annsville Creek

This is where most of the educational activities will occur. Among them will be Christopher Kennedy Lee's demonstration of the Peruvian Despacho ritual, which offers thanks to the earth, and Michael Anthony Naciello, fisherman's shack, where he'll be making prints of fish.

St. Mary's

Among the happenings at the future Ginsburg Development Corp. site, artist Ryan Brown will be doing "Move Peekskill," which will involve musical instruments made out of exercise equipment, including a stationary bike that will make noise as people ride it. A team of people will also dance for 72 hours straight, starting at noon on Friday, Sept. 12, and ending on Sunday.

Core Downtown Area

From unused retail storefronts to some of Peekskill's most popular gathering places, including the Bruised Apple Bookstore, Treat Station, The Peekskill Coffee House, the site of Clemente's Dry Cleaners on Main Street, the Workmen's Compensation Building, art will be on display and events will be taking place.

Maxwell Fine Arts

There will be exhibitions at the gallery by The Artist's Collective, which will include Meng-Yeh Chou, Pamela Phatismo Sunstrum, Rosalind Schneider, Gene Panczenko, as well as video projections after dark on the evening of Sept. 13.

There will also be exhibits and performances at the Hat Factory at 1000 North Division St. and outside the HVCCA itself.

As always with contemporary art, performance art will be part of the mix, and the performances won't be conventional ones. Besides Move Peekskill and the video projections at Maxwell Fine Arts, other performances will include:

- Layered Defenses by Marya Kazoun with Christian Minotto and Andrea Busetto on Sept. 13, 14 at HVCCA at 1 p.m.
- BodySite by Andrea Cote, Sept. 14 in Pugsley Park at 2:30 and 3:30 pm.
- The Coffee Cup Project by Eva Mantell at the Gazebo, Sept. 13, 14 from noon-6 p.m.
- New York Flavors Ice Cream Stand by Miwa Koizumi at the Gazebo on Sept. 13, 14 at noon

Although there are many artists participating, standards are actually more strict this year than ever before. Artists participating in the project will come from around the world, including Italy and Austria, and from the region as well, with 15 local artists taking part.

Numerous organizations besides the HVCCA are participating. The City of Peekskill is providing crucial support, Strauss says, singling out police chief Gene Tumolo and Parks and Rec head Fran Brunelle for special praise. Graphics business 3 and Co is hosting an exhibit, while the Peekskill Business Improvement District is sponsoring “A Taste of Peekskill” in coordination with the event.

Ginsburg Development Corp. is also providing support by providing access to its property on the St. Mary's site.

For more information visit www.hvcca.org, or call (914) 788-0100.