

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

2009 is the first full year of activity of Black & White Project Space as a nonprofit art organization which marks our seventh year as a vibrant cultural organization having operated as a commercial gallery from 2002 until 2008.

Though the social value of the arts is not readily measured, either quantitatively or by the quality of art that is produced, many studies have shown that the presence of small art organizations strengthens communities by increasing connections both within and outside the communities, creating stability, locating new places for cross-cultural dialogue, creative problem solving, and knowledge-building.

Black & White Project Space transitioned into nonprofit in October 2008 in response to the lack of support from the commercial art establishment for site-specific installations and the diminishing availability of affordable workspace for artists.

Our mission is preservation of cultural diversity and further development of the creative environment. With continued support of our funders we are able to offer substantial resources to artists shaping contemporary visual culture in the field of site-specific installations and bring socially conscious art to a wide audience.

2009 HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- An estimated 2,000 people visited exhibitions and enjoyed events at Black & White Project Space in 2009;
- The Space was in use 365 days, half of the time as a private artist studio and half of the time as a public exhibition space;
- Established the Black & White Project Space Prize to fund art production and provide work and exhibition space to two winners per year;
- Produced two major exhibitions and commissioned new site-specific works by two artists;
- Successfully launched the Artist-in-Residency program and welcomed two artists as Artists-in-Residence;
- Produced four community-based events associated with site-specific installations on view;
- Produced and distributed two brochures in support of each exhibition;
- Held the First Annual Benefit Auction and raised \$10,000;
- Received major support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund;
- *American Dream / Be Happy!* inaugural installation by Alina & Jeff Blumis has been selected for Pulse Miami 2009 Installations to be on view during the art fair in December, 2009;
- Received the 2009 Best of Brooklyn Award in the Art Gallery category by the U.S. Commerce Association;
- Received NYFA fiscal sponsorship;
- Recognized as tax exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



Alina & Jeff Blumis. Artists-in-Residence. winter 2009. site-specific installation on view. spring 2009



Blane De St Croix, Artist-in-Residence, summer 2009, site-specific installation on view, fall 2009

Artists' Testimonials:

From: Blane De St. Croix
Date: September 2009

No place else in the city provides the whole package of great location, large studio space, living space, funding for a major project and 3 month solo exhibition.

To: Black and White Project Space
From: Alina & Jeff Bliumis
Date: June 2009

BWPS offered us the unique opportunities thanks to its physical shape of the space, structure of its program, great Williamsburg neighborhood and wonderful people associated with BWPS. Our show was in this space for more than 3-month, an unusual situation for the exhibition space and absolutely unique opportunity for us to experiment. Williamsburg location is a perfect place for a non-profit space; in the center of the art community it makes an interaction and idea exchange flow easy.

Visitors' Feedback:

"The informality of the space is what makes it welcoming, which makes it easier for me to relate to the work. It's a more successful show because of it. You can really feel the artists influence pervading in the space. I can also sense the transformative aspects of the show because of this. I can really feel the process." – Charles Sainty, Brooklyn, NY, April 2009

"What I find most fascinating about Casual Conversations is that most art derived from foreigners living in America is about nostalgia and living in the past. Here, the overarching theme is looking towards the future and the cross-pollination of moving to a new country, which provides an optimistic outlook and allows the viewer to participate rather than just view the art" – Scott Valentine, Brooklyn, NY, May 2009

"Since our son is 2 ½ we can take him out and this is a fab [sic] space to be free and enjoy art and run around freely. I was interested in the societal aspect of the exhibition as well. It really interested me because of the "Be Happy" and the fact that we're in this recession, but the idea that a community can unite us and conversation can unite us to create shared pleasant experiences through the vehicle of art" – Kate, Brooklyn, NY, May 2009

Press Quotes:

Culturestrike.com

[Can Black and White Gallery Save Williamsburg from Fashion?](#)

story by David Pierce

One of the landmarks of the Brooklyn gallery scene is Black and White Gallery. Like many galleries in the Williamsburg area of Brooklyn it moved to Manhattan to attract collectors who wouldn't cross the bridge and to stay vital in more established centers of the New York art world. Challenged by a limited collector base and real estate prices that now rival Manhattan, galleries and artists' studios are disappearing from the once Bohemian and vibrant Williamsburg landscape. Tatyana Okshteyn the Director of Black and White Gallery though, kept her space in Brooklyn along with her Manhattan presence. This kept the connection to the neighborhood and the artists and patrons of the scene. But the neighborhood that artists and galleries love has become increasingly unrecognizable and appropriated by the world of fashion and commerce. Okshteyn is fighting that trend by establishing Black and White Brooklyn as a not-for-profit space dedicated to long-term, less marketable projects and site-specific work.

L Magazine

(<http://www.themagazine.com/TheMeasure/archives/2009/03/20/wicked-artsy-picturing-cultural-memory>)

Wicked Artsy is Benjamin Sutton's art column for the people.

Often, contemporary art gets stuck in a self-referential loop, questioning and inverting its own terms while losing track of surrounding questions and causes. Three current exhibitions in Chelsea and Williamsburg turn such investigations of mediation and aesthetics into opportunities for exploring cultural heritage and identity. Using video, installation, sculpture and photography, they question how sentimental and historical values become attached to objects and memories, and how those tokens of remembering in turn shape and distort our memories.

Alina and Jeff Bliumis undertake a less elaborate, more direct exposé on shifting cultural identities at Black and White Gallery's new project space in Williamsburg. Rooted in the Russian immigrant community of Brighton Beach, their four-part investigation asks how cultural heritage is re-shaped by mass movements and preserved through entrenched rituals.

Whitehot Magazine

(http://whitehotmagazine.com/index.php?action=articles&wh_article_id=1844)

Interview with Alina and Jeff Bliumis about "Casual Conversations: Let's Drink. Let's Talk. Free," at the Black and White Project Space by Jill Conner

Alina and Jeff Bliumis recently launched a sparse but growing installation at the Black and White Project Space located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Their current exhibition, "Cultural Conversations," highlights the complexities that emerge from cultural misunderstandings. As Russian immigrants who are now American citizens, Alina and Jeff Bliumis use America as a primary context since it symbolizes unity, yet generates stark division.

edward_winkleman

(<http://edwardwinkleman.blogspot.com/search/label/a%20show%20you%20should%20see>)

A Show You Should See: #1

Even if you mentally draw a line from Robert Smithson up through Richard Serra, you may still not be physically or spiritually ready to encounter Blane de St. Croix's latest installation, *Mountain Strip*, at Black and White Project Space in Williamsburg.

WAGMAG

(<http://www.wagmag.org/reviews.php>)

Brooklyn Environmental Sculpture

These days the environment is often at the forefront of our minds, and this October in Brooklyn it is BIG. In Williamsburg at Black and White Project Space the environmental outlook is no less harsh. Blane De St. Croix's "Mountain Strip" takes a critical look at the strip mining process, and the mountain top removal by building a gargantuan upside down mountain landscape sculpture.

Williamsburg Greenpoint Arts + News

(<http://thewgnews.com/2009/10/trents-top-gallery-picks/>)

Trent's Top Gallery Picks

By Trent Morse

Walk through the interior of Black and White Project Space to the back courtyard and you will run into a behemoth geological model—flipped upside down. Blane De St. Croix's sculpture, called "Mountain Strip," is a 40-by-22-foot miniaturization of the Kayford Mountain Ridge in West Virginia, an area that has been strip-mined using the destructive method of mountaintop removal. The vast majority of what you see in front of you, however, is not the mountain but deep layers of subterranean rock and sediment. Lay on your back underneath the installation and you will get a wonderful bird's-eye-view of the lush green topography—as well as views of land flattened by mining companies. This is environmental activist art at its finest.