

Art of the Catskills

ARTS&REC and OSMOS Play Crucial Role in Upstate Art Weekend

A Sanctuary for Creation: Open Studios at Byrdcliffe's 2025 Artists-in-Residence Program

By Brett Rollins
Included in the Upstate Art Weekend was an opportunity to visit ARTS&REC, a non-profit arts and cultural organization based in Stamford, and their exhibition of works Wei Leng Tay and Catherine DeLattre at the OSMOS STATION, a rustic barn converted to a gallery space located at 20 Railroad Avenue. While both artists use photography to explore ideas of home, family memories and domesticity, their visual and technical approaches are deeply different and made for a fascinating reflection of each other.

Wei Leng Tay just completed her tenure as the most recent Artist-in-Residence of ARTS&REC, and returned to her native Singapore, leaving an evocative collection of hand-manipulated photographs, a series entitled Image/Time. From the ARTS&REC curatorial description: "In the works, she presents archival and contemporary photographs of family that were made with different technologies, including microscopy, film and digital photography. These photographs are in turn sanded, layered and fragmented to imagine different ways photographs are stories of history." Reproduced in varied large formats, including collaged grids and printed on a long roll of paper cascading down to the floor, Tay's images are dream-like and mysterious: figures, landscapes and domestic interiors seem to fade in and out. Overlaid with text, crackled surfaces and abstract blocks of white, they evoke a sense of vague, partial memories captured in images.

Catherine Delattre is represented by two series of photographs, installed side by side. Her series Interiors, Monongahela, Pennsylvania, 1977-78 are large-scale, sumptuous



Viewer with a work by Tay



Work by Wei Leng Tay

color photographs of her childhood home. Depicting scenes like a wood-paneled den sporting black velvet paintings, ceramic knick-knacks and a bar covered in magenta vinyl, and a living room with plastic plants, a gold crushed-velvet easy chair and haphazardly hung

family photos, they capture the vibrant, kitschy vibe of their era. For many viewers they will feel deeply familiar. But the photographs are devoid of human presence, giving them an eerie quality; a kitchen table's corner with the tableau of a clock, spilled cereal and spoiling bananas evokes thoughts of abandoned homes from another time.

Delattre's other exhibited works are series of color photographs titled Shoppers, Broadway Upper West Side, NYC, 1979-1980. As described by the ARTS&REC text, "Delattre positioned herself every day for an entire year (weather permitting) on a corner near a Fairway Market" with her medium-format camera, capturing the shoppers going about their business. Almost all of these sharply observed images capture older women carrying shopping bags and displaying a wide range of the bouffant hairdos, hats and glasses, and colorful patterned prints of the era, a vivid record of a moment in time, through the lens of everyday life on a city street. Long held in the artist's archive of negatives, this is the first time these images have been publicly displayed, enhancing the sense of opening a time capsule.

Two artists from deeply differing backgrounds have both produced bodies of work that are deeply personal, and at the same time tap into universal feelings of memory and community.



Viewers and Delattre's installation



Work by Catherine Delattre



Artist In Residence Clark Stoeckley

By Robert Brune
WOODSTOCK — On the final Sunday of their five-week stay, the artists-in-residence at the Byrdcliffe Guild in Woodstock opened their studios to the public, inviting visitors into the intimate spaces where creativity had taken root and flourished. The event marked the culmination of a deeply personal and professionally generative time for nearly two dozen artists across disciplines, in what is now the longest-running artist residency in New York State.

Founded in 1902, Byrdcliffe has served as a cradle for American artists for over a century, with its current residency model taking shape in the early 1990s. Today, the program continues to attract an international roster of painters, writers, composers, ceramicists, and multidisciplinary artists, all drawn to the historic colony's blend of solitude, inspiration, and community.

Among this summer's standout participants was Clark Stoeckley, a professor of art at American University in Kuwait. Stoeckley's vibrant, abstract geometric paintings are directly influenced by the architecture of Middle Eastern mosques, a motif that came alive in his Woodstock studio in luminous color and pattern. A well-traveled muralist known internationally, especially in Taos, New Mexico, Stoeckley is also recognized for his global photography project documenting feral cats, which was recently exhibited in New York City (@feral_feline_photography).

"My studio overflowed with vibrant energy, color, and connection," he shared, calling the Byrdcliffe experience a "sanctuary to explore, reflect, and dive deep." He expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Milton and Sally Avery Foundation and to his fellow residents, whose camaraderie added profound dimension to his time in the woods of Woodstock.

Three-time Byrdcliffe resident Freda Shapiro returned this summer for a more extended stay, over three months, residing in a cottage and working in one of the historic studios on the property. A Boston-based painter working in acrylic and gouache, Shapiro reflects nature through a deeply personal lens, emphasizing themes of resilience, decay, and



Becky Yazdan, Clark Stoeckley, Camilla Taylor: Tintype by Courtney Robertson

memory. "The trees here feel like sentient beings," she said. "They're history's witnesses."

Her process balances direct observation from hikes around the Hudson Valley with memory and photographic references, resulting in rich, evocative canvases that honor nature's overlooked details, the fallen branch, the tenacious sprout. "Each residency has its own flavor," she added. "They are all delicious."

Ceramicist Erika NJ Allen used her time at Byrdcliffe to experiment with immersive installations. Her work explores form, texture, and space, challenging the boundaries between object and environment. With support from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation and the Byrdcliffe Ceramics Fellowship, Allen pushed her practice forward by considering how audiences navigate the gallery experience. "The installation I created for Open Studios allowed me to reimagine how I can build immersive experiences. This experimentation became the 'homework' I'm taking with me."

Byrdcliffe, she emphasized, not only provided time and resources, but a deep connection to artistic lineage. "My mark now lives inside the ceramic studio, a place rich with history."

For Becky Yazdan, the monthlong residency became an incubator for clarity and growth. Known for deeply psychological, layered paintings that

draw from memories, media, and everyday color associations, Yazdan found herself rising before dawn to paint, returning to a life rhythm where art was front and center.

"Color, form, and pattern combine to become conversations, expressions, and events," she explained, likening her paintings to dreams—unpredictable rearrangements of memory, emotion, and daily experience. Her recent works, such as Shrinking Violet and Exit Strategy, merge abstraction with narrative intimacy, providing windows into subconscious storytelling. "By the end of the month, the residents were thick as thieves," she said, "and I left with a solid body of work and a deeper understanding of my practice."

The open studios buzzed with visitors engaging thoughtfully with the work, surrounded by tall trees, wraparound porches, and the echoes of a storied legacy. For many of the residents, Byrdcliffe offered not just a place to work, but a place to listen, reflect, and evolve.

As artist Freda Shapiro put it, "Without a doubt, the original intent of this colony lives on."

And on this summer afternoon, with studios brimming with paintings, ceramics, installations, and conversation, the proof was in every brushstroke, every shared meal, every footstep taken in quiet forest paths toward inspiration.