

THE WASSAIC PROJECT

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MEDIA ALERT: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Wassaic Project Summer Festival

August 13th - 15th, 2010

Press Preview - August 7th, 1pm.

at the Maxon Mills - 37 Furnace Bank Road, Wassaic, NY

please RSVP to media@wassaicproject.com

WHAT: **The Wassaic Project Summer Festival** is a FREE, annual, multi-disciplinary celebration of art, music, and community in the hamlet of Wassaic, NY. 2010 will feature over 80 artists, 25 bands, poetry readings, dance performances, film screenings, and much more. Our website will have a detailed schedule of events, periodic updates, as well as artist and musician bios. Housed in and around historic buildings in Wassaic, NY, The Wassaic Project's summer festival escapes the white walls of traditional art spaces and focuses on site-sensitive installations and performances. As visitors climb through the vertical bins of our historic wooden skyscraper, they explore the work of over 80 emerging contemporary artists, whose bold and intricate installations, paintings, sculptures and videos responded beautifully to the unique architecture. This festival creates a weekend-long opportunity for the public, as well as artists of all mediums, to come together, exchange ideas, learn new things, and engage in a thriving arts community.

WHO: In 2009 over 2,000 festival goers piled into our little hamlet to share in our three day celebration of art, music, and community. This year our **Visual Artists** will include our **2010 Artists in Residence:** Lauren Adelman, Josh Atlas, Hannes Bend, Dana Bunker, Hector Canoge, Jenn Catron / Paul Outlaw, Ben Cuevas, Hope Gangloff, Ghost of a Dream, Greg Hopkins, Hannah Ireland, Steffani Jemison, Kate Johnson, Darryl Lauster, John Pena, George Pfau, Christopher Robbins, Ryan Frank, & Breanne Trammell, work curated by Alison Zavos of Feature Shoot, and much more. Our **Musical Acts** will include The Luyas, Pink Skull, Silk Flowers, Points North, She Keeps Bees, This Frontier Needs Heros, & The Flanks, and many more. Our **Film Program**, curated by Liliana Greenfield-Sanders, includes a short film directed by James Franco, the Student Academy Award Winning short film "God of Love" directed by Luke Matheny, an award winning independent feature film and many more.

WHERE: **Maxon Mills** is located at **37 Furnace Bank Rd, Wassaic, NY 12592**. **The Luther Barn** is located at **17 Furnace Bank Rd, Wassaic, NY 12592**. The Hamlet of Wassaic is located within walking distance from Metro North's Wassaic station. For schedules and fares: <http://mta.info/index.html>

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ABOUT THE WASSAIC PROJECT

The Wassaic Project is an artist-run sustainable, multi-disciplinary arts organization that focuses on community engagement and facilitates artists and participants to exhibit, discuss, and connect with art, each other, our unique site, and the surrounding community.

We seek to make connections between artists of all disciplines. We facilitate interaction and collaboration among artists and the public by utilizing our historic location to create new ways of working in the arts and to inspire new ways of seeing art. The Wassaic Project's activities include an annual summer festival, a year-round artist residency, studio visits/critiques for artists involved with the organization by guest curators and visiting artists, artist workshops with community members, published catalogs, and fundraising exhibitions in Wassaic and New York City. Our programs intend to generate dialogue and collaboration across geographic, ideological and disciplinary boundaries.

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WASSAIC PROJECT HISTORY

The Wassaic Project's location in a refurbished mill and animal auction house adds to the project's unique atmosphere. While it primarily functions as a dynamic arts organization, The Wassaic Project doubles as a restoration venture that is breathing life back into the historic buildings of Wassaic, NY.

An economic boom arrived in Wassaic in the 1800s when Gridley Iron works and the Borden Condensed Milk Factory opened. Soon after, a hotel was built in the town to house visitors arriving by railroad from New York City. In 1875 the Gridleys built a large community barn which was purchased in the 1940s by the Luther family and transformed into a livestock auction house. In the 1950s, Maxon Mills built the large mill building that now stands as the focal point of the town. The mill served as an animal feed processing and storage facility.

By 2005, the mill had long since been shut down and was condemned to be torn down due to decay. Driven by their interest in historic buildings, Tony Zunino and his business partner Richard Berry decided to buy the building and renovate it, saving it from demolition. At the time of renovations it was unclear what the building would be used for, but they were confident that the historic site should be preserved for future generations.

In order to stay true to the original structure of the mill, the contractors closely followed a set of old photographs of the building. They completed extensive work on the entire structure including the grain elevator, the abutting hotel building, and the adjacent site of the old factory. With a bit of architectural ingenuity, they did their best to maintain the original character of the building while also creating a usable space for the community.



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In 2008, Bowie Zunino, Eve Biddle, and Elan Bogarin approached Tony Zunino with a proposition to host a contemporary arts festival in the Mill. Tony agreed to open the mill as an exhibition venue for the festival, as it would be a good way to revitalize the space and open it to the community.

With over forty artists, fifteen musicians, and 500 visitors, the first festival in 2008 was a success. The team of Bowie, Eve, and Elan immediately began fundraising with the hopes of making the free festival an annual event. After much great feedback and the addition of a fourth co-director, Jeff Barnett-Winsby, the Wassaic Project headed into its second year. In 2009, the summer festival attracted close to 2,500 visitors, and included over one-hundred artists, and twenty-five bands.

From 2009 to 2010, The Wassaic Project has grown in leaps and bounds, introducing the artist residency program, its Second Saturday Programs, and a series of community arts workshops. The old animal stalls in the Luther barn have been transformed into artist studios, and the auction ring is used as a film screening room and performance venue. In the back of the barn there is now a woodshop and a screen-printing studio.

Currently, The Wassaic Project is in the process of receiving their 501c3 status and is fiscally sponsored by The Solo Foundation. It is run with the undying support of volunteers and devotees, and grants from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation and the Dutchess County Arts Council.



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WHO WE ARE

Eve Biddle, in addition to being a co-director at the Wassaic Project, has managed large scale public mural projects with her husband and collaborator Joshua Frankel since 2007. She makes public and private murals on commission and also collaborates with co-director Bowie Zunino as the interactive arts team “Bowie + Eve.” Bowie + Eve make interactive and edible art works focused on emotional issues surrounding illness and the medical industry. They met at Williams College where they were both in the class of 2004. They have collaborated since 2008 and have shown both nationally and internationally. Through conversation and private thought they engage viewers to question and expand their perceptions with the firm belief that challenging the way people think can bring about social awareness and change.

Bowie Zunino, in addition to being a co-director at the Wassaic Project, has a background in community-based education and has worked for a number of non-profits including Creative Time. She holds two degrees from Williams College in psychology and fine art as well as a MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in Sculpture, has severe ADD, and loves her dog Ailee.

Jeff Barnett-Winsby, in addition to being a co-director at the Wassaic Project, is a Kansas native and recent nyc re-locator. He holds an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in photography and is an adjunct professor, artist, commercial photographer, and cinematographer. His first book, Mark West and Molly Rose, published through J&L Books, arrives on shelves in March 2010.

Elan Bogarin, in addition to being a co-director at the Wassaic Project, is a New York City based filmmaker/photographer and graduate of NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. Elan is currently co-directing and producing a documentary about the origin myths of oil: invisiblemuralsmovie.com. Elan recently produced the feature film Big Fan for director Robert Siegel which premiered at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival and will open in 6 US cities in August 2009. Other recent projects include God’s House a feature-length documentary about Muslims who saved Jews during the Holocaust for JWM Productions and a short documentary for the National Gallery of Art for Oscar-winning director, Aviva Slesin. In addition, Elan has recently exhibited her photographic work at Rhonda Schaller Gallery in New York.

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Scott Anderson, in addition to being a music director at the Wassaic Project, was raised in Massachusetts, and now resides in Brooklyn, NY. After nearly finishing a Sustainable Agriculture degree, he is now a founding partner of a 10 year old technology consultancy, Control Group, leading the Media and Entertainment practice, and serves on the Leadership Council of openhousenewyork, the largest architecture and design event in the US. He has also been a respected DJ for over fifteen years, was in the rap group Lords of the Rhymes, and is part of the Superspirit Family Band.

Peter Segerstrom, in addition to being a music director at the Wassaic Project, received his MFA from RISD's Digital Media department. He currently resides in Brooklyn, NY where he makes electronic music, art, silk screens, and magic.



For press inquires feel free to contact me by phone (917) 716-4314 - Thanks!