

## BARNALLOW

**SHAKING WINTER AT MILLAY** by Nora Maynard

In March I returned to The Millay Colony to spend a week as a Winter Shaker. When I made that familiar drive up to the Barn, East Hill Road was half-frozen in tire-tracked furrows. The trees were still mostly bare, and snow still covered the ground in patches. It was that bright, cold time between winter and spring.

I arrived with two fellow alums from the November 2007 session, and we were soon joined by two others. Each of us spent most of our stays working in our studios on individual artistic projects (a novel for me—a memoir, a biography, and drawings and installations for the others), but for an hour or two a day, we'd get together in the main house to collaborate, pitching in to work on various jobs for the Colony.

Much of this work, we found, was pruning and clearing to make room for the new. The turn of season meant new residents would be arriving shortly, and the place needed to be ready. Spring was coming—both indoors and out.

Down behind the Barn, we spent an afternoon clearing away pine branches that had been downed (along with the power lines) by a heavy ice storm earlier that winter. Although the lines had been repaired months ago, the newly melted snow was only just now revealing everything else that had fallen. We teamed up to drag the biggest branches back to the woods, then raked and wheelbarrowed away the rest. In among the prickly wreckage, we found a bird's nest and the utmost tip of a pine bough that looked like a miniature tree in itself. We carried these to the house as trophies.

Back indoors, we set to work on the kitchen. We gave the place a top-to-bottom cleaning, freshening up the fridges, cupboards, and drawers in anticipation of Donna's return. Game cooks ourselves, we'd take turns fixing meals,

supplementing fresh groceries with odds and ends scavenged from the pantry. (The curry paste, agave nectar, and furikake seasoning got some great play, though the clam juice, Karo syrup, and cake sprinkles never really found a good outlet.)

Meanwhile, across the road, I had another kitchen project to complete. I spent a couple of hours one morning at the Steepletop farmhouse, taking pictures for a photo-essay about the 1949 Ladies' Home Journal renovation and the planned Millay Society restoration of Edna's storied kitchen.

As the week passed, the weather seemed to get milder by the hour. The streams started gurgling again, and thin crocus spikes began to push their way up in Edna's garden. It was now warm enough for long hikes through the woods during the day, and starlit walks along East Hill Road at night. We took to eating our lunches at the picnic table outside. The sun shone hot on our faces and plates, even though there was still a thin crust of snow on the grass beside us. It was deliciously surreal.

Our last Friday at Millay was March 20th, the Vernal Equinox. We'd all be heading home soon and we wanted to celebrate everything we'd accomplished during the week. We cooked up a big frittata and decorated the table for our dinner: The fallen bird's nest sat at the center, and the crown of the pine branch stood in a glass milk bottle beside. It was finally spring.

The Millay Colony for the Arts

ISSUE 7 | SPRING 2009

**COMING UP IN 2009****Workshop Retreats 2009**

The Millay Colony for the Arts offers five-day retreat workshops on the Colony's gorgeous pastoral campus. Each class includes twelve hours of workshop time, all meals, and ample time to work, ruminate and explore our lush natural surroundings. Private bedrooms and studios are available.

Trans-Experiential Playwriting Workshop  
with Chiori Miyagawa: June 27 to 31

Mixed Media Works on Paper with  
Jason Middlebrook: July 30 to Aug 2

Adaptation & Collaboration in Video with  
Bernadine Mellis: Aug 29 to Sept 1

Writing Workshop: Call & Response with  
Eleni Sikelianos: October 1 to October 4

Critical Writing as Creative Practice:  
Frances Richard: October 29 to November 2

**PLEASE SEE**

[www.millaycolony.org/workshops](http://www.millaycolony.org/workshops)  
or call 518-392-4144

for full workshop details, teacher  
biographies and application info.

**Millay Nights at The Colony**

Readings/Showings/Playing/Happenings from resident artists at the Colony. Held at our lovely campus in Austerlitz. Snacks & spirits will be served.

The third Thursday of every month.  
7:00 PM

Great work. Great drinks. Great food.  
FREE!

**Millay Colony Summer Fête**

- Music performed by Millay Colony alumni & special guests
- Open Studios
- Silent auction of original postcard art by Colony alumni
- Hors D'oeuvres by local restaurants
- Wine from Hudson Wine Merchants

July 18 6:00 PM

Tickets \$75.00 per person

## Message From the Executive Director

As I write, The Millay Colony is in the midst of its annual metamorphosis from an austere, glimmering Winter panorama to a bustling, noisy Spring home for resident artists. On April 1st, we will welcome our first group of residents and Calliope, Donna, Cara and I are busy making sure that everything is ready. Outside, the first signs of Spring - peepers, crocuses and millions of robins - are reminding us that, yes, even a Winter this long and cold ends with new life and possibility.

And readers, it was a long Winter in Columbia County. The Spring Equinox has never been more welcome. We had relentless storms - snow, hail, ice. In mid-December, a ferocious Northeastern ice storm ripped many of our wise old trees in half, toppled telephone poles and left us, like so many others, without electricity, heat or phones, for more than a week. By January, we were used to driving the long dirt road to the Colony while it snowed- or hailed- or both. The Winter was gorgeous, glittering, bedazzled. But I'm glad it's over.

Now we are ready for the great thaw. The studios that have been largely bare all Winter will surge back to multi-colored, multi-layered, multi-dimensional form. We celebrate this outpouring of ideas, happenings and artistic community. We celebrate the artists who spend time with



us each year. We celebrate by planting our gardens (Victory Gardens if you will) now so that the Summer & Autumn residents can pick their own vegetables and herbs. Meanwhile, our friendly farm down the road, Hawthorne Valley, is beginning its bio-dynamic magic and we will be getting fruit and vegetables from them all summer through the joy of a CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture). Calliope's neighbor, Gail Day, is giving us eggs from her prodigious heirloom chickens and we are getting flour & bread from the amazing Wild Hive bakery (grinding its own flour from its organic grains) in Clinton Corners.

As the basil and tomatoes, squash and rosemary, cucumbers and thyme begin to pop up, we will begin our annual workshop retreats, bringing renowned artist-teachers to the Colony for a series of classes on poetry, playwriting, video, music, etc. Our residency groups are interdisciplinary, and so we offer workshops that negotiate with great awareness, often working entirely outside of, the boundaries between genres. Tomas Urayan Noel looks at poetry that moves across languages, forms and performance. Frances Richard looks to prose writing as a way to analyze and contextualize a range of artwork, specifically visual art.

And by mid-Summer, we will be planning our annual Open House, this year a twilight concert on our own "great lawn": Cocktails, Music & Art on the Meadow. Featuring music from Millay alumni, great local food and amazing wines that only Hudson Wine Merchants knows of, we will celebrate the full glory of summer on July 18 at 6:00 PM.

We look forward to more communication with you all this year, sweet readers of our newsletter. We hope that you will get in touch any time you want to check in or visit us amidst our ever-changing chorus of wildflowers, berries, birds, and, of course, brilliant artists of all stripes.

## Report from the Juries by Christopher Stackhouse

This year was the second consecutive season I sat on the visual arts jury at The Millay Colony for The Arts. Each year has provided surprises that have called for considerations beyond aesthetic and intellectual ones. As each photograph of an artist's work appears on the screen in front of us, we are confronted with questions—some, basic, and others nuanced, more personal. How well the person, whose work is on view, has followed the submission guidelines notwithstanding, essentially critical is an assessment of quality. It is a challenge determining the feel of, e.g., installations, sculptures, or surface play in paintings, when reproduced images of them are flattened by screen projection. This model of jury review favors drawing, printing, film and

photography. To balance the technological disadvantage of one with the advantage of another, jurors have to reflect on what intellectual and conceptual properties can stand in for the absence of ideal present conditions. At that level, however abstracted, all is relatively equal in potential. Here is where personal, rarefaction of judgment becomes pitched.

Artists will continue painting, ad infinitum it seems, which always makes the question of its relevance, though perennially provocative, rather moot. Both years provided a hardy dose of it. What is difficult is figuring out what such a variety of painters are doing or saying, then, thereof give merit. The traditional plastic arts are enriched, enlivened, by the experiments being held in all the other mediums. Something about the plurality of expressive means is reflected in the character of contemporary, conventionally iterated, genre forms. Among live action and animated film/video, performance documentation, book art, text-based imagery, etc. that has been seen, noticeably missing are computer and/or web art. While The Millay Colony itself maintains an anonymous application process for the juries, what remains consistently striking on the juries I have participated in are the submissions by applicants generally considered 'established'. Is it fair for someone who has received a great deal, of relatively public, recognition, to be placed in competition with those who have a competent practice but are much lesser known? There are biases, with strong arguments, leaning in all directions. That question alone brings to bear focus on a series

of questions about how residencies, fellowships and grants function to serve the broader creative community. This is a pointed negotiation for adjudicators, across the board, given the perception that our nation, in general, cares so little for the ongoing development of the arts.

The panelists with whom I juried made invested choices. To some extent, we made decisions that reflect our tastes, belief systems, and whims, as much as we were able from a select pool of random candidates for residency. Diversity is an important factor, but equally valuable is getting the right mix of people, personalities, and ideas together. Potential opportunity to learn from others is a vital feature at the Colony. The placid grounds of the facility beg for quiet reflection. An activating counterpoint to the coddling respite of the artists getaway, is the maintenance of lively discourse once they get there. During the oncoming season conversations likely to be had, if any, began in the viewing room where jury and staff came together to get it started.

*As each photograph of an artist's work appears on the screen in front of us, we are confronted with questions—some, basic, and others nuanced, more personal.*



**ABOVE**  
Chris Stackhouse at  
The Millay Colony.  
PHOTO CREDIT:  
CAROLINE CRUMPACKER

**RIGHT**  
The poetry jury  
considers applications  
at The Millay Colony.  
PHOTO CREDIT:  
CARA BENSON



## 2009 Millay Colony Residents

- April** Douglas Boyce, Composing; Alexandria, VA  
 Susan Kim Campbell, Non-Fiction; Marina Del Rey, CA  
 Brett Goodroad, Visual Arts; San Francisco, CA  
 Kristin-Paige Madonia, Fiction; Charlottesville, VA  
 Jay Muhlin, Visual Arts; Astoria, NY  
 Laurie Stone, Non-Fiction; Scottsdale, AZ
- May** Laura Andel, Composing; New York, NY  
 Nicholas Boggs, Fiction; Washington, D.C.  
 Whitney S. Holmes, Poetry, Tuscaloosa, AL  
 Christopher Kardambikis, Visual Arts; Pittsburgh, PA  
 Molly Larkey, Visual Arts; Brooklyn, NY  
 Mark Read, Visual Arts; Brooklyn, NY
- June** Ryan Black, Poetry; Jackson Heights, NY  
 Janet Jieru Chen, Composing; Durham, NC  
 Christine Evans, Playwriting; Providence, RI  
 Jennifer Levonian, Visual Arts; Philadelphia, PA  
 Rick Lewis, Visual Arts; New Paltz, NY  
 Jarod Rosello, Fiction; State College, PA
- July** Tisa Bryant, Poetry; Brooklyn, NY  
 Graham Faust, Poetry; Oakland, CA  
 Selena Kimball, Visual Arts; Brooklyn, NY  
 Sarah Madsen, Fiction; Providence, RI  
 Thomas Martin, Visual Arts; Bronx, NY  
 Mauro Zamora, Visual Arts; Philadelphia, PA
- August** Giovanna Cecchetti, Visual Arts, Paterson, NJ  
 Trent Hanna, Composing; Huntsville, TX  
 Joesph Kim, Screenwriting; San Francisco, CA  
 Julie Nagle, Visual Arts; Richmond, VA  
 Sujin Lee, Film Arts, Brooklyn, NY  
 Bruce Snider, Poetry, San Francisco, CA
- September** Amy Albracht, Visual Arts; Brooklyn, NY  
 Paul Burn, Visual Arts, Brooklyn, NY  
 Tracy E. Grinnell, Poetry; Brooklyn, NY  
 Emily Lace, Composing; Los Angeles, CA  
 Kat Smith, Screenwriting; Los Angeles, CA  
 Paul David Young, Playwriting, New York, NY
- October** Darren Floyd, Visual Arts; Brooklyn, NY  
 Azareen Van Der Vliet Oloomi, Fiction; New York, NY  
 David Politzer, Film Arts; Youngstown, OH  
 Sabeen Raja, Visual Arts; Ashburn, VA  
 Melissa Sandor, Fiction; Brooklyn, NY  
 Thomas Smith, Composing; Milmont Park, PA
- November** Stewart Allen, Fiction; Brooklyn, NY  
 Mark Cannariato, Visual Arts; Brooklyn, NY  
 Alison Cobb, Non Fiction; Brooklyn, NY  
 Peter Iannarelli, Visual Arts; Beacon, NY  
 Natasha Marin, Poetry; Seattle, WA

## New Works by Residents





'Marry Me Or Else  
Sabeen Raja, Ashburn, VA  
August Resident



**TOP LEFT**

'Tradeship  
Julie Nagle, Richmond, VA  
October Resident

**BOTTOM LEFT**

'Phoebe Seen from the Back  
Selena Kimball; Brooklyn, NY  
July Resident

**ABOVE**

'Untitled (girl on green plastic)  
Amy Albracht; Brooklyn, NY  
September Resident

## My One and Only

E. TRACY GRINNELL

For months the vacant leaves  
teased the eye I thought  
the mirror had

So looking in  
the substance  
fell away

No relation whom I loved  
was there

Deep empathy made the case  
for seclusion

I followed you anywhere  
I frayed the very knot  
I tore my pockets out

With great thanks to all the wonderful foundations who supported our 2008 season by underwriting residencies for individual artists, giving ground-breaking artists, writers and composers the chance to develop ground-breaking work in our gorgeous pastoral setting.

**Endowed Fellowships**

**Resident Artist**

The Bay and Paul Foundations Fellowship .....	Kelly Parr
The Edward T. Cone Foundation Fellowship .....	Caroline Mallonee
The Jean & Louis Dreyfus Foundation Fellowship .....	Lynn Gumert
Nancy Graves Foundation Fellowship .....	Oona Stern
Berrilla Kerr Foundation Fellowship .....	Peter Gil-Sheridan
Martha Martin Fellowship .....	Sejal Shah
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Robert W. Simpson Fellowship .....	Naoe Suzuki
Isabel Padre y Valiente Fellowship .....	Paz de la Calzada
The Wallace Foundation Fellowship .....	Jean Day and Christian Nagler

**Annual Fellowships**

**Resident Artist**

Bay and Paul Foundations Teacher Fellowship .....	Allison Carter
Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation Fellowships .....	Darren McManus, Katie Murken, Jennifer Sears, Molly Springfield
Milton and Sally Avery Foundation Fellowship .....	Rachel Meuler
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The Millay Colony for the Arts was founded in 1973 as an artists' residency program in Austerlitz, New York located on the former property of poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. Our mission is to nurture and promote the vitality of the arts by providing writers, visual artists and composers with a rural retreat that encourages creative intensity and exploration in the context of an artistic community.

**SAVE THE DATE:**

**Millay Colony Summer Fête**

July 18 6:00 PM

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The Millay Colony for the Arts  
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