

La Gazette du Moulin à Nef

Number 5, December 2002

Dear Friends, Old and New

As the snow falls gently over a quiet morning in the mountains of Colorado, there is, at last, a tranquil moment to review this year's activities, and to anticipate those upcoming. It was a busy and exciting year! We welcomed old friends back to deepen ties with Auvillar, and oriented some new adventurers to our environs. I hope you will enjoy reading the stories of some of our participants this year. It was a very successful season!

As always, barely have we finished wrapping up one season when we are fully occupied with planning for the next one. Each year we are building on the work of the year before, adding new programs while refining the old ones. The Artist-in-Residence program continues to be the focus of our efforts. We are receiving, through our website now, inquiries regarding our residencies. This, of course, brings new challenges along with opportunities for cultural exchanges that are far wider than our original reach.

We welcomed five Artists-in-Residence, this past summer, four through the Pont Aven School of Art, and one independent artist from Boston. Our first music program, with American David Schmal and the Conservatoire de Toulouse expanded to include the music school in Valence D'Agen this last summer. Our efforts to introduce a film program



A painting by Lynn Pauley

were well received and the films, one by an American, and one by a Frenchman were well attended. The ceramics studio was open on a drop-in basis for 10 days this summer and it worked so well that we will do it again in July 2003. The ceramics studio was also open, in the spring and fall, for children from Auvillar and the U.S., to make some commemorative tiles, and to take advantage of the studio spaces for crafts and folk dancing classes. Finally, in the fall, in collaboration with the organizers of the Marché Potier, we welcomed potters and visitors to see an exhibition of work and a slide show by artist and ceramist David Davison, and to try their hand at some clay work. This collaboration is one we will happily build on for next year. Our new program for 2003 is in digital photography. An exchange between French and American photographers will include a special workshop for the community.

So, while I am surrounded by the images of a white blanketed world outside, I anticipate the coming seasons with a fresh enthusiasm born of new ideas, new energy, and a genuine wish to share some of the French countryside and culture with new friends.

—Susan Saarinen

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*Unless otherwise indicated,
articles have been written by
members of the CECA Board*



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Paradis in Auvillar

There is so much to write about my stay in Auvillar that I don't know if I can put everything on paper for this article. From the moment I stepped off the train at Valence d'Agen till 3 weeks later when I boarded the train to leave, it seemed I was in "le Paradis".

My hosts Jean-Pierre Beaufiles et Marie-Pierre were relentless in taking care of my every need in the most gracious manner. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to share these days with them and to form a wonderful friendship.

The experience of living in this special French village allowed me to make many unique acquaintances and friendships. I found the people of Auvillar to be especially caring and welcoming; from the woman at the local *tabac*, who without my asking saved the Herald Tribune for me each day; to the gentleman, who worked in the post office who invited me to draw and paint the 16th century structure in the garden facing his house. I will always remember the many chance encounters and how gentle and thoughtful each one was for me.

I purposely chose not to rent a car with the idea of spending as much time as possible in the village and participating in the life of the community. My daily routine consisted of rising early to take a *petit déjeuner*, leaving home to stop at the church for a time of meditation and reflection, and then hiking through the cobbled streets of the village down to the Port to work in my studio, climbing back up the hill for lunch and a short siesta and then back to the studio to work until seven o'clock in the evening. The day ended

with a *pièce de résistance*, the *repas* with Jean-Pierre and Marie lasting sometimes till eleven or eleven thirty at night. These pleasant daily experiences went far beyond any of the expectations I had when I was accepted by the Centre Cultural d'Exchange d'Auvillar.

My final sense of integration into the community came after giving a short discourse in French to a group of retired people in the village. I chose to speak about my ancestry, the reasons for learning French, and my formal studies of painting and art in my retirement. I felt proud to invite them to my studio the next day to discuss my work and the exhibition. And in return I was invited to join in their game of cards, which was a real sign of acceptance and belonging for me.

As an artist, the real luxury was the availability of the large new studio in the privacy of which I was able to create my work in preparation for the exposition at the end of my stay. Even though it was a challenge to produce a sufficient amount of work for an exhibition in a short period of time, I found the time I spent drawing and painting to be extremely rewarding. I enjoyed the company of other artists who were part of the program and of local artists. The Moulin à Nef is really an ideal setting for artists.

I want to thank the Centre d'Exchange Cultural d'Auvillar for the opportunity to participate in this valuable program and I look forward to being invited to participate in collaborating and building on the many relationships I have started with the Center and Auvillar, *le paradis*.

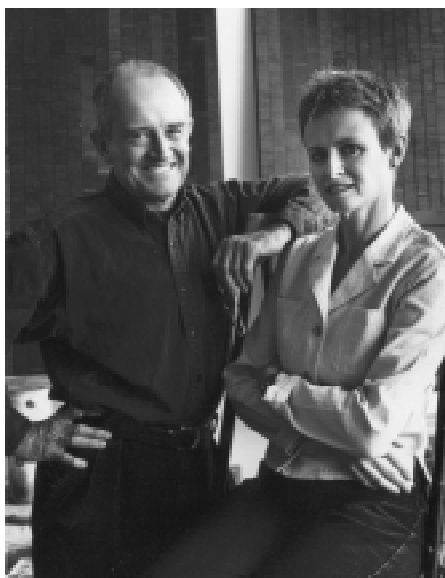
—James Paradis, July 2002



Peace and Harmony

Working in Le Moulin à Nef and looking out of the studio windows to the hillside with hosts of poppies in bloom, insects buzzing and a sun hatted man scything produced a marvelous sense of inner harmony.

Any residency abroad raises issues. Should it be a calm period, a richness of time to continue to develop current ideas? Should it be an opening up to people, place, light and tempo? Should all of the time be spent working flat out in the studio exploring new possibilities or in responding to a new environment and culture? In our case a compromise of all of the above came about not by strategy, but by the pull of the place.



The working routine of living up on the hill in Auvillar on Rue de l'Horloge, stepping out into the almost stageset-like street and square and after coffee and baguette buying, proceeding down to Le Port to the cool quiet tranquility of the studio on the edge of the Garonne, whether in the early morning or evening was seductive.

Ideas and attitudes to work can be instant, instinctive responses or slow marinades of experiences and reactions. Having been lured to work in Auvillar with little knowledge of the town, Le Port or Le Moulin à Nef, but by affectionate memories of Pays d'Oc and the desire to visit the cloister of Moissac, the painted caves at Peche Merle and

Toulouse with perhaps a revisiting of Albi and Montauban, we rented a car. Moissac we returned to many times, Peche Merle alas only once, but discoveries recommended by new friends in Auvillar — Les Abattoires in Toulouse, the Centre D'Art Contemporaine Georges Pompidou in Cajarc, the Sphinx Gallery showing abstract painting from all over France in the small town of La Ville Dieu du Temple, and Cahors were wonderful discoveries and stimuli.

However the enduring thought in retrospect is of the studio and of the pace and peace of a working day there. Who knows at this point if the work made was really successful, but working there with our exhibited work out in the new gallery, to react to directly, was an important experience. The only other strangers in town, other than our fellow resident artists, that we were aware of, were of course the pilgrims passing through to visit the ruined chapel dedicated to Saint Catherine in Le Port en route to Saint Jacques-de-Compostelle. We hope that the artists coming to Le Moulin à Nef will become as familiar a sight and of course that they will stay longer, interact with the people of the town and return.

What has been achieved in the restoration and development of the studios and galleries at Le Moulin à Nef is superb. The vision of the longer term plans to

develop the chapel alongside as a cultural center for the town as well as pilgrimage sight is marvelous. We enormously enjoyed the experiences and work time, which resulted from the energies, foresight and dedication of all of the people involved in developing and setting up the center. Our hope would be that it can remain focused, bring in artists of quality, generating its own spiritual energy for the town and becoming a place of artistic pilgrimage. —Eve Thomson & Kenneth Dingwall

The Lynn Pauley Show

Everyone knows Lynn Pauley is a New Yorker, but her heart belongs to Auvillar where she has her second home.

This year she spent most of August hard at work in the village. One of the high points of her stay was a splendid retrospective exhibit at the Moulin à Nef which gathered a series of paintings

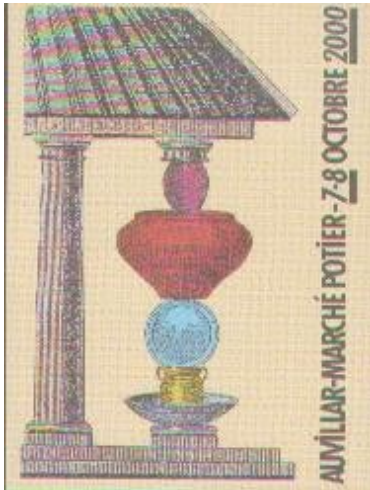


and drawings she has done in Auvillar since her first visit in 1995.

A reception was held on the 18th of August. Many locals and tourists came to admire Lynn's work and to chat with the artist whose enthusiasm and desire to communicate have made her many friends throughout the region.

The Pottery Festival and Sale

The organizers of the *Marché Potier* celebrated their tenth year this fall with a festival and pottery sale. Sixty potters from the region participated, twenty more than usual. Visitors had an opportunity to make tiles for a peace sculpture, glaze raku pots to take home, observe the firing of a paper kiln in The Port, and take part in several other activities. It was well organized, except for the weather, which gave everyone a scare on Saturday morning!



David Davison, a friend of the *Moulin à Nef* since his inauguration of the ceramics studio two years before, was on hand to give a lecture and slide show about his work in ceramics, painting and photography on Saturday night. We had 60 people packed into the gallery for the lecture. Also shown in the gallery was an exhibit of his newest works, Iris prints from Cuba and Bali.

On Sunday we opened the ceramics studio for visitors to come and play with clay, see the facilities, and view the art exhibit. Next year we hope to coordinate more activities in the Port with the *Marché Potier*. We'd like to invite more people to come and try their hands at some clay work!

A Paper Kiln

To celebrate the 10th Annual *Marché Potier* of Auvillar, the organizers wanted to position several activities throughout the village to allow the public to wander from the *Place de la Halle* to the Port by way of the road known as the *Peyrat* and in this way create a link with the *Moulin à Nef*. A trail of installations and ephemeral sculptures pointed the way culminating in a demonstration of a paper kiln firing on the banks of the *Garonne*. The ten pieces to be fired in two firings had been decorated with clay motifs by children from the school in Auvillar.

The construction of a paper kiln requires many hands and a good deal of perseverance. One of the participants described the different steps for us:

"First we prepare the ground on which the pots will sit. It is

raised so that we can put wood and charcoal underneath. After placing the pots, we surround them with thin pieces of wood in a sort of tipi shape and with charcoal which will generate high heat. Little by little we work our way up to the highest pot. The next step is to cover sheets of paper with slip, liquid clay, and place them (so they stay!) on the wood. This layer is repeated about twenty times, leaving a hole in the top to serve as a chimney."

The next step is, of course, the firing. Several openings are made at the base of the kiln to light several fires, which takes some time. When you can hear the fire humming, there is nothing left to do but wait a few hours. The pots, fired at about 800 degrees (in our kiln), can be removed when the kiln has cooled.

—Jean-François, François, Remy and Jonathan



Beyond the Frontiers of Language

Music is a universal language. This was confirmed once again for five local musicians on the occasion of their encounter with American composer David Schmal and his nephew Aaron Stewart, a promising young saxophonist.

The first meeting which took place near a stage at the Music Festival in Valence d'Agen last summer consisted mainly of an exchange of comments, sheet music and rehearsal schedules in a "frenghish" that foreshadowed some communication problems, ending in ..."see you soon!"

Drummer Olivier Maurieres, saxophonists Fabien Carrouche, Nicolas Grandjean, Guillaume Gourmaud and Aaron Stewart and bassist Stephane Dauty joined David Schmal at the piano for rehearsals at the School of Music in Valence for five days in July 2002. David's composition was focused on jazz and the different ways that the

French and American cultures approach this difficult musical idiom.

First rehearsal: everyone prepares his instrument, plays a few notes, a few riffs. We get oriented,



share ideas on the sound, the equipment, distribute the score...then "one, two....one, two, three, four...." And the magic of music brings us all together to the same spot. No more cultural barriers or perplexity. An understanding is born among the musicians. We can all relax, smile, joke, encourage each other, listen to

each other, exchange compliments. It will be a good experience.

The other sessions all flow in the same ambiance where English and French blend in a musical language that goes beyond frontiers.

The exchange culminated in two performances, one for a small audience at the Moulin à Nef, the other on the Place de la Halle with a larger audience.

The originality of the themes and arrangements for this unusual ensemble (four saxophones, bass, drums and piano), the inspired improvisations and the musical bonding (not to mention some more personal anecdotes like petanque parties late into the night or David, Nicolas and Guillaume dancing a spontaneous twist backstage a few minutes before the concert...) will remain good memories.

—Guillaume Gourmaud

Auvillar Improvisation

When my uncle, David Schmal, invited me to perform with him in France, I didn't know what to expect. It would be my first time out of the country, something completely new! After I finished my final week of school, I had 3 days to recover before my departure to Europe.

Auvillar was absolutely stunning, one of the most beautiful places I have ever been. With a week before rehearsals began I had plenty of time to explore. I took several walks during that week, sometimes as many as three a day. One of my favorite activities was to take my saxophone up to the highway overpass and play for a few hours while looking at the beautiful landscape.

I enjoyed the change of pace in Auvillar. No longer were we rushing around cities like Paris. We were relaxing in a comfortable home where our hosts and friends Marie and Jean-Pierre treated us as family. In fact, everyone in Auvillar treated me like family. Everyone was willing to try out their English on me.

I enjoyed meeting the visual artists and seeing their work. I learned a new colored pencil technique that renders photo realistic drawings. The film festival was one of a kind. It was nice to have the opportunity to speak with the filmmakers after viewing their work.

The night of our first rehearsal was very exciting. I always get nervous about playing with new musicians for the first time. Will they like the music? Will we get along? In this case both questions could be answered with a yes. I had an easy time relating to the other saxophonists because we liked many of the same artists. We ended up having a great time together. They even liked the song that I wrote.

My favorite part of playing jazz with others is listening. I love to hear what other musicians say through their improvisations. Listening to all of the solos at each rehearsal was a wonderful experience, like listening to the improvisations of Auvillar.

—Aaron Stewart



Welcome A7

A dynamic group of painters and sculptors has recently appeared in Auvillar. Installed on the Place de la Halle, the newly created association of artists and art lovers is known as l'Association d'Artistes, d'Amateurs d'Art et d'Animateurs d'Ateliers d'Auvillar or, more simply put, the A7.

A permanent show of their work was inaugurated in September 2002.

We hope these French artists will enjoy meeting with American artists in residence at the Moulin à Nef and that these encounters will encourage a richer climate for cultural exchange.

In the meantime, welcome to A7!

Denver International School II: The Sequel

We were very pleased to see Edith and J.O. again, the two teachers from the Denver International School who returned to Auvillar this fall with another group of fifth graders: Andre, Anne, Billy, Camille, Colby, Dilara, Jacques, John, Madison, Maren, Michaela, Nicholas, Ralph and Sabrina. We are proud that DIS chose our town and our school again as the destination for this trip that marks the end of the primary cycle for their students.

With enthusiasm, generosity and a good measure of flexibility,

At the height of the Pottery Fair on October 12th and 13th, balloons were released carrying messages for peace from the children and their families.

Guillaume Gourmaud organized a music workshop. The students played squash and field hockey. They visited the police station and enjoyed themselves at the indoor pool and waterslide in Golfch.

At the Restaurant de l'Horloge, the chef M. François and his wife had the good idea to introduce the stu-

It was a Tuesday morning, just like the last time, when the group said goodbye at the train station, sad to leave so soon yet very happy to have had such a great time.

Now the students from Auvillar are eager to go see where and how their new friends live. The coming months will be busy with preparations for the trip to Denver next May.

—Genevieve Galan



friends of the school, parents and teachers organized an excellent and varied program for the 14 students from DIS and 25 CM1/CM2 students from Auvillar. On behalf of all the children who participated in this program, we warmly thank everyone involved.

The visit began with the discovery of Auvillar and its museums with a guided tour led by Mme. Noby.

Two afternoons were reserved for workshops in pottery, folkdancing and handicrafts at the studios of the Cultural Exchange Center of Auvillar at the Moulin à Nef in the Port. Susan Saarinen and David Davison were in charge of the ceramics portion during which the students worked on a project together which will be offered to the school in Auvillar.

dents to French gastronomy, a luncheon of foie gras poele au chasselas, frogs' legs, snails, coquilles St. Jacques, pigeon... followed by a visit to M. and Mme. Joly's farm.

The children spent a day in Arcachon on the Atlantic Ocean. They visited the Dune du Pyla, the Ingres Museum in Montauban, the Conservatoire de la Ruralite et des Metiers d'Autrefois in Donzac. They made and ate chocolaines with M. Borean, the baker in Auvillar. Of course there was a dance party and a movie, thanks to M. Laffitte.

During the second weekend, many Auvillar families took advantage of the presence of the DIS students to discover or rediscover the fabulous site of Carcassonne in the Aude.

Looking Forward to Coming Back

I had the pleasure of being one of the participants at the first Franco-American Film Festival of Auvillar. To be quite honest, I agreed to attend three months before the event but as the date approached my schedule was so busy that I almost backed out at the last minute. My friendship with Anicette Touillez prevented me from doing so...luckily! I had a wonderful stay, discovered a superb village and met some talented people. In both the music program and the film program, the American participation was very high quality. I felt a little bit lost with my video cassette but the kindness of the people in Auvillar quickly reassured me. Conclusion: As for next summer, if I am able, I will be delighted to return to Auvillar.

Amities and thanks to all.

—Eddy Matalon



Eddy (left) and Mark Mark Wilkinson was the American director in the film festival. An article about his visit to Auvillar arrived too late to make it into this issue of La Gazette. It will appear in the next issue.

Auvill'Art 2003

And Now... Photography!

From September 21st to 27th, 2003, *Working with Artists Photographic Workshops* in Denver, Colorado, will offer a workshop at the Moulin à Nef in fine art photography using digital photographic techniques. French and American artists will share their approaches to creating images using today's digital technologies. A special workshop for the community of Auvillar will be included in the program, and an open evening of discussion and viewing of work with the artists will also be planned.

...and Gastronomy

At the request of a small group of American Francophiles, the Hotel and Restaurant L'Horloge has put together a weeklong workshop combining cultural tourism with the secrets and joys of French and Occitane cuisine under the expert guidance of Serge François. The participants will learn to prepare certain local dishes which they may then enjoy eating right away, but the prestigious chef will also teach them others which they will preserve and take home with them.



Of course, visits to several vineyards in the region are part of the program as well as the opportunity to taste the wines and liqueurs they produce.

More details on this adventure will appear in the next issue of the Gazette.

John Lencicki Returns to Auvillar

Under the auspices of *Phil Levine Workshops* (www.paintingfrance.com), John Lencicki will teach drawing and painting in the village where he has painted so many times before. From July 20-30, a group of adults of all ages from across the United States will discover Auvillar's wonderful sites including the Moulin à Nef. Local artists are encouraged to join with the group on a private basis.

John was a member of the original group of Colorado artists who came to Auvillar as part of the first cultural exchange program during that landmark summer of 1994. "Coming back to Auvillar will be like coming home," says John, who looks forward to introducing his students to everything he loves about the town.

James Will Be Back

James Paradis has already decided to spend the month of June 2003 in Auvillar. The Moulin à Nef has reserved a studio for him where he can create new works for us to admire.

But of course James is no stranger to Auvillar. Lots of people know him well there, particularly at the Club des Aïnés to which he hopes to return next summer. He is also looking forward to meeting more French artists this trip.



A painting by John Lencicki

Have a Good Weekend!

Starting in 2003, the Renaissance du Brulhois Association will work with the Moulin à Nef to develop weekend programs for visiting American artists to help them get to know this beautiful region.

As early as this summer, the student painters working with John Lencicki in July (see article "Return to Auvillar"), as well as other artists in residence, can take advantage of the expertise of this non-profit organization devoted to promoting the richness of this area and the warm hospitality of its inhabitants.

(Association Renaissance du Bruhlois, President: M. Jean-Pierre Perry, Salle Occitane, 82340 Dunes Tel/Fax 011-33 (0)5 63 39 61 64.)

Ceramics Studio 2003

The studio will be open for ceramic instruction and practice from July 11th through July 25th. You are welcome to come on a drop-in basis, when you can.

If you wish to learn to use the potter's wheel, please plan for three full days of work in the studio. There will be a charge for materials, firing and instruction. We will post a sign-up sheet at the studio in June for anyone who wishes to participate in this program, or you may contact Susan Saarinen by email at CECA@moulinanef.org.

La Cebo and la Cloucado: Stones that Speak

The sculptural process used for the stones that now designate the Moulin à Nef buildings is called “taille en épargne”. It allows the letters to be superposed on one another at different levels of relief. The play of light and shadow, which helps the eye to identify the motif, is increased in this way so that the motif can be read even in low natural light when the sun is hidden or does not hit the façade. The thick and thin strokes of the letters themselves suggest the handwritten style appropriate to a place dedicated to art and its making. Their closeness or imbrication is intended to suggest cohesion, working together as a group, encounter and movement.

—Bruno Riboulot



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Our next issue will be sent in the spring of 2003