



SUMMER IS ABOUT GETTING BACK TO WORK FOR JULIAN LAVERDIERE, SHOWN HERE WITH IMPERIAL DRAGSTER (2002), A WORK IN PROGRESS.

Photographs by Robin Holland

working vacations

Where Does the Art World Go in the Summer?

BY BARBARA POLLACK

Where are you going on your summer vacation?" Ask any artist this question and the inevitable response is "What vacation?" Artists don't take vacations—or don't admit that they do—and the summer months, when the art world goes on hiatus, is often their most productive time of year. The lucky few have second homes with fully equipped studios, where they can continue working (and networking) in places that are supposed to be relaxing. But the luckier ones have a full schedule of fall shows with deadlines that make relaxation almost impossible.

"Boy, do I need recuperation," says Joel Meyerowitz, who has just spent the last eight months photographing the terrible beauty of ground zero. Meyerowitz's classic series, "Cape Light," defines the serenity of summers past: serene skies and ocean views framed by the weather-beaten porch of his home in Cape Cod. This summer, however, when he gets to the Cape in August, Meyerowitz is faced with the formidable task of editing the more than 8000 pictures he has taken at the World Trade Center disaster site. The photographer has already selected the images for two upcoming shows. "September 11: Images of Ground Zero," sponsored by the Museum of the City of New York, is tentatively scheduled to open in a public lobby in Lower Manhattan at the end of August, supplemented by an exhibition already set for the Ariel Meyerowitz

Gallery, run by the photographer's daughter, that inaugurates her new Chelsea space in September. "Determined to see something other than 3.5 tons of rubble," Meyerowitz took three weeks off in July, but this was a working holiday, shooting Italian landscapes for his forthcoming book, *Inside the Light: Four Seasons in Tuscany*. Meyerowitz needed this respite and the peacefulness of the Cape to clear his mind for the task of sorting through his images of violence and destruction.

Julian Laverdiere, another artist whose career became inextricably enmeshed in the aftermath of September 11, will not get such a pleasant break. Laverdiere, one of the creators of the Tribute in Light memorial, is recuperating from that project on the roof of a building in Chelsea, where he has just erected his new studio. "I bought an airplane hangar online, and I just finished constructing it," says the artist, who is a bit of a mad scientist. His only vacation plan is a trip to the Adirondacks to visit his father and collect specimens of rare mosses, which he wants to grow into future sculptures. For Laverdiere, who has upcoming shows at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Miami and Lehmann Maupin in New York, summer is about getting back to work. "It feels like I didn't get any of my own work done this entire year," he says. "My big joy is finishing the studio. After September 11, this is a kind of personal reconstruction project."

June is traditionally the month when the art world escapes from New York and artists escape from the art world. Art colonies, such as Yaddo in Saratoga Springs and MacDowell in New Hampshire, provide hundreds of artists each year with a place of refuge, needed now more than ever, according to painter Andrea Belag, who lives and works within blocks of ground zero and will be returning to Yaddo this summer. "I feel safe there," says Belag, "which is a big consideration these days."

In these idyllic settings, reminiscent of upscale sleep-away camps, artists are given uninterrupted time to work on new ideas, a "lifesaver," according to filmmaker Abigail Child, who will be joining Belag at Yaddo. "During the year, I teach," Child says, "so the three months of summer vacation is actually when I carry the bulk of my workload, but to be honest, as an artist, making the work feels better than anything else." Melissa Meyer, Whitfield Lovell, and Geoff Hendricks will also be out of town, as artists in residence at Skowhegan, a prestigious summer school in Maine offering workshops and studio critiques for recent art-school graduates. Still more exclusive is the little-known Acadia Summer Arts Program, fondly called Kamp Kippy, an aesthetically oriented think tank on Maine's Mount Desert Island where artists, writers, and curators convene at the invitation of its founder, Marion Boulton Stroud. William Pope.L, whose retrospective opens at the Maine College of Art in July, and Dawoud Bey are among the artists attending this summer.

"I usually don't do anything interesting, but this summer I have a residency in France at Alexander Calder's house," says Sarah Sze, who is currently preparing a project for the Public Art Fund and an exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Calder left his estate in the Loire Valley as a foundation, providing six-month residencies for contemporary sculptors, by invitation only. Sze, like her benefactor, makes works that soar through space, albeit using thongs, Tupperware, and blowup dolls, rather than steel and aluminum. Given her proclivity for consumer-culture materials, it would seem impossible for her to go off to France without crates and crates of flea-market finds. But, no, Sze plans to pick up what she needs at her destination. "You can find the same things in shopping malls in France as you can in New Jersey," says Sze, who is only afraid that Calder's massive studio—a towering greenhouse with windows on four sides—will prove too intimidating to

work in. "It's a little overwhelming, and it may be just too much."

Too much is never enough, at least in the Hamptons, which some consider the best variety of art colony—one where every artist owns his or her own estate. "There was always Provincetown and Cape May and Taos and even Cornish, New Hampshire, but we had the proximity to the city," says Helen A. Harrison, director of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center and who (with collaborator Constance Ayers Denne) recently published *Hamptons Bohemia: Two Centuries of Artists and Writers on the Beach*. Allegedly, potato fields and unspoiled beaches attracted artists out there in the 1950s. But ever since the days of Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning, the grilled tuna and the convenient access to wealthy collectors have been the draw for artists who cannot bear a clean break from the New York art world. The East End has long been a beach-head for art stars, attracting the likes of Eric Fischl and April Gornick, Julian Schnabel, John Chamberlain, Donald Sultan, and Keith Sonnier, to name a few. And Cindy Sherman has recently joined Nan Goldin in nearby Sag Harbor.

In the ecosystem of the new global art world, however, the Hamptons suddenly seem so '80s. This summer, spurred by the opening of Documenta in Kassel, Germany, in June, increasing numbers of artists are on the road, and are more frequently found in international airports than at second homes on the shore. "Do I have a house in the Hamptons?" Maurizio Cattelan said, laughing. "No, I have a sleeping bag in the Hamptons." He, like other nomad artists on the international exhibition circuit, will be traveling in Europe, supervising productions of new works. Christian Marclay also faces a staggering schedule this summer. Using a visit to Documenta as his launching pad in June, Marclay performed at the Sonar Festival in Barcelona and the Reina Sofia in Madrid, before going to Switzerland for a teaching stint in Saas Fee. En route, he stopped in Yverdon-les-Bains to tinker with his sound piece, *Nebula*, installed in Diller and Scofidio's Blur Building, and then visited his parents in nearby Geneva. After a brief stint back in New York, he will be on the road again, this time performing with Merce Cunningham Dance Company's August tour in Greece, Italy, and France. "I have been flying so much, it's almost more work than living in New York," says Marclay.

"We are working all the time. We are serious artists, and we travel all the time. It's part of our lives," says Irit Batsry, the Whitney Biennial artist chosen for this year's annual \$100,000 Bucksbaum Award. Batsry, who recoiled at the mention of a vacation, finally admitted that she took a week off, relaxing on beaches in Portugal and France in June. But the rest of her summer is devoted to *Fuller's Flow*, a multimedia installation that she is creating for the Buckminster Fuller geodesic dome in Montreal, a project she has been working on since 1999. "It was more fun last summer,

when I spent every night testing the video projections," she says, "but now I have to finish the piece, which is a lot more pressure."

Rona Pondick, whose recent show at Sonnabend has spurred an onslaught of requests for her work, is thrilled to have deadlines facing her all summer long. "I am anxious to see what these pieces are going to look like in the sunshine," says Pondick, who is currently finishing an outdoor installation at the DeCordova Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts. From there, she will fly to the Netherlands, where she will oversee her show at the Groninger Museum. (The same show is also scheduled for the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Bologna.) "It's a very demanding time in my life, but I am so happy with the response to the work and what's happening in terms of people wanting exhibitions," Pondick says. (Her husband, painter Robert Feintuch, will be stuck in New York, working on his November show at CRG.)

For overseas artists based in New York, discovering America can be a break from the jet-lagged lifestyle. Ghada Amer, who went to

Panama, Japan, and Sweden all in the month of June, is looking forward to seeing an "American beach." "I went once and it was a little bit savage—not like the Mediterranean," says Amer, who is hoping to visit her sister in North Carolina in August. Born in Cairo, Amer explains that Egyptian women cannot wear bathing suits at nearby beaches in Alexandria, so she and her family go to more liberal-minded resorts on the Mediterranean. "I am very uncomfortable flying, especially since September 11. I get searched a lot, every time," says Amer, "but if you don't travel, you don't work."

White-water rafting gives artist Oliver Herring and his boyfriend, painter Peter Krashes, a break from their usual routine. Herring, who recently showed new videos at Max Protetch in New York, took one week off in June for a canoe trip on the Penobscot River in Maine. "We have been going on these rafting trips for the last five years," says Herring. "They are cheap and adventurous, and you can't get farther away from the art world." With September shows coming up at Rhodes+Mann in London and Thaddaeus Ropac in

Paris, the rest of summer means long days fighting the heat in his Brooklyn studio. "Frankly, I have to work my butt off," Herring sighs.

Even though his mid-career retrospective is up and running at the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Charles LeDray is another artist who will not take a breather this summer. Preparing for his first show at Sperone Westwater this winter, LeDray is stuck in his New York studio, making his labor-intensive works. "I'll be here glazing pots, sewing, and carving," says LeDray. "Other people get vacations: I get to work." Andrea Fraser, on the other hand, would love to be able to stay put this summer. "I can't afford to stay in New York," says Fraser, "so I have rented my apartment for the summer and I will hit the road again, living out of a suitcase." Still, she can't entirely complain about her summer plans, which include a visit to mom in San Francisco, dad in Hawaii, and boyfriend in Rio. After that, it's on to Barcelona, where she is working on a Spanish television series, a sitcom that takes place in a museum, loosely based on the

Guggenheim Bilbao, a site that inspired one of Fraser's most hilarious videos, shown at Friedrich Petzel earlier this year. "I wanted to write myself a part as a New York curator, but so far I just make a cameo appearance," Fraser explains.

Should I go or should I stay? Should I work or should I play? Gregory Crewdson has worked out the best solution to the artist's summertime blues, turning his childhood vacation spot of Lee, Massachusetts, into the site of his ongoing series of staged photographs, titled "Twilight." The entire town participates in the production of Crewdson's photographs and, according to him, looks forward to his return each summer, following the academic year teaching at Yale. This year, Crewdson's departure for Lee has been delayed. "Twilight" opened at Gagosian L.A. in late June and "American Standard," a show curated by Crewdson, is currently up at Barbara Gladstone. But Crewdson can't wait to get back to his log cabin on a dirt road outside of Lee. Does he call this a vacation? "Hopefully, I am going to get back to work!" he replies. ☐

ONE DEADLINE AFTER ANOTHER FACES RONA PONDICK, HERE WITH DETAILS OF MARMOT AND DOG, BOTH FROM 1998-99.

