Residency

Klondike Institute Of Art And Culture

The Klondike Institute of Art Culture (KIAC) is located in the Yukon at the historic Oddfellows Hall in Dawson City, 450km south of the Arctic Circle. Dawson City is home to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and is commonly associated with the 1898 Klondike Gold Rush. Today, Dawson has a population of approximately 1800 and its main industries are tourism and gold mining.

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Stairwell in Macaulay House featuring work of past artists in residence, 2013

The Pit, 2013

The Dempster Highway viewed from the top of Goldensides Mountain, 2013

The Palace Grand, 2012

Studio at Macaulay House, 2013

The community support for artists in Dawson is abundant, as is the range of cultural activities. In summer this includes: the Dawson City Music Festival, historical tours of the town, and driving up the Dempster Highway. In winter there is the Yukon Quest (an annual 1000-mile-long dog sled race between Fairbanks, Alaska and Whitehorse) and betting on when the annual ice break-up of the river will occur.

KIAC opened its doors in December of 1999 and now oversees programming of the ODD Gallery, the Dawson City International Short Film Festival, Yukon Riverside Arts Festival and the Artist in Residence program. KIAC also provides support for the activities of the Yukon School of Visual Art (SOVA) and the Confluence Gallery. The Dawson City Arts Society (DCAS) is the umbrella organization responsible for initiating both KIAC and SOVA.

Resident artists at KIAC stay in the historic Macaulay House, built by Dawson's first mayor Henry C. Macaulay in 1901. The house is managed by Parks Canada and is rumoured to have a resident ghost somewhere amid the two large studio spaces, two comfortable bedrooms, kitchen and laundry facilities. A library of films from past artists and a guestbook with ghost stories is available for late night perusing.

Over the past 14 years, The KIAC artist in residence program has hosted many artists from Canada and abroad. Past alumni include: Shary Boyle (2002), Mary Ann Barkhouse (2004), Peter von Tiesenhausen (2005), Rebecca Belmore (2009), David Hoffos (2010), and Jin-me Yoon (2013). Many of the artists have permanently relocated to Dawson since their residency.

As a photographer, I found the quality of the light washing over the town and surrounding landscape heightens the anachronistic feel of the place. Dawson, as a town, exists in the present, yet Dawson, as an idea, is related to fantasy and romanticism of the past. Living there, I felt a strange mixture of nostalgia, sadness and fascination. I can't count the number of times I ran around at 1:00am with my camera and tripod, trying to drink in all that light and beauty. Dawson represents a magical space, and the impossibility of trying to capture that feeling is what propels me forward.