



VisArt

contemporary issues in the arts through collaboration and reciprocal exchange

VisArt projects encourage and enhance appreciation of contemporary arts by stimulating dialogue and the exchange of ideas on contemporary issues, trends and problems in the arts. Exchanges provide opportunities for collaboration between American artists, musicians, and arts professionals and their colleagues in Russia and Central Asia on seminars, workshops, performances lectures and symposia.

“The artists in Bishkek had one major concern. Money — money to make art and art that would make money. First off, [workshop co-leader] Ji Lee and I wanted to get the point across that you don’t need a lot of money to make art — it starts with the idea and concept and realizing that concept with the available resources. This point was illustrated by the work done by street artists in New York City and other major cities throughout the world. Artists use inexpensive material like chalk, packing paper and balls to create public art and as a result received notoriety from their peers and the art world at large. Ji also explained that although he did not make money directly from his [low-budget street projects] ...he was hired by his present employer ...because of these projects.”

Kendal Henry, US public arts specialist and VisArt workshop co-leader in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Program participants from overseas visit the United States for short residencies. Reciprocally, well-known US arts professionals such as Terry Riley, Robert Storr, Sheila Levrant deBretteville, Kimsooja, Kendall Henry, and Bang on a Can among others offer workshops, performances and lectures in Russia and Central Asia.

Program Facts (2004-2007)

CEC ArtsLink has partnered with funders, artists, and arts organizations internationally to send:

- 14 cultural specialists to Russia
- 61 artists and performers to Russia
- 7 artists and performers to the US
- 12 cultural specialists to the US
- 21 museum specialists to US museums
- 7 museum specialist to Russian museums

The VisArt Central Asia has placed:

- 6 Uzbek musicians in US residencies
- 14 visual artists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan in US residencies
- 21 US visual artists, performers and cultural specialists in Central Asian residencies and workshop series.

Program Highlights

VisArt Projects unfolded in diverse locations, engaging artists, administrators, and the public in thinking about contemporary art. 2007 projects include:

- **Contemporary Music**
In an on-going collaboration, Bang on a Can musicians present workshops and concerts in Central Asia, while Central Asian musicians participate in the Bang on a Can Summer Institute at Mass MoCA and perform in New York.
- **Sitelines Festival**
A week-long on-site collaboration between System of Units, a performance troupe from Siberia, and the New York interventionist performance group TRYST at the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Sitelines Festival.
- **Growing an Environment for Artistic Dialogue**
US public art curator Kendal Henry and artist Ji Lee conduct lectures and workshops for artists, city administrators and curators in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and Almaty, Kazakhstan.