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Press Release



Carl Johnson in the studio of Willem de Koonig

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An enriching summer for UW-Richland art professor Carl Johnson

University of Wisconsin-Richland assistant professor of art Carl Johnson, who is beginning his second year as a member of the faculty, had an enriching and inspiring summer.

He recently completed an intensive five-week study and creation period at the Byrd Hoffman Water Mill Foundation working with artistic director Robert Wilson. This summer program was held July 13 – August 16 at the Watermill Center in Long Island, New York. Each year the Watermill Center invites 100 of the most promising artists working in all artistic disciplines from all over the world and challenges them to create in an interdisciplinary and multicultural setting.

They learn from and exchange ideas with established artists. Artists he worked with included English rock musician Roger Waters formerly of Pink Floyd. Tom Waits, who was scheduled but unable to attend because of an illness in the family will produce the music for

one of the pieces work shopped this summer that's based on Hans Christian Anderson and entitled "A Very Dark Matter." (For more information on the Watermill summer program visit http://www.watermillcenter.org/programs/summer_prog.php .)

"Being surrounded by so many artists from different disciplines and different countries has enriched my creativity," Johnson said. He's begun a new series of large scale paintings for a solo exhibit that he plans to hold in Richland Center later this fall.

Among the activities Johnson was engaged in at Watermill was a performance art piece featured during a fund raising event that attracted many of the world's top designers and artists, including Calvin Klein and Isabella Rossellini. A video report about that event is available online at: <http://www.plumtv.com/videos/inferno-at-the-watermill-center> . On that video, Johnson can be seen in a cameo appearance wearing a yellow raincoat.

Another highlight of his New York residency was a visit to the studio of one of Johnson's own favorite painters, the late abstract expressionist Willem de Koonig.

Early during his summer break from teaching, Johnson in May worked with the Riverbed Theatre on productions staged in France. Those productions, *Riz Flambe* and *Riz Souffle*, were staged at the C. Cultural Robert Desnos in Ris Orangis, France and the Theatre Le Mouffetard in Paris. The Riverbed Theatre Company is noted for blurring boundaries between visual and performing arts. (For more about the Riverbed Theatre Company, see www.riverbedtheatre.com.)

Because of his summer activities, the community can look forward to seeing Johnson's new art works and students in his studio arts and art history courses will benefit from the new knowledge he brings to the classroom. Johnson also has plans to reach out to young artists in the region. Discussions are underway with Black Earth artist and UW-Madison professor emeritus Gene Summers and with area high school art teachers about a high school art exhibit to be hosted by the UW-Richland art department and held on campus later this year.

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