



ANNE-CLAUDE COTTY

Haystack, over the years, has given me a colorful assortment of hats to wear: student, teaching assistant (in four disciplines), faculty (fall and summer sessions), and off-season mentor with youth and Island adults in my studio. With each I've grown. And I feel fortunate for such a range and richness of experiences through Haystack.

I first came to Haystack for Thursday auctions in the late 60's on my days off as a camp counselor down the road. I could never have suspected then that I would be making my life on Deer Isle (since 1978) and to what extent Haystack would be implicated in shaping my dual careers as artist and teacher.

There is a magic at Haystack that sets a stage for personal, transformative experiences as I've not found in other schools. It is a laboratory for new ideas, "other" crafts, exchanges, and modeling among earnest craftspeople. For a teacher, there is nothing to compare with what happens at Haystack. I wrote Stuart Kestenbaum back in 1999, "For an itinerant artist, any venue is welcome, but September's New England Workshops afforded indescribable pleasures, a solid and refreshingly varied body of work springing up from an optimum mingling of landscape, studios, and group dynamics."

And there is New Works, the ultimate privilege Haystack bestows on its faculty. The retreats, offered every few years, afford us the chance to absorb the benefits of time, community, landscape, and technical studio help while advancing our own projects. They are all about tuning in, connecting, integrating. I leave refreshed, emboldened, and supremely grateful to Haystack's board and director for such a valuable gift.

Grace Notes began there, at my first New Works and all subsequent ones, as I assembled bits of metals found in the scrap drawers of the metals shop. Whether printmaking, experimenting with photography, or shaping handmade books, the "default" mechanism in me is fundamentally about collage/assemblage. And there is always a particular pull for me towards metal. Haystack allows us to sift down to what is pure and basic in us and to create with clear sight and voice.