The 2016 Spring Shows at BWAC
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Flowering trees, bird songs and longer-lingering evenings usher in springtime and another exciting new season at The Brooklyn Waterfront Artist Coalition. It’s their 24th Annual Spring Pier Show, and the iron gates of their historic pier gallery in Red Hook open on Saturday, May 7, 2016 with three distinctively different exhibits: Roode Hoek, Wide Open 7, and Recycle.

Roode Hoek is a celebration of Red Hook’s Dutch past leading up to its multicultural present. As you gaze out onto the waters of Buttermilk Channel, watching the water taxis and cruise ships drift by, you might conger up the image of a 17th century tall ship at the end of a trans-Atlantic voyage, coming ashore for a new adventure.

The adventure awaiting you is an artistic one inside the 25,000 square foot Civil War-era gallery. Show chair, Anna Anus Hagen, has called almost 200 of BWAC’s exhibiting artists to the task of creating unique “mindscape images” that tell the story of one of America’s oldest neighborhoods.

BWAC’s seventh annual national juried show, Wide Open 7, will be their largest yet, with close to 2000 submissions. Esteemed juror Beth Saunders, Curatorial Assistant at The Metropolitan Museum of Art selected work of virtually every medium including painting, photography, mixed media, sculpture and installation – it was completely wide open. Says Saunders: What I looked for, then, were resonances among the entries, works that could create an open-ended dialogue both among artists, viewers and with the waterfront space.

Recycle is a national juried show, now in its second year, which has introduced many of our visitors to the new re-use genre. As today’s artists look toward the future, considering our planet’s resources, calls for new innovations. Harriet Taub, Executive Director of Materials for the Arts and the show’s juror, had this to say of the 70 pieces she selected from the 850 entries:

The selected works all demonstrate a unique and artistic treatment of the chosen materials. In some cases, the materials become irrelevant as the work itself is so strong and vibrant that what it is made of is unimportant. In other cases, exactly the opposite occurs and the transformation of everyday materials soars to new and ambitious heights. I ask the viewer to stand before the work and judge it for its design and artistry. Then read the sign of what the piece has been created from. It may surprise you, shock you and hopefully push you to rethink your relationship with everyday materials and what the term “art materials” actually means.
The opening reception on May 7th features a live performance by jazz singer Paula Jeanine and *The Spring is Here Quartet*. And there will be a really exciting collaborative art project where participants will be invited to help build and play a giant re-use xylophone made out of the kinds of reusable materials distributed by Materials for the Arts. Everyone can tie objects such as plastic bottles, hardware, and more into a large frame and then proceed to play on it using available drumsticks, joining in a collaborative reuse orchestra.

Other special events are planned for every day of the show – including the Sunday acoustic performance series, *UnPlugged in Red Hook*, and Saturday reading series, *The Word Cabaret* – which aims to celebrate and savor the wondrous variety of Brooklyn-based wordsmiths--storytellers, playwrights, essayists, novelists, comics, spoken word artists, and poets. On Saturday, June 11 to complement Recycle, SIMS Municipal Recycling in Sunset Park is again sponsoring a special film – *Trash Dance*, an inspiring affecting documentary about dance, creativity and dirty work.

Come see the vista that has inspired so many BWAC artists. Go inside and marvel at the variety that a show of almost 400 artists has to offer. The BWAC Spring Shows open May 7 and run until June 12th, weekends only from 1-6PM. Take the free IKEA ferry from Wall Street, and biking is a breeze!

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BWAC is the largest non-profit artists group in Brooklyn and one of the oldest – now in its 39th year. The space for the BWAC gallery is generously donated by The O’Connell Organization and Kings Harbor View Associates. For more information www.bwac.org or 718 596-2506 (weekdays) 718 596-2507 (weekends)

481 Van Brunt St, Door 7, Red Hook BKLYN