

THE ISC'S SWISS RESIDENCY

With the generous support of sculptor Heinz Aeschlimann and arts advocate, collector, and patron, Gertrud Aeschlimann, winners of the ISC's Outstanding Student Achievement Award in Contemporary Sculpture are offered the chance to apply for a six- to eight-week residency in Switzerland. This year, Samuel Ekwurtzel of the University of Hartford and Crystal Schenk of Portland State University were selected to live and work in Zofingren, Switzerland. Both emerging artists were encouraged to take advantage of the Aeschlimanns' vast network of resources, including the sculpture facilities at Art-St-Urban, an art center in the former Abbey of St. Urban. While Crystal is currently completing her residency, Sam concluded his stay in Switzerland this past summer. As an ambassador for the ISC and representative for emerging artists, Sam was given unique opportunities to interact with the Swiss artistic and cultural communities, as well as to pursue and exhibit his own work.

Samuel Ekwurtzel on his experience in Switzerland:

The ISC Swiss residency is absolutely the best opportunity for any emerging sculptor. I was provided with two well-equipped studios, a car, a stipend, and the finest accommodations. During this eight-week period, I was able to complete 18 new pieces from a variety of industrial materials, including laser-cut steel, Gussasphalt, and bitumen.

Art-St-Urban / Aeschlimann International is the only place in the world where sculptors can experiment with Gussasphalt, an extremely versatile road-paving medium. We began by designing and fabricating massive steel molds, fortified to withstand extreme temperatures. Finally we poured Gussasphalt into them with a truck designed by Heinz. After sculpting with Gussasphalt, I had the chance to participate in the paving of a bridge with a crew of Aeschlimann International laborers.

Through observation and discussion, I learned the technicalities of fabricating, shipping, and installing these monumental sculptures. I received studio visits from Heinz's colleagues in both the Swiss art scene and the business world. In addition to keeping a rigorous studio schedule, I visited museums, galleries, and artist's studios in Zurich, Bern, Basel, and Berlin. The residency culminated with an exhibition at Art-St-Urban, a sculpture park and gallery complex founded by Gertrud and Heinz.

The ISC Swiss residency is absolutely unique in that Heinz Aeschlimann is recognized internationally as both a sculptor and an entrepreneur. I was welcomed into the lives of the Aeschlimanns as a student, colleague, and family member. My thanks to the staff at the ISC and the Aeschlimanns for giving me this opportunity.



Clockwise from top left: Samuel Ekwurtzel works on the surface treatment of a sculpture at Art-St-Urban. Sam meets with Heinz Aeschlimann and Andreas Hämmerli, CEO of Tradecentercomplex, at the sculpture studio, Art-St-Urban. Sam prepares for an exhibition of his work at Art-St-Urban.