

The Spaces in Between

... air and light and time and space

have nothing to do with it

and don't create anything

except maybe a longer life to find

new excuses

for.

(Charles Bukowski, *The Last Night of the Earth Poems*, 1992)

I both agree and disagree with that genius troll Bukowski and his unequivocal musings about creativity. But it does actually come down to “air and light and time and space “ a lot of the time, for mere mortals trying to create art within a world full of distraction.

I am sitting in a beautiful big studio space in the basement of 266 Baker Street with artists Tyler Toews and Kelly Shpeley when Kelly brings the above quote to mind. She is hugging a one-eyed pink monster doll with green horns and big teeth while she talks – a creation of Rhandi Sandford, one of the seven artist denizens of the space – and it seems perfectly appropriate that she does so.

The space has functioned as an artist studio for Tyler since 2014 and is the site where many of his most recent murals (<http://canadianmurals.com>), commercial art projects and fine art have been created. Since opening up the studio to other artists, the space has become Sweet9Studio and has a total of seven artists in residence: Tyler Toews, Linda Mummery, Kelly Shpeley, Rhandi Sandford, Yvonne Munro, Shawn Morris and Hildur M H Jónasson, who is currently in the Arctic on residency.

Like all the iterations of studio collectives that have evolved over the years in Nelson, the purpose of this space is to work, a designated space for creating, free from distraction and procrastination. That is the dream of a studio space. “We are all here to work” says Toews and the litany of projects and commissions that he and Shpeley are involved with speak to the focus and dedication of their respective arts careers.

We talk about the trials and tribulations of that rare animal called ‘the working artist’ which is fraught with inconsistency and insecurity, although it is the pinnacle of achievement for every

emerging artist everywhere: the feast-and-famine of projects – the complicated mechanics of commission work – the zombie-effect of deadlines – the difference between ‘real’ art and commercial art – the passion for creation, and the spaces in between

Sweet9Studio is just one amongst many creative spaces in the Nelson region but it is an excellent example of creative enterprise quietly contributing to a community that in turn supports the artists that make us who we are.

Vive le art!!!

kellyshpeley.com shawnmorriscreative.ca canadianmurals.com

hildurart.tumblr.com rhandisandford.com