
"There are a delicious amount of head-scratching art experiences that happen at Eastern Edge. Experiences that will cause you to question your preconceptions of what art is, what art can do for the world..." - Mary MacDonald (The Overcast, August 16, 2016)

HOLD FAST: Thoughts from Behind the Scenes

facilitated by Tessa Graham



Holdfast staff by new mural outside Eastern Edge Gallery. Artwork by Jonathan Green

Part 2: Penelope Smart – Director of Eastern Edge Gallery

3. Overall, what was your favourite part of HOLD FAST and why?

So many great moments. Probably my favourite part was walking down Water Street with Daniel (Assistant Director) and Stephen (Festival Coordinator) during the Art Crawl and feeling really happy and proud to have pulled this thing off. You know that feeling when you see people shine and do their thing and you know that you helped bring that moment into being? It's very uplifting. Also, going to the beach a few days later with some of the artists who stayed in town a little longer to explore the island. Quieter moments to get to know people is always a luxury during a chaotic festival setting.

4. How is this festival different from other art festivals you have attended?

HOLD FAST is going to be its own thing entirely because St. John's is unlike any other city in Canada. Art wise, Eastern Edge is a small gallery, volunteer-driven and located in a small city. We're far away from large art centres with tons of museums with vast ranges of artists and art flowing through all the time. The art scene and art audiences look different here than they might in Montreal, Toronto or Halifax for example. It's so important to me that

HOLD FAST take these differences and run with them; for the festival to be an opportunity for St. John's and Newfoundland to shine through and resonate within a larger art world. We really built our selection of artists, art projects and events around life in St. John's. Resonance creates energy and momentum, no matter who or where you are.

This year was an important year of growth and change. We moved forward from memories of the Art Marathon Festival with confidence. This was evident in our ambitious caliber of artists and in the way we built HOLD FAST around free and participatory workshops. HOLD FAST isn't just about walking around and looking at stuff, but having the chance to create and learn, to interact with artists who can share their skills and experiences. There is so much value in that. Also, meeting new people. St. John's, as we all know, is a great place to be real and have a great conversation during a walk up a steep hill or over a late night drink.



Concept by Penelope Smart, Artwork by Amery Sandford