

TAG ARCHIVES: KAREN MENINNO

## Where The Heart Lives – Kingston Gallery

### June 2

Posted on **June 13, 2013** by **Deborah Davidson**

Our first Kingston Gallery event, *Where The Heart Lives*, on June 2, the last day of Ilona Anderson's exhibit, *What One Is*, drew a great crowd, despite the heat, and sparked a terrific discussion. The conversation focused on the theme of visual artists who are not working in their country of origin, and whether that fact influences the life and work of the artist. We invited **Ambreen Butt** (Pakistan), **Natasha Bregel** (Russia/Israel), **Karen Meninno** (India/UK), **Gupi Ranganathan** (India), and **Ahmed Abdalla** (Egypt) to join Ilona Anderson to explore the topic, which is an especially pertinent issue in light of the recent events and national debate around immigration.

The artists took the opportunity to speak more from the 'heart' than they would otherwise do in a public forum. We plan to have more such events as it allowed artists to engage on a more personal level and to hear from them how their lives are reflected in their work:

Natasha Bregel:

"Though I have always resisted categorizing myself as a "multicultural" artist, my two immigrations (as a child from Russia to Israel, and as a teenager from Israel to the United States) have shaped my experience, and probably world view, and do affect my work. I do see how much I rely on a sense of dislocation to engage with my work, often choosing to depict the places with which I now have an outsider's connection. In this discussion some of the other immigrant artists also talked about looking from the outside in, but others seemed to see themselves as "citizens of the world". And there was so much more to discuss than time and the consideration of an audience could allow!"

Karen Meninno:

"It was a pleasure to be with other artists who have similar, and dissimilar, experiences with coming from other places. The most interesting thing for me is investigate how much that life experience does permeate the art that we make."

We thank our speakers and audience for helping make this first event a success, and look forward to planning many more!

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