On Friday night Recess artists in residence Riitta Ikonen and Karoline Hjorth invited several dozen intrepid admirers into their studio at Dustin Yellin's Red Hook art center formerly known as The Intercourse — “You can't run a major arts organization in the U.S. called 'The Intercourse,'” Yellin told ARTINFO, before revealing the new name, Pioneer Works. During their residency, which began in February and runs through late April, Ikonen and Hjorth are continuing their “Eyes as Big as a Plate” series, for which Hjorth photographs elderly subjects standing, lying, or sitting in landscapes, wearing costumes Ikonen makes from found, natural materials on-site.
For this, the third installment in the series, the duo has begun keeping the costumes, which they had previously returned to nature after finishing their shoots. Their studio presentation included photographs from the series' previous installments and the costumes used in their New York shoots. “We only get to work together once a year for maybe a month,” Ikonen said, “so it’s always very intense.” A few of the subjects of their most recent shoots, photos from which were expected to be back from the developers this week, were in attendance on Friday and attested to the collaboration’s intensity.
“The five or however many hours we spent out at the Rockaways were among the most delicious hours of my life,” said a man who will appear wearing a crown of twigs in the new photos. The series references folk narratives about natural phenomena personified in sage old characters, so Ikonen and Hjorth tried to select subjects with a connection to nature and their environment. For their New York photos, they started by befriending members of the Indoor Gardening Society.

Hjorth and Ikonen will present their latest body of work in a residency-concluding reception at Pioneer Works on April 24, 6-8pm.

— Benjamin Sutton

(Photos by the author.)