

Wish You Were Here: *Michael Schoenig*

Beginning in 1985 I called the Bay Area home for a total of 23 years. My first period of residency ended in 1996 when I decided to move back to New York – I'm originally from Long Island - to finally complete my BA as a non-traditional age student. After graduating from SUNY Plattsburgh in the spring of 1999, I returned to San Francisco and remained there until 2011.

My permanent move from the Bay Area was prompted by my layoff from an organization where I had worked for a total of 18 years. I'd been contemplating a move from San Francisco for a while, but the loss of my job hastened that decision. Although I was hoping to leave on my own terms, I chose to look at this as a blessing in disguise.

I once again moved back to New York to contemplate this new phase to my life. Eventually, I received a call from a former supervisor, who was now at Lyric Opera of Chicago, asking me to interview for a newly vacated position. I interviewed a week before Christmas of 2012, was offered the position, and started my life in Chicago on January 7, 2013.

My artwork hasn't changed much, but the way I work, and the time I'm able to devote to it, has. Chicago is a great city, but not being able to enjoy the same type of working studio I shared with other artists in San Francisco, or the type of art community I was a part of, has had its challenges. There are several street fairs devoted to artists of various disciplines. I've participated in one fair so far, and am exploring other street fair options as well.