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### For Great Art, Go Directly to the Source - Doors Open On Studio Art Tour

By Emily Keller 05/10/2006

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More than 70 artists in five zip codes in and around Park Slope are getting ready to throw caution to the wind and put their work out on display, for better or worse.



More than 70 Park Slope artists will throw open the doors to their studios May 20 & 21. Visitors can see work in a variety of mediums on self-guided walking tours

Organizers of the Park Slope and Environs Artists Open Studio Tour say it is difficult to predict what will or will not sell each year, but that the exposure the artists gain through the annual self-guided walking tour of local studios is always a positive thing.

"I am a huge advocate for artists connecting directly with the public. Even though I own a gallery I think it's a very tough world for artists," said Audrey Anastasi, a participating artist who lives in Bay Ridge and has a studio in Sunset Park.

"We want to make it a fun two days for the artists, we want them to feel like they were appreciated, and we want them to make a few bucks," said organizer Carol Itzkowitz Neiman, an oil painter and graphic artist who moved to Park Slope in 1972. "I've had good years. I've had bad years. It's nothing personal."

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To help the artists succeed, Neiman offers some tried and true advice to those showing work on the walking tour, each of whom pays \$40 to exhibit from noon to 6 p.m. May 20 and 21, or \$80 for latecomers. "You have to have water and nuts."

Viewing the work at the 28 participating studio sites is free, and maps will be provided to visitors. The number of artists exhibiting is higher than at last year's event, which drew 63 exhibitors.

There will also be an opening reception from 8 p.m. to midnight May 18 at Madarts Studio, a 1,600 square-foot space at 255 18th Street, at which each participating artist will exhibit one piece.

Madarts was also the site of Neiman's recent exhibit "The Vanishings," which included portraits of children, including a Kenyan orphan whose parents died of AIDS, and a painting of an aerial view of New Orleans after hurricane Katrina, called The Music Will Play.

This year, for the first time, there will be a van that seats about seven people making a 35-minute, six-stop loop around the tour area, which is west of Prospect Park, east of Court Street, south of Bergen Street, and north of Caton Place.

Any artist who pays the fee can participate, and Neiman says organizers do not censor any work, although they do ask that artists displaying work that might be offensive to children place a sign outside their studios indicating so.

The prices of artwork that will be displayed by those in the zip codes 11215, 11217, 11218, 11225 and 11238 will vary in price as well as style.

Anastasi (www.audreyanastasi.com), who is a board member of the Brooklyn Arts Council (BAC), will sell her works on paper for \$50 to \$1,000 at the show, and her paintings for about \$3,000 or \$4,000.

"I think with people out to visit studio tours...most people are kind of looking for something affordable to take home that day. I'm going to bring a range of affordable work," she said, explaining the reason she will display more works on paper than paintings.

One of the paintings Anastasi will bring is a 36" x 48" oil-on-canvas tribute to her late mother called I Miss My Mommy, in which she experiments with the use of words over images.

"It's about that raw, childlike feeling. When I think about my mother, who passed away three years ago, it still hurts like I was four, and I want my mommy," she said about the painting, adding that the feelings expressed are universal, which she says is an important aspect of art.

Ruby Levesque and her husband, Niel Amon, who live in Park Slope and have a studio in Carroll Gardens/ Red Hook called Court Street Ceramic Studios (www.tactilegeometrics.com), will exhibit their clay-based ceramic sculptures at the

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show as well.

"We want to show people our work. We're trying to get our name out there. It would be great if we could sell our work but basically we want as many people to know about our work [as possible]," said Levesque about their participation.

Photographs, as well as works done in iron and stone and those made by printmakers and silk-screen artists will also be displayed, Neiman said.

"We have new and emerging artists, we have artists who have been around the block...we have some that have had major shows in Manhattan...from young to older," said Neiman.

The walking tour is also taking place in conjunction with the Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition's (BWAC) Pier Show in Red Hook May 13 through June 18, and the Park Slope Civic Council's Historic House Tour on Sunday, May 21.

For more information contact Carol Itzkowitz Neiman at infoartcin@aol.com or (718) 972-6750.

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