



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Robin Schwartz, Program Director,
273-5072, ext. 20 / programs@artspartner.org

PRESS KIT AND IMAGES: This Press release, Images and Image list are on "Contact Us" page at www.ArtTrail.com.

Area Artists Roll Out the Welcome Mat
50 Artists' Studios Open to the Public on the Greater Ithaca Art Trail

- WHAT:** Greater Ithaca Art Trail Open Studio Weekends
WHEN: October 8-9 and October 15-16, 11am to 5pm each day
WHERE: 50 artists will exhibit their work in 50 studios across Ithaca and the Towns and Villages of Tompkins County.
COST: Free
WEBSITE: www.ArtTrail.com
MAP: Visitors need a map to find the artists on the trail. Brochures with artist information and map are available at Visitor Centers and tourist locations throughout Tompkins County. More information, including downloadable maps, artist biographies, sample portfolios and a short film, can be found online at the Greater Ithaca Art Trail Website: www.ArtTrail.com.
CONTACT: Robin at the Community Arts Partnership at programs@artspartner.org, 607-273-5072, ext. 20 for more information or to be mailed a brochure.
LOOK: For the Green Road Signs!

NOTE TO MEDIA: Please make sure to list the website address ArtTrail.com and our phone number, 607-273-5072, ext. 20 in any articles or features! Visitors need the brochure (sent or downloaded) in order to learn where the artists' studios are! *Thank you!*

September 9, 2011 (ITHACA, NY)—The 2011-2012 season of the Greater Ithaca Art Trail has begun! The trail gives art enthusiasts the opportunity to take a self-guided tour of 50 artists' studios throughout Tompkins County and see art where it happens. The Greater Ithaca Art Trail is the largest open studio tour in the region and offers visitors **two** weekends to maximize studio visits. **On October 8 & 9 and October 15 & 16, from 11am to 5pm each day**, there is no need to make an appointment—all 50 studios will be open simultaneously. Just get in your car and go!

Full information, including a downloadable map, is available at www.ArtTrail.com. Art lovers with busy schedules needn't be discouraged if they can't make the October weekends, however. Unlike many other open studio tours around the country, all sites on the Greater Ithaca Art Trail are also open **year round by appointment**.

The Art Trail is a program of the Community Arts Partnership, Tompkins County's arts council. Now in its 13th season, and with over 5,000 visitors each year, the Art Trail continues to grow and gain visitor anticipation. Robin Schwartz, Program Director, coordinates the Art Trail. *"This is truly an amazing event because Tompkins County not only has a wealth of amazing artists, it's also a beautiful area to visit," says Schwartz, "especially in October when the fall foliage is at its peak. Visitors tell me that they are continually impressed by being able to visit such a quality group of artists and to*

see art where it happens” Visitors to the Trail come from a large geographic region, from as far north as Toronto and south into New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

What will visitors find at the studios? Explorers on the trail will find artists working in all media: painters, sculptors, printmakers, fiber artists, ceramists, jewelers, makers of fine furniture, collage artists, glass artists, mixed media artists, digital artists, creators of decorative functional art and even a blacksmith! Visitors get to see the space, the lighting, and the materials, and they can engage the artists in a conversation about their creative process—things you can’t experience in more formal settings.

The two weekends give visitors more time to explore. One recent visitor said *“I had so much fun ... and the artists were so terrific, I grabbed some friends and went the next weekend as well!”* Some visitors pick an area and visit all the artists close by. Some study the website or brochure and pick artists of specific disciplines. Others just go with the flow and follow the suggestions of other trail visitors. Visitors gain a new appreciation of the art-making process, and the artists themselves grow through the personal exchange with an audience. During their visits, trail-goers will also have the opportunity to support our local artists. According to Schwartz, *“Artists on the trail offer a broad collection original work at a wide variety of prices.”*

Some studios are in downtown Ithaca and some are along rural roads with hayfields as neighbors. Some are cozy living rooms and others spaces are as interesting as the work itself. From scraps of paper and shards of glass to an unfinished canvas or the smell of wet clay, an artist’s studio contains countless clues as to what lies beneath an artist’s work.

Mural painter **Mary Beth Ihnken’s** is perhaps best known for her largest work to date, the historic panoramic mural behind Alternatives Federal Credit Union in downtown Ithaca. Her beautiful family home (shared with husband, two children, a dog, two cats, six horses, and lots of art!) began life as a 200 year old barn originally located in King Ferry, which was then transported to its current site in rural Brooktondale. The finished home provides a showcase for Mary Beth’s artwork. Visitors on Open Studio weekends will be taken on a tour of the home, from the underwater themed murals in the upstairs bathroom to the lifelike tiger mural set against bold blue and white stripes in her son’s bedroom.

Seven of the fifty artists on the trail are new this year. Among them is **Jessica Warner**, who graduated with a B.F.A. magna cum laude from SUNY Purchase in 2000. After spending time studying abroad in Italy, a time which continues to have a great impact on her painting and drawing, she relocated Ithaca’s “South Hill” with her husband and two children. Visitors to her home/studio will see paintings that are so large they take up entire walls! Her recent colorful gouache and watercolor pieces are drawings that begin with still life objects like peppers, but become abstract in execution. Jessica says, *“The drawings aren’t really about the actual still life objects. They are more concerned with what I can find in trying to see them.”*

Jenny Pope, also new to the Art Trail this year, is a full-time artist residing on West Hill in Ithaca. She is a printmaker and primarily makes color reduction woodcuts with an ecological theme. This means that she takes one block of wood, draws an image onto the block, carves into that block, and prints. Each printed color comes from carving away the previous layer so that when she is finished, all that is left of the wood block is the last color that was printed. Images can never be remade unless she re-carves a new piece of wood. The prints are very limited edition, not a typical Kinko’s reproduction! Jenny says *“I enjoy the company of animals in life and in artwork. Invasive, endangered, and mythic animals uncurl from my imagination.”* On Open Studio weekends, visitors will be treated to an exhibit featuring a wide variety of her colorful prints.

The Greater Ithaca Art Trail is a program of the Community Arts Partnership of Tompkins County, the county’s arts council. CAP was founded in 1990 to serve as the arts council of Tompkins County, providing technical assistance, grant opportunities, and professional services and information to artists and arts organizations, as well as public programs that celebrate and support the arts community in the county. For two decades, CAP has helped to distribute more than \$2 million to artists and arts organizations in the community. For more information on the Community Arts Partnership and its programs and services, visit www.artspartner.org or call Program Director, Robin Schwartz at (607) 273-5072.

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