

Focus on **YOHO STUDIOS**

Local artists get creative to bring in buyers

By Nikki Dowling
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It's not easy being an artist, especially in tough economic times.

"It's hard," Riverdale artist Deborah Yasinsky said. "People are buying less art now."

But she and other local creators are dealing with new challenges by stepping up their games. On Sunday, Nov. 14, they will open up part of YoHo, an industrial space in Yonkers, that houses over two dozen artists' studios, for the first-ever Autumn Open Studio.

The public events, usually held in the spring, allow patrons to amble down the long hallways, popping into the open doors to see artists in action. Guests are welcome to talk and drink, look at — and maybe even buy — some of the pieces on offer.

Unlike past events, this one is being put together entirely by the showing artists, without the help of their landlord, who usually promotes the shows.

Riverdale residents showing at the event, which will present the work of about 18 artists who use the space, said they hoped it would bolster sales at a time when everyone, especially artists, are hard up for cash.

"A bunch of artists have left [YoHo]," Ms. Yasinsky said, adding that art programs at schools and in other institutions are usually the first to get axed in a budget crunch, stripping many artists of their day jobs.

Ms. Yasinsky estimated that at least two artists have left in recent months. Those who have kept their spaces at YoHo range from hobbyists with small, sparse spaces, to those who spend so much time in the studio that they treat it like home, adding various amenities to make their spaces more comfortable.

Ms. Yasinsky, who works as a museum educator, said she rents one of the smallest spaces in the building. In her modest room, she manipulates wax and dye on wood to create richly colored images that are, in part, inspired by Riverdale landscapes.

Down the hall, standing amidst huge paintings of pixelated clown faces and walls covered with images of candy hearts, Riverdalian Angus Schlitz said he makes an effort to get to his space — one of the largest in the building — every day. He has outfitted his studio, which he shares with his wife, with a lounge area, loft storage, microwave, television and couch to make it more family-friendly.

During the open studio, Mr. Schlitz said he will sell pieces from "Poured Stripes" — a collection of works featuring colorful horizontal lines made by pouring paint onto canvas and letting each color run to the bottom.

Sitting in a chair next to a large collection of CDs and wine bottle corks, George M. Gutiérrez, a photographer for *The New York Times* and former photo editor of *The Riverdale Press*, seemed right at home in his cluttered space, where he said he sometimes sleeps.

Mr. Gutiérrez paints canvas covered with newspaper articles and sheet music, and said he planned to show about 100 works at the show that he would offer at cheaper "studio prices."

But even those who are not buying are encouraged to come out and support the artists. After all, "There'll be great wines and beers and cookies!" Mr. Gutiérrez said.

If you want to go:

What: Autumn Open Studio
Where: 540 and 578 Nepperhan Ave., Yonkers, N.Y.

When: Sunday, Nov. 14, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Cost: Free
Information: 914-305-4296 or 914-374-7278

Website: www.yohoartists.com
Some Riverdalians involved: Carole Naggar, Deborah Yasinsky, George M. Gutiérrez and Angus Schlitz.



ARTIST GEORGE M. GUTIÉRREZ, at left, is one of a number of local artists who are opening their studios to the public at the YoHo arts space on Nov. 14. Mr. Gutiérrez's love of music shows through in much of his work, below.



RIVERDALIAN Deborah Yasinsky in her studio, above, is displaying, among other works, wax on wood encaustic paintings, at left.



ARTIST ANGUS SCHLITZ in his YoHo studio, at left, is exhibiting a diversity of work, including a series of his 'Poured Stripes,' above, which he creates by running paint at varying velocities down a canvas.