



OJAI STUDIO ARTISTS

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New Work, New Studios – Ojai Studio Artists Tour **October 10th & 11th**

Ojai, CA – Sept. 10, 2009. On the weekend of October 10th and 11th, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., the public is invited to visit the working studios of 39 members of the prestigious Ojai Studio Artists (OSA). On this self-guided tour, starting at the Ojai Art Center, visitors can travel by car, by bicycle or on foot to a wide variety of creative workshops.

Visitors will have the pleasure of meeting and chatting with three outstanding artists who are new to OSA this year: Carlos Grasso, Michael Sobczak, and Fred Whitman. They will also visit the studios of old favorites to see their new creations, view their pieces in progress, and enjoy discussing their concepts and their work.

Those who've been on previous tours may wonder what's new this year. OSA artist Ruth Farnham shares her thoughts about the evolution of her work: "This is one of the most exciting periods of my artistic life, this opening of doors into new experiences," she says. "Things that had become familiar to the point of non-existence suddenly take on an entirely new aspect. The new concepts inevitably led to new ways of expression and, frequently, the use of new materials."

The tour is a unique opportunity to see the back roads and byways of the Ojai Valley, inspiration to artists of all persuasions, while experiencing a weekend steeped in fine art. A map to the studios is included in the ticket price, as is admission to the Saturday night reception, October 10th from 6 to 8 p.m., at the Ojai Center for the Arts at 113 S. Montgomery St. in downtown Ojai.

At the reception, visitors will mingle with the artists and view the beautiful pottery, sculpture, paintings and prints. They can also participate in the live auction, a rare opportunity to acquire a beloved piece among those donated by renowned OSA artists Richard Amend, Gayel Childress, Bert Collins, Ted Gall, Alice Matzkin, Jennifer Moses, Marta Nelson, Elisse Pogofsky-Harris,

Jean Smart and Michael Sobczak. There will also be a silent auction featuring artist demonstrations, classes, and special events.

Many of the Tour's 39 participating artists have achieved national recognition, and continue to evolve and respond to changing times. Ojai's artists display widely disparate styles, mediums and influences. Artworks on display at the studios include paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture, ceramics, jewelry, blown glass, photographs, assemblage and mixed media.

Visitors will enjoy, first-hand, the beauty of the Ojai Valley that brings so many creative people to the area. Pacing themselves on the self-guided tour, they can experience the area's tranquility and ever-changing colors, reflected in the art it inspires. Gayel Childress explains, "I love to look at the mountains polka-dotted with the scrub oaks and with the shadows cutting into and alongside the contours on the little hills below. Changing colors every hour."

One of OSA's members describes the vital ambiance of Ojai, a town that nurtures the creative spirit. She says, "I love living where I can just walk over to my local coffee shop and sit down and know there's the screenwriter, there's the metal sculptor, there's the musician whose CD I had playing yesterday in the studio as I worked."

Proceeds from the Tour and auctions benefit the Scholarship Fund. OSA is heavily involved with giving back to the community that nurtures them. At a time when arts funding is at a critical low, OSA presents scholarships to local art students to help with their continuing education.

Including 2009, OSA will have given some \$150,000 in scholarships and donations to qualified art students, artists, and arts organizations in the Ojai Valley. They have purchased art books for local libraries, offered free workshops for children, supported public art projects and art outreach for people of all ages, and worked within the community to promote the visual arts.

Tickets can now be purchased online, at a savings. Visit OSA's web site www.ojaistudioartists.org for advance tickets. Prices are \$31 in advance; \$36 on the weekend of the tour. Students (under 23, with student ID) are \$21; children 12 and under are free. Tickets can also be purchased or reserved at the Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce: by phone, call (805) 646-8126, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; by mail, send to the Chamber at P.O. Box 1134, Ojai, CA 93024.

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