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Stover Takes Over

Allen's Lane Art Center
shows new Executive
Director's work

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POST

PHILADELPHIA OPEN STUDIO TOURS

The 9th Annual Philadelphia Open Studio Tours kicks off this year on Saturday and Sunday, October 4 and 5, and continues the following weekend. Organized by the Center for Emerging Visual Artists, the self-guided walk of about 300 artists' workshops that include painters, print-makers, photographers, sculptors, furniture makers, and fiber artists, spans more than 16 neighborhoods throughout the city.

by Jan Feighner



FROM LEFT: Art by Darla Jackson, Julia Blaukopf, and Zivile Art

The first weekend covers the area west of Broad Street: Germantown, Mount Airy, Chestnut Hill, East Falls, Manayunk, West Philadelphia, Fairmount, Center City, and Graduate Hospital. The second targets the opposite direction off Broad: South Philadelphia, Bella Vista, Center City, Old City, North Philadelphia, Northern Liberties, Kensington, Fishtown, and Port Richmond. All visits are free to the public and some places offer entertainment, munchies, and beverages.

Several events citywide correspond to the tours. CEVA hosts a month-long exhibition in the Felicity R. "Bebe" Benoliel Gallery of the Barclay Building, 237 South 18th Street, Suite 3A, entitled, *Underground: an Exhibition of Select Work from POST Artists*, through October 24. The show features works from six POST participants: Genevieve Coutroubis, the Dufala Brothers, Drew Leshko, Erin Murray, Daniel Petraitis, and Francesca Pfister. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. during POST's opening weekend, then Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. A reception with curator Lee Stoezel, Director of the West Collection, occurs Thursday, October 23 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Three POST participants discussed their interests in the tours, their art, and why this is important.

Designer and ceramicist Teresa Chang, 931 North Leithgow Street, is a veteran of five years. She joined as a way to connect with other artists upon first relocating to Philadelphia. Chang set up shop, selling her meticulous hand-thrown porcelain dinnerware and tea ware and recently moved to a new studio behind her house. She stated she hoped for visitors to see the place "well organized and functioning," since one of her reasons for doing POST is to have an excuse to clean one's studio.

"It's a great chance to stop for a moment, re-consider, re-organize, and re-group," said the first generation Korean-American, who possesses undergraduate and graduate degrees in architecture. "[It's] an opportunity to meet and connect with fellow artists, do some volunteer work for your community, and to clean up your studio. There are also many events and workshops associated with POST. For non-artists, it's a chance to demystify the life and work of productive artists, see behind the scenes, understand the working process, talk one-on-one, [and] ask the questions you've always wondered in an environment where the artists feel most at ease. Also, maybe pick up some great work."

Sculptor Jesse Harrington, 3510 Scotts Lane, Suite 3015, joined POST three years ago having previously done the tours as a visitor. He noted the exposure they received and sought the same for himself. He stated that his experience has been positive in many ways, from meeting new people and showing his work in a relaxed environment to acquiring a "deeper understanding of my own work and process, so that it can be shared with the public," he maintained.

"My studio is a fun place to be," added Harrington, a former Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts painting major. "There are always multiple projects going on. To me the best thing about POST is knowing that there are so many people out there interested in what we as artists do. Because I am a sculptor,



FROM TOP: Tremain Smith, Teresa Chang, and Marilyn Simon work on projects in their studios



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[my studio] is a great place to learn about the process of stone [and] wood carving and bronze sculpture. The stone and wood carving seems to really pique peoples' interest. It is not something you see a lot of any more. It is really nice to share the process with them instead of just showing the final results at a gallery."

Second-year participant Eileen Tognini, 628 East Girard Avenue, has a different kind of studio. Rather than making art, the independent curator, collaborator, and innovator uses artists' works to create "curated living environments," she explains, "where POST visitors can see art in the context of a living space, amongst furniture, furnishings, and other artist's work so it helps the viewer imagine the coexistence of various mediums and sensibilities in one place."

Tognini shows sculpture, paintings, and a variety of media by Philadelphia artists. She chooses pieces based on mood, tone, or sensibility on which she can build. Despite the diversity of the selected works, she aims for cohesiveness and harmony within any space, strongly advocating people to buy what they love and allow the rest to follow.

"POST is a wonderful opportunity to support our community of artists and their work," said Tognini. "We are in a city that is recognized by artists and collectors to be supportive and talented. I believe strongly in 'local sustainability' in the arts and cultural community that goes beyond our everyday definition of sustainability."

Philadelphia sculptor Karen Brown founded POST in 1999 as a one-day event to give the public a view as to what really happens behind Philadelphia's art scene. She wanted to present works more intimately than at galleries and introduce people to their creators.

The first year witnessed 19 participants. The idea was so well received that Philadelphia's Office of Arts and Culture supported the next season financially and administratively, and during the subsequent three years increased its visibility with the help of volunteers, Studio Z, and Inliquid.com.

POST approached the nonprofit CEVA for financial and administrative support in 2004, which it provided to help the organization realize its goals. Last year the tours acquired over 285 participants and support from more than 60 businesses and organizations.

Find printed guides containing artist directories, city maps, participating sponsors, and event details at CEVA, Ritz movie theaters, coffee shops, bookstores, artist supply stores, and various city locations. See the website at phi-laopenstudios.org for maps and more information.

Comments on this article? Contact Jan Feighner at jan.feighner@gmail.com



FROM TOP: Work from "Reliefs and Fountain" by Jesse Harrington; Michelle Ortiz in her studio; Bill Kosman works on one of his paintings

