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The Keene Valley studio of Frank Owen is one of the 25 stops on the Au Sable River Valley Studio Tour.

Photo courtesy of Norte Maar.



Cohesive Creativity

The 1st Au Sable River Valley Studio Tour and the 2nd Annual Jay Invitational of Clay highlight the work of outstanding artists and artisans July 18-19.

By Claire Durham

THE BEST WAY to experience the creative process is to see artists in their own working environment as they create new works of art. Now, art lovers can do that during the 1st Annual Au Sable River Valley Studio Tour on Saturday, July 18 and Sunday, July 19. This new tour coincides with the return of another event, the 2nd Annual Jay Invitational of Clay, which takes place at The Jay House July 18-19. The public is invited to attend the evening opening reception for both events, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, July 17 at The Jay House, 35 Randy's Lane in Jay, N.Y.

The 1st Au Sable River Valley Studio Tour

The self-guided free tour enables visitors to design their own tour to view 25 art studios and gallery spaces from Keene Valley, Keene, Upper Jay, Jay, Au Sable Forks and Wilmington. The tour was organized by Norte Maar in collaboration with the Jay Craft Center, Young's Studio and Gallery, and Jackie Sabourin's Stoneledge Pottery.

"It's an intimate opportunity for the public to walk into an artist's studio and see how they make a painting or throw a pot or make a sculpture or furniture," says Norte Maar co-founder and curator Jason Andrew.

"I've always been fascinated by the artists who live and work in the North Country," explains Andrew, a former dancer who grew up in Utah. "It's amazing for Norte Maar, which was founded and has its roots here, so it's great to come back in the summer being residents here and meet new artists and have these great conversations."

Founded in 2004 by Andrew and choreographer Julia Gleich, Norte Maar is a non-profit organization that promotes the arts and facilitates collaborations between artists. (The name "Norte Maar" has a double meaning, meaning "north lake" or "north sea," and also, refers to Dora Maar, who was Pablo Picasso's great muse.)

Once headquartered in Rouses Point, N.Y. where it held an annual dance gala, Fête de Danse, Norte Maar relocated

to the Brooklyn neighborhood of Bushwick, where Andrew opened a gallery and carried on the process of creative collaboration with Brooklyn and North Country artists. Last year, Andrew and partner Norman Jabaut renewed their North Country connection when they purchased a home in Jay, N.Y.

Inspired by the Jay Studio Tour of the late '90s and early 2000s, the Au Sable River Valley Tour promotes artists in the Au Sable River Valley, incorporating well known institutions such as the Jay Craft Center and Young's Studio and Gallery, both of which are open year-round and showcase new exhibits and works.

"We needed to do something that would feature those artists [in Au Sable River Valley] specifically and independently from any other part of the North Country," Andrew says. Some of the artists and artisans who will be showcasing their craft include Swallowtail Studio's Wayne Ignatuk, who builds custom-made furniture; photographer Nathan Farb, whose nature works are featured in magazines, books and films, and is considered one of the Adirondack's great photographers; Sue and Terry Young of Young's Studio and Gallery, who is both a painter and a clay sculptor; and abstract painter Frank Owen, who has been exhibiting paintings in New York since the 1950s.

A map, which provides directions to all of the participating studios, can be downloaded from www.nortemaar.org or picked up at the Jay House.

The 2nd Annual Jay Invitational of Clay

Another Norte Maar project, the Jay Invitational of Clay, takes place exclusively at The Jay House, 35 Randy's Lane in Jay. This show, curated by Jackie Sabourin with Jason Andrew, features local and regional ceramic works, both functional and decorative.

Along with the weekend-long exhibition, families will be able to participate in related events at The Jay House,

ranging from clay tile painting to watching a pit firing with ceramic glazes. Additional information and directions to The Jay House can be found on nortemaar.org.

Based upon last year's reception, Andrew is optimistic about the future of artistic collaborations. "[The townships] kind of blend in to each other," Andrew says. "That's what we're hoping, that all the towns blend in together and form this fantastic, cohesive, exciting creative web of activity and artists making works."

The 1st Annual Au Sable River Valley Studio Tour and the 2nd Annual Jay Invitational of Clay will take place July 18 and 19. Meet the artists and get a preview at the opening reception at The Jay House from 6 to 9 p.m. on Friday,



The Young Studio and Gallery.

Photo courtesy of Norte Maar.

July 17. The Jay House is located at 25 Randy's Lane in Jay, N.Y. Visit nortemaar.org for a complete schedule and downloadable tour map and brochure.

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AU SABLE RIVER VALLEY

STUDIO TOUR

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nortemaar.org