

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
CONTACT:  
Heather Balchunas  
617-625-6600 ext. 2985  
hbalchunas@somervillema.gov  
April 18, 2022

Somerville Arts Council  
50 Evergreen Ave.  
Somerville, MA 02145  
617-625-6600 x2985  
www.somervilleartscouncil.org

The Somerville Arts Council's Inside-Out Gallery & Somerville Open Studios present:

# Create/Space

A Somerville Open Studios Member's Exhibit

April 15 - May 16, 2022



A perennial favorite, Somerville Open Studios returns on April 30th & May 1st to bring art to the masses. As a part of this tradition, Somerville Open Studios, the Somerville Arts Council and the Inside-OUT Gallery present an eclectic array of works from seasoned members and newcomers for this annual show.

About the theme: CREATE/SPACE

*"During this pandemic my studio has served as a sanctuary to not only create artwork, but to escape the four walls of my home. Being able to have a space that was my own helped me get through all types of emotional upheaval and continues to be a blessing in my life."*

*-Alison Drasner, Vernon Street Studios Artist*

Space. While many claim it is the final frontier, for artists it is where their creative journey begins. Over the past couple years, the relationship to our surroundings has shifted in various ways. Homes became work spaces. Art studios became a respite from current events. Our backyards replaced cafés for social gatherings. But what makes a creative space? Why is it important to how we create? What happens when it is no longer there? The great outdoors, sacred dwellings, our homes, our studios—they all can play a role in how artists create. Now more than ever, it seems that space is occupying important real estate in many people's minds.

When asked, the exhibit participants gave a variety of answers to these questions. There are artists that found inspiration by gazing at the angular structures of urban landscapes. For others, their muse strikes most often in their art studio-- away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Then, there are artists who have been displaced and, then, reclaimed new spaces for their craft. Whether space is an abstract concept, a state of mind or an actual location, it is evident that it's a key ingredient and essential to the creative process.

## Participating Artists

Adam Adkison, Adam Leveille, Alison Drasner, Aliza Arzt, Catherine Weller, Christine Palamidessi, Consuelo J. Perez, Emily Bhargava, Eric Bornstein, Heather Couture, Hilary Scott, Janeann Dill, Jenn Wood, Karl Stephan, MJ Rotchford, Nancy Hall Brooks, Pam Greene, Pauline Lim, Richard Curran, Robert Boyler, Sarah Carlson, Stan Eichner, & Yildiz Grodowski



## What does having a creative space mean to you?

### Adam Adkison (SOS Map# 40)

"I've spent the last month in-between teaching and part-time work contemplating my studio, how it's changed and what it's meant for me through the pandemic. It's a haven, a place to experiment and play, which is vital to creating. Sometimes things get too heavy and I have to remind myself to play around, to create a mess."

Website: [adamadkison.com](http://adamadkison.com)

### Adam Leveille (SOS Map# 76)

"As a plein-air painter, my work is often as much about finding a space to paint as it is about finding a good view that is more than just the physical representation of the scene. It is about capturing the feeling and atmosphere of the moment, and the interactions with the residents and passers-by as well. With each painting, I share with the viewer the wonders and revelations I see that often go unnoticed in this bustling city."

Website: [adamsartwork.me](http://adamsartwork.me)

### Alison Drasner (SOS Map# 44)

"During this pandemic my studio has served as a sanctuary to not only create artwork, but to escape the four walls of my home. Being able to have a space that was my own helped me get through all types of emotional upheaval and continues to be a blessing in my life."

Website: [ampleartdesign.com](http://ampleartdesign.com)

### Aliza Arzt (SOS Map# 23)

"I have been lucky this year to be able to return to working with clay at Mudflat and am very grateful for that, especially after spending 6 months last year trying to create in my living room instead. While my studio space requirements have been met, I frequently yearn for the space and conditions in my home to sustain the many plants I wish I owned. Although my indoor environment is not ideal, creating them in clay is my way to have them with me always, a moment frozen in time."

Social Media: [facebook.com/Geckcessories](https://www.facebook.com/Geckcessories)

### Catherine Weller (SOS Map# 33)

"I have had many studio spaces, both at home and in artist buildings, and recently moved into a space in Somerville that finally allows me to spread out and use everything I've been storing and moving from place to place. This has allowed me to make connections between old and new work and rediscover and combine processes I have used over the years. The studio has also been a refuge during the pandemic, a place to go to that is a safe and supportive community. But a lot of my thinking about working happens outdoors, so I collect mental images in familiar and unfamiliar landscapes to create imaginary landscapes back at the studio."

Email: [cweller27@yahoo.com](mailto:cweller27@yahoo.com)

### Christine Palamidessi (SOS Map# 44)

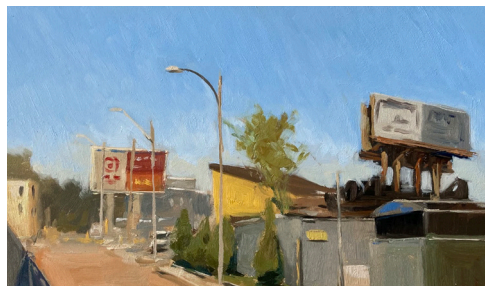
"During the pandemic, for nearly 10 months, I worked on top of my washing machine in the laundry room, wearing red headphones, listening to The Sculptor's Funeral (podcast dedicated to figurative sculptors) and making 3D masks of my daughter's face. It taught me my mind can travel back to Michelangelo's time while my hands work in present time on top of a 2 x 2 foot white square in a windowless space and make my art. But oh... how nice it is to be in a big studio with multiple tables, windows, and the buzz of other living artists working nearby."

Website: [palamidessi.com](http://palamidessi.com)

### Emily Bhargava (SOS Map# 40)

"This piece reflects the colors of earth, the clay browns, the watery blues and the amazing oxides that you can find in rocks. It's an attempt to bring outdoor space into the studio."

Website: [glassandlead.com](http://glassandlead.com)



## What does having a creative space mean to you?

### Eric Bornstein/Behind the Mask Theater (SOS Map# 40)

"In times of crisis and change, only the resourceful survive. Those who work well with others, even more so. These jackals stand as guardian spirit figures, surveying their territory, and working together for the survival of their kind. The competition? Larger, stronger, and higher status lions. Yet hyenas thrive. May we all thrive, and work together to face the future together." Website: [behindtheface.org](http://behindtheface.org)

### Heather Couture (SOS Map# 1)

"This piece is an ode to homes, and how important they are for each and every one of us. My home has always been my refuge, and when the pandemic came, it was even more so. Being a work-at-home artist, I was able to stay home and track what was happening with the virus and my neighbors online. It quickly became clear that those with secure housing weathered the storm way better than those who didn't. This has always been the case, of course, but the pandemic put a big old spotlight on how housing is integral to our physical and mental health, as well as our overall safety and security. Without these basic human needs met, it's difficult to relax enough to be creative, and creativity is something that lives inside each of us. Imagine what it would be like to live in a world where everyone had access to safe, secure, and affordable housing, and as a result, their innate creativity?"

Social Media: [instagram.com/mendingmaniac](https://www.instagram.com/mendingmaniac)

### Hilary Scott (SOS Map# 46)

"When the pandemic upended my family's life, my wife and daughter began baking in earnest. They had always baked together when my daughter was younger. Yet time and distance had done its job, and those warm mornings of sugar, flour and shared experiments had been replaced by professional obligations. With the pandemic, both began working from home, and suddenly the act of being in the kitchen together took on a special meaning. It was the comfort of nostalgia made physical. It was my daughter's childhood brought forward into her adulthood, and I found myself making dinosaurs.

As an artist, I often find it difficult to point to the reason why I embark on a project. Ideas seem to enter fully formed from behind the curtain of my unconscious, but I am left quite mystified as to who wrote the script I'm following. In this case, I think that dinosaurs covered with comic books served the same purpose as my wife and daughter's baking: They were two things from my childhood that I could depend on always being a comfort. For the first time in my adult life the world outside of my home was a really scary place. It was full of unknowns. Perhaps a part of my mind took that feeling to its natural conclusion: "You're an adult, and you're scared of the big adult world; so stay in your room with some dinosaurs and comic books... and you might get homemade cookies as well."

Website: [hilaryscottart.com](http://hilaryscottart.com)

### Janeann Dill (SOS Map# 33)

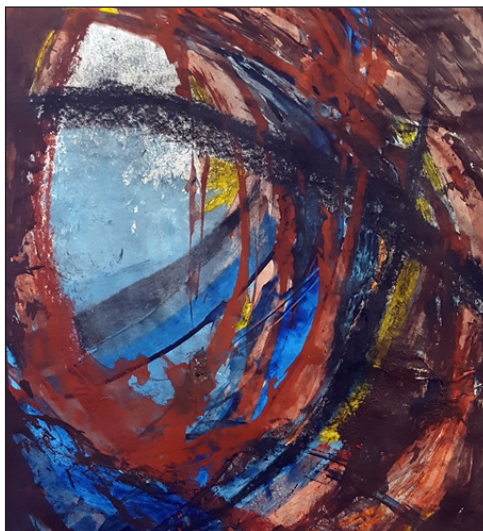
"I have had many studio spaces, both at home and in artist buildings, and recently moved into a space in Somerville that finally allows me to spread out and use everything I've been storing and moving from place to place. This has allowed me to make connections between old and new work and rediscover and combine processes I have used over the years. The studio has also been a refuge during the pandemic, a place to go to that is a safe and supportive community. But a lot of my thinking about working happens outdoors, so I collect mental images in familiar and unfamiliar landscapes to create imaginary landscapes back at the studio."

Website: [janeandill-artist.com](http://janeandill-artist.com)

### Jenn Wood (SOS Map# 44)

"For many years a broad series has been prominent and ongoing in my work. The images depict abstractions of deep whirlpools, intense cyclones or weather, and arabesque-like swirls. The work is colorful and active, about varied states of movement in space in circular forms. The circle is a universal symbol for many phenomena. Relative to my work in this series it can imply wholeness, encircling water or weather, and the eternal motion and rhythm of all that moves in space."

Website: [jennwoodstudio.com](http://jennwoodstudio.com)



## What does having a creative space mean to you?

### Karl Stephan (SOS Map# 2)

“Spaces artists find to work are often interstitial: disused industrial buildings, blank walls, vacant lots and other places in between. Somerville has long been enriched by the presence and work of artists. May that continue.”

Website: [karlstephanstudio.com](http://karlstephanstudio.com)

### MJ Rotchford (SOS Map# 56)

“For me, making art without a designated space is like being a contractor that has to haul in the tools and supplies, set up a workspace, do some work, clean up, pack up, and put everything away. At the same time, I need to work outside because of smoke, paint and glue fumes, wood dust, and noise. I do this again and again and again until I have to stop to do some other part of life. Having lost the Artisan’s Asylum shops and both my studio spaces this past year I only managed to complete three things, none of them sculpture. But I had such a grateful heart while making them! 2022 is already better.”

Social Media: [instagram.com/mjworksit](https://www.instagram.com/mjworksit)

### Nancy Hall Brooks (not open)

“I have always loved these words by the artist, Philip Guston. For me, they distill the essence of what it means to be in a creative space: “When you’re in the studio painting, there are a lot of people in there with you - your teachers, friends, painters from history, critics...and one by one if you’re really painting, they walk out. And if you’re really painting YOU walk out.”

Sometimes I am smitten by the way light falls – in this case on stencils left in my studio in accidental juxtaposition. A moment lost, save for the photograph that documents it.”

Website: [nancyhallbrooks.com](http://nancyhallbrooks.com)

### Pam Greene (SOS Map# 49)

“Pandemic life has felt to me like a turning inwards, and sometimes - in its lowest moments -- like a house arrest. But it’s also given me the opportunity to experience my surroundings in a new way during the many long hours I’ve spent in my home. This slow examination of my space has inspired me to paint light: how patterns of sunlight fall across and define form, and how oblique angles of light cast shadows from solitary objects.”

Website: [pamgreenepaintings.com](http://pamgreenepaintings.com)

### Pauline Lim (SOS Map# 76)

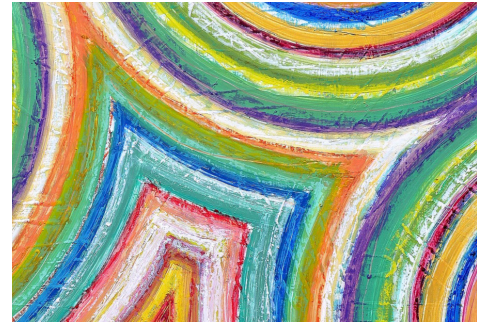
“I have had a studio at the Brickbottom Artists Building since 1989. Being able to relax and settle into a secure environment frees my mind to be creative and not to use energy panicking about my financial future and being kicked out of my nest. During the pandemic, I was especially grateful that my artwork was not interrupted since my studio was in my own home. I did long for travel, so I did a series of paintings based on photos taken during previous travels. I envied the freedom of birds.”

Website: [paulinelim.net](http://paulinelim.net)

### Richard Curran (SOS Map# 44)

“For the first time in decades I am lucky to have an art studio outside my home. My studio space has helped to bring purpose and a sense of peace into my life. This piece includes images from my studio, from the walk from my home to my studio, a field in Giverny, France, and a window from Monet’s studio at Giverny.”

Email: [richardcurran@mac.com](mailto:richardcurran@mac.com)



## What does having a creative space mean to you?

### Robert Boyler (SOS Map# 4)

“The pandemic actually displaced me from the community pottery studio that I had been using for nearly twenty years. Space, in this context, encompasses not just the physical location but the infrastructure, the community, and even the materials from which I had been making for all of those years. Moving to a new studio has been a disruptive transition involving rethinking processes, learning about new materials and developing new rhythms of work. Hopefully there is growth in that change and in the context of new constraints. The pieces presented below represent a new direction that have come from shifting spaces.”

Website: [rdboyermakes.com](http://rdboyermakes.com)

### Sarah Carlson (SOS Map# 40)

“Harmony is ideal in my studio space, essential to finding balance with my process. Yet, in these balanced spaces there is an organized chaos. These opposing forces are ever present in my creative space.”

Website: [sassafrass-creations.com](http://sassafrass-creations.com)

### Stan Eichner (SOS Map# 73)

“During this period, being in the beautiful wild wide open outdoors has been one of the key places where I’ve been able to continue to pursue my photography -- in this case in a small boat in the Chesapeake Bay at sunrise. This type of wide open space has afforded me a safe and inspiring place for me to pursue my photography and continue to advocate for climate activism.”

Website: [staneichner.smugmug.com](http://staneichner.smugmug.com)

### Yildiz Grodowski (SOS Map# 44)

“Artists create in spaces as small as a closet and as large as a hangar. Does that influence our art; yes. But I always like a challenge that pushes me forward.

My art space is my sanctuary. Small or large, private or shared I simply make the best of it.... and get lost inside my colors.”

Website: [yildizgrodowski.com](http://yildizgrodowski.com)

Find out more about the featured artists and this year’s Somerville Open Studio event on April 30th and May 1st (12-6pm) by visiting: [somervilleopenstudios.org](http://somervilleopenstudios.org)

For more information on artist space and its local impact, go to the Somerville Arts Council Risk Assessment page: [somervilleartscouncil.org/spacework](http://somervilleartscouncil.org/spacework)

## About the Inside-Out Gallery

*The Inside-OUT Gallery is located in the CVS Window in Davis Square, a unique space that allows the public to view an eclectic array of works from artists and local organizations each month. The mission of the Somerville Arts Council is to cultivate and celebrate the creative expressions of the Somerville community. Through innovative collaborations and quality programming we work to make the arts an integral part of life reflective of our diverse city.*

