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## An art affair

Meet three creative women who are preparing to sell their masterpieces at this year's Broad Ripple Art Fair.

**BY JODY CROSSMAN**

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When the cadre of artists converges on Indianapolis May 22 for the 34th annual Broad Ripple Art Fair, it's going to be one big sea of creativity.

Artists who specialize in everything from ceramics to metalsmithing, pottery to clothing design will be hawking their wares on the grounds of the Indianapolis Art Center, helping the organization raise money for community outreach programs.

Joyce Sommers, president and executive director of the Indianapolis Art Center, said the Broad Ripple Art Fair attracts some of the most talented artists from Indianapolis and across the nation. The Fair committee received close to 900 entries this year, but only a select group of 280 artists were chosen.

While you're shopping for a great find and munching on that hot dog, you might stop and take a minute to get to know the artists displaying their goods for sale. Many of them, no matter what their craft, have made making art a career.

"There are such things as fair artists," Sommers said. "They tend to be closer to the fine art end of things and not just selling thingamajigs. For some, this is very much their livelihood. Their income comes from going to fairs around the country."

Sommers said the artists, some of them from the Indianapolis area, sell their art not only through fairs, but also other venues. Many of them also take other jobs like teaching art to supplement their incomes.

Three artists, all of whom will be showing at the Broad Ripple Art Fair, talked to us about what life is like as an artist, their struggles and what it takes to do things right.



**Final strokes: Susan Hodgin, 26, touches up her paintings titled Poppie Vines No. 1 and No. 2, which she plans to sell in her first show at the Broad Ripple Art Fair. Hodgin is also a teacher at the Broad Ripple Art Center and the Wheeler Arts Building. -- Michelle Pemberton / INTake**

### 34TH ANNUAL BROAD RIPPLE ART FAIR

**When is it?**

May 22, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and May 23, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Where is it?**

The grounds of the Indianapolis Art Center, 820 E. 67th St. in Broad Ripple

**Where do I park?**

If you've been here before, you know. Parking can be a bitch. Take our advice and go into it knowing you're going to have to walk a few blocks (unless you get really lucky) or opt for a shuttle. Most people park for free on the street. But free parking with shuttle bus service also is available at Broad Ripple High School, Broad Ripple Park and the overflow lot at Glendale Mall.

**How much is it?**

## SUSAN HODGIN, PAINTER

Susan Hodgin has wanted to be an artist for as long as she can remember.

The 26-year-old Indianapolis native went to college in Montana, graduated in 2001, and moved back to the city she had called home for almost all her life.

"I wasn't planning on coming back," Hodgin admits about returning home. "But I had a few things fall through in Montana and the atmosphere here was perfect. The arts community is very supportive here and it's growing really fast."

Hodgin, a painter who uses mixed media like paper, glitter and charcoal, has her own studio space in the Wheeler Arts Building that allows her to display her work to the public. It also doubles as her living space, which saves a lot on rent.

She's just starting out, but so far, being a career artist seems to suit her.

"I've shown in one gallery but mostly different spaces here and there," she said. "I've done group shows, hung artwork in restaurants and coffee shops and that sort of thing. I'm just getting my work out there as much as possible."

This year will be the first time Hodgin has sold her work at the Broad Ripple Art Fair. She's been preparing an inventory of work for months. On Saturday, she expects to bring between 30 and 50 pieces, priced between \$50 and \$2,000, to the fair.

Hodgin said being a career artist does have its down times. When she's not working on her art, she's teaching to supplement her income.

"This is pretty much full-time," she said of her art. "I teach between two and 10 hours a week. I really enjoy teaching. It keeps me sane to be around children, if you can believe that."

Hodgin said the best advice she can give to up-and-coming artists is to put your all into what you do, no matter what.

"Work really, really hard and be willing to starve

- Tickets at the gate are \$10 for adults and \$1 for children ages 2-12.
- Advance sale tickets (available until May 21) are \$8 for adults and are available at First Indiana Bank locations, the Indianapolis Art Center, Marsh Supermarkets, O'Malia's Food Markets and Ticket Central at the Artsgarden.

### What's it about?

The fair began in 1971 and has grown to feature more than 280 national and international artists this year. An estimated 25,000 people will attend this year's event. Proceeds from the Broad Ripple Art Fair benefit the Indianapolis Art Center, a not-for-profit community arts organization.

### Who are the artists?

Too many to mention by name here, but if you're wondering, you'll find everything from painters to jewelry makers to furniture to glass blowers to photography and sculpture. Oh, you wanted kids' clothing? Well, they'll have that, too. Woodworking? Yup. Leatherworking? Sure thing. You want it, chances are you'll find it.

### Can I stuff my face?

When you go to a festival, you always expect great food, right? Well, you won't be let down here. More than 30 food vendors will be on hand to tempt you with everything from lobster wraps to ice cream.

### Is there entertainment?

Entertainment from a variety of local and regional talent will be on hand to perform on five stages at the Broad Ripple Art Fair. Entertainment will include jazz, blues, Celtic, swing pop and reggae. Check out the lineup on page 13.

### What can my kids do?

Bring the kids to the fair, where they can enjoy art, entertainment, food and fun. At the Kids' World tent, sponsored by Radio

for the first year," she said.

### **LAURIE WHELLER, CHILDREN'S CLOTHING DESIGNER**

When people find out what Laurie Wheller does for a living, the first question they always ask is, "Do you have kids?"

"I don't, but I've been making children's clothing for eight years and it hasn't presented a problem yet," she said. "The way I got involved was by making stuff for other people."

Wheller, 43, owns Minds Eye Design in Hudson, Ohio, where she designs and sews one-of-a-kind children's clothing from vintage chenille bedspreads and table linens. They're unusual pieces, each one distinctly different from the others, but they've garnered Wheller a throng of adoring fans.

"People seem to love them and I love them, too," she said. "Children's clothing is fun and funky and whimsical. I could never make adult clothing. It's boring."

Wheller was working in the health care field before her mother encouraged her to go into business for herself. In 1999, she cut her ties to the field and went into business full-time doing what she loves to do.

She doesn't have a storefront ("I didn't want the commitment of being married to that every day," she said) but rather travels extensively to art fairs where she sells Minds Eye creations. While this is her first year at the Broad Ripple Art Fair, Wheller said she's honored to have made the cut.

"I hear it's quite difficult to get in," she said. "I like the flexibility of being able to travel and do shows all over. I think this show is going to be great."

She's been preparing like crazy. Wheller brings only as much inventory as she can sew between shows, and she still does all the work herself.

She said to make it as a career artist, you have to be willing to take a leap of faith just like she did.

Disney, kids can be entertained and take part in educational activities.

#### **How do I find out more?**

For more information, check out the Indianapolis Art Center's Web site at [www.indplsartcenter.org](http://www.indplsartcenter.org) or call (317) 255-2464.

Source: [www.indplsartcenter.org](http://www.indplsartcenter.org)

### **HERE'S A LIST OF ENTERTAINERS**

#### **SATURDAY, MAY 22**

##### **92.3 WTTS Riverfront Stage**

(located in the Starbucks Coffee Artist Grove)

- 1 to 2:30 p.m. Ann McWilliams
- 3:30 to 5 p.m. Jennie DeVoe

##### **107.9 WTPI Sculpting Court Stage**

(located in the Monon Row Artist Lot)

- 11 a.m. to noon Village Drums
- 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Dayna Malow
- 2 to 3:30 p.m. Mina Keohane
- 4 to 5:30 p.m. Spud Puppies

##### **100.9 WYJZ Portico Stage**

(located in front of the Art Center)

- 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Stasia Demos
- 1:30 to 3 p.m. Cliff White and Roberto Monsalve

- 4 to 5:30 p.m. Bob Bullock

##### **WFYI TV20 Kid's Stage**

(located in the Radio Disney KIDS' WORLD)

- 11:30 to 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Idiophonic Rhythms with Bill Bailey
- 1 to 2 p.m. and 4 to 5 p.m. Nikki Cleary

#### **SUNDAY, MAY 23**

##### **92.3 WTTS Riverfront Stage**

(located in the Starbucks Coffee Artist Grove)

- 12:30 to 2 p.m. Caribbean Consort
- 3 to 4:30 p.m. Cool Chillies

##### **107.9 WTPI Sculpting Court Stage**

(located in the Monon Row Artist Lot)

"You need to first make your product and market it to friends and family," she said. "If the response is good, then go to the public and see how the response is there. It takes a while. It took me several years to do that, but it's been worth it."

#### **ANDRE´A JACKSON, JEWELRY DESIGNER**

Andre´a Jackson said she's proud of her "starving artist" title. After all, it took her a long time to get where she is today.

"I was a professional student for nine years," she said, laughing. "I didn't start my business until after grad school in 2002. I decided that's how it was going to be. I was going to starve going into business for myself if that's what it took."

Today, Jackson is nothing less than a success. The 31-year-old is designing and creating her own jewelry through what she's dubbed F.C. Dre´a Design.

Working with mostly sterling silver, Jackson designs wearable pieces of art that sell for between \$30 and \$2,000 each. Necklaces, earrings, rings, spoons and even chopsticks have come out of her small studio in the Stutz Building.

Jackson also teaches students the fine art of metalsmithing. She said she's reaching out to students who don't have access to similar programs in the city.

"My teaching is the main part of my career," she said. "I've found it keeps me grounded and I can still do the fairs and things on the side. It also allows me a more stable income and I know where that's coming from."

One lesson Jackson said she tries to impart to her students is that being an artist can be difficult.

"If you don't push yourself to pursue every avenue and take every opportunity you can, you'll never get anywhere," she said. "You really have to put yourself out there and be prepared for whatever comes to you."

Jackson said this is her first year at the Broad Ripple Art Fair and she's looking forward to the experience.

"I just hope the weather holds up," she said. "This is the first major one I've done, so I'm hoping it goes well."

- 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Uncle JuJu
- 1 to 2:30 p.m. Michael Kelsey
- 3 to 4:30 p.m. Seven Pleasures

#### **100.9 WYJZ Portico Stage**

(located in front of the Art Center)

- 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Jan Aldredge Trio
- 1:30 to 3 p.m. Blueprintmusic
- 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Beth and Dan Lodge Rigal

#### **WFYI TV20 Kid's Stage**

(located in the Radio Disney KIDS'

WORLD)

- 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monika Herzig
- 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. and 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Monika Herzig