

DAILY NEWS

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Under a bridge, a span of styles

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Organizers call the eighth annual Art Under the Bridge Festival the nation's largest visual-arts weekend, but you can trim the 30-block celebration of life between the Manhattan and Brooklyn bridges into just one block:

68 Jay St., between Water and Front.

Amid the gallery exhibitions, music, dance and poetry presentations and movies, more than 200 artists of the 1,500 involved have agreed to open their Brooklyn studios for an up-close look at how they work. Nearly 60 of them fill the winding hallways at the vertical artists colony that is 68 Jay. Find the complete schedule at www.dumboartscenter.org.

OSMAN AKAN, STUDIO 417

"I try to create a state of being in my installations. They try to encapsulate and hold the audience for a while. I sometimes think they are musical that way," says Akan, 34. A 1995 immigrant from Istanbul, Akan has been in DUMBO for a year. In his quiet space, drawings hang on the walls and the shelves are filled with random objects like gauze pads and a Simpsons 3-D chess set. His latest work is a video series of explosions. He explains: "An image of an explosion became a pop icon almost. We are so incredibly remote from the reality of destruction of these blasts that they

appear as colorful, almost beautiful spectacles."

ANNE GILMAN, STUDIO 817

"Drawing is a current that runs through all my work," Gilman, 50, says. She's working on a number of projects: black-and-white drawings done on that crackling examining-table paper, mixed-media collages, storybooks on loose folios of Mexican newspaper and subway maps filling vases. Her wall features a dark and powerful work called "War Ad Finitum" she's trying to finish. It's drawn on papers that are then dipped in wax and stitched together. Visitors will also see "All George Bush's Horses and All George Bush's Men Couldn't Put the World Together Again," a drawing of the world she ripped up and stitched together like a mismatched puzzle.

ALEXANDRA REYES, STUDIO 417

"A lot of my work has been about my family issues and relationships, and my own twist on how to work these issues out internally," says Reyes, 33. "If I can portray the irony of the beauty in emotional pain, I have succeeded." Reyes translates her crafty-eyed approach to funky jewelry, sculptures and restoration (she's currently restoring Venetian glass goblets). She uses recycled objects in her works, like magnifying glasses and labels from old-school pharmacy bottles, in her collages. "I love the

noises I hear out of my window," she says. "Hammers, drills, guitars, drums, compressors. It's productivity. I can hammer on my anvil and no one cares."

ZOE SHEEHAN SALDANA, STUDIO 821

Saldana, originally from Connecticut, has been spending time at a Vermont Wal-Mart for her latest endeavor, "Shopdropping." She buys clothes from the Wal-Mart, reproduces the clothing as faithfully as possible, then surreptitiously returns the handmade item to Wal-Mart with the original tag. She doesn't keep track if anyone buys her work, but the mystery is all part of the creative process. The original Wal-Mart piece, as well as a full-size photograph of her version are then displayed in conventional art settings. "I like to make work that generates questions rather than making work that promotes answers," says Saldana, 31.

FEDERICO SOLMI, STUDIO 511

"DUMBO is the place where all my ideas are coming to life," says Solmi, 31, who was born in Bologna, Italy, and worked there in a butcher shop. Whether it's a drawing, a sculpture or a video installment, Solmi is especially interested in capturing the distortion and perversity of contemporary life. His next project, he says is a drawn animation that takes the viewer into the cockpit of a plane to explore the world's triumphs and failures.