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**AMERICAN CRAFT WEEK IN VERMONT: Back roads, fall foliage and 120 open studios**

MONTPELIER, Vt. -- Create your own fall foliage getaway with an American Craft theme, as scenic Vermont welcomes visitors to its second annual Fall Open Studio Weekend, October 6-7, 2012.

More than 120 potters, silversmiths, glassblowers, watercolorists, furniture designers and other makers will greet the public in their private workspaces. Choose a picturesque backdrop: sun-dappled back roads and covered bridges, charming mountain towns, or sparkling freshwater lakes. Wherever you wander, the yellow signs of the Open Studio Weekend will guide you to encounters with craft artists.

“It’s a rare invitation to go behind the craft shows and exhibits to view the creative work environment and speak with the artist,” says Martha Fitch, executive director of the Vermont Craft Council, host of the Open Studio Weekend in fall and spring. “You can explore straight or winding, paved or dirt roads, and be treated to brilliant scenic vistas, classic Vermont villages, and warm welcomes from artists whose studios are normally private spaces.”

What’s the best way to plot your course? Choose a favorite medium, like pottery or furniture, and map the way to those studios, Ms. Fitch says. Or select a section of the state to explore.

For example, one of the regions is Southwest Vermont, home of Manchester, Bennington and the Shires of Vermont, a broad valley carved by the Battenkill River, which flows between the Taconic Mountains to the west and the Green Mountains to the east. Here, many open studios are a short ride off U.S. Route 7, Western New England’s north-south highway.

Begin at the studio tour information center, Epoch Gallery, an artisan cooperative on Main Street in Manchester. Always staffed by a member artist, the gallery presents Vermont-made craft including jewelry and fashion accessories, pottery, wood art and blown glass. In Manchester also are Creative Works, where Patricia Rosenbauer presents original paintings, prints, and "up-cycled" vintage furniture that she has restored and transformed; and Gander Gallery, which showcases the work of established and emerging artists.

Travel north from Manchester to find numerous artists just outside Dorset, including William Laberge Cabinetmaker, Kit Mosheim jewelry, Penny Vicusi pastels, and Raeburn Custom Furniture. Slightly farther north in the Danby area are Bob Gasperetti Furnituremaker and Vortex, an art center located in the old Danby Four Corners Store.

Travel south from Manchester toward Bennington to visit Battenkill River Pottery on Route 7A in the classic Vermont village of Arlington. In what used to be a cider-making barn, visitors will meet Jessica Phillips, who hand-carves intricate designs into her stoneware pottery. In Bennington is the studio of Tony Conner, whose luminous watercolors express the rural New England landscape. East and south of Bennington is Readsboro, a tiny village surrounded by rugged mountains on Route 100 and home to Readsboro Glassworks, the glassblowing studio of K. William LeQuier and Mary Angus. LeQuier's complex glass sculptures are both powerful and fluid while Angus creates blown glass perfume bottles and vessels with graceful forms and soft colors.

To help you plan your individualized tour route, the Vermont Craft Council publishes a free map booklet, organized by region, which is available online at <http://www.vermontcrafts.com>, and at Vermont welcome centers and galleries. For more information, call 802-223-3380.

#### ABOUT THE VERMONT CRAFTS COUNCIL:

The Vermont Crafts Council is a non-profit organization serving the Vermont visual arts community. Open Studio Weekend is supported by the farmers who own Cabot Creamery, The Vermont Arts Council and the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing.

#### ABOUT AMERICAN CRAFT WEEK:

The third annual American Craft Week will be held Oct. 5-14 in cities and towns across the nation. With hundreds of diverse events at galleries, artist studios, museums, schools, as well as fairs and festivals, it is the premier public celebration of hand-made craft in America. American Craft Week is a program of Craft Retailers and Artists for Tomorrow (CRAFT), a trade association dedicated to the growth and vitality of American craft. The 2012 Lead Sponsor of American Craft Week is the John C. Campbell Folk School. Other major sponsors include the American Craft Council, New York International Gift Fair, [wholesalecrafts.com](http://wholesalecrafts.com), and [VermontVacation.com](http://VermontVacation.com). For more information visit [Americancraftweek.com](http://Americancraftweek.com).

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