New Jersey Small Works Show at Mikhail Zakin Gallery

This year titled “A Perfect Fit,” the 22nd annual New Jersey Small Works Show, featuring 44 works by 34 artists who are affiliated in some way with New Jersey, opens June 10 at the Mikhail Zakin Gallery at the Art School in Old Church. The exhibition runs through July 8, and a reception for the artists is scheduled for June 16, from 6 to 8 p.m. The show is free.

The show features work in a wide range of disciplines, including photography, ceramics, jewelry, printmaking, sculpture, drawing, painting and collage.

This year’s juror is Meredith Lipmann, an artist and curator who has organized group shows in New Jersey over the past 15 years. She is currently the administrator for Hudson County’s Public Art Program.

Artists are limited to 18 inches square (hence “Small Works”). Of the 34 artists included, 26 are New Jersey residents. Some are students of the Art School at Old Church, which offers more than 90 classes each semester in many artistic disciplines. The Zakin Gallery is at 561 Piermont Road, Demarest. Open Mondays to Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; weekday evening hours are by appointment.

For more information, call (201) 767-7160 or visit tasoc.org.

Britain regulates antiquities the Anglo-Saxon way

In 2010, more than 90,000 archaeological discoveries were reported to British museums, but very few of them were found by archaeologists. Unlike most continental governments, which outlaw not only the discovery and sale of antiquities but even digging them up on your own land, Britain has a unique law, the Portable Antiquities Scheme that allows retrieval if the objects are immediately registered with a local museum and their site recorded and revealed. In return, the discoverer is allowed to keep his or her find, but it’s registered and cannot be sold abroad.

Last year was a banner year for PAS, and not just because officially recorded discoveries jumped by 36 percent over 2009. In 2010, a farmer in southeast England dug up the remains of a leather bag filled with 840 solid gold coins, called “staters,” dating to c. 15-20 AD, the largest hoard of treasure uncovered since 1849. Even more amazing was a Roman erotic knife handle, showing two men and a woman having sex—one of them clutching a severed head—dug up in Lincolnshire, in central England. The erotic knife handles from that period found in Britain can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Enforcers of the law are applauding its effectiveness (PAS went into effect in 1996), especially in contrast to the sieve-like but Draconian laws in Italy and France. Trained archaeologists were highly unlikely to find 90,000 objects in any one year by themselves; PAS officials are trying to pass the word that they think they’ve put the black market on their side.

Essex Watercolor Club spring show opens

The Essex Watercolor Club, New Jersey’s oldest watercolor organization (founded in 1932), will have its annual spring show at the Art Upstairs Gallery of the Morristown Community Theatre Tuesday through Aug. 2. More than 50 of its exhibiting members will be represented, and a reception and awards presentation will be held June 11 from 3 to 5 p.m.

The Art Upstairs Gallery is in the Mayo Performing Arts Center, 100 South St. in Morristown. Regular hours are Wednesdays from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., plus two hours prior to and during any given performance or by appointment with the gallery coordinator, (973) 539-0345, ext. 6506. For more information on the Essex Water Color Club, visit ewcclub.com.

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Gallery Aferro’s holds annual fundraising party

June 18 is the date for Gallery Aferro’s “Art Reaction,” its third annual benefit art auction and party, with tickets on sale now for $20 (regular) and $100 (VIP). For one night the alternative space offers only unique artworks by emerging and established artists for sale at equally unique prices. Music, novel activities, local food, strong signature drinks and your community are all celebrated, at different levels of intensity.

Gallery Aferro has been on Market St. in Newark. Open Fridays and Saturdays from noon to 6 p.m. and by appointment. For more information, visit aferro.org.