

The Story of an Exhibition

This is a story about how people and places change, and yet, stay the same. And, it's the story of the emergence of a brave new museum, DUMA, and its part in reconnecting two friends, Janet Lee Kadesky Ruttenberg and John Butler, after 71 years of separation.



John and I were childhood friends in Dubuque, Iowa. When I was 13 I was sent off to boarding school and virtually left Dubuque to continue my education and art pursuits. In the ensuing years, I married and raised a family.

John stayed in Dubuque and became a pillar of the community.

The reconnection came about 71 years later when John contacted me and proposed an exhibition of my painting and the world class art work of my daughter, Kathy Ruttenberg, at DUMA, Dubuque's art museum. It was an inspiring invitation for me to return to my home town.

The 21st Century of renewal and globalization has had an effect everywhere including Dubuque, where change is also visible: yet, generations of families are still in one place, and enduring friendships remain the cornerstone of Dubuque culture.

DUMA is a now a Smithsonian affiliate, providing inspiration and an exciting place to exchange ideas. The permanent collection has two masterpieces: the very beautiful, first-rate Grant Wood paintings, exhibited in the perfect location, which would be reason enough to travel to Dubuque, but then there also are the exciting and breathtaking bluff views of the Mississippi River.

I treasure the warm welcome home that was extended to me by my fellow Dubuquers. I want to thank all those who gave my daughter, Kathy, and me the opportunity to sparkle a bit in such a lovely space: Dubuque's own museum -- DUMA!



Janet Ruttenberg

With special thanks to:

Alice and John Butler
Debi and Andrew Butler
Christine and Tim Conlon
Conlon Construction
Ted Kluesner
Dr. and Mrs. Roger Ott
Jack Wertzberger
Jeanne Quann
Donna Conzett and her son, Donald Dumbell
Prof. John Beldon Scott
Lori and Phillip Lasansky and their sons, Emiliano and Diego
Susan Farber and Dr. Bernie Saks
Stacy Peterson
John Anderson-Bricker
David Schmitz
Kathleen and Timothy Lennon
Mary Walker Fleischmann and her husband, Tom Fleischmann
Cindy Patterson
Kate Mulgrew
Wendy and Sam Mulgrew
Bill Blakemore
Gerald Rivera and his crew - Manuel Nunez, Gevork Chubaryan
Janice Roerig-Blong and her husband, Don Blong
Gene Tully
Trish McDonald
Sarah Henry
Sara Cedar Miller
Margaret Buhr
Megan Gloss

Douglas Stuckey
John Keane
Susan Whiteman
Cynthia DiCrocco
And the entire opening night crowd that rallied

Special thanks also to my family:
Margie, Janet Ruth, Robert and Max Ruttenberg who travelled through wind and rain and unbelievable hurdles to make it for the opening reception, as did Dean and Kimber Kadesky.
Buzz Ruttenberg who came from Chicago for pre-opening excitement.

And to:
"Team Ruttenberg," as Kathy termed them:
Sarah Bertalan
Keith Hoyt
Greg Jackson
Jonas Jonasson
Luis Mora
Fionn Reilly
Richard Rosen
Allison Siegel
Andrew Siwoff
Kevin Siwoff
The world renowned Charles Stuckey, curator supreme

I also wish to thank Suzanne Slesin and Frederico Farina and their admirable Pointed Leaf Press for the catalogue of the show, Janet Puts the Figure in the Landscape and Kathy Puts the Landscape in the Figure.

My final and most profound thank you goes to my daughter, Kathy Ruttenberg, for partnering with me in the DUMA show. Her extraordinary stardust talent is thrilling as was sharing this memorable experience with her.