



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Exhibition of New Works by Celebrated Artists Janet and Kathy Ruttenberg  
Opens at Dubuque Museum of Art October 24**

*Dubuque, Iowa native Janet Ruttenberg returns for first major exhibition alongside daughter Kathy Ruttenberg, exploring the artists' shared fascination with landscapes and the human form.*



Janet Ruttenberg, *Scheme*, 2014. Watercolor, pastel, gold leaf, silver leaf, acrylic on paper, 108 ½" x 192 ½", collection of the artist.

**Dubuque, Iowa** – New York artists Janet Ruttenberg and Kathy Ruttenberg share an intimate connection as mother and daughter and as artists dedicated to a rigorous studio practice. Yet when *Janet Ruttenberg: Figure in the Landscape / Kathy Ruttenberg: Landscape in the Figure* opens at the Dubuque Museum of Art (DUMA) on October 24, mother and daughter will exhibit together for the first time in their distinguished careers.

*Janet Ruttenberg: Figure in the Landscape / Kathy Ruttenberg: Landscape in the Figure* explores each artist's intense observation of the human figure, the natural world, and the complex relationships and endless compositions that ensue from each. Organized by DUMA with a published catalogue and essay contributed by Charles Stuckey, former curator of the 20th Century Department of Painting & Sculpture at The Art Institute of Chicago, the exhibition includes four large-scale paintings by Janet Ruttenberg and ten ceramic sculptures and a tapestry by Kathy Ruttenberg, accompanied by a selection of Janet Ruttenberg's early works and works by two of her Dubuque teachers, artists Dorothy Bechtel Rossiter and Sr. Mary James Ann Walsh BVM.

Born Janet Lee Kadesky in Dubuque in 1931, Janet Ruttenberg left Iowa to attend boarding school at the age of 14, before returning to study under legendary printmaker Mauricio Lasansky at the University of Iowa. Since 1965, Janet has lived and worked in New York City, where she has produced a large and masterful body of prints and paintings while declining to exhibit or sell her work. For the last fifteen years, Ruttenberg has painted almost daily in New York City's Central Park, where the artist begins her signature paintings on paper and canvas – some measuring 15 feet wide – before returning to her studio to complete them.

In 2013, the Museum of the City of New York revealed Janet Ruttenberg's work to a much broader and appreciative audience with her debut exhibition, *Picturing Central Park*, which garnered praise in *The New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, among other publications. Stuckey commented that the exhibition “revealed an exuberant and sophisticated master of color and drawing, and simultaneously an artist committed to experiment – prepared, for example, to incorporate photographs and videos for the fullest, most visionary results.”

Following her successful debut, Janet was invited to return to Dubuque to exhibit alongside her daughter, artist Kathy Ruttenberg, who, at mid-career, Stuckey describes as “possibly the foremost sculptor working in ceramic today, shaping incredible life forms, both physical and emotional, forever frozen in their most intensely heated state.” A prolific artist, Kathy Ruttenberg has produced an enormous body of new figurative sculptures over just the last three years, some in miniature, others at monumental scale. Kathy's work has been regularly exhibited and was recently awarded a Prize of Honor from the 59<sup>th</sup> Faenze Prize, an international competition of contemporary ceramic art.

“We are thrilled to welcome home Janet Ruttenberg and Kathy Ruttenberg to Iowa and to offer our visitors the opportunity to engage with their incredible artworks,” said David Schmitz, DUMA Executive Director. “I believe that our community and broader region will recognize and appreciate these remarkable artists' artistic accomplishments, while also recognizing itself in their close observation of nature and our place within in it.”

*Janet Ruttenberg: Figure in the Landscape / Kathy Ruttenberg: Landscape in the Figure* opens at the Dubuque Museum of Art on October 24 and remains on view through March 20, 2016. Major support for the exhibition is provided by Cottingham & Butler. A full schedule of related programs and events can be accessed at [www.dbqart.com](http://www.dbqart.com) and will be detailed in subsequent media releases leading up to, and following, the opening.

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The Dubuque Museum of Art is Iowa's oldest cultural institution, founded in 1874, and is dedicated to promoting cultural growth and enhancing the quality of life in Dubuque through interpretation, preservation, and arts education. The mission of the Dubuque Museum of Art is to seek to excite, engage, and educate constituents through the presentation of collections, exhibitions, and programming; to form mutually beneficial partnerships to enhance the role of the arts within our community; and to adhere to professional museum standards in all operations.

The Museum is located across from Washington Park in historic downtown Dubuque at 7th and Locust Streets. Dubuque Museum of Art hours: Tuesday–Friday 10:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M., Saturday & Sunday 1:00 P.M.-4:00 P.M. Daily Admission: \$6 Adults, \$5 Seniors, \$3 College Students, free for kids every day, and free to all on Thursdays thanks to Prudential Financial. Website: [www.dbqart.com](http://www.dbqart.com)

## Selected Additional Works and Descriptions

*High-resolution images of all artworks are available upon request*



Janet Ruttenberg, *Dubuque Elevator*, 2014. Inkjet on paper, 100" x 72", updated image of early collage on paper adhered to plywood, 95 ¾ x 65 ¾ in., collection of the artist.

Janet Ruttenberg's father, Max Kadesky, a former All-American football player at the University of Iowa, was an orthodontist whose office was downtown in Dubuque's celebrated Roshek Building. As a youngster Janet made a large poster for his office showing the iconic Fourth Street funicular elevator. Not surprisingly, the somewhat battered original has become too fragile for display, so Janet has re-created it meticulously for this exhibition as a full-scale color photograph of itself. Comparing it with her most recent paintings shows amazingly enough the extent to which her artistic roots reach back to her hometown.



Janet Ruttenberg, *Central Park*, 2015 (in process). Oil on canvas, 110" x 180", collection of the artist.



Janet Ruttenberg, *Central Park Watercolor Study #9 with Video Display Frame*, 2015. Inkjet on paper with video display frame, approximately 116" x 186", collection of the artist.

This exhibition features Janet's most complex multimedia work yet. Developed over the last year, it consists of one of her panoramic watercolors with scores of figures relaxed in the pastoral bliss of Sheep Meadow in Central Park.

The artwork is presented in a technologically miraculous frame composed of dozens of interconnected small video displays. Each display screens a bit of a continuous video shot by Janet Ruttenberg in Central Park, just blocks from her studio.

In a different medium and at a different scale, the multi-screened video frames her watercolor both literally and figuratively. The peripheral vision captured in her video offers a light-hearted conversation with the central vision of her watercolor.



Above Left: Kathy Ruttenberg, *Grounded*, 2009. Ceramic, 32" x 56.5" x 26", collection of the artist.

Above Right: Kathy Ruttenberg, *Tree Hugger*, 2010. Ceramic, 91" x 35" x 40", collection of the artist.

Kathy Ruttenberg's ceramic sculptures convey the artist's sensitive fusion of figurative and animal symbolism. Put most simply, Kathy Ruttenberg's works articulate her insights and observations as a modern woman engaged with men and animals in the world of nature. Working with clay, the earth itself, Kathy models single or paired figures that incorporate the landscape, merging and emerging from it.



Above Left: Janet Ruttenberg, *Rose Kadesky*, year unknown. Oil on canvas, framed dimensions 32 ¼" x 25 ¼".

Above Right: Janet Ruttenberg, *Max Robert Kadesky in "I" Sweater*, 1952. Oil on canvas, framed dimensions: approximately 30" x 25", collection of the artist.

The exhibition is accompanied by a special presentation of Janet's early works including portraits of her mother and father, Rose and Max Kadesky, and works by two of her Dubuque teachers, Dorothy Bechtel Rossiter (1913-2002) from the DUMA permanent collection and Sr. Mary James Ann Walsh BVM (1913-1980) from local collections at Clarke University and the Mount Carmel Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Janet took lessons from each artist as a child after school. Mary James taught in the Clarke Art Department from 1933-66. Rossiter was a master colorist and preferred watercolor because it allowed her to paint directly from her subject matter, out-of-doors. She once explained that she would often go back to some places in Dubuque over and over, drawn by contrasting shadows of light and dark as the light played off the scene – a practice that most certainly made a lasting impression on her young student.