

**For Immediate Release:
December 5, 2008**

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The Atwood Artists Group Presents Annual Show at Vermont Arts Exchange

Bennington and Manchester, Vt. — The Vermont Arts Exchange (VAE) presents “The Atwood Artists Group Annual Show,” opening with a reception in VAE’s Mill Gallery, in the Sage Street Mill, on Friday, December 12, from 4:30 to 6:30 pm.

This exhibit, presented in partnership with United Counseling Service of Bennington County (UCS), will be on view in the Mill Gallery through February.

The Atwood Artists are a group of about 15 adults who work weekly in VAE’s art studios through UCS’s day service program. Working alongside UCS and VAE staff, these participants have focused on group and individual artworks for more than three years in VAE’s studios — in doing so, these untrained artists have found their own individual style and manner of working that best suits their creative expression. Through support of initiatives such as the Atwood Artists Group, VAE continues its 16-year partnership with UCS, providing arts programming in the community.

“For people with developmental disabilities, communication difficulties can be especially frustrating,” said Robert Pini, UCS’s community relations director. “Making art helps satisfy the desire to communicate and share ideas. Creating art is always a wonderful, affirming, confidence-building form of expression — especially so for people whose other channels of communication and expression are not easy.”

“The artists exhibiting are all faced with various physical and mental challenges in their lives,” says VAE Artistic Director and teacher Matthew Perry. “Each week they gather with great enthusiasm to make art and the amount of work being produced is astonishing. They not only are producing, but several are expanding on their work and exploring different styles and mediums. For some of these artists who have been working in the studio for three years, they’ve established a particular trust and comfort level with their work, which results in incredible pieces.”

The work in this annual exhibit includes acrylic and oil pastel paintings, ceramics and watercolors. Accompanying the artworks are black-&-white photographs of the artists working by Bennington College student Tanya Schmid.

A concurrent exhibit in the Mill Gallery, “Ink, Paper, Press,” features the work of eight advanced printmaking students from Bennington College. Printmakers Dorothy Allen, Zoe Chevat, Drew Gold, Elizabeth Melsheimer, Andrew Murdoch, Margaret Rizzio, Selomé Samuel and Todd V.A. exhibit their recent works in monoprint, book art, intaglio, gravure, serigraphy and lithography through

February.

For more information about these exhibits, or events, classes and workshops at VAE, please call 802-442-5549 or visit www.vtartxchange.org. For information about United Counseling Service of Bennington County, please call 802-442-5491 or visit www.ucsvt.org.

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Photo by Tanya Schmid

Atwood Artists Group member Amie Murray works on a painting at Vermont Arts Exchange. The Atwood Artists Group exhibits its annual show at VAE, in partnership with United Counseling Service, opening with a reception in VAE's Mill Gallery on Friday, December 12, from 4:30 to 6:30 pm.

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