

Exhibition of 'Amazing Art' opens at Fosdick-Nelson Gallery

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Amazing Art: A Celebration of Consciousness, an exhibition of paintings and drawings by artists from the Northeast Center for Special Care, (NECSC) will be on view at the Fosdick-Nelson Gallery from Friday, Jan. 30, through Feb. 27. A reception, open to the public free-of-charge, will be held at 4:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 30, in the Gallery, located in Harder Hall on the Alfred University campus. The exhibition was curated by Bill Richards, founder of the art studio at the NECSC, Lake Katrine, NY. Amazing Art is comprised of 50 paintings and over 100 drawings, created by 35 artists who are current or former residents at The North East Center for Special Care, a state-of-the-art inpatient care facility designed to serve medically-complex and multiply-impaired individuals. The center offers a unique and extraordinary art program as therapy that promotes serious artistic involvement as a method of improving cognition and contributing to the restoration, to the extent possible, of lost functions. In this context, there exists an intense urgency to transform fragmentation into expressions of wholeness, resulting in the production of "amazing art," explains Sharon McConnell, director of the Fosdick-Nelson Gallery in the School of Art & Design at Alfred University. Richards describes his method of working with these individuals as "the art of necessity." Richards further explains his approach to using art as a tool for rehabilitation states, "Making art is perhaps as natural as learning to speak - I have never seen a child resist art material. Learning speech, the mother tongue, is a combination of self-teaching and the timely and rhythmic input from others." "This is how we approach art at NCSC, unlike the systematic paradigm utilized in traditional art therapy. There, art's function is to generate information about the patient's condition, whereas we view its function as process, a vehicle for invention and communication. Art making as process means accepting its propensity of being inherently continuous, always establishing conditions for its next evolution." In an article published in Art Education, Alice Wexler further describes the art-making process at the center as "not always a continuous movement upward, but a diagram of dips and detours as well as ascents - diagrams of their struggle to proceed in spite of the inevitable regression back to confusion and disorientation. Their artworks are pictures of people reclaiming their lives." Gallery hours are Mondays-Fridays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays, 1-3 p.m. The Gallery is closed on all University holidays. Additional information about the Fosdick-Nelson Gallery may be obtained by calling McConnell at 607 871 2149 or 607 871 2227, or e-mailing her at mcconnells@alfred.edu