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Bethlehem, NH

New WREN Exhibition Explores Abstract Painting and Modern Quilt-making

Opening Friday, May 5, *Echoes and Reflections*, the newest exhibition in the Gallery at WREN, examines the symmetries between abstract painting and modern quilting, such as bold color, asymmetry, and the use of negative space. On display are twelve paintings and the thirteen quiltworks they inspired.

“The first time I saw them, Jim Wolcott’s grid-based paintings looked like quilts to me,” explains Ruth Fischer, co-owner of Contoocook Quiltworks, “but with an unfamiliar use of color and fewer repeating patterns.”

Fischer, who had been visiting Wolcott’s studio, thought the combination of quilting and abstract painting would make a great exhibition. The idea blossomed into a working partnership in which Fischer borrowed Wolcott’s paintings to study their color and composition, and brainstorm possibilities for quilting. Like-minded painters and quilters joined in on the exchange, resulting in enough quilt “echoes” of paintings to fill the first iteration of *Echoes and Reflections*, hosted by Two Rivers Art Society in Contoocook in the spring of 2022.

“I find a collaborative approach to art very rewarding,” says Jim Wolcott, “both for the ultimate richness of the product and for the interpersonal feelings that the artists may experience – even if they don’t really know each other.”

Now at WREN, *Echoes and Reflections* features six New Hampshire artists, including painters Jim Wolcott and Pam Tarbell, and quilters Ruth Fischer, Hester Campbell, Diane Chartier, and Deborah Rivers.

“Jim, who has deep family roots in Bethlehem, visited WREN last summer and as we got to talking, he told us about this show he had recently been involved in,” says WREN Marketing & Programs Manager Scarlett Moberly. “Jim’s energy and enthusiasm about the project was contagious, and we realized the



WREN
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exhibition's premise fit perfectly with WREN's ethos of collaboration and innovation, and in its union of fine art and craft."

Echoes and Reflections is on view May 5 through June 25 in the Gallery at WREN. The opening reception will take place on Friday, May 5 from 5-7 PM. Meet the artists and mingle with the North Country arts community. All are welcome to attend!

The Gallery is open during WREN's regular hours, Monday-Saturday 10 AM-5 PM and Sunday 10 AM-4 PM. The Adair Country Inn & Restaurant is the proud sponsor of the Gallery at WREN.

About WREN

The Women's Rural Entrepreneurial Network (WREN) is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization in Bethlehem, NH. In addition to the Store and Gallery, WREN provides classes, workshops, community workspace, networking and events to support better lives and livelihoods through education, economic development, and community engagement in the North Country. WREN's programs are funded in part by grants from the NH CDFA CDBG Program, the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Granite State United Way, the NH Women's Foundation, and the NH State Council on the Arts Public Value Partnership Grant.