

2022

# ACTIVITIES AND IMPACTS

## River Gallery School of Art

### **Art engages us, brings joy and creates community.**

River Gallery School (RGS) aims to foster an inclusive art making community where people are able to realize their creative capabilities and express themselves fully. We do this by providing art making in our studios, online, and in partnership with local organizations and schools. To nurture every individual's unique expression, we offer instructional guidance, opportunities for exploration, and financial assistance. We have programs to support underserved parts of our community, such as BIPOC residents, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, seniors, and our homeless population, along with workshops and classes for children and adults that bring people together to forge relationships and experience the power of art to enhance their lives.



[rivergalleryschool.org](http://rivergalleryschool.org)

# COMMUNITY BUILDING THROUGH ART



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## Making art brings people together

so they can develop relationships that help make our community strong and resilient. Our studios, classes and workshops are welcoming places to be creative! In addition to our regularly scheduled offerings, we have classes and workshops designed to support different parts of our community, along with events and art making open to everyone, such as Exploring World Cultures through Art events, public painting in local parks, Brattleboro's monthly Gallery Walk, kids fairs and other community events.



To further support an inclusive creative community, we have a generous scholarship program that allows people who may not otherwise financially be able to participate in our in-studio classes to enjoy the benefits of creative expression. In 2022, 51% of children and 46% of adults participating in our offerings are receiving scholarships, ranging from 20% to 100% of tuition.

Some of our community building events in 2022:

- Holi Festival Celebration
- Public Art Making
- BIPOC Creative Community
- Ability Arts programming
- Art at the RiverFest
- Kids Fair on the Brattleboro Common
- Artmaking at BMAC's 50th Anniversary Celebration



*Thanks to the River Gallery School, 5 young people from two Afghan families supported by my Rotary Club found their world brightened this past summer. They had only been in the States for a few months when school was out for the summer, and they expected nothing. Instead, RGS opened their doors, offered incredibly generous scholarships and spun their magic, engaging these students in art projects for weeks. What began as a dull summer in isolation ended with creativity unleashed.*

-Rob Szpila



# HELPING PEOPLE MEET THEIR CREATIVE CAPABILITIES



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**Everyone can benefit from art making and creative expression.**

Making art fosters essential life skills, such as self confidence, innovative thinking and problem solving. RGS is committed to fostering a fully inclusive art making community through our offerings, whether in our studios or elsewhere in the area. Our approach is to nurture every individual's exploration of their creativity, offering support and guidance while allowing people to discover and experiment. Our programs are welcoming and free from judgment. We encourage everyone to follow their curiosity and inspiration, developing new ways of seeing and considering the world around us, and bringing those observations into their art making.



*Coming to RGS has helped me through difficult times in my life - it's been my way of finding hope. The teachers are fantastic, and bring different skills and perspectives to each class. The spirit of this school is amazing. It's all about expression and finding your passion. I always try to give to RGS so they can support people from all parts of the community, because art is healing for everybody.*

-Lori Schreiner



Painting by Lori Schreiner

# MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE



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**We realize that every person and every family has their own story.**

While we offer generous scholarships to help people attend our programs, this is not enough to reach our vision of an inclusive creative community. There are people who can't get to the school, like those with transportation, childcare, mobility or simply scheduling challenges. Our outreach programs are a really important way for us to help ensure that everyone has access to the benefits of artmaking. We partner with other fantastic local arts organizations, such as HatchSpace and the Brattleboro Museum and Arts Center, for collaborative programming. Our Art in Schools program brings special artmaking experiences to local elementary, middle and high schools. We work with local service organizations, like the Boys and Girls Club, The Root Social Justice Center, Families First, and Groundworks Collaborative, to develop offerings for the people they work with. RGS also works with businesses and organizations to bring creative team building elements to retreats, meetings, and in-service trainings, and with senior living communities to offer artmaking onsite.



# SUPPORTING THE ARTS LOCALLY





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## Greater Brattleboro is rich in the Arts.

We are fortunate to have so many artists in our area, working in such an array of genres, materials and mediums. RGS sees support of local artists as part of our mission. Many people who make art here sell their work locally, through shows or online. RGS operates Gallery 34, a small community gallery on Main Street, where a different local artist or group of artists show their work each month. This year's shows featured a huge variety of subjects and themes in oil and acrylic, pastel, cut paper, fabric, multimedia, collage, walnut ink, and charcoal. It's always a treat to see what's going on in the gallery!



Painting by Leigh Niland

*Like many people, I am dismayed by images of war and its effect on people. A few years ago, I decided that I needed to do something, even if it was a small gesture. Art can have such a strong impact, so I decided to have a show of my paintings. I worked for two years to paint portraits of people touched by war. I was really shy about my art being seen publicly, but I needed to give something of myself to people who are struggling, with proceeds going to relief organizations. When I hung the show, I was thinking, "What am I doing here? Only real artists have shows!" But then people showed up and reacted to the portraits. And my art sold. I never would have had a show, or even thought of myself as an artist, if it wasn't for the encouragement and reassurance of the teachers and people at RGS.*

-Carol Boyes



Portrait by Carol Boyes

# RGS FINANCIALS FY2021

