

NORTH FOURTH ART CENTER

VSA arts of New Mexico

4904 Fourth Street NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107
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NM Relay for the Hearing Impaired
1.800.659.8331

www.vsartsnm.org

mission

North Fourth Art Center nurtures and celebrates the creative spirit of people of all abilities through education, outreach, exhibits and performances.

North Fourth Art Center is operated by VSA arts of New Mexico, a member of the national VSA arts network affiliated with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.



Flower by Adam Smith

CONTENTS

- north fourth performing arts.... 2
- north fourth visual arts..... 3
- arts outreach statewide..... 4
- statewide opportunities..... 5
- news & newsmakers..... 6
- community report..... 7
- thank you..... 7
- be a visionary!..... 8



Left to right: Colbert by Marc Frye; AXIS Dance Company; Painted Chair by Paula James, Pat Hall, Orlando Najjar; photo by Sue Hermes

2003: Becoming the North Fourth Art Center

by Marjorie Neset
Executive Director

The metamorphosis is underway... VSA arts of New Mexico is evolving into an Art Center... the North Fourth Art Center! Outwardly, our building at 4904 Fourth NW, just north of Fourth and Griegos, doesn't look any different (although it will in the spring!); internally major change is underway.

The managing organization is still VSA arts of New Mexico; the building and programs comprise the North Fourth Art Center. The initial concept was announced in last fall's newsletter; that concept has taken shape and grown to meet the needs of those we primarily serve, people with disabilities.

The BIG news! VSA arts' North Fourth Art Center is preparing to claim title as the ONLY contemporary art center in the U.S. with a focus on creative learning, exhibiting and presenting opportunities for people with disabilities. The ONLY contemporary art center that is absolutely dedicated to inclusivity, where artists unique in ability and disability interact in programs of artistic excellence and social significance. The ONLY contemporary art center in Albuquerque's North Valley!

The North Fourth Art Center has four complementary components: Education, Outreach, Visual Arts and Performing Arts. Together they meet the artistic objectives of students, artists and audiences who sometimes have a difficult time finding creative access in other programs. The educational and outreach components include VSA's excellent

and established studio arts program, school residencies, the newly established neighborhood classroom, and a vigorous new statewide outreach program. All of these programs are described in more detail on pages 2 to 5.

The performing and visual arts programs described on page 2 and 3 will have a brand new home—half of our building at 4904 Fourth NW will be transformed into a "bona fide" ART CENTER with a performing arts theatre, gallery and coffeehouse. Where community meets creativity. Where artistic courage overcomes physical and mental challenges. Where adventures of the spirit transform ordinary journeys into extraordinary adventures.

The North Fourth Art Center is taking shape. Too slowly, of course, for those of us who eagerly await the first major art opening; the first time the lights dim, the music swells, and actors, dancers, and musicians fill the NorthSide Theatre stage; the first coffee and brownie sliding across the coffeehouse counter.

Architect Jonathan Craig (Kells and Craig, Architects); access advisor and architect Rebecca Ingram, and theatrical lighting and stage designer Ian Rosenkrantz are now in initial redesign of VSA NM's existing North Fourth Art Center building. An enthusiastic staff with a plethora of ideas for a fascinating array of visual, literary and performing arts activities are in the midst of planning what happens after the architects and contractors have completed their jobs.

The renovation will take place in three phases. The funding is in place for Phase I to create the essential space and basic infrastructure for a versatile 160 seat theatre. Phase II will see the gallery space renovations completed, along with classrooms and other multi-use areas, including an upgraded lunchroom/coffeehouse and the installation of basic theatre equipment. Finally, Phase III will equip the theatre with state-of-the-art lighting and sound equipment.

Phase I will be completed by the summer of 2004; Phases II and III are dependent on additional fundraising efforts—and successful results.

We need your help. Our fundraising campaign is just getting started. You can call us with your pledge or contribution (505/345-2872), or use the form on page 8 and mail it. Either way we are most appreciative. Become part of the vision.



Snail by Linda Plageman

"...dedicated to inclusivity, where artists unique in ability and disability interact in programs of artistic excellence and social significance."



2 north fourth performing arts expanding

● Performing Arts Studio Program

by Catherine James

It's been an exciting year for the Performing Arts Program at VSA's North Fourth Art Center. The addition of new dance teachers recruited to the VSA AmeriCorps Team meant that a variety of movement classes were offered within the Studio Arts Program for the first time. Classes in social dancing refined skills for all participants and were great fun. Movement classes were given for those in need of greater physical supports and an advanced dance class worked on choreographed pieces, movin' and groovin' to favorite songs like *La Bamba* and *All Shook Up*.

The Studio Arts performing arts "season" culminated with a multi-media extravaganza entitled *Viva Las Albuquerque*, a musical set in a New Mexican version of Las Vegas, Nevada. Dance, theater and visual arts classes



collaborated on the production, which was created by apprentice artists. A "standing room only" audience was treated to an interactive journey through a variety of settings such as "Club VSA" and the "Nacho Lounge" to fully experience the double-dealings of *Mama Sass*

and the lovesick wishes of *Diamond Pearly*. With an enthusiastic cast of over twenty apprentice artists, staff and guest performers, it is very likely that mounting a musical production will become an annual event.

Theater classes were more challenging this year to meet greater expectations and levels of skill demonstrated by participants. A new class offering called *Shakespeare Study* met with success when the group explored its inaugural play and went on to complete four more within the year; the most popular being *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The advanced acting class worked on development of their vocal capabilities, using the same exercises recommended by the Royal

Shakespeare Company voice coach (Ed. Note—led in the authentic British accent of the Performing Arts Studio Director). Group members then took this experimentation and applied it to text work that included both plays and poetry.

The video class made several movies, including a detective film, a murder mystery and a western. The class had great fun concocting storylines, making backdrops and props and finally committing their ideas to video. The current blockbuster in production is a science fiction movie set in 4089 AD, involving the introduction of an alien race and requiring subtitles in order for the aliens to be understood. Stay tuned for the sequel.

● Buen Viaje Dance Company

by Susanna Kearny and Sarah Bennett

Buen Viaje means 'good journey' in Spanish. Since 1984, *Buen Viaje* Dancers have shared a good journey with local, national and international audiences by performing original choreography, facilitating residencies for area schools and presenting workshops for people of all ages and abilities throughout New Mexico.



This year the *Buen Viaje* Dance Company is increasing momentum. More performances, more company members, more "diversibilities." Sarah Elizabeth Bennett, *Buen Viaje's* Company manager hopes to start a mixed ability dance program for children, with the dream of growing it to become a junior company.

Buen Viaje has refocused as a dance company. This year the dancers will be exploring their abilities to the fullest, trying new ideas in everything from props to partnering. The company is excited and looking forward to working with *AXIS* Dance Company (Oakland) and with *Homer Avila* (New York City). The artists will come to Albuquerque in 2004 to perform in the community and conduct workshops as artist-in-residents at the North Fourth Art Center.

The immediate goal for *Buen Viaje* is to be ready when the curtain goes up at the *NorthSide Theatre*. The long range goal is to produce an annual "season" at the theatre and to expand community outreach.

● Equilibrium Theatre Company



An Actor's View

by Marc Frye, apprentice artist

I remember the day that they put me in the drama class. At first we didn't have a name so *Ralph Pacheco* gave us a name for us to use. We came up with some names and then we voted on one, that is *Equilibrium*. So everyone liked that name very much. Also *Cathy James* picked the ones who would be in the drama class.

After that we started to write about having a disability because I went to school I did not have friends. Well again, some people thought that I couldn't do anything at all, they were very wrong about that. On Thursdays we have the drama class and we wrote a play about having a disability. The other people in the drama class also had things said to them. So I was not the only one, the others went through it too. Like calling names and not having service when you are in a wheelchair, that is not right at all. They were picked on by others who didn't like them because they have a disability. Everybody has a label on them in the play because that's all people think that we are.

We rehearse once a week and first we read the script then we do the play. We go over it a couple of times. I had to memorize my lines, I practiced at home in the evening. I would get the book out and study my lines. We have been working on it, I'm not sure how long! It's been a long time. Over a year. Sometimes *Cathy* gets after everybody if they don't know their lines or their cues!

Back in the summer; July 18, we did the first performance. Everyone came to see us. *Jill* and *Sarah* and *Deborah Mashibini*. The audience liked the play, everybody stood up and clapped. I felt good because at the end we all got a flower.

The theater has made me look at myself in a different way. I mean we have a disability but we can do anything. I feel more confident now than I did before. We are teaching others, people that don't have disabilities. We are teaching them what it is like for us.

A New Company at North Fourth

by Catherine James

There's no stopping *Equilibrium*, VSA's new resident theater company. Moving on from their first performances last summer, the company was invited by *Santa Fe Presbytery* to perform at a *Ghost Ranch* gathering last fall. And thanks to funding by VSA arts national, the company was able to develop a workshop series on disability culture for middle and high schoolers. The series ranged from a six-week project for *Freedom High School* students to a single performance and workshop for the *CESS* Program, a transitional program for APS students with disabilities.

Wherever *Equilibrium* performed, the outcome was the same—standing ovations and a barrage of questions for the actors who developed and wrote the play they performed, entitled *Now I Was Different*, as a means of expressing the frustrations involved in growing up with a developmental disability. *Equilibrium Theatre Company* is currently developing a follow-up show with the working title *Circus Perfecto*. Prospective partners for the coming academic year include *Manzano* and *La Cueva* high schools.



AXIS Dance Company

Visual Arts Studio Program

by Sue Hermes

There's always something exciting going on in the Visual Arts Studio Program. Classes continue to attract new students and new classes rapidly become popular! There's always a different medium, a novel teaching method, an innovative community project—creating new challenges for students and staff alike. VSA apprentice artists look forward to new schedules and new class offerings, some enjoying the new and different; others sticking to favorite classes they know and love. Everyone seems to have a favorite teacher, medium, style, class, and/or studio but the overall diversity is what really makes the studio visual arts program the inviting learning opportunity it is.



This rich mixed bag of possibilities is offered in a familiar people-friendly setting, letting apprentice artists find pleasure in friends, concentrate on learning new skills and just being their creative selves. Their imagination and enthusiasm is remarkable to see. It is the studio staff that makes all of this possible; without them the program would not exist.

Some classes, such as clay, painting, and printmaking (monoprints) are offered every class block. Several different teachers lead these classes, offering variety and different perspectives for the apprentice artists. There is a sculpture class, often papier mache as the medium, or assemblages of recycled or reused materials. Quilting is another popular class that fills up quickly. Joan Clawson teaches this class, and the quilts are made almost entirely by hand. This year, three apprentice artists entered their quilts in the state fair, and one of them, Christina Caraveo, earned a second place ribbon. Other fabric art items, such as felt hats, tie-dyed scarves, card woven bags, to name just a few, are popular products in the gallery and at arts and crafts fairs.

Another class offered each block is Sam Bautista's Native American class. It can be a very important class for the Native American apprentice artists who may be isolated from their community and culture. Sam takes this class on outings to feast days at local pueblos, Indian dances, and the Gathering of Nations Pow Wow. There are always some honorary "Natives" in Sam's class, and they benefit as much if not more from this wonderful class. Another artist/teacher, Tony Fragua, teaches many of the core classes. He is well versed in clay, painting, and printmaking. Tony is a strong teacher who challenges his students to do

better, and many apprentice artists flourish with this encouragement.

Some classes are offered more than once, but do not appear on the schedule every block. Among these are crafts and collage, pastels, paper-making, and art history. Advanced classes, such as a silkscreen class, are offered as often as possible. We are lucky to have Deborah Jojola teaching this class, and the results are always amazing, multi-colored prints. Deborah designed and implemented a new Painting and Movement class earlier this year. This was a small, intensive class for six Apprentice artists in wheelchairs. The class worked collaboratively on large canvas placed on the floor. Adaptive tools were used to apply and manipulate paint as the artists moved around and sometimes over the paint surface. Deborah incorporated movement to loosen the artists up and exercise to warm up muscles. The artists learned to work in a group and share ideas.

Other classes were equally exciting. Wendy Zollinger and Susan Buckley teamed up to co-teach a portrait class that yielded incredible drawings and paintings of the human form. Mixed into their class was a fine blend of art history, examples of their own work, and instruction on ways to draw faces. They are continuing in the collaborative vein, and are currently co-teaching an art exploration class.



Last, but certainly not least, the Multi-Sensory Studio is led by Anna Zollinger, with assistance from Emily Marshall. Both Anna and Emily have worked in the Open Studio with their class to make gift wrap, another product line sold through the gallery and the outside venues. Emily facilitated a great class for the current block, designing and making the VSA arts of New Mexico float for the 2003 State Fair Parade. To everyone's delight the float took third place in the adult non-profit/organizational category. This will be the second anniversary of VSA NM's participation in the state fair parade, and for some, the excitement has been building since last year's parade.

These visual arts classes and offshoots of other ideas, old and new, will continue to fuel creativity in studio arts programming. Creating art is such a magic way to spend one's day, and staff is committed to continue to create a rich menu of offerings to those attending the Visual Arts Program at VSA's North Fourth Art Center.



Sculpting Change along North Fourth

by Cassandra Reid

Over the past year I've had the pleasure of working with the apprentice artists and staff of VSA arts of New Mexico on a project that is funded by the City of Albuquerque's Urban Enhancement Trust Fund. The tile sculpture project will be installed along Fourth Street in front of VSA's North Fourth Art Center.

In the fall of 2002, I met with apprentice artists and artists-teachers in all of the many studio arts classes and solicited their input on design ideas to make preliminary sketches for the sculpture. The final design incorporates two large gateways connected by a low wall. The gateways will be completely covered with handmade tiles created by apprentice artists and staff at the North Fourth Art Center. The images on the gateways weave together ancient and modern imagery from Native American Hispanic, European, and Middle Eastern traditions.

Throughout last winter and spring, I worked with apprentice artists from Deborah Jojola's and Tony Fragua's clay classes, along with Sam Bautista's Native American class, to create over eight thousand tiles for the sculpture. Using

modeling, stencils, stamps, drawing and other techniques, the apprentice artists worked long and hard to cut every tile from wet clay. They made tiles that look like they stones of Chaco Canyon, adobe bricks, large flowers, Islamic patterns, and Pueblo pottery. They then painted the tiles with glazes to give them color. Other classes and additional staff members added to the project by cutting their own tiles. The tiles are scheduled to be installed in the spring of 2004.

In the meantime Karen Dunning of the City's Department of Family and Community Services has been guide, supporter and generally all around "superhero" making the project happen. Through State funding sponsored by Senator Dede Feldman for Fourth Street improvements, a landscaping design will be implemented in conjunction with the tile sculpture. The walls and gateway will be beautifully landscaped, enhancing a tile sculpture that is sure to make the North Fourth Art Center an outstanding example of Fourth Street revitalization.

PHOTOS left to right: apprentice artist Joseph Tenorio; Bill Zimmer, Laurence Wellborn, and Carolina Yahne at North Fourth art opening; Cassandra Reid making tiles with North Fourth Staff.

"It is the studio staff that makes all of this possible; without them the program would not exist."





Sabine Becker & Special Feet Studio Move to Northern New Mexico

by Deborah Mashibini

Sabine Becker's introduction to New Mexico came through the novels of Tony Hillerman and the music of Robert Mirabal. That led to a curiosity that became conviction about her destiny when she visited the state, first on vacation, and then to present as a speaker through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in Jemez Pueblo. When her son graduated from high school in the spring of 2003, she made her move from Alaska and now Sabine and her Special Feet Studio call northern New Mexico home.

Sabine, who was named Alaskan of the Year by the State of Alaska Governor's Committee on Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities in 2001, is an experienced presenter as well as an artist. She was born in Berlin, West Germany, on January 11, 1962, as one of the last "Thalidomide Babies" whose mothers took the drug Thalidomide during early stages of pregnancy. "I was born with abbreviated arms," says Sabine, "but I learned from a very early age to compensate by using my feet for daily tasks."

Sabine's work as an artist, social worker, educator, and presenter has taken her to France, Somalia, Ethiopia, Switzerland, Canada, and then Alaska, where she became a citizen

of the United States. Her portfolio abounds with accolades from her many presentations, including international conferences and classrooms with children as young as five.

About her work as an artist, Sabine says, "Following a creative urge and the need to survive, I went into the arts. Inspired by Southwestern Native American art and Alaskan Native art, I created my own version of the "Spirit Dancer." Sewn from leather, they are decorated with small necklaces, dresses and feathers. I craft their "Spirit Mask" from moose or caribou antler."

Today, much of Sabine's energy goes into advocating disability awareness and independent living. Her goals are "very definitely to establish my artwork and myself as a motivational speaker—those are my two main goals right now." Sabine particularly enjoys speaking in schools, sharing with children how she uses her feet. Her primary message is strong and clear, "You can make something of yourself if you just persevere and have the right attitude."

Sabine can be contacted in her northern New Mexico studio at (505) 776-2082 or visit her web site at www.sabinebecker.com



Photos of Sabine and her work by Pat Berrett

Santa Fe Artist Joins National Initiative to Honor Blues Legends

by Deborah Mashibini

When the U.S. Senate designated 2003 the "Year of the Blues," the resolution read, in part, "Blues music is the most influential form of American roots music, with its impact heard around the world in rock and roll, jazz, rhythm and blues, country, and even classical music." The Senate resolution further acknowledged the blues as "a national historic treasure, which needs to be preserved, studied, and documented for future generations." Santa Fe artist Sharon McConnell's LIFECAST Blues project is doing just that. Robert Lockwood Jr., Pinetop Perkins, Little Milton, and Coco Taylor are just some of the Mississippi Delta blues legends whose images have been immortalized by LIFECAST Blues.

"I love the blues," Sharon said during a recent interview, "I wanted to get closer to the artists, to see them, to know about their lives. I wanted to touch their faces, to see what they look like. It's really as simple as that." With support from friends, the New Mexico Commission for the Blind, and the Delta Blues Museum, Ms. McConnell has traveled to Chicago, Seattle, and throughout Mississippi creating plaster portraits of some of the greatest living musical legends of our times.

The journey that led Sharon to Santa Fe and this project began with a visit in Maine, where she had returned to reconcile herself to the fact that she was becoming blind.

"I was pretty tragic then. Working on my early demise, you know, in a very depressive state. I knew I had to re-engineer or redesign myself but I was stuck. A friend of a friend came to visit. He was a sculptor and he brought this big old blob of clay and some tools and a stand, and he set it up. I thought, Oh geez, you know, here's another person trying to fix me... Then I just put my hands in the clay and I put on Mozart. Several hours later Mozart was still playing over and over, and if I looked out the window I could see only a blur, this bright blur of color going back and forth dancing in the waves. It was a friend of a friend wind surfing.

"I was working on what turned out to be a self-portrait. Feeling my face and trying to put that into the clay. I was so pleased with myself. I had to show everyone—my family, whoever walked in the door. I had just done something beyond my disability that had consumed me. 'You must see this! You must see what I've done!'

"I was really living with a lot of fear and panic. How will I be able to support myself? What will I do? What is my passion? I was seeking something I was excited about. There was really something there, something in my enthusiasm. It was hard to deny. Going through volumes of occupational handbooks I was connecting with nothing. So when this friend of a friend brought me the clay he brought me such a gift. I have never seen him again, but we are in touch. Every time I speak with him I tell him it was just such a gift. It really was.



"It's an odyssey—my journey, from Kennebunkport, Maine, where I had experienced that moment with the clay, to the LIFECAST Blues project. So much in between. When I came to Santa Fe, I completed eight lifesize cast sculpture for my Stripped Naked series. That was my first show on Canyon Road and it got lots of attention in the press.

"The Blues project, which has become my life over the past year, is teaching me about life and rhythm, how things are—no pun intended. You know, rhythm. The rhythm of this project is connecting me with my own rhythm and it's also teaching me more about humility. All of the musicians I have visited with and I have met so impressed me with their humility and their authenticity. They are so real—and they're entrusting me with their images—without even knowing me. It's a heart connection, you know, I'll meet with a musician and visit a little, meet their family sometimes. And all of a sudden it just starts—it's this creative... there's this communication... like a soul-scape. It's like they're offering just a little bit of their soul to these portraits."

In October Ms. McConnell makes another return trip to Mississippi for the filming of Journey to Clarksdale. "It's going to be a big thrill to be part of this project. Morgan Freeman is executive producer and many exciting dynamic creative people are involved. They're going to be filming nine bands a day for ten days. They've included the portraits because this project was inspired by the blues. They'll film an artist being cast. They might film a blind artist feeling the faces of the portraits of his contemporaries that he's never seen before. Then there will be a reception where all of the musicians that I have cast will be in the room with their portraits. I'm imagining a gallery opening full of musicians and their portraits and how honored they will feel. Hopefully we'll connect with some people during that time that will help bring this project forward, to really present it to the public. That's the next step. Selling an edition—whether it be to a museum in this country or outside this country—and making sure that they start getting out there. That's what this project needs now."

Sharon's work, including LIFECAST Blues, can be viewed on her web site at www.sharonmcconnell.net

"The rhythm of this project is connecting me with my own rhythm and it's also teaching me more about humility."

Opportunities in Visual, Performing & Literary Arts

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS FOR ARTISTS AT NORTH FOURTH ART CENTER

Developing an Artist Statement

Charmaine Brown, recent recipient of a grant from the Christopher Reeve Foundation, is a respected Albuquerque artist whose work has been recognized both locally and internationally. This professional development workshop will take place over two Saturday sessions, October 11 and October 18, 2003, 10am–Noon. Participating artists will be shown samples of artist statements and receive guidance in developing their own statements. The workshop is free to New Mexico artists with disabilities (Others welcome for \$5 fee.) Registration is limited to ten participants.

Access and the Performing Arts

Celia Hughes, Executive Director of VSA arts of Texas and Director of Actual Lives Performance Project, will join performing artists from the North Fourth Art Center to present an *Access and the Arts* Workshop for teachers, artists, arts administrators, family members and others. The workshop is free. Participants will learn about access issues and model programs developed in Texas and New Mexico to present the performing arts, and artists with disabilities, to diverse audiences. The workshop will take place on Friday, October 24, 2pm – 5pm.

Taking Slides of Visual Artwork

Well known professional photographer Pat Berrett's workshops for Magnifico and the Albuquerque Arts Alliance have received rave reviews. His upcoming Taking Slides of 2-Dimensional Work will be held on Saturday, November 1, 10 am – 12 noon; followed by Taking Slides of 3-Dimensional Work to take place on Saturday, November 8, 10 am – 12 noon. The workshops are free to New Mexico artists with disabilities. (Others welcome at \$5.00 per session.)

For more information on workshops, contact Deborah Mashibini at (505) 345-2872, ext. 18 or e-mail info@vsartsm.org.



ART EXHIBIT

Exhibit to Showcase Artwork by Artists with Disabilities

The Independent Living Resource Center (ILRC) will again be showcasing the work of artist with disabilities. The juried exhibition will open at the ILRC office in Albuquerque on October 1, 2003, and run through January 1, 2004. For more information call Carla Baron (505) 266-5022.



CALLS FOR ARTISTS & POETS

All as One, Poetry by & for New Mexicans

Poets from throughout the state are invited to submit work for this collaborative publication featuring work by poets with and without disabilities. All as One is being produced in celebration of National Poetry Month in April 2004. This effort is a collaboration between two arts organizations, Harwood Art Center and VSA arts of New Mexico—both art centers include literary programs and have a history of literary publications. Harwood Art Center's *Harwood Review* has become a respected literary publication, presenting the work of some of New Mexico's most renowned poets. VSA NM's *The Enabled Writer* (six editions) and a *Best Of The Enabled Writer* features the work of professional and emerging New Mexico writers with disabilities. The upcoming collaborative publication will be available for distribution in April 2004. Open to all New Mexico poets. Submission deadline, January 31, 2004. For guidelines and a submission form contact Harwood Art Center (505) 242-6367 or VSA's North Fourth Art Center (505) 345-2872. Information is also available on the VSA arts of New Mexico web site at www.vsartsm.org.

Performing Arts Event: Celebrating Access & the Arts

Currently being planned for February 2004. Coordinators Larry Lorenzo and Deborah Mashibini are interested in hearing from New Mexico musicians, poets, comedians, etc., with disabilities interested in presenting their work. For information call Larry at (505) 980-2286.

Exhibit of New Mexico Artists: Celebrating Access and the Arts

A juried exhibit featuring the work of artists with disabilities from around the state is scheduled to tour in 2004, opening in Las Cruces and traveling to Silver City, Gallup, Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Submissions are invited from professional and emerging artists with disabilities from throughout the state. A distinguished jury of New Mexico artists headed by Albuquerque's Frank McCulloch will select the work to be on exhibit through the spring of 2004. Prospectus available in early November. Submission deadline: January 31, 2004. For a copy of the prospectus or other information contact VSA's North Fourth Art Center at (505) 345-2872, ext. 18 or email info@vsartsm.org.

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES

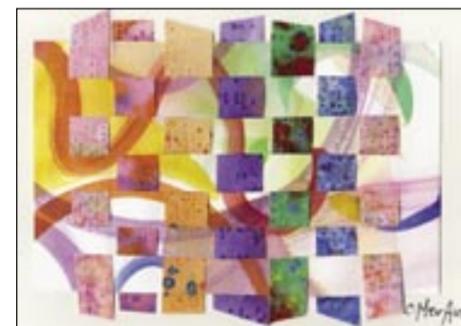
VSA New Mexico Artist Registry

VSA's North Fourth Art Center is developing a registry of New Mexico artists with disabilities. This Registry will be used to connect artists with professional development, presentation and exhibit opportunities. All artists on the Registry are invited to submit information about themselves to be posted on the VSA arts of New Mexico Artists Gallery web page. There is no charge for posting artistic and biographical statements, visual or written work samples, as well as direct contact information or links to existing artist web sites. For more information or to request an application form, contact Deborah Mashibini at (505) 345-2872, ext. 18 or e-mail info@vsartsm.org.



Hands On Community Art Studio

In Santa Fe, the Hands On Community Art Studio offers free art-making opportunities in a safe, alcohol-free, drug-free space dedicated to creative exploration. The Studio's goal is to bring a broad spectrum of the community together to develop mutually supportive relationships while engaged in creative work. Everyone is welcome to Hands On's open studio sessions. A class designed specifically for participants with disabilities is now offered each week. Call (505) 955-9768 for a schedule and details.



VSA Expands Arts Education Opportunities in Northern New Mexico

Deborah Brink, glass artist and former Studio Coordinator for Challenge New Mexico, is collaborating with VSA arts of New Mexico to offer arts opportunities for people with disabilities in the northern part of the state. With support and space provided by the Hands On Community Art Studio, a series of weekly classes for adults with disabilities is now being offered every Monday through December. VSA NM and Hands On are exploring collaborative funding to extend and possibly expand these classes. Plans are also in the works to provide classes in Los Alamos in conjunction with the Fuller Lodge Art Center.

In 2004, Deborah Brink is scheduled to conduct a VSA Artist In Residence Program with students in the Santa Fe Public Schools. Deborah is enthusiastic about expanding arts opportunities for children and adults throughout the northern part of the state. For more information or to find out how you can get involved contact Deborah Brink at (505) 982-4514.



The North Fourth Art Center is located at 4904 4th St. NW just north of 4th & Griegos. Info/reservations: call (505) 345-2872 or e-mail info@vsartsm.org.

PHOTOS left to right, top to bottom: *Untitled* by Janis Sedillo; *Jack Card* by Charmaine Brown; *Tea with the Cat* by Wendy Zollinger; *Horses* by Adam Smith; *By the Patio* by Wendy Zollinger; *Untitled* by Callian Meran; *Red Lotus* by Callian Meran

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Dawn Gillreath, Derrick Wanoskia, & Sam Bautista

New Grants Support Outreach

New Mexico Arts, a Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, has awarded an Arts in Social Services grant for \$7,639 to VSA arts of New Mexico, supporting follow-up services and events to the September 2002 Statewide Forum, Careers By Design: People With Disabilities Achieving in the Arts. The grant will provide professional development and presentation opportunities for visual and performing artists with disabilities. For information and a schedule of events see the "Opportunities" column on page 5 or call VSA's North Fourth Art Center at (505) 345-2872, ext 18.

VSA arts of New Mexico has also received a \$3,000 grant from the Albuquerque Community

Foundation to support VSA's 2003-04 School Residency Program. This unique program involves VSA AmeriCorps members with and without disabilities who serve as artists-in-residence in several Albuquerque schools. The residency program provides dance instruction that builds skills in the performing arts while raising awareness about disability issues.

Residencies for the coming year include Cochiti Elementary, Albuquerque Public Schools' C-TAP program, involving young adults with disabilities and DLD Sycamore, a school for children with learning disabilities. VSA arts of New Mexico has been presenting and facilitating school residency programs since the early 1980s.

Board News is Good News

by Marjorie Neset

Our wonderful Board of Directors has provided valuable support, guidance and lots of plain old hard work this past year. There have been changes, too. Winthrop (Win) Quigley stepped down after more than six years of service and it will be hard to replace him...the work at openings, at Opening Doors and continuing

with the contributions AND that wry sense of humor. Thanks for all of your work for VSA, Win.

Some pretty amazing new members have joined the board: Frank McCulloch, painter; teacher (retired) and musician (one could describe Frank as the "grand young man" of New Mexico arts); and Stephen Slusher, attorney (Peacock, Myers & Adams, PC), theater aficionado and involved community member.

Continuing to serve with distinction and enthusiasm: Orlando (Orlie) Sedillo; our new Board President, Robert Gutierrez, our new VP; Janet Saiers, Secretary; Katherine Rowe, Treasurer; along with Rebecca duMond, Bill Evans, William (Bill) Johnson, Richard Towne, Michelle Welby, Anna Marie Ulibarri, and last, but definitely not least, past President Rebecca Plutino, who has served VSA arts of New Mexico loyally, energetically and cheerfully for over five years. Concha Ortiz y Pino de Kleven, Emeritus/ex officio of VSA NM Board, has moved to Santa Fe and we wish her the best in the City Different.



Concha Ortiz y Pino de Kleven and VSA AmeriCorps members at 2002 Opening Doors

**The NEWS about the NEWS:
www.vsartsnm.org**

North Fourth Art Center Friends, Family, Patrons and Interested Community Members will soon be able to receive all of the North Fourth news, views and opportunities via email. We have subscribed to a service called PatronMail, a national arts service/technology organization which will enable us to send out regular newsletter updates, colorful and informative marketing flyers, and important announcements about our client services and our many arts programs on a regular basis.

We are all very tired of junk mail—and at the same time we all want to distribute and to receive our news and information as quickly

and inexpensively as possible. PatronMail is the answer for us—and it will be for you, our North Fourth Friends.

PatronMail SERVICE WILL BE FULLY IMPLEMENTED BY JANUARY, 2004. In the meantime, please sign up on our web site www.vsartsnm.org or e-mail us at info@vsartsnm.org.

PLEASE BE ASSURED, OUR EMAIL LIST WILL NOT BE USED FOR SOLICITATION PURPOSES, OR SHARED WITH ANY INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANIZATION WITHOUT YOUR EXPRESS PERMISSION.

Newsmakers

Float Wins Third Place at State Fair: The Route 66 theme decorations and colorful outfits on VSA NM's float earned VSA arts of New Mexico third place in the 2003 State Fair parade for the adult non-profit organizational category. The apprentice artists in the Multi-Sensory Studio and their teacher **Emily Marshall** were very excited to win the award. The quilt work of four apprentice artists from **Joan Clawson's** quilting class were also entries at the fair, with apprentice artist **Christina Caraveo's** baby quilt taking second place. Congratulations to all for these great community projects!

Model Program: Deputy Director **Deborah Mashibini** and Visual Studio Arts Program Director **Sue Hermes** were invited to Waikiki as consultants for VSA arts of Hawaii on setting up their studio art program. VSA arts national office in Washington D.C. recommended their affiliate in New Mexico as a model studio arts program for people with disabilities.

Native American Notables: Artist/ teacher **Deborah Jojola** was guest teacher at the Denver Art Museum for the Native American Youth Outreach Program's Denver Summer Art Institute. Deborah received a third place ribbon in the 82nd annual SWAIA Indian Market for her intaglio print. Artist/Teacher **Samuel Bautista** was invited to talk a on KUNM's nationally broadcast show, Native American Calling, about his Native American class at VSA's North Fourth Art Center and his perspective on the healing power of art.

People's Choice Award: A star spangled entry in Dinosaur Stompede™ was a winner for artist/ teacher **Susan Buckrey**, whose painted Pentaceratops won the prize in the New Mexico Museum of Natural History Foundation fundraiser.

Internships: UNM Occupational Therapy Program graduate student **Rebecca Starrett** finished her clinical internship at VSA arts of New Mexico, a UNM HSC field work site since 1999. A new educational collaboration is underway at VSA with the Masters level Social Work Program of New Mexico Highlands University. **Jodie Perez** and **Jim Hobson** will complete their internships in May 2004. UNM Fine Arts student **Annie King** joined the Visual Arts Program all summer as a full-time volunteer.

AmeriCorps Mentors & Members: **Angeler Tripajayakorn**, **Rebecca Salazar**, **Corinne Schuman**, **Pat Hall**, **Joseph Tenorio**, **Cari Carlston** and **Casey Ferguson** all successfully completed their full year as VSA AmeriCorps program mentors, a component that will not be continued this year because of AmeriCorps funding cuts. North Fourth welcomes new AmeriCorps members **Molly Kohl** and **Adrienne Katz**, and welcomes back second year members **Greg Maines**, **Tamara Quade**, and **Emily Reiter**.

It's a boy! Congratulations to **Anna Zollinger** and **Hoka Skenandore** for the birth of their baby boy **Elijah**. Anna is lead artist/ teacher for the Multi-Sensory Studio and Hoka attends the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe.

Goodbye: Artist/ teacher, **Jena Glenn** left VSA arts to attend graduate school. Her fiber arts classes produced many of the items in the VSA product line that have been very popular in the VSA gallery, arts & crafts fairs and stores such as Origins in Santa Fe. Special thanks to Jena for sharing five years of her talent and expertise at VSA NM.

VSA Studio Program 2002–2003

OUTCOMES

The goal of VSA's Studio Arts Program is to provide high quality arts education and community inclusion opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities (apprentice artists). Throughout the year apprentice artists have opportunities to select from a wide variety of visual and performing arts classes. Community involvement is facilitated through school residencies and other collaborations.

Apprentice artists participated in performances and workshops for APS CESS program, Public Academy for Performing Arts and in school residencies at Cochiti Elementary, Wherry Elementary, La Luz Elementary, Valley High School, the APS C-TAP program and DLD Sycamore School. Trips included visits to exhibits and performances, museums, picnics, fishing, and the State Fair. Thirty Apprentice Artists participated in *PUSH Day at the Zoo* with twenty members of Pi Kappa Phi fraternity who were biking across America to raise awareness and money for people with disabilities. Freedom High Students volunteered on a weekly basis at the Studio Arts program. They also participated in workshops with VSA's *Equilibrium Theater Company*. Apprentice artists volunteered at the North Valley Senior Center, the Family Focus Center's after-school program, and collected donations for homeless children served by Los Ninos Daycare program. The Studio Arts Program will maximize opportunities for the work of apprentice artists (visual and performing) to be exhibited, presented, and sold in professional settings. Multiple performances, community exhibits, and internal exhibits took place during the year:

2002:

- Sept: Dance performance for Southwest Annual Conference on Disability
Native American adobe bas relief project at Sacred Mountain Learning Center
- Oct: Textile show in VSA gallery
Dance performance at Opening Doors-VSA event
Theater & dance performances for Santa Fe Presbytery at Ghost Ranch
- Nov: Weems Arts & Crafts Fair-booth sales
- Dec: Rio Grange Arts & Crafts Fair-booth sales
Winter Wonderland/Open House at VSA's North Fourth Art Center

2003:

- Jan: Art show at UNM Occupational Therapy
Two dance performances at State Rotunda
- Feb: Theater & Dance Performances/Art Show at Keshet Dance Company
Tile Mosaic project at North Fourth Art Center (three month project)
- Apr: Casey Ferguson's artwork and videos travel to VSA Hawaii
- May: Art exhibit Sage Mesa Coffee House
Apprentice artist art show La Explosion de los Torpedos in VSA gallery
- June: New Mexico Arts & Crafts Fair Keynote Exhibit & Dance Performance
Hand painted chair project for Ronald McDonald House Chair Auction
Dance performance at VA Medical Center
- July: Open Mind Studio Show at Blue Dragon Coffee House
Viva Las Albuquerque musical at VSA's North Fourth Art Center

DEMOGRAPHICS

VSA arts of New Mexico currently serves 90 people in the Studio Arts Program. Some attend full-time (Monday – Friday, 9am– 3pm), some attend two to three days per week. The Studio has an average daily attendance of 48. A demographic profile of those 90 individuals shows: 1% Asian, 47% Hispanic, 8% Native American, 44% Caucasian, 56% female, 44% male, 53% ages 21 to 34, 33% ages 35 to 54, 14% age 55 and over.

SURVEY RESULTS

In February, 2003, a four-question survey was developed and conducted by an apprentice artist in the Studio Arts Program. (VSA arts of New Mexico refers to service recipients as apprentice artists.) Twenty-nine Apprentice Artists in the Studio Arts Program participated in the survey. To the question "Do you like coming to VSA?": 28 answered yes and one answered no. Apprentice artists were asked to comment on their favorite classes, if there was anything they did not like about VSA, and for other comments. The comments were 95% positive.

In March of this year family members and other stakeholders were asked to rate VSA's Studio Art Program based on the following scale: poor, fair, good, excellent. 65% of those responding rated the program excellent. 94% rated the program good or above. Approximately 50% of the respondents also included comments in their surveys. Some of the positive comments about the program:

"The staff does a wonderful job and are very knowledgeable"

"I continue to enjoy working with your staff. They provide excellent care/supports."

"VSA's program is the best in the city and I visit many. This achievement is a direct product of the caring, devoted staff that run the programs."

Statewide opportunities are made possible in part by New Mexico Arts, a Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts; and through funding provided by the central office of VSA arts, under an award from the U.S. Department of Education.

Letter from the Board President

Hello Everyone—

- Many of you may know something about VSA arts and some of you may not. VSA arts of New Mexico offers visual, literary and performing arts classes and activities for those with mental and physical disabilities.
- At VSA's art center on North Fourth Street in Albuquerque, these apprentice artists participate in creative activities as diverse as silk screening, clay sculpting, painting, drawing, writing, music, dance and theater.
- The gallery offers the public an opportunity to view and purchase artworks. Buen Viaje, our innovative dance company, travels throughout the community to present their work. Equilibrium, our new theater company, performed a play they wrote about growing up with a disability. Soon renovations to our building will provide new performing and visual arts spaces for VSA and the community.
- I've known VSA since the 1980s, when I was Director of the City of Albuquerque's Parks and Recreation Department. Beth Rudolph, who worked for the Department, started VSA arts of New Mexico, and it's been successfully operating for more than twenty years. VSA NM links with other creative programs statewide as well as with the national office, which is affiliated with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC.

My sister Janis, who has Down Syndrome, joined VSA's program in 2000, shortly after the organization's move to their Fourth Street facility, now known as the North Fourth Art Center. She spent two years as a VSA AmeriCorps Team member, working with other members with and without disabilities on recycled art activities for VSA's Global Depot. When her two years as an AmeriCorps member was up, Janis insisted that it was just "not fair" but she continues to be enthusiastic about her involvement in studio classes. Janis recently joined a quilting class. She objects that they named themselves the "Crazy Quilters." My rational sister knows she is not crazy. She has taken to sewing like a natural and can focus for hours on her small, neat stitches.

The Studio Arts Program not only allows freedom in the number of choices offered, it inspires the creative growth that gives Janis and so many others like her the opportunity to feel important, to see their work valued.

In order to continue offering these great services to people with special needs, we need to raise funds for capitol improvements, programs and daily operations. See page 8 and make a contribution to VSA arts of New Mexico. Your contributions are tax deductible.

Respectfully,
Orlando (Orlie) Sedillo
President, VSA NM Board of Directors

thank you!

GRANTORS

Albuquerque Community Foundation
City of Albuquerque:
Dept. of Family & Community Services
Keep Albuquerque Beautiful Program
Urban Enhancement Trust Fund
McCune Charitable Foundation
National Endowment for the Arts
New Mexico Arts, a Division of the Office of Cultural Affairs
NM Commission for Community Volunteerism
AmeriCorps State Programs
US Department of Education
VSA arts
Western States Arts Federation

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Albuquerque Public Schools
Association of Developmental Disability Community Providers
ARC of Albuquerque
City of Albuquerque Therapeutic Recreation Program
Designs for Learning Differences (DLD Sycamore School)
NewArt New Mexico
New Mexico Highlands School of Social Work
North Fourth/Camino Real Merchants Association
State of NM Dept of Health Long Term Services Division
United Way of Central New Mexico
UNM SOM Occupational Therapy Program
VA Medical Center

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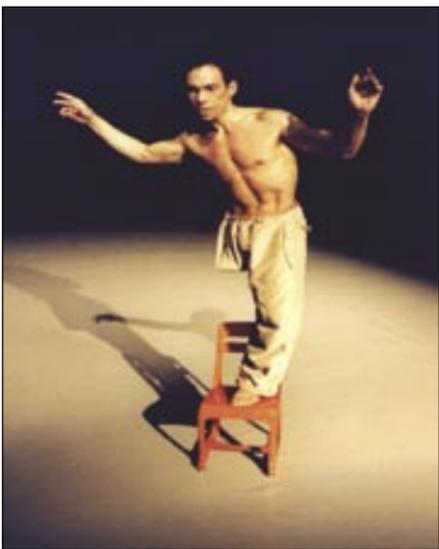




Artists: Ready, Willing and ABLE to Go Around the World

by Marjorie Neset

The world is full of artists making art about life in the diverse cultures in which they live. Whether their culture derives from shared abilities or disabilities, or whether it is geographically, religiously, or politically-based, it is likely to be rich in varied values, opposing opinions and conflicting customs. Who better to tell the resulting tales than artists—dancers, actors, painters, singers? VSA's North Fourth Art Center has begun a program of presenting artists from here, there and everywhere in venues around the city and even the state.



When VSA's NorthSide Theatre opens many of these artists will be presented at North Fourth Art Center. Until then continued collaboration with local and regional partners and venues will ensure that VSA's North Fourth program participants and audiences will have access to a broad array of artists and cultures. Access to the brilliant and innovative artists who have experienced disability, social or economic disadvantage, and sometimes real political danger, yet who continue to make and share work has the potential of changing our hearts... the way we think... the way we interact with our own neighbors and other global citizens.

In 2002-03 Bill Shannon "CrutchMaster" performed at the Lentic Theater (as part of Global DanceFest 2003); Norwegian puppet/street theater Gruvekompaniet gave a parking lot performance at VSA's North Fourth Art Center (co-presented with Tricklock's Revolutions Theatre Festival), and Gateway Productions from Atlanta performed "Coyote" at Cochiti Elementary (as part of the VSA School Residency Program).

In 2003-04, the excitement goes on with AXIS Dance Company from California (a mixed ability company), and Homer Avila, a gifted choreographer/dancer from New York City who continues to create and perform brilliantly in spite of losing his leg to cancer. The dates, times and locations will be announced later this year as appropriate venues are so very difficult to find—a problem that will be resolved when NorthSide Theatre is in operation!

VSA arts of New Mexico/North Fourth Art Center enormously appreciates its presenting partners: UNM Department of Theatre and Dance, Tricklock Company/Revolutions Theatre Festival, NewArt New Mexico/Global Dance Fest, Keshet Dance Company, Magnifico, Harwood Art Center, Outpost Performance Space, and the Lentic Theatre and Center for Contemporary Arts in Santa Fe—and gratefully acknowledges its grantors for 2003-04 performances and artist residencies: City of Albuquerque's Urban Enhancement Trust Fund, VSA arts national, the McCune Charitable Foundation, Western States Arts Federation and the National Endowment for the Arts.



PHOTOS left to right, top to bottom: Homer Avila; Painted Chair by Paula James, Pat Hall, Orlando Najjar; photo by Sue Hermes; Gateway Performance Productions, Coyote Tales, John Jaramillo, photo by Clark R. Hill; AXIS Dance Company; Bill Shannon/"Crutchmaster"



be a visionary! support North Fourth programs

Funding the vision depends on you! Please support North Fourth's resident theatre and dance companies, touring company performances, community gallery, evening and weekend programs and community outreach. Be a visionary! Support the NORTH FOURTH ART CENTER!

YES! I want to support the North Fourth Art Center!

Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution:

- \$30
- \$50
- \$100
- \$250
- \$500
- Other \$ _____

I would like to pledge \$ _____ over the next _____ months (monthly donations deducted on 15th of month)

I will be making a donor designation through United Way of Central New Mexico.

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Signature _____

Please make checks payable to:
VSA arts of New Mexico
4904 Fourth St. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107

Sign up online for email updates on North Fourth at

www.vsartsnm.org

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or call us at (505) 345-2872

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VSA arts of New Mexico

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