

**Gallery Night**   
**November 1, 2024**

Welcome to the 2024 edition of our annual Gallery Night! We’re proud to present the work of nine Wisconsin artists who are blind or low vision. We’re grateful to Arts for All for enabling us to include pieces by three of the artists whose work we are showcasing this year. We are also grateful to this year’s Gallery Night sponsors: Community Shares of Wisconsin, Numbers 4 Nonprofits, SVA and Kwik Trip.

Please read on to learn a little about each of our featured artists. You can also access these artist statements in written or audio format on our website by using the QR code below.



**Evelyn Becker**  
**West Allis**

As long as I can remember, I have loved color and mathematics. When I lost my sight 35 years ago, I did not realize how much potential I still had. Color is still a large part of my life, and crocheting has been a saving grace.

My autistic grandson asked me to make him another afghan. When I asked him what colors, he replied, “Star Wars.” I gave it a lot of thought and started to remember my first impressions of “Star Wars.” What I remember from my first viewing of “Star Wars: New Hope” in 1978 was the moisture farm, which to me meant black, shading to darker brown. Moisture farm contains two strips of Off-White to indicate Luke’s step-brother and his wife, one strip of Marbleized Gray and Scuba Blue to indicate Luke, one strip of Varsity Gold to indicate C3PO, and one strip of Bluet to indicate R2D2. On the outside of the moisture farm is a red strip to indicate Luke’s red speedster.

Following the moisture farm section, I used several different shades of beige to indicate a sand planet. Within this area, I used shades of green to show the village of Mos Eisley. This is followed with more of the planet colors, leading into Sky Blue for the sky and one Pumpkin-colored sun and one Saffron sun. Within these outer reaches, a fleet of Imperial Warships (Anthracite) circle this small insignificant planet, Tatooine, and the Millennium Falcon (Heather Gray) daring to cross into their space escapes. When I got to this point, I realized that the afghan would be too big and condensed some subsequent “Star Wars” vignettes to smaller sections using thee six sections of the afghan pattern.

**Richard Berkholtz**  
**Madison**

I make my own firestarters independently, using adaptive equipment and natural materials. Over the last seven years, I have developed my own process to design, manufacture, package, and sell my firestarters.

Before I lost my sight, I enjoyed working with metal to make sculptures and creations for friends and family. I have always had a creative side, so after my accident it was a natural progression into my art practice today. I make masks out of clay as well as vessels big and small.

I incorporate textures in my ceramic work and continue to investigate ways to add tactile design elements. I enjoy the works of art that I continue to create. My art and my business are important to me because they make other people smile. Family, friends, and the community are the most important things to me.

**Illana Dehoyos  
Madison**

Since I was a kid, I have always loved art, and as I got older, I got interested in photography as well. Both have been a part of my life for a long time, and although I struggle with drawing certain things or capturing certain things on camera, I still try and don’t give up. My vision impairment is something I was born with, and because of it, I am restricted from doing a lot of things, but with art and photography, I’m not restricted at all. I can show those around me how the world looks from my perspective as a visually impaired person.

**Rosemary Fortney  
Milwaukee**

As I was pondering the meaning of life as a mother of a young daughter with brain cancer, this is the result created with acrylics, alcohol inks, fiber and gold seed beads. The "Dance of Womanhood" began as a very organic trailing string of fiber loosely traveling up and down the canvas. Feminine figures, such as a young girl happily skipping in her dress, a single young woman with a cat perched upon her shoulder, and a very maternal figure...all stages of womanhood dancing among the earthy green ferns to the spritely, winged little girl-muse leading them in the dance of life. As she plays her fiddle, the musical notes float above the path toward the yellow sun.

**Duncan Hamilton  
Verona**

Duncan has been an amateur artist all his life. About ten years ago, his eyesight began to be seriously affected by macular degeneration and the VA furnished him with a table mounted 5-inch lens-lamp. He also received a gift of a new set of oil pastels with a pad of good quality paper and began to make abstract designs. He says that when he is busy with the colors, “whatever difficulties life may confront me with all disappear for the time being.” He also notes that “art of any kind is genuine freedom and I recommend it wholeheartedly to one and all.”

**Janae O’Connell  
Waterloo**

I am a late starter and only discovered the wonderful world of oil painting by happenstance. I restored an oil painting my grandfather painted long before I was born. I found so much joy in it that I taught myself to paint by watching Bob Ross and other artists to learn some basic techniques and went from there. I love the beauty of nature, so I gravitate towards landscapes and have a special affinity for lighthouses and mountains. I take inspiration from travels or photos and make them my own.

**Lynn Olson  
Madison**

An active artist/maker throughout her lifetime, Lynn works in several mediums, including painting, illustration, quilting, and mosaics. After a career spent promoting sustainable food, a determination of legal blindness has provided a rare opportunity to live a life devoted to her art. Lynn uses a technique that tells a story about her visual perception of the world around her. “Round pixels” have been used in her works for over 20 years.

**Albert Schmiege  
Slinger**

Albert D. Schmiege is a Wisconsin artist who has been legally blind since 1992 due to macular degeneration. Despite having no central vision, poor depth perception, and color blindness, Schmiege has been able to capture on canvas his interpretation of the world. He uses a combination of techniques, brush strokes, and color to create the illusion of detail and depth, usually working in oils. “I believe that blindness does not limit, but rather enhances the creative process.”

**Nicole Wolf  
Janesville**

I have enjoyed taking photos since high school, and 30 years later I still enjoy taking pictures as hobby I do for myself that I like to share with others, taking pictures of flowers and colorful things. A little color can brighten anyone’s day. I look at photos on my computer to see the things I miss like bees and butterflies while taking pictures.