

# 'Round & Around'

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By Mary Gow



*A collection of works from various artists in the current "Round & Around" exhibit on the main floor of Studio Place Arts in Barre. STEFAN HARD / STAFF PHOTOS*

**Orbs and rings and endless loops — art is going around in circles at Studio Place Arts.**

"Round & Around," an exhibition exploring circular forms, opens this week at SPA in Barre. Installations, paintings, photographs, sculpture, drawings and jewelry by 25 artists are featured in the show.

"Round & Around" in the Main Floor Gallery is accompanied by two solo shows on SPA's upper floors. Carol Radspecher brings together figuration and abstraction in her digital drawings in "Clever Hand" on the second floor. A retrospective exhibit of Rene Schall's calligraphy shows her stunning craft and art in "Classic to Spontaneous Letterforms" on the third floor. A public opening reception for all three exhibitions will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. Saturday at SPA.

"In my own practice, I have been using circle motifs as long as I have been making art. It's a form that is very engaging," said Janet Van Fleet, SPA founder and curator of "Round & Around," about the inspiration for the show.

"Historically and personally it appears that things go in cycles," noted Van Fleet. "The universe is populated by circles and spinning globes."

The art that was submitted for the show shows incredible creativity. In curating the show, Van Fleet was delighted and surprised in discovering connections and affinities between diverse works. Several pieces evoking perspective on our universe and spheres in space are grouped in one section of the gallery. Cycles of life and the natural world are explored by other artists. Four installations are featured in the exhibition. A trio of mixed media armillary spheres by Paul Calter, of Randolph Center, evokes their namesake celestial models. Calter's circular bands suggest longitude and latitude but in fresh realms. His spheres offer connections with ideas of the harmony of the spheres and attraction and ties through the voids of space.



*Marshfield artist Frederick Rudi's "Oh" in acrylic on canvas.*

In Judy Dales' quilted "Planets at Play," textile circles orbit and eclipse each other in an expanse of textured space. Mary Admasian's "Melting Planet" seems to bring together the vastness of the universe and intimate internal space.

Twenty drawings by Susan Sawyer, of South Woodbury, take a close up look at her organic and natural subjects — a maidenhair fern, a coiled garden snake, algae, sand waves — all featuring or seen in circles.

The drawings in the series, Sawyer explains, "are part of a long exploration of pattern and form. To me a circle is a view through a hand lens, microscope, and binoculars, a culture dish, an egg, an eye, the world when we turn around and look. A circle can hold all kinds of things, even formless thoughts and multitudes."

A gilt thicket of goldenrod, each tall stem bearing a spherical gall that served as home to a hatching insect, stands in the center of the gallery. In Beth Miller's untitled installation, each of the stems is painted gold.

"My work has always been in response to my love of this earth and my relationship to it. As time goes on, the making presses into an imperative," said Miller in her artist's statement.

"The goldenrod galls stand as witness to the uncertain future for this planet. They stand collectively and in relationship to one another. While they hold strength and presence, these natural spheres in our landscape also hold a joy and humor as members in the natural order of things," said Miller.

Pamela Wilson, of Barre, considers time in her "Waking Hours: 5x5x5." The installation, rows of ceramic discs with a subset of dough discs, is the first piece in a series she is working on based on mothers and time. An artist, mother, doula, and Lamaze teacher, Wilson has been collecting stories about women's experiences and unique calculus while caring for a baby or young child. "Waking Hours: 5x5x5" describes her personal experience, each disc representing an hour.

"'5x5x5,' the second half of the title, describes the specific time restraints I work within as an artist. My familial responsibilities have finally begun to shift to allow me to return to the part-time labor force and part-time studio practice," said Wilson. The fives, she explained, are "a 5-year-old in school, five hours a day, five days a week."



*Middletown Springs artist Beth Miller's untitled work in goldenrod galls, paint and soil is in the foreground. Hanging vertically in the background is Pittsburgh artist Stefani Danes' "Circularity #3" in cotton, both commercially- and hand-dyed.*

The retrospective exhibit of Schall's calligraphy in SPA's third floor gallery offers a remarkable look at the skill and art of letter-making. From sheets of meticulous experimental trials of lettering styles to a copy of a 15th century manuscript page to beautifully executed quotes to artwork built on letter forms and strokes — the range of Schall's work is staggering.



Schall has also included a display of the calligrapher's materials. She explains benefits of different tools — the distinct effects of goose versus turkey quills, how shapes and styles of brushes are suited to different forms.

Expanding the educational aspect of Schall's exhibit, SPA is offering a calligraphy workshop in February. Schall is donating proceeds from sales of her work in the show to SPA to support the art center's programming and educational opportunities.

## **STUDIO PLACE ARTS**

*Studio Place Arts presents "Round & Around" in the Main Floor Gallery, "Clever Hand" by Carol Radspecher and "Classic to Spontaneous Letterforms: Retrospective Exhibit of Rene Schall's Calligraphy" in the upper floor galleries, through March 4, at 201 N. Main St. in Barre. Hours are: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; noon to 4 p.m. Saturday; admission is free; call 802-479-7069, or go online to [www.studioplacearts.com](http://www.studioplacearts.com). A public artists' reception will be held 3 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 4.*