

# US!: Forward-looking exhibit at Chambers

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Student art at Barre City Chambers  
Courtesy Studio Place Arts

BARRE — Walk into City Chambers in Barre City and you immediately know that it is a room where many hundreds of political decisions have been made over the years. There is a traditional raised dais flanked by flags, technical equipment scattered along the walls, and a small table where testimony takes place.

Change is in the air.

A new show called “US!,” involving a group of nearly 30 self-portraits by students in grades 8-12 from Barre City schools is on view at Barre City Chambers through June 10, presented by Studio Place Arts.

These sensitive explorations by the students attest to the challenges they have been experiencing beyond those of typical teens. There are expressions of kind-heartedness, introversion, boldness and defiance, masked and unmasked.

Art teacher Eirene Mavodones from Barre City Elementary and Middle School describes self-portraiture as “one of the most introspective of art forms.” Her students used reverse color and texture painting to create their artworks. Colleague Danielle Berg’s students relied on graphite and color pencil to represent expressions and sentiments.

The square clusters of student self-portraits are, in many ways, new members of the community audience in Chambers or on Zoom as they gaze towards the dais where topics are debated. One of the goals of this show, however, is to begin engaging more city youth in community service and decisions.

“Bringing youth art into City Hall is a small step to remind the Council and staff how our work must be focused on — not only considering the next generation of Barre, but including them — and celebrating their voices and perspectives,” observed Jake Hemmerick, Barre City mayor. “And it’s why I’m so excited to invite youth to serve on committees and commissions.”

*For more information, call Studio Place Arts, 802 479-7069, or go online to [www.studioplacearts.com](http://www.studioplacearts.com)*