

SPA's new Quick Change Gallery

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Sue Higby, Studio Place Arts executive director, and SPA's new Quick Change Gallery. Photo by Tuyen Nguyen

BARRE – How many clowns can squeeze into a Volkswagen Beetle? How many people can fit into a football stadium? With a nod to Clark Kent of Superman fame, Studio Place Arts (SPA) will soon be assessing how many works of art can be exhibited in its new Quick Change Gallery, made from an “up-cycled” telephone booth.

SPA currently exhibits artwork in three spaces in its historic building, the Nichols Block, located on Main Street, and curates the local Morse Block Deli and the Civic Center Complex. Exhibits at the SPA art center are changed every seven weeks throughout the year.

The Quick Change Gallery will occupy a small space on the second floor of SPA. While Clark Kent ripped apart his understated business attire to reveal a superhero costume in

telephone booths, the Quick Change Gallery will make use of an old telephone booth to reveal the power of art in a spontaneous, quickly changing exhibit setting.

The gallery will be used by young and emerging artists looking for a pop-up space, and by better-known artists wanting to test a new body of work. The common feature of the Quick Change Gallery is that the exhibits will be quickly installed, the shows will change every three to four weeks, and the space will exhibit unframed artwork that can be swiftly pinned into place or site-specific installations.

“We think it’ll become known for its outstanding and somewhat unconventional shows,” explained SPA Executive Director Sue Higby, who was inspired by a telephone booth project that she saw at the Hood Museum of Art in Hanover, New Hampshire, and started to poke around the state for an old, abandoned telephone booth. “Who knows, we could be creating the smallest white box art gallery in the state.”

The Quick Change Gallery is a two-year pilot project that makes use of a vintage telephone booth that has been occupying a small area on the lot across from the East Calais General Store. Higby pitched her idea to members of the Calais Historic Preservation Commission, including Scott Bassage, Karen Lane, and several others associated with managing the area’s historical resources, who agreed that the project would be an exciting use for the telephone booth.

SPA plans to debut the Quick Change Gallery in mid-September. A “call to artists” will be posted at its website and Facebook page shortly.

For more information, call Studio Place Arts, or go online to www.studioplacearts.com.