

ARTS

Boundless Art at Arts Unbound Gallery

Group exhibit to run for next two weeks at non-profit gallery in Valley Arts District

By **Carol Selman** October 5, 2010

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An engaging and color-filled group exhibit opened at the non-profit Arts Unbound Gallery Monday and runs through Friday, Oct. 22, at 542/544 Freeman St, Orange.

Executive Director Gail Levinson talked about Arts Unbound, which serves the differently-abled arts community: "We provide up and coming artists with skills in the visual arts, as well as venues to promote their work and become better known among the general public," said Levinson. "The artwork is compelling and the artists' journeys are motivating and inspirational. Many of our customers are drawn not only to the work, but to the stories."

Among the dozen or so artists represented in the current Arts Unbound exhibit is Jon Gabry, a 21-year-old mathematics major at Bergen Community College who was born deaf and blind. His lyrical watercolor, "Trumpet Flowers," and his closely observed pencil and charcoal drawings defy his disabilities:

"I use both tactile and vision senses to see the objects I draw or create," Gabry said. "It doesn't matter that I am deaf-blind. I enjoy the process of making art, feeling how my body moves, and seeing the colors and shapes come together. I hope people will look at the details in my work and that they will appreciate the feelings and emotions in my art."

Exhibiting artists submit their work to Robert Ramos, the gallery director and curator and himself a noted visual artists. A couple of years ago, Ramos, who also hangs the exhibits, redesigned the gallery with a hip, well-lit design.

"I just resealed the brick wall this summer," Ramos said, "and repainted the other walls to draw the space together and better display the art. We have gallery owners from New York City who come and buy the art right off our walls."

"You'll think you're in a trendy spot in Soho," said Gabry's mother, Katherine, "That's all Robert's design."

Ramos talked about the art and the business of art: "This is affordable art for entry level collectors or anyone wanting an original work, and the proceeds go to the artists," he said.

Among the other artists represented are Anie Knipping, of Montclair, with her two delicately colored macro photographs of tulips and the exuberantly colored canvases of Brad Friedman and Ronaldo Byrd. Both Friedman and Byrd are on the autism spectrum. Byrd's "High School Hallway" and "Pajama Party" explode with lively characters and are witty takes on being young.

An older, oft-exhibited artist, Brad Friedman, is among the artists engaging Ramos' enthusiasm: "Friedman is heavily invested in color and composition as here in 'Rainbow Town.' He draws you into the story," Ramos said.

Arts Unbound has been a cornerstone of the Valley Arts District, a group of arts organizations, individual artists, restaurants and performance venues in a once industrial neighborhood on the Orange/West Orange border, since 2003. It mounts exhibits both at the Freeman Street gallery and at traveling shows in both commercial and educational spaces throughout New Jersey. Other recent venues included Parlor Hair in Montclair. A show related to the current home exhibit opens at Caldwell College on Oct. 18.

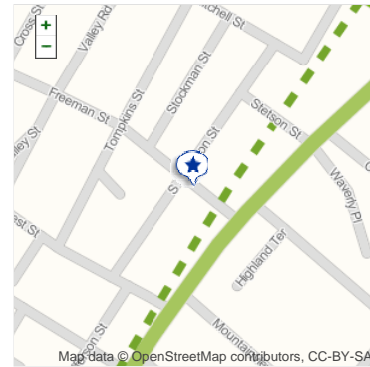
The Arts Unbound Gallery is open weekdays from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and by appointment. For more information, call (973) 675-2787 or visit [Arts Unbound \(http://www.artsunbound.org\)](http://www.artsunbound.org).

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