



## Studio 84: The Creative Voice

Studio 84, located at 121 West Center Street in downtown Whitewater, is a non profit community art studio. It is a unique space offering exhibits and workshops in the arts for people of all ages and all abilities. The staff at Studio 84 specializes in working with people with disabilities and believes in inclusion when ever possible.



The brain child of founders and directors, Deborah Blackwell and Katherine Fincutter, Studio 84 opened its doors on July 1, 2009. Since then over 700 students and visitors have visited the studio and gallery. "It's wonderful", states Blackwell, "to see so many people come through our doors and amazing to see people of all ages and abilities working side by side on their art and in the theater programs."



One of the many yearly events Studio 84 is involved in is the Big Read, a National Endowment for the Arts initiative. Working collaborative with The Young Auditorium, Studio 84 develops programming around the book selection chosen by The Young. This year's selection was 'Sun, Stone and Shadows: 20 Mexican Short Stories.' For this, Studio 84 brought three Milwaukee based artists together to exhibit their work, which is based on the stories and traditions of Mexican culture. In addition to the art exhibit, Studio 84 put together an 8 week workshop in which participants developed and created a performance piece under the direction of Jim McCulloch. The workshop was supported in part with a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board. Inspired by the first short story, 'My Life with the Wave' by Octavio Paz, and the concepts of surrealism, Mexican culture and waves, participants wrote, created, and acted in several free public performances.

Fincutter states, "Studio 84 fosters community involvement as well as individual involvement." The exhibit 'Quiet Desperation: Putting the Pieces Together' dealt with artists and mental illness. Working together with several local clinics, Studio 84 held a mini seminar in the gallery, with topics ranging from mental health in children, neuro feedback and art therapy. It was an open, relaxed gathering for people to feel comfortable inquiring and learning more about mental illness. The art on exhibit brought a visual experience to the internal struggles of mental illness. Statements from the artists explained how art helps with these challenges.

Erin Dierick, a full time volunteer, remarks, "Working together with other arts organizations, such as The Young and the Whitewater Arts Alliance, Studio 84 brings together the community on many levels. October is celebrated as Arts and Disability Awareness Month and we are planning to expand our vision and activities for this month."

Fund raisers are an important part of a non profit organization. This year was Studio 84's first annual 'Art in Motion: Ride, Run, Walk for the Arts' Fund Raiser. Participants took routes up to 26 miles in length and gathered pledges. Proceeds fund programming. This fall will begin the first campaign for 'Friends of Studio 84'. By becoming a 'Friend of Studio 84' you will have the satisfaction of knowing you are helping others find a way to express creatively.

If you are interested in becoming a 'Friend of Studio 84' or need more information on the programming available, please visit our web site [www.studio84inc.org](http://www.studio84inc.org) or stop in at 121 W. Center Street, Whitewater. Hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10 am to 5pm. ♦

