

inside] out

the heART of mental illness

Compassionate Touch Network Announces its Fifth Annual Inside] Out Art Exhibition at the Santa Fe Community Gallery September 15 – October 14, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—June 5, 2017, (Santa Fe, N.M.) The Inside] Out Art Exhibition, an annual exhibition giving those who are living with mental illness a venue for showing their art in a professional gallery, will be held this year for the first time in the downtown Santa Fe Community Gallery. The exhibition, opening on September 15, 2017 and on view through October 14, 2017, is part of Inside] Out Arts, one of three major programs of Compassionate Touch Network, a Santa Fe based non-profit whose mission is to promote mental health literacy for youth, teens, and adults using education and the arts. There will be an opening reception on Friday, September 15, 2017 from 5pm to 7pm. The reception and the exhibition are free and open to the public.

One in five people suffer from mental illness in the U.S. One of the greatest barriers to seeking help for mental illness is the fear of being ostracized or stigmatized. Breaking the silence about mental illness is one of the major goals of Inside] Out Arts. The show is important because it helps to eliminate stigma and misunderstandings around mental illness and connects the artists to the larger community.

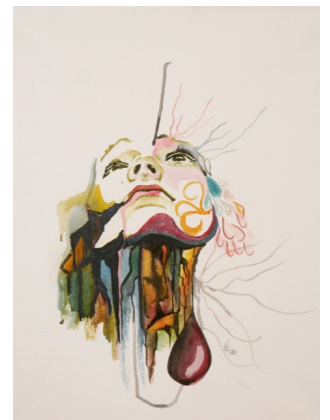
Inside] Out Arts provides a professional forum—in a contemporary gallery setting—for art created by New Mexico residents living with diagnoses including schizophrenia; anxiety disorders such as PTSD and OCD; clinical depression; and bipolar, schizoaffective, and eating disorders. Individuals with mental illness are often said to display a capacity to see the world in a novel and original way; literally, to see things that others cannot.

“When you suffer from mental illness, no one sends you a get-well card,” said Michele Herling, executive director of the Compassionate Touch Network. “Our organization has created a community for people to be understood by others. Our workshops and the exhibition offer individuals living with a mental illness a forum for expressing their inner voices through the creative process and for connecting with others who can relate,” she said.

Many of the artists who have been selected to be part of the show welcome the opportunity to speak openly about their illnesses and are eager to be out of the shadows and not harbor the shame that is associated with mental illness. The artists are often able to recover self worth and self-esteem in the program, which also provides arts education through facilitated dialogue, written words, and visual expression.

“The art workshops and the exhibition give me a sense of belonging and a place to share things with others that I might not have shared before,” said David Trujillo, whose work will be in the show this year.

“Art has been a solace for me all my life,” said Rebecca Best, one of the artists in the show. “I can be myself, I can better understand myself, I can work through what I am feeling—it is a



great outlet,” she said. “I have never wanted people to know that I have a mental illness and last year I saw the exhibition and was moved by seeing other artists’ expressions and I wanted to show people my art and reveal that part of myself to others.”

Now in its fifth year, the Inside] Out Art Exhibition has grown considerably in both scope and quality and this year will again be curated by Bruce Velick, a former gallery owner and fine arts professional. The project originated in 2012 with the vision of Santa Fe artist, and primary Inside] Out Arts teacher and mentor, Michele R. Altenberg. It has grown to include many professional artists and volunteers who offer mentoring and art classes at residential and drop-in centers in Santa Fe and Albuquerque. The art selected for the exhibition was made at Casa Milagro, a residential center in Santa Fe; from three drop-in centers—Santa Fe Life Link Clubhouse, Warehouse 21, and Albuquerque’s ArtStreet; and, from a number of individuals who create art at home.

Sales of artworks will benefit the artist and Compassionate Touch Network. The organization is designed to increase awareness of the public health challenge surrounding mental illness in New Mexico, where approximately 300,000 youth and adults have a diagnosable condition, according to US Department of Health and Human Services agency Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

WHAT: The 5th Annual Inside] Out Art Exhibition
WHEN: September 15-October 14, 2017
Opening Night Reception: Friday, September 15, 2017, from 5pm to 7pm
WHERE: Santa Fe Community Gallery, 201 W. Marcy St.

More information is [here](#).

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

About

Compassionate Touch Network is a Santa Fe, New Mexico based 501(c)(3) nonprofit that was founded in 2012. Its mission is to promote mental health literacy, well being, and advocacy for youth, teens, and adults utilizing education and the arts, and to support and educate communities to understand challenges faced by community members who are vulnerable and marginalized. Its work primarily focuses on the public health challenge of mental illness, suicide, and stigma.

Our programs incorporate the power of sharing story, either through the written word and/or the visual arts, with the goal of erasing the stigma surrounding mental illness and suicide. We continue to expand the scope of our programs in Santa Fe, around the state of New Mexico, and across the country. Our three main programs are: Minds Interrupted: Stories of Lives Affected by Mental Illness; Breaking the Silence / New Mexico; and Inside] Out Arts.

Visit us at www.compassionatetouchnetwork.org or www.insideoutsantafe.org.

Images from top: “Fragmented,” Rebecca Best, collage, 20.5” x 10.5”, 2017; “A Happy Me into the Sun,” Rebecca Medina, watercolor on canvas, 12” x 2”, 2017; “Looking Up,” Jeanelle Moore, watercolor on canvas, 20” x 16”, 2017.