

I Jump the Moon Exhibit Featuring Local Artists at USU's Sorenson Center Through October 17

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Mckay Neilson, Logan resident and patron of Jump the Moon, holds one of the artworks that will be featured on his wall of the I Jump the Moon exhibit.

On August 12, I Jump the Moon, an exhibit of select artists from the Jump the Moon studio, will open to the public in the Lyndsey Wilkerson Gallery in the Sorenson Legacy Foundation Center for Clinical Excellence at Utah State University. A gallery reception is scheduled for Friday, August 15, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. and is open to the public.

The exhibit showcases the artworks of 12 individuals with differing physical and developmental abilities—such as autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, and Down syndrome—who are regular patrons of the Jump the Moon studio. The studio and gallery is the creation of founder Michael Bingham, a renowned artist, USU alumnus, and retired art teacher from Cache County School District.

“For this show, I thought we would focus on the work of individual artists,” explains Bingham. “The studio has 12 walls, and we’ll feature one artist per wall. It’s a big deal for artists to be in an art show in a beautiful building, to attend an opening reception, and to have people see what they’ve been working on. I thought if everybody had their own wall with their photograph and name it would be even more of a boost for them.”

To properly showcase the artworks, each wall will only display two or three pieces. “I want to give a proper amount of space around the work,” explained Bingham. “I don’t want to pack it full. The more space you have around a piece the more important it feels. That’s kind of

the thought behind utilizing the single wall per artist. Just having a wall devoted to one artist makes their work more important.”



Michael Bingham, founder of Jump the Moon

Bingham also reserved one wall to feature some 200 unique works of Benny the Cat, drawn by residents of the Williamsburg, Sunshine Terrace, and Birch Creek assisted living centers in the Cache Valley community. Benny is a stray kitten Bingham adopted a few months ago, and the cat has since become a permanent fixture at the Jump the Moon studio. “He showed up under our shrubs as a little two-pound kitten,” explained Bingham. “Now he wanders around on the table and plays with people’s things and moves pencils around.”

Bingham takes the kitten with him on his visits to the care facilities, encouraging the residents to begin to draw. “A lot of these are drawn by people who didn’t think they could draw a cat, but it’s just circles and triangles. It’s interesting that no two are alike.”

Now in its eighth year, Jump the Moon is a Logan-based nonprofit organization that relies almost exclusively on grants and donations for funding. The only full-time employee is Bingham, who is assisted by two part-time employees and several dedicated volunteers.

Recently, PBS News featured the Logan-based studio in a World News segment that aired in May. “It was quite a surprise,” said Bingham. “This is the first time we’ve had any sort of national recognition. The [PBS news story](#) gave us a really great stamp of approval that tells people we’re

here to stay and that we still have a lot of people to help. Who knows what doors will open for us?" At the gallery, the PBS segment will play in the background on a large screen for attendees to view.

Bingham wants attendees to recognize the value of each of the artworks on display as they walk through the exhibit. "I hope people come away appreciating the amount of energy that has gone into this art and realize that it represents someone's passion, something they're excited about and capable of doing," he said. "These artists are making art with whatever method we can come up with that makes it possible for them to create, and they're bringing something brand new to the world."

The exhibition in the Lyndsley Wilkerson Gallery is free of charge and open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday until October 17. For more information about the Jump the Moon Foundation and to provide a donation, visit the [website](#) or visit in person at 48 North 100 West in Logan.