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Notes from editor (not for publication):

Nice advance!

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

Vermont artists craft a vision of democracy

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####BEGIN SUBHED####

Indivisible Brattleboro organizes a multimedia art event
at the Latchis, bringing together artists to express their love of
country through visuals, word, song, and community

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TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

Indivisible Brattleboro hosts “What Does Democracy
Look Like? An exploration in art and discussion” on Sunday, Nov.
16, from 4 to 6 p.m., at Brattleboro’s Latchis Theatre.
Designed, according to the event press release, to
“celebrate democracy through art, music, poetry, and
discussion,” the open-to-all event welcomes people from “across

12 the political spectrum. Come together to find common ground,
13 celebrate local creativity, and discuss the future we all share.”

14 *The Commons* spoke recently with event co-organizer
15 Katie Allaway. From Wyoming, she moved to Vermont in 2019
16 where, in Brattleboro, she’s “found a community that inspires me
17 and nurtures my family as we raise our young children. A space
18 to call home.”

19 In a career that promotes violence prevention work,
20 Allaway works for Element 74, software that collects the data for
21 domestic and sexual violence shelters across the U.S. She also
22 “does federal reporting, grant tracking, and data storytelling
23 across the nation,” she explains.

24 As a volunteer, Allaway has been involved locally with
25 Swords to Plowshares and Interaction Youth Services &
26 Restorative Justice. This year, though, she’s committed most to the
27 Brattleboro chapter of Indivisible, a nationwide network of
28 political action and response groups.

29 This latest Indivisible Brattleboro event was conceived as
30 a vehicle for collective community expression by “a group of
31 really dedicated individuals,” at a meeting in March, she recalls.

32 In a breakout session, she and others dialed in on a few
33 seminal questions: “What does democracy mean to our
34 community? And how can we collectively reach out across
35 barriers and polarizations that we individually experience to
36 really learn how to communicate better, how to envision what
37 we want for our future together across the polarities, to really say,
38 ‘regardless of where you come from or how you’ve come to be
39 who you are now, how do we work together and move forward
40 as we find ourselves in this really unique juncture of time?”

41 The team “started to dream this event up, and it’s turned
42 into something really exciting,” Allaway continues. More than 30
43 visual artists will display work demonstrating what democracy
44 means to them, and they will be joined by more than a dozen
45 performers.

46 The lineup includes visual artists C. Tinsley, Carol Dodge
47 Davis, Candace Jensen, Christine Triebert, Deidre Scherer, Diane
48 Shamas, Ellie Weiss, Eric Stewart, IVPP (Izzy Victoria Perez-
49 Poulson), Jane Kolas, Josh Allen, Karen Kamenetzky, Kat Gooch-
50 Breault, Kirsten Ullrich, Kris McDermet, Lindsey Britt, Marie-
51 Pierre Py, Naomi Lindenfeld, Pat Dodge, Phoebe Sparrow
52 Wagner, Raul Gracia, Susan Bonthron, Suzanne Flynt, and
53 Swords to Plowshares Vermont with related writing by Michael
54 Louis Bosworth, B.H., and Cerina Heartwell. Their work will be
55 seen in the entryway to the theaters and in Latchis' Theater One.

56 Bosworth's poem "Hemispheric Emigres" was created in
57 collaboration with his wife, ceramicist Naomi Lindenfeld, as a
58 tribute to her parents, who immigrated to North America in the
59 1930s.

60 The poem starts: "Come, wander no more, America has
61 let you in./You were the lucky ones. We are the lucky ones." It is
62 complemented by a ceramic wall hanging reflecting emigration
63 from the Eastern Hemisphere to the Western.

64 "This piece made with colored porcelain is my vision for
65 refugees who are fleeing a tumultuous situation in their home
66 country," Lindenfeld explains. "I hope for them a safe journey, to
67 be welcomed in America, to have the opportunity to weave the
68 fabric of their lives, and put down roots in this new land. We
69 must speak out on their behalf and keep being a nation of
70 compassion."

71 South Newfane photographer Christine Triebert has
72 contributed "We the People," an exhibit of photographs she's
73 taken at the area's resistance demonstrations and marches over
74 the past six months.

75 "I wanted to make something that would speak
76 powerfully to this moment in history when we are facing the
77 potential loss of our democracy," she says.

78 "I came up with an idea to design a large fabric piece
79 based on the elements of the American flag but printed in
80 reverse," Triebert continues. "A reversed flag represents how the

81 flag appears when it's being carried into action, and it's used on
82 all military uniforms as a symbol of courage and patriotism. To
83 me, the people protesting the Trump administration are also
84 patriots, marching to save our country's rights and freedoms."

85 One of fiber/textile artist Kris McDermet's submitted
86 pieces is "The Veil — Restore Democracy." She says it represents
87 "what we have lost and what we hope for."

88 Performers and readers on stage in Theater One will
89 include Addy Russell, Alex Lockie, Andy Burrows, April
90 Ossmann, Daniel Kasnitz, Jessica Stilling, Judith Reichsman, Mike
91 Mrowicki, Tim Kieschnick and Wendy Fiering, and Verandah
92 Porche and Patty Carpenter. The Good Trouble Choir, organized
93 by Becky Graber, will also perform.

94 Of her and Carpenter's contribution, Porche says,
95 "collaborating and sharing our songs is the best response to hard
96 times like these."

97 The creative duo wrote "Good Trouble" for the
98 Indivisible rally honoring American civil rights activist and
99 statesman, the late John Lewis, she said. Another tune, "In this
100 Kitchen," "makes a meal of celebrating food and love and
101 inclusive community," Porche says.

102 Meg Mott, a retired political science professor who bills
103 herself as "Constitution wrangler" and speaks often on the
104 freedoms and constraints of the nation's organizing document,
105 will moderate a panel discussion among Brattleboro resident and
106 Representative Town Meeting Member Gemma Seymour, former
107 State Rep. Tristan Roberts, and Susie Webster-Toleno, a
108 Congregational Church minister.

109 The discussion will be focused, says Allaway, on how
110 one can hold different beliefs "and still hold dignity for each
111 other, still allow each other to be human, and really practice
112 listening. What does it mean now to listen to someone who
113 doesn't think the same thing that you do and to give them space
114 and allow them to be heard?"

115 Allaway adds that an after-party is planned at Sages Pub
116 in the Latchis complex, “where people all across the spectrum
117 can get together and maybe practice communicating in ways that
118 we don’t get to do normally anymore in our social media
119 worlds.”

120 Among events hosted nationwide by Indivisible chapters,
121 this one is unique to Brattleboro’s, says Allaway.

122 “Indivisible has a method whereby if your community
123 has done something unique, you end up creating a handbook.
124 How did you do what you [did]? Was it successful? Lessons
125 learned? So it might be a starting point for other communities to
126 be able to really take it and do their own thing.”

127 She adds, “what you end up doing with your democracy
128 is community specific. So Brattleboro being what it is, it makes
129 sense that this is really coming out of our community. This is
130 beautiful.”

131 Looking back on 2025, Allaway reflects that seeing area
132 action has been inspiring, “seeing how many people have really
133 come to our Indivisible events, how many volunteers there are
134 really working to make this possible.”

135 “I do feel a sense of hope,” she says. “I’ve not seen this or
136 experienced this before in movement-making where people are
137 just so ready to actually put their feelings and their thoughts and
138 their values into action.”

139 And, Allaway says, “regardless of our politics, our world
140 really needs us to show up right now.”

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

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141 Admission to this event is free, but donations to
142 Indivisible Brattleboro are welcome at the door. To register, visit
143 indibrattleboro.org.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

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