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**Notes from editor (not for publication):**



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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1 'Retrospective,' a tribute to David Rohn, opens April 3

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3 TEXT BODY:

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4 Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts, 181–183 Main St., pays  
5 tribute to longtime Putney artist David Rohn, with  
6 “Retrospective,” a gallery-wide exhibition, opening Friday, April  
7 3, from 5 to 7 p.m. and continuing through June 7.

8 A “Directors’ Talk” is scheduled for Saturday, May 2, at 5  
9 p.m. Many of the artist’s paintings will be on view for the first  
10 time.

11 Rohn (1934–2025) died at his home Dec. 10. He was a  
12 teacher, humorist, lover of music and poetry; he has been  
13 represented by Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts for a decade.

14 Author Vincent Panella, a close friend of Rohn, writes  
15 that he “attended a military high school, flew airplanes, rode  
16 jumping horses, put on puppet shows, built a mini-home for his  
17 daughter Cleo down to the chairs and pots and pans, had sailed  
18 around the Greek Islands, owned a New York loft, taught art in  
19 many places, and settled in Vermont.

20 “David was a good storyteller, but you didn’t want to  
21 interrupt him mid-narrative. He was driven and singular, he drove  
22 fast, was undeterred by age or physical inconvenience, had many  
23 friends, a loving and extended family, and he never missed an  
24 opportunity to hear music, or lectures, to look at art about which  
25 he knew so much.”

26 Rohn lived a simple existence close to the earth and the  
27 ordinary objects that informed his paintings. Bach, Beethoven,  
28 and his hand-puppet companion Miss Tulip were as important to  
29 this visual artist as Cézanne and Matisse.

30 Putney artist Nancy Storrow remembers living in France  
31 in 1970. “At the time, David was painting large abstractions,  
32 using oil paints. He worked in an unheated back space as a  
33 studio, where we also kept escargots. Occasionally the snails  
34 escaped and ate his sketches.”

35 As Rohn painted throughout the ‘60s, he said he  
36 considered himself “a serious professional intending to advance  
37 American Art, and I hoped to awe the art world with my painting,  
38 [but] I had to find a better process regardless of the product. I  
39 changed to watercolor paper and began drawing, then painting  
40 the objects that began accumulating on my windowsills and  
41 counters at home. I painted in the penciled outlines with  
42 watercolor, and as I worked I was looking at abstract  
43 arrangements in the overlapping puddles that have their own flow  
44 and assertions.”

45 As long as he could paint, he was content — as  
46 evidenced by multiple stacks of unsigned, unframed paintings,  
47 many with images painted on both sides. He found pleasure in  
48 the act of painting, not artistic invention, and remarked that it  
49 was watercolor which gave him “freedom and liberation from an  
50 art world of expectation and judgment.”

51 As a guest on Wendy O’Connell’s BCTV program, *Here*  
52 *We Are*, Rohn explained: “It’s very much about the process and  
53 what I’ve been thinking about recently. I know there’s a clue, I  
54 mean at what I suppose is towards the end of a long life of just  
55 looking at things ... looking at still lifes. It’s a very interesting,  
56 intense situation for a human being to be just keeping company  
57 with a still life. There’s something in that process that is much  
58 more important than the result. You know the result comes out of  
59 the process.”

60 “The more tangible result — David Rohn’s legacy — is  
61 our great good fortune,” wrote organizers in a news release, “a  
62 life’s work of insightful, sensitive, masterfully rendered paintings.”

63 However, as his longtime Guilford friend, Margie Serkin,  
64 observes, “His artistic achievements have been formidable and  
65 are well documented, but it is just as much his offering of  
66 friendship in the quietest, unfailingly supportive way which  
67 shines on. David could be stirred to passionate resistance in the  
68 face of injustice but never allowed himself to fall into pessimism,  
69 and shared freely his hopes and his enduring belief in a brighter  
70 future for us all.”

71 For more information about this exhibit, visit  
72 [mitchellgiddingsfinearts.com](http://mitchellgiddingsfinearts.com) or call 802-251-8290.

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