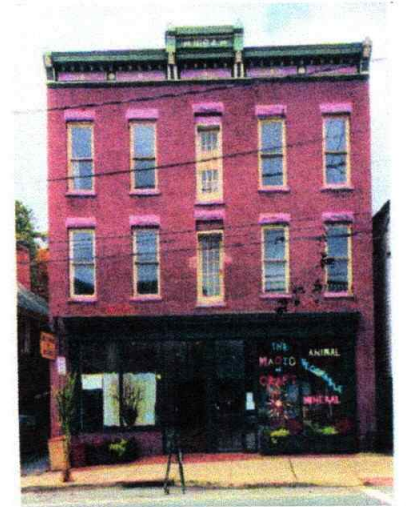


## NEWSLETTER FALL/WINTER 2024

2024 was an exciting and challenging year at the Liberty Museum & Arts Center. Recovering from the COVID disruption, we offered a slew of diverse exhibits beginning with **Hope Blecher's** comprehensive and eclectic reflection on the Holocaust, **Voices of Survivors**, and other traumatic events of the past century, focusing on the resilience of survivors, the extraordinary art that grew out of these events as well as historical artifacts and ephemera. There was a riveting display of art made by children in our county that was inspired by the art produced by children who were victims during the Holocaust.

There were well-attended presentations each and every week from both survivors of the Holocaust as well as remembrances by family members whose families perished in the Holocaust, a talk by **Richie Chiger** about the history and survival of Yiddish during that period and there were musical performances ranging from the gentle and moving music of **Fisher and Kean** to the eclectic Jewish repertoire of **Chai on Music**, featuring **Richie Chiger, Lori Schneider** and **Leon Hilfstein**. Among those presenting family histories were retired Monticello veterinarian **Rick Stein** and Liberty Central Schools Superintendent **Patrick Sullivan**.

Unarguably, the most spellbinding talks were by those of actual survivors of not just the Holocaust in which most of their family members were exterminated but of their own struggles hiding and running from the Nazis. 95 year-old **Tibor Spitz** recounted his breathtaking story with a remarkable sense of detachment considering he and his family hid out in dugouts in the forest for years, avoiding almost certain annihilation. After the war, Spitz eventually emigrated to the US where he improbably got a PhD in chemical engineering, working for IBM in Kingston. He never neglected his art but when he retired, he was able to devote himself full-time to his painting



**Liberty Museum & Arts Center**  
46 South Main Street

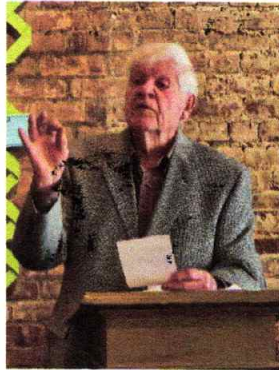
PO Box 1087  
Liberty NY 12754  
(845) 807-6055  
[www.libertymuseum.com](http://www.libertymuseum.com)

### Board of Trustees

Matthew Frumess	<i>President</i>
Robert Dadras	<i>Vice-President</i>
Etta Barbanti	<i>Treasurer</i>
Marilyn Laufer	<i>Secretary</i>
Hope Blecher	<i>Trustee</i>
Tony Canger	<i>Trustee</i>
Naomi Frumess	<i>Trustee</i>
Kusar Grace	<i>Trustee</i>
Matthew Sherman	<i>Advisor</i>

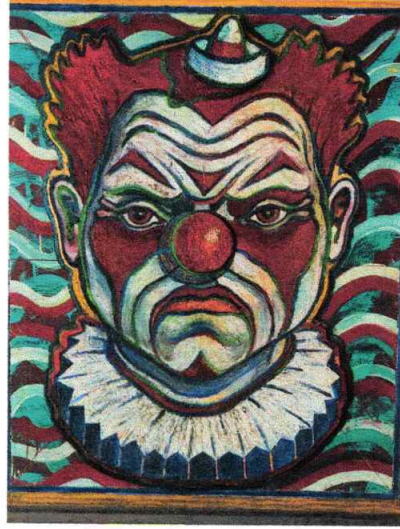
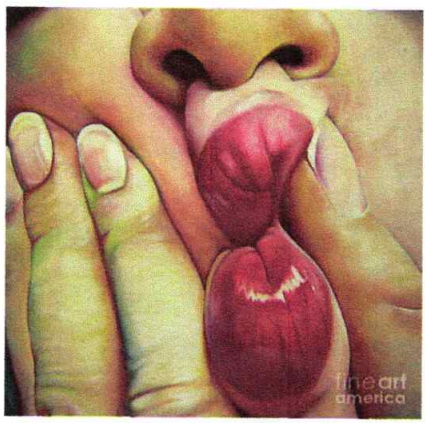
*The Liberty Museum & Arts Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. All donations are fully tax-deductible.*

Just as riveting was the unbelievable life story of **Egils Liepins** who runs Town & Country Antiques in Liberty. The overflowing audience was mesmerized by his heart-stopping recounting of keeping one step ahead of the Nazis and certain death.



On display, complementing these presentations were equally intense exhibits about the Ukrainian Famine, the Holodomor, curated by the chair of the county legislature, **Nadia Rajsz**, and of the Armenian genocide, perpetrated by the Turks, which was put together by **Tina Hazarian** of South Fallsburg, whose father escaped to the US from Armenia

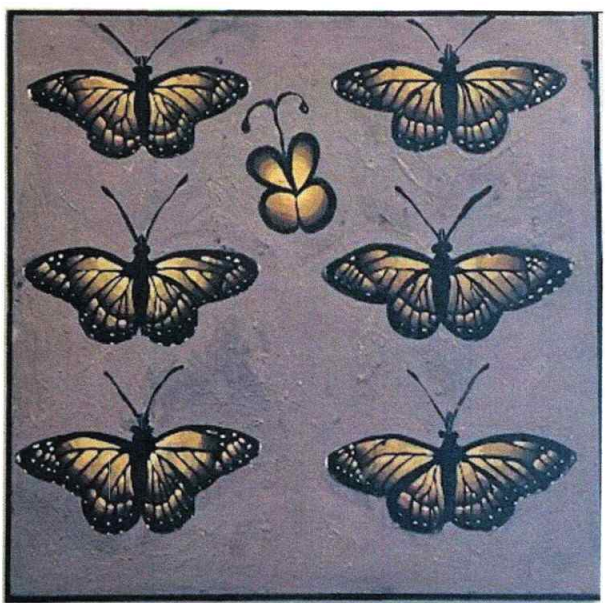
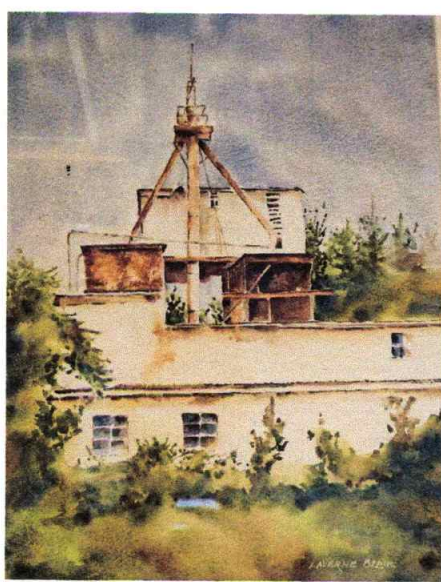
The first juried art show since the COVID hiatus, **The Invitational Art Show**, followed with a three-gallery display of some of the finest art in the region. Oil paintings and watercolors, photographs and mixed media, sculpture and drawings, filled the walls and panels.



*Sara Munoz Alexander*

*Rosie Nove*

*James Karpowicz*



*Laverne Black*

*Barnaby Frumess*

*Marjorie Morrow*

Filling out the exhibition were photographs by **Jackie Chiger** of Monticello and **Jean Rhode** of Kerhonksen. Coincidentally, most of Jackie's photos were of Asian elephants from her trip to Thailand several years ago and Jean's focused, literally, on the pigs of Arthur's Acres sanctuary in Parksville. Museum board members **Matthew Sherman** and **Tony Canger** displayed some of their iconic works.

Finally, works by **Ed Ziff**, **Jacqueline Herman** and the late **Dorothy Langseder** filled out the main gallery. Complementing Jean's pigs photos were small oil portraits of many of the same pigs by **Alison Lucie**.

Welcoming the fall, **Kath Johansen**, the art director at the Liberty schools, put together her annual Art Educators show, giving both current and retired art teachers a chance to stretch out and show their chops.

At the opening reception, each teacher talked about his or her work and, if they were currently working, how they grab a few minutes of “me” time in order to pursue their artistic endeavors. It’s not easy balancing family, lesson plans, sleeping and finding time for art. Liberty was represented by **Tara Powers**, **Ann Higgins** (ret) and Kath herself; Monticello by **Brenda Sywalski**; Tri-Valley by **Samantha Hayes**; Livingston Manor by **Val Taggart** (ret); Eldred by

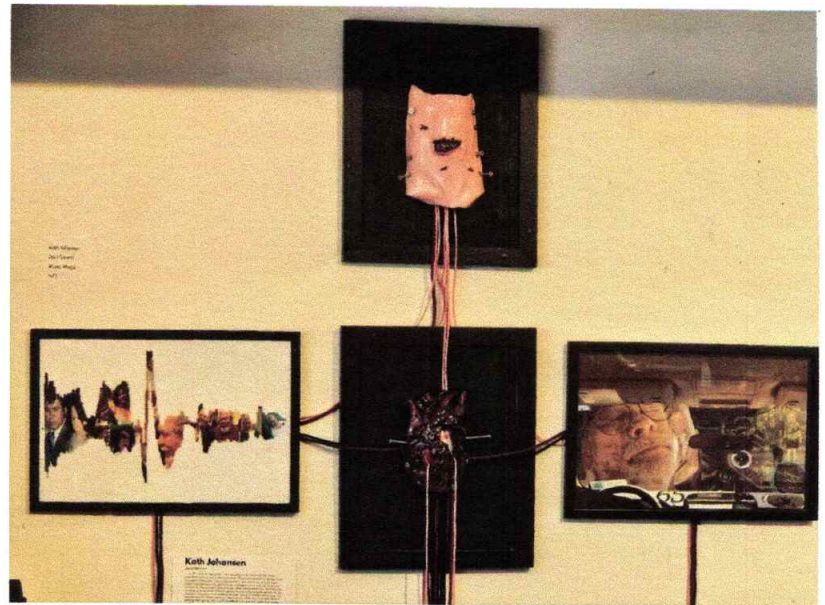
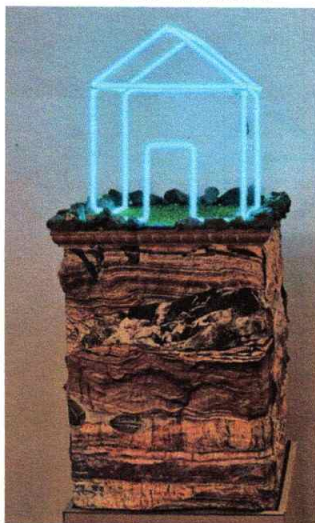


*Rocky Pinciotti and his Sullivan Catskills Map*

**Pat Gersten** (ret) ; Sullivan West by **Jena Morse**, **Natalie Sauer** and **Robin Nervegna**; and SCCC by **Rocky Pinciotti** and **Stephen Morse** (both ret.); and **Matthew Sherman**, who teaches, among other things, set design at multiple schools and colleges.



*Pat Gersten*



*Kath Johansen's powerful 202Floored, created after her husband's illness*

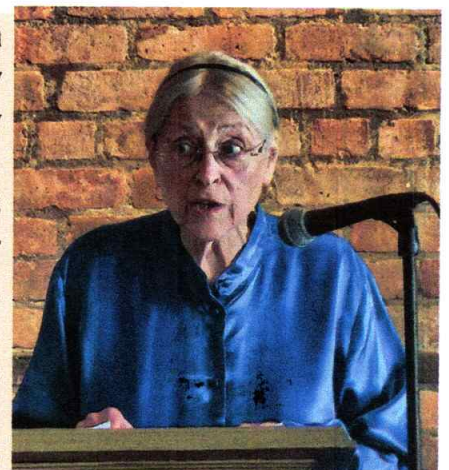
*Rocky Pinciotti*



*Jena Love*

Our 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Poetry Festival in September, curated by Museum Secretary and Poet Laureate of the village of Liberty **Marilyn Laufer**, was a great success as usual. The packed house sat with rapt attention as poets from around our region read their poetry which alternately entertained, challenged and entranced the crowd.

The high quality of the varied poetry was matched by the superb readings themselves. In many respects, this is a tribute to the founder of the festival, the late **Walter Keller**...the village of Liberty's first Poet Laureate... who brought his theater training to his own poetry presentations.



The Museum's 30<sup>th</sup> Harvest Festival took place in October and with it, the eagerly anticipated 30<sup>th</sup> Chili Cook-Off. Pretenders to best chili throne entered in three categories, Vegetarian, Meat and, for the first time in many years, Restaurants. Board member Naomi Frumess challenged five Liberty eateries to compete and compete they did: **Casi's Diner, the Liberty Diner, the New Munson Diner, the Star Bar and Grill** and the **White Sulphur Springs Inn** all accepted the challenge. As always, visitors sampled each chili in a blind tasting and then voted for their favorites in each category. In the vegetarian category, **Jackie Chiger** of Monticello easily won in her category, **Matt Frumess** won in the meat group and...drum roll please...in the restaurant category, all were tied until, at the last moment, a late straggler arrived, tasted all the chilis and, voilá, the New Munson Diner emerged as the winner. And no one left hungry.



*Christos Kritiko, owner of the  
New Munson Diner and  
Naomi Frumess, Liberty Museum*

Our exhibition season closed with a rare exhibit of paintings and drawings of **Frank DiModica**, of Monticello. Frank was a drummer for the famed local trio, "Tryangle", playing the Concord Hotel, all the while producing an extraordinary portfolio of oil paintings and drawings. Frank considers himself an old school modernist, drawing inspiration from abstract expressionism, surrealism, and of course music. He approaches his painting with a jazz sensibility. "Jazz is his God", he proclaims. We expect to have a display of additional works next year

At our board meeting in November, the Museum welcomed two new board members, **Kusar Grace** of Liberty and **Hope Blecher** of Parksville. We are always on the lookout for volunteers as well as artists who would like to be a part of our Museum family. Call or text the Museum at (845) 807-6055. We will return your call as soon as possible.

## **WE NEED YOUR HELP**

To continue to produce our exhibits and presentations, we not only need operating expenses but, after 30 years, many of our original renovations need work. Most immediate is the need to replace the roof or, more accurately, three roofs. Estimates have hovered around \$70,000. Without an intact roof, it is difficult to continue any further renovations in the building proper. We've been patching and coating the roof for many years but these are only stopgap measures.

Once the building is secured, we will restore the back section where the original bakery ovens were (and still are). It is an enormous unobstructed space which, once completed, can be used for social and community events and conventions, large Museum exhibitions and performances. We will be able to rent the space when not used by the Museum, adding badly needed income.

The Museum is funded almost entirely by membership fees and donations. In addition to rejoining (or joining for the first time), please consider an additional donation. You can go to our website, [www.libertymuseum.com](http://www.libertymuseum.com), and click on the contribution link or, of course, return the membership form with your check. The museum is a 501(c)(3) organization and all donations are tax deductible. If you are getting RMDs from your retirement accounts, you can designate your contribution to the Museum and you will avoid the tax.

PO Box 1087 • Liberty NY 12754

[www.libertymuseum.com](http://www.libertymuseum.com) (845)807-6055