

*For Immediate Release*

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**Contact:** Betsy Cantlin, 802-431-0204 or outreach@chandler-arts.org

## **A Gift Unveiled at Chandler**

Chandler Center for the Arts in Randolph will receive a monumental gift on Friday July 15 in the form of a large abstract sculpture donated by Braintree artist Karen Petersen. It is the final installation in Chandler's extensive and exciting renovation making it the vibrant focus of the arts in the Central Vermont community. The dedication begins at 5 pm and will be followed by a gala reception in the Gallery for Petersen's exhibit, "The Gift – Karen Petersen Retrospective" of sculpture and paintings.

The sculpture which was created for Chandler is still under wraps and will not be on view until the dedication, but board President Janet Watton and Director Becky McMeekin worked with the sculptor to choose a piece that reflects Chandler's place in the community.

Petersen describes her piece as "a bronze abstract piece that symbolizes what I have seen happen to children and adults as they participate in so many ways in the various activities generated by Chandler. The sculpture is in the form of an opening seed that is also the opening of the human heart and mind to potential, to joy, to the excitement of sharing talents and good will."

A lifelong artist and educator with an international reputation, Petersen feels strongly that for a public sculpture to find a place in the visual culture of a community, there needs to be dialogue and education. The retrospective exhibit communicates her artistic process and showcases a career of luminous and contemplative artistic achievement. Activities during the two-month exhibit will include talks by the artist and tours for local schools in the early fall.

To date, the sculpture does not have a name. Based on her experiences installing public art pieces in Connecticut and as a way of encouraging engagement, she plans to let the community interact with the Chandler piece and offer suggestions for titles.

That process of involving the community in the ongoing life of the sculpture will be part of the dedication ceremony on July 15 as titles for the piece are put forth by statewide and community arts leaders. Alex Aldrich, executive director of the Vermont Arts Council, and a representative from Governor Shumlin's office will both speak about the role of the arts in Vermont communities.

The paintings and sculptures in the Petersen Retrospective will be on display through September 25. The summer is the perfect time to be immersed in Petersen's organic sculptural forms and her "Landscapes of the Heart" painting series. Explore how she visually expresses that "I create what my hands see and feel, ignoring fashion and embracing the lessons I have learned from teachers, past masters and a life of conflict and beauty."

Chandler Gallery is located at 71-73 Main Street in Randolph. Gallery hours are Thursdays from 4-6 PM and Saturday and Sunday from 1-3 PM, or may be scheduled by appointment by calling 802-431-0204.