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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Lenawee Council for the Visual Arts** **For additional information:**

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**LCVA Spotlight Exhibition**

**June 24 – August 6**

LCVA Gallery is proud to announce the opening June 24 of its first **Spotlight Exhibition** in the new gallery space at the Croswell Theatre, 129 E. Maumee Street, in downtown Adrian. The Lenawee Council for the Visual Arts officers and board selected members Anne Flora, Mary Gautz, Joan J. Larsen, and Bryan VanBenschoten for this year’s exhibition, which continues through August 7.

Flora works primarily in felted wool fiber, making one-of-a-kind wall hangings as well as pieces of wearable art. Gautz is a nature photographer who finds many of her subjects in Lenawee County, and Larsen captures still lifes of fruit and flowers in printed paintings called monotypes. VanBenschoten creates functional pottery ware with innovative forms.

The public is invited to meet the artists at the reception on Friday, June 25, 7:00 – 10:00 p.m. The event is free.

Trained in art education at Western Michigan University, Joan J. Larsen became a full-time artist in the early 1990s. Her goal is to quickly capture not only the subject, but also the urgency and worth of each moment. “I am acutely aware of the life force drifting away from my freshly picked lilacs,” she says, and “I cringe a bit when I see brown spots starting to form on a pear.” Monotypes—unique prints made through printmaking techniques—are well suited to the immediacy of her works.

Mary Gautz continues to study digital photography and web site design at Siena Heights University while working for the Adrian Dominican Sisters. Interested in the ways photography can catch nature’s constant changes, she hopes her work helps viewers see what fascinates her through the camera lens. Her work was published in the 2007 issue of *Jackson 24*, and she has received several awards in the Photo Arts Club of Toledo’s annual photo contests, exhibited at the National Center for Nature Photography at Secor Metropark. An exhibitor at Adrian’s Art-a-Licious for three years, she will also participate in the University of Toledo’s Alumni Association “Art on the Mall” in July.

Larsen’s artwork has been shown in many regional juried exhibitions and several solo exhibitions. In addition to many private collections, she is represented in the permanent collection of CMS Energy World Headquarters in Jackson, Michigan. In 2008, she designed the Michigan Seventh Congressional District ornament for the White House’s Christmas tree and attended an artist reception there with First Lady Laura Bush.

Anne Flora first trained in printmaking at the University of Iowa and exhibited and worked in printmaking studios in New York City before falling in love with felting, which allows her to “transform wisps of fiber using just soap, water and friction.” Like the artist herself, feltmaking has evolved--from “an ancient form used to fashion utilitarian items such as clothing and shelter,” she notes,” into an art form that attracts a worldwide audience of artisans and collectors. Felted artwork can be small or large, firm or diaphanous, two or three dimensional, utilitarian or a pure art form.”

Flora, now based in Tecumseh, teaches workshops and exhibits widely in galleries, juried exhibitions, and art fairs throughout Michigan.

Bryan VanBenschoten earned his art degree in ceramics at Alfred University in New York before becoming Master Potter at The Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village in Dearborn. Retiring after 29 years, he now works in the ceramics area and teaches sculpture at Adrian College. VanBenschoten focuses on creating pottery that functions, while simultaneously finding the most aesthetic and innovative form for each piece. “The challenge is to synthesize form, function, and proportion and find creative solutions for each. The farther out on this limb one ventures, the greater the possibility for the work to become aesthetically appealing. ”

His work is collected internationally, and he has gone as far as South Korea to demonstrate and teach workshops. In addition, he shows in juried and invitational exhibitions nationally and locally.

The Gallery is open during the Croswell’s business hours and when the box office opens, two hours before a production, through performances. This exhibition will be open 9:00 – 5:00, Monday through Friday, and from 6:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 1:00 p.m. on Sundays through the theatre’s performances. It closes at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 6.

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