



PHOTO BY
ALBERT J.
MARRO

This pastel nude by Kate Mueller of Montpelier is on display at the Chaffee Art Center in Rutland.

Celebration of female forms at the Chaffee

BY ANNE GALLOWAY

The Chaffee Art Center in Rutland is hosting five simultaneous solo shows through Feb.

13. The Queen Anne mansion on South Main Street is filled with paintings, pastels, photographs and student art.

The front room is chockablock with Bruce Pendleton's arresting, poster-sized photographs of still life compositions, abstract images and a portrait of a clown's face that seems to stare derisively at the viewer. Across the way is an exhibition of papier mache snowmen and women made by students at Christ the King School. In the center room, Laurie Hyde Wilson's impressionistic oil paintings depict people milling around farmers' markets. The hallway is loaded with Kelly Kingston's mixed media interpretations of nature.

Nothing front and center at the Chaffee prepares the viewer for the back room, however. Kate Mueller's bold pastel drawings of female nudes blur the line between abstraction and representation. Nudes are auto-

matically fascinating, anyway. Where else, but in an art gallery or museum, do you have the opportunity to ponder the way we're put together without seeming like a pervert? And Mueller has a knack for giving her female forms an edge. The breasts, bellies and legs of her torsos are broken down into subtle shapes — cylinders, triangles, spheres — made up of dark intense shades paired with deep golds and pale greens. Mueller's subjects are svelte, obese and somewhere in between. In "Urn," for example, an ample bosom rests on two rolls of belly fat, which are centered over a pair of thighs that stick straight out at the viewer. Nudes are rarely this colorful, or this candid.

The Chaffee Art Center's "Featured Artist Exhibition" is on view through Feb. 13. The center, located at 16 S. Main St., is open 10 a.m. through 5 p.m., Mondays through Fridays and noon to 4 p.m., Sundays. The center is closed on Tuesdays. For more information, call 775-0356 or go online to www.chaffeeartcenter.org.