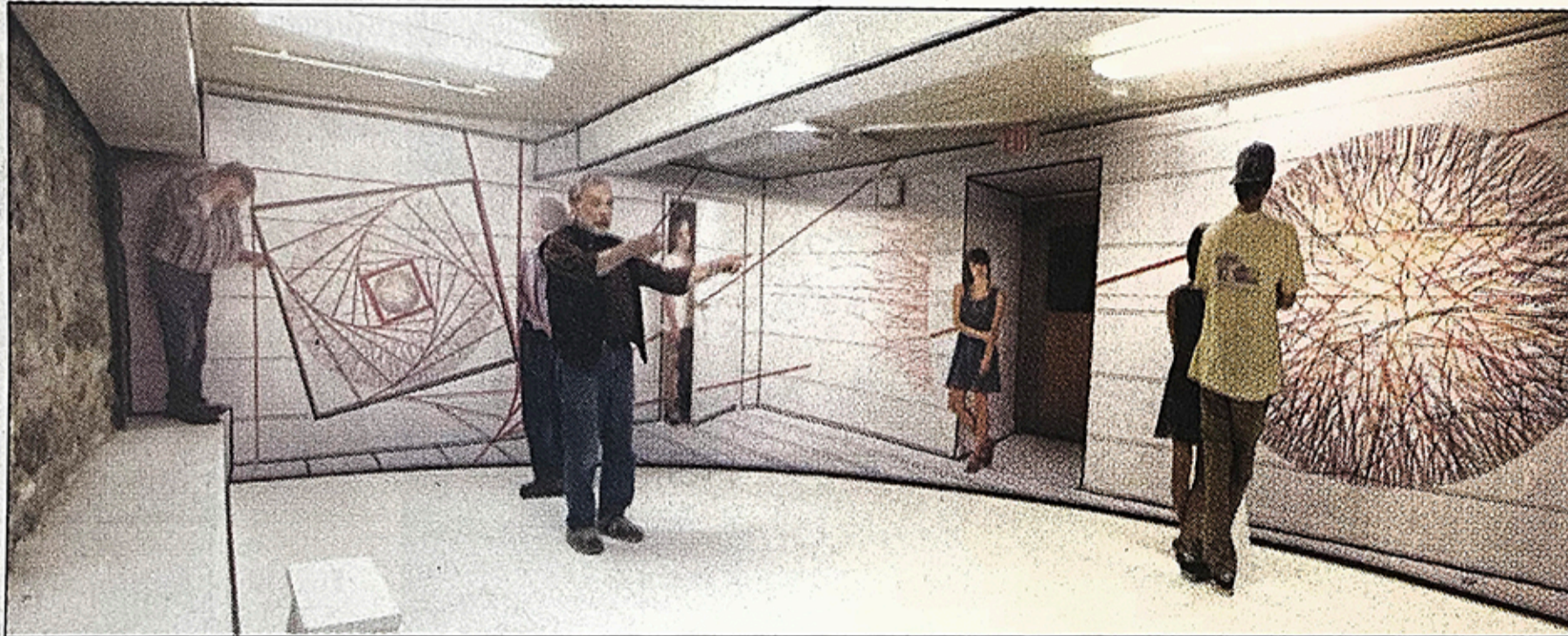


Business Monday

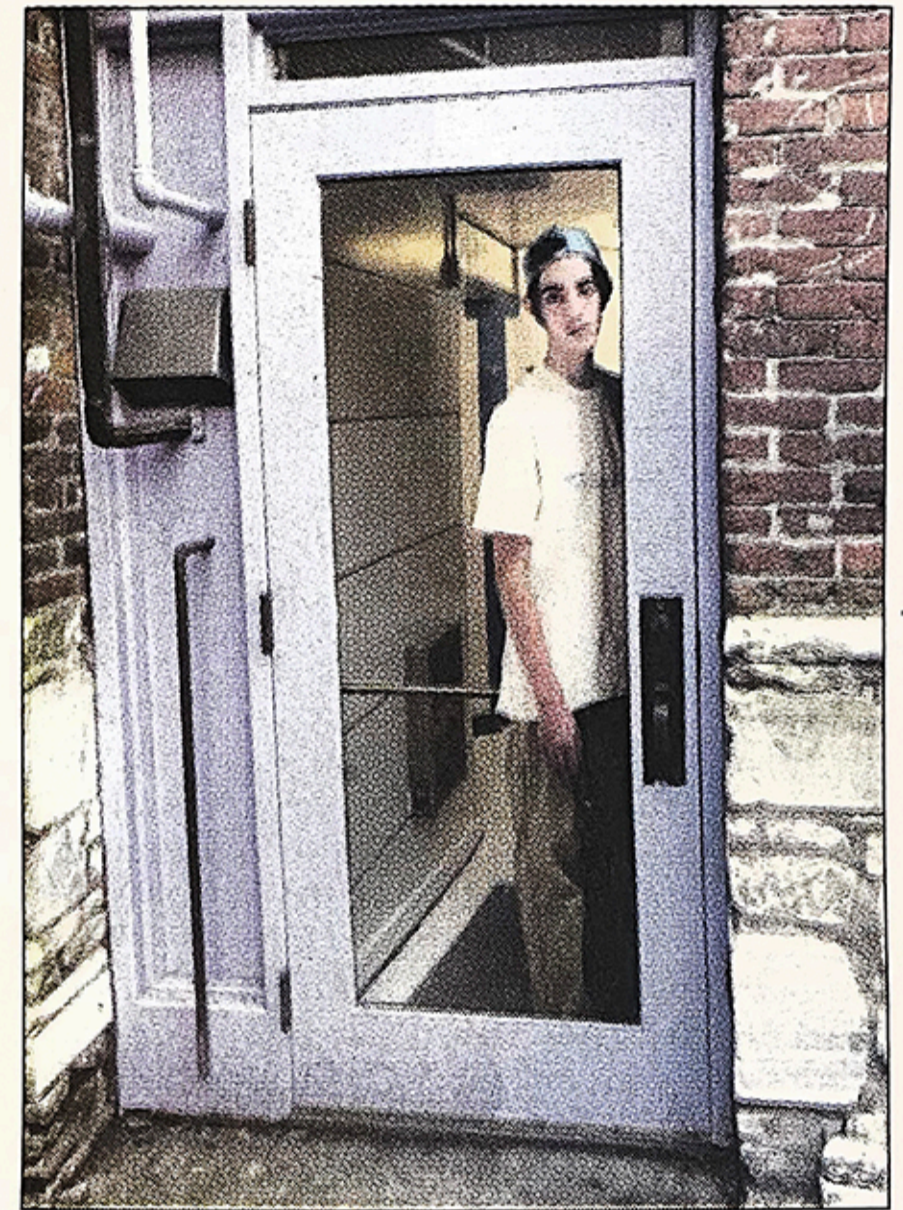
Local ■ State ■ National

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ALBERT J. MARRO / STAFF PHOTOS

William Ramage stands in the midst of his latest exhibit which is located off Center Street Alley in Rutland. At right, the entrance to the exhibit is shown.



Picture this

New gallery opens in downtown Rutland

By GORDON DRITSCHLO
STAFF WRITER

At a glance, it looks like a young man is peering out through the glass door by one of the entrances to Center Street Alley. It's just a photo, but its seeming realism hints at what lies beyond the door.

A work by Castleton State College professor Bill Ramage will spend the next year in the building, which will later hold a planned art gallery for Castleton State College. The piece titled "papaNova" involves images of people creating and looking at colorful abstract designs. Like the image in the doorway, the life-size cutouts appear three-dimensional, and careful study reveals the room isn't what it seems.

"It's all about the way you perceive space," Ramage said. "This space is absolutely life-size and to understand what it is you have to stand in the middle of it. It's hard to explain it or take a photograph of it. ... I've been thinking about perception for 30 years, maybe longer." Owner Mark Foley is giving Ramage the space for free for a year.

"Somebody's got to get out there and make some-

"I think it's right for downtown, it's interesting. We're trying to redefine downtown, try stuff, see what fits. I think it's one more step in trying to do something."

Mark Foley, downtown building owner

thing," Foley said. "I think it's right for downtown, it's interesting. We're trying to redefine downtown, try stuff, see what fits. I think it's one more step in trying to do something."

Ramage said he is looking beyond his own piece, and even the gallery slated to follow it.

"In our initial conversations, I told (Foley) Rutland needed an art site, which is different from a gallery," Ramage said.

While a gallery typically rotates exhibits every few weeks or months, Ramage said an art site has a single exhibit — or a single piece — over a much longer time. He said art sites in New York City have been in place as long as 30 years.

Ramage said he believes Rutland can develop an arts scene and that he hopes "papaNova" can help start it off. Ramage noted the effort to build an arts scene in Brandon and said Brandon's real estate prices were 30 to 40 percent higher than Rutland's as a result.

"All those houses have really wet basements," he said. "There's a seed, here, something that can develop. ... If there was a serious art presence in Rutland, it could impact the town. There's a bigger scheme of things, here."

Ramage said he did not want to denigrate the city's existing arts presence.

"I think the Chaffee does a good job," he said. "Rutland could use something more, something else."

Ramage calls "papaNova" a "photosculpture" and said it is the fifth he's done.

The piece is part of an attempt to develop a reversal of linear perspective, a technique used to create the illusion of depth in two-dimensional drawings. The artist imagines a point behind the images from which they are emerging, creating an effect in which the parts of the image that are supposed to be closer to the viewer

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are larger than those that are supposed to be farther away.

In Ramage's technique, which he calls "centripetal perspective," the point is located behind the viewer rather than behind the image.

The result is curved walls appearing to be corners, cardboard cutouts looking like real people and images of sprinkler heads and exit signs appearing to be actual, physical features of

the room until examined closely.

Starting next week, Ramage said he plans to open the installation to the public from 1 to 5 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays as well as when the Paramount Theatre has events. He said he will expand those hours if he can find volunteers willing to mind the installation in his absence.

"I'm going to get a little sandwich board to put on the sidewalk to say when it's open," he said. "People have to come and see this."