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Morgan Arts Council – Berkeley Springs, WV

304-258-2300 – [macicehouse.org](http://www.macicehouse.org)

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ICE HOUSE CELEBRATES THE MOUNTAINS

BERKELEY SPRINGS, WV – The Morgan Arts Council presents *Close to Nature's Heart* at the Ice House Gallery featuring more than a dozen artists celebrating the majesty of the mountains in a variety of media. The show, curated by Theresa Wells Stifel opens Friday, September 18 and hangs through November 8. Gallery hours are Thursday through Monday, 11am-5pm.

Stifel said that she was “inspired by the offerings submitted for the show” which range from paintings, photography and pottery to glass, mosaics and fiber works. She summons a quote from famed naturalist John Muir to describe the feeling of the show: "Keep close to Nature's heart... and break clear away, once in a while, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean." Stifel finds delightful all the different ways artists interpret the serenity of the mountains. “In these times of turmoil, the exhibit provides a much needed respite,” she promises.

Regional artists living in West Virginia, Virginia and Maryland have contributed to the show, and the mountains they capture are not just those nearby but also the Great Smokies and Oregon's Hood Mountain. Featured artwork includes Anne Smyers' lively and colorful quilts and Diane Hobbs' naturalistic pottery which uses earth tones and carving to conjure the undulations of the hills. Alexia Scott's scroll murals capture the Shenandoah in a casual yet classic way while Dawn Whitmore's photography highlights the glory of sunshine in the mountains.

There are two additional shows at the Ice House. Maryellen Willingham displays pour paintings in Art with Healing Intention hanging in the Hall of Dreams. From October 1 through November 1, Mark Schwenk's photography features Empowering Survivors in Annalee's Dream classroom adjacent to the Gallery.

Precautions in place throughout the Ice House are aimed at the safety of staff and patrons.

The curated gallery shows are presented with financial assistance from the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History, and the National Endowment for the Arts, with approval from the West Virginia Commission on the Arts, and local hotel/motel taxes.

The Ice House is at the corner of Independence and Mercer in downtown Berkeley Springs, WV. For more information on this and other MAC activities, call 304-258-2300 or visit www.macicehouse.org.