



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE!

September 29, 2010

Contact: Margaret Jacobs, Exhibition Coordinator, 603-448-3117

ROBERT McCOLLUM

AVA Gallery and Art Center

Playful Petals

Photographs by Robert McCollum

Johnson Sisters Library (second floor)

October 15 – November 12, 2010

Opening Reception: Friday, October 15, 5-7pm



Playful Petals: Photographs by Robert McCollum

An exhibition of photographs by the late Robert McCollum will be on view in AVA Gallery and Art Center's Johnson Sisters Library, located on the second floor, from October 15 through November 12, 2010. A reception, free and open to the public, will take place at AVA, 11 Bank Street in Lebanon, NH on Friday, October 15, from 5 to 7pm.

The desire to observe and to share his observations with others pervaded McCollum's life, both as a highly distinguished physician and as an artist. The former Dean of Dartmouth Medical School (1982-1990), McCollum died at his home in Etna on September 13. He was 85. In a conversation recorded by

his wife Audrey, on September 2, he reminisced about his creative life and how he wanted the exhibition at AVA to go on, even if he might not be there.

McCollum's interest in photography was stirred at the tender age of five, on a family vacation in Colorado, where he captured the beauty of the Rockies with a Box Brownie. He pursued photography throughout his life, with images ranging from those taken on his world travels to intimate close-ups of flowers in his own garden. Though, for a number of years, his artistic pursuits were overshadowed by his medical responsibilities—during his time at the Yale University School of Medicine he was noted for his clinical research on viral illnesses; he also served as the Chair of Yale Department of Epidemiology and Public Health—McCollum sought to reawaken his interest in art during his years at Dartmouth Medical School. It was during this time that he began studying art with a number of regional artists, including Charlet Davenport, who was teaching painting at Lebanon College. Davenport recalls him telling her about a teacher who told him, when he was nine years-old, that he could never become an artist, since he didn't know how to draw. "So," McCollum told Davenport, "I have always been a secret artist. I have even been known to hide my artwork under my bed." He finally "came out" as an artist when he was leading the campaign for the expansion and move of the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center from Hanover to Lebanon, NH.

After McCollum retired from medical research and education, he rediscovered the joys of recording the natural world, this time with a digital camera, revealing wonders that many others fail to see. Writes Audrey McCollum: "The almost surrealistic forms portrayed in *Playful Petals* had absorbed him since last spring."

AVA Gallery and Art Center/Alliance for the Visual Arts is a non-profit organization representing Vermont and New Hampshire artists. Located at 11 Bank Street right off Colburn Park in Lebanon, NH, the gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11AM to 5PM and by appointment; closed on Sundays and Mondays.

Admission is free, and the gallery is accessible to the handicapped.



AVA is supported in part by
the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts
and the National Endowment for the Arts.