


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

 March 15, 2025

CONTACT:

Whitney Aldrich, Owner

Axel's Gallery & Frame Shop, 10 Stowe Street, Waterbury, VT 05676

802-244-7801

info@AxelsGallery.com

AxelsGallery.com

**Susan Smereka Explores Family Dynamics and Emotional Inheritance in New Exhibition
"Coagulate"**

WATERBURY, VT –

Susan Smereka, a visionary artist known for exploring human connections and emotional histories, presents a groundbreaking exhibition titled *Coagulate*. Opening on April 2nd, this body of work delves into the intricate and often invisible bonds that shape our identities—examining how family structures, both biological and chosen, influence who we are and how we relate to the world around us.

Coagulate invites viewers into a visceral exploration of family dynamics, emotional inheritance, and the role of memory in shaping identity. Drawing from both the science of epigenetics and personal experiences, Susan challenges traditional notions of family as a rigid, biological construct. Instead, the work suggests that family is a fluid, constantly evolving network of bonds—formed not only by blood relations but also by friendships, colleagues, and chosen connections.

"Genetic studies show that our DNA carries not only biological traits but also emotional imprints from our ancestors," Susan Smereka explains. "In my work, I explore how these inherited memories can influence our present lives, often without our conscious awareness. My aim is to bring together fragments of the past—letters, photographs, and personal artifacts—and transform them into something new, something that holds space for healing and growth."

Each piece in *Coagulate* weaves together fragmented materials—pieces of family letters, photographs, and personal mementos—with the quarter almond shape, a recurring motif

symbolizing the individual. The process of stitching these elements together mirrors the artist's meditation on the imperfections, messiness, and beauty found in familial connections. In the act of creation, Susan reveals how family, despite its complexities, remains a source of resilience and transformation.

Informed by the turbulence of recent political and social events, the artist has felt an urgency to reflect on the theme of retreat and renewal. "Since the election, I've been grappling with a sense of retreat—almost a need to hide," Susan notes. "The word 'coagulate' spoke to me as a way of understanding how we come together in times of fragmentation, finding strength in our relationships and in the very act of healing."

This exhibition is more than just a reflection on family—it's a call to examine what binds us together, even in times of discord. It's about finding beauty in the dysfunction and understanding that, like family, art too is a living, evolving entity.

Coagulate will be on view at Axel's Gallery, located at 10 Stowe Street, Waterbury VT from April 2 – May 10, 2025. A public opening reception will take place on Friday, April 4th from 6-8pm and the artist will be available for interviews and discussions about the themes explored in the exhibition.

For more information, please contact Whitney Aldrich at 802-244-7801 or info@axelsgallery.com.

With the exception of special events, Axel's is open Wednesday – Friday 10:00 am – 6:00 pm and Saturdays 10:00 – 4:00 pm.

Images attached:

Photo Corner.jpeg (courtesy of the artist)

Nickname.jpeg (courtesy of the artist)

About Susan Smereka

Susan Smereka was born and raised outside Toronto, Ontario, and has lived in Vermont for over thirty years. Smereka graduated from Concordia University, Montreal, 1994 with a BFA in painting and drawing. Smereka co-founded 'new new art studio,' a space for teaching, exhibitions, and the creation of fine art, in 2020 with her partner Kevin Donegan in Burlington, Vermont.

Susan's exhibits include; Highland Center for the Arts, "Unique Similarities," 2024, Monotypes; Vermont State University, "Fluid Dynamics," 2024, a collaborative installation

with Kevin Donegan; Central VT Medical Center, "LOCUS", new works; Art at the Kent, "Traces," 2023, sewn collages and drawing on wood; Scavenger Gallery, 2023, "Family"; new sewn collages; Green Tara, "Transitions" 2021, painted panels and monotypes with sewn collage; Towle Hill Studio, "Multiphase Flow," 2018, reclaimed book works; Metro Gallery, "Cradle and All", 2014, hair drawings.

susansmereka.com