

Volunteers In Art Newsletter

Fernando Botero Painter Of Colombia's Soul

The Nevada Museum of Art's latest exhibition, *The Baroque World of Fernando Botero*, is a big show -- big in every way.

It is an important major show of an artist who is wildly successful worldwide. It covers the entire third floor and more. The canvases are big, with glorious colors, and inflated subjects that fill them up. Some of the sculptures are huge, but even the smaller ones are done with sumptuous rounded forms. The collection is the work of a remarkable Colombian-born artist, Fernando Botero. The Colombian Ambassador to the United States, Carolina Barco, refers to him in the show's catalog as the 'painter of Colombia's soul.'



Fernando Botero, *The President*, 1989. Oil on canvas, 84 ½ x 69 inches.



Fernando Botero, *The First Lady*, 1989. Oil on canvas, 84 ½ x 69 inches.

So how did this man arrive at this style which many others have mimicked? In his childhood in the 1930's and 40's he saw ornate Baroque churches with dramatic religious paintings and sculpture. He saw colorful tile-roofed homes and lush vegetation. His eyes were opened to modern art when he happened upon a book which dealt with Picasso's art. He spent the proceeds he won in an art competition on an extended trip to Europe. In Spain he consumed the work of Velazquez and Goya. In Italy he studied the art of fresco painting and absorbed the best of Quattrocento painting. He also came to admire the work of Courbet, Ingres and Delacroix. In the late 1950's he went to Mexico, and took in the work of the great muralists Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros. It was in Mexico that he developed his unique style. He told of a day that he was painting "Still life with a mandolin." He made the sound hole quite small, and realized that it changed and inflated the form of the mandolin in a way he found very pleasing. From that time on the form of his subjects

became rounded and enlarged. He has said:

“The purpose of my style is to exalt the volumes, not only because that enlarges the area in which I can apply color, but also because it conveys the sensuality, the exuberance, the profusion of the form I am searching for.”

So in this show we see all of these threads coming together – his memory of, and kinship with, past and contemporary artists, his Colombian upbringing, and his own particular vision. Many of the pieces are his own variations on familiar classical paintings –Velazquez, Ingres, Piero della Francesca – but always with his own inflated forms and odd perspectives. There are portraits of artists he admires, from Picasso to Giacometti. There are distinctly Latin American portraits of solemn dignitaries and clergymen with all the trappings of power. There are bullfighters, prostitutes, bicycle racers and artists’ models. There are Colombian village scenes that show normal every-day goings-on. There are still lifes with the standard fruits and musical instruments, but done with Botero’s

stunning colors, rounded forms and skewed perspectives. But behind these wonderful colors and benign subjects there is often a feeling of menace, or of sadness. Colombia is a country that has been plagued by natural disasters as well as political violence. Surely this has helped to form Botero’s magical, melancholy world.

In the 1970’s Botero began to translate his forms into sculpture. His sculptures are sleek and sensual, highly finished so that light accentuates form. They are done in Pietrasanta, the Tuscan town near Carrara famous for its marble and bronze facilities. Botero summers there and divides the rest of his time between New York, Monte Carlo and Paris. It is not safe for Botero to return to Colombia, and yet he feels that his entire artistic sensibility is rooted in Colombia. “My country and ‘Paisa’ origin have been my strength and spirit, the essence of my artistic creation.”

K. Durham

The Baroque World of Fernando Botero is on display from May 1- July 25 in the Feature Gallery South, North & East.

Robert Caples

Seldom Seen Works On Display



Robert Cole Caples, *Untitled*, not dated. Pastel and colored pencil on paper, 17 7/8 x 23 5/8 inches. Collection of Nevada Museum of Art, bequest of Rosemary Riley Caples.

Those of us who seek out the work of local artists tend to think of Robert Cole Caples as one of our own. His subtle images of Nevada landscapes show such intimacy with their subject they can only have been created by a native son, we like to think.

See for yourself three of his mixed media images of tall, nearly barren desert mountains currently on display in the Sierra Nevada, Great Basin Gallery. These seldom exhibited works, part of the permanent collection of the Nevada Museum of Art, capture the very spirit of our environment, with clear, high-country light playing on the jagged peaks.

Jim McCormick wrote in the Nevada Historical Society Quarterly, Volume 33, summer 1990:

“In the 1950’s and 1960’s he created elegant, haunting landscapes that portrayed no place in particular, but were precise distillations of the desert, mountains and

dramatic atmospheric effects experienced in the desert. Space is at once telescoped and expanded infinitely. The substance of the mountains and the volume of air are sucked out in favor of the essence of mountains and glowing atmospheric effects.”

Certainly, we assure ourselves, this is the work of a man who spent his lifetime in the intermountain west. Then, of course, we must remind ourselves that Caples was actually a New Yorker, a former student of the National Academy of Design and the Art Students League. He was born in 1908, and never saw Nevada until 1924. And his stay here was interrupted by years of further study in New York and California, service in the Navy during World War II, recuperation from a long illness and finally retirement to Connecticut in 1958. And there he stayed, no longer painting, but devoting years to writing and illustrating a children’s book, “The Potter and his Children.” Published in 1971, it never found an audience. He died in 1979. Surely Caples’ best known works are a series of poignant sketches -- portraits of native Indians, begun in the 1930’s when he was employed by the Federal Arts Project -- that were published by the University of Nevada Press in two limited editions starting in 1972. Many of the originals hang in the president’s office at UNR. The portfolios, “People of the Silent Land: a Portfolio of Nevada Indians,” continue to be avidly sought by collectors.

Visiting the gallery of Great Basin scenery is always a pleasure. If you’re not already familiar with Robert Cole Caples, stop by, spend a little time among his lovely mountains and learn why he’s a favorite among our native sons, expatriate division.

Joan Elder

The works of Robert Cole Caples are currently on display in the Sierra Nevada, Great Basin Gallery.

Docent's Choice

Views from China: Yang Yongliang and the Modern Metropolis



Yang Yongliang, *Viridescence, Stock World*, 2009. Inkjet print on paper, 16 x47 inches.
Courtesy of the artist and LIMN Gallery, San Francisco

When you visit this haunting exhibit in the Installation Gallery, be prepared to stay a while. These mysterious images will capture your fancy, and close inspection will lure you into puzzling over the artist's technique and musing over his intentions.

At first glance you will be struck by the delicate, almost fragile images that seem like a contemporary incarnation of traditional Chinese scroll paintings. But as you focus on the details, you'll realize the works are actually photo montages, the mountains are actually layer upon layer of skyscrapers, the forests are actually near endless repetitions of high voltage transmission towers. Yang Yongliang, born in 1980, is a member of the generation of young Chinese artists who are pushing the boundaries of contemporary art in a culture imbued with ancient customs. He lives in Shanghai and studied in Hong Kong, but his vision is international and his technique is of the moment. He employs cameras and computers for his work, not paints and brushes. This is his first solo exhibition in the United States.

Consider, first, the scroll on your right as you enter the gallery. An ancient Chinese scroll would not show itself all at once; its story would unfold gradually as one end opened slowly and the other closed, revealing a story in its imagery. This scroll is fully realized and held in place with a plexiglass sheet. Its title is *On the Quiet Water; Underwater Paradise*. What an enigma! Lots of water, of course, but mountains too, and cities, towns. The focal point is a group of circular mechanical devices. Is this an amusement park? No, these are not ferris wheels, but almost. So much is happening here, even a dirigible is sinking in the bay. And yet, despite its diverse elements and its energy, the effect is serene. Perhaps that's because of those mechanical circles, to which our eye keeps returning, reminding us of the infinity of time, with neither beginning nor end.

Look closely at the "Heavenly Cities" series, exploding spirals of skyscrapers, construction cranes

and freeways, depicting the seeming frenzy of growth and expansion modern China is experiencing. These are tornadoes, whirlpools, each a sublime vortex threatening to draw the viewer into some industrial hell.

Adjacent to these strong, scary images are *Snow Cities*, calm landscapes where activity is suppressed under a cool blanket of snow.

I love this whole exhibit, and after an extended hour of docent training class, I returned for another hour just to be alone with these lovely works. My favorites are the two photo montages called "Viridescence #3" and "Viridescence: Stock Market." Here again are those mountain ranges of skyscrapers, those forests of steel transmission pylons. But these are not just black and white; they have tints of coppery green, hence their titles.

The image on the left is not created from photos of a Chinese city, but of New York, the powerful financial center of the world. You can even make out the distinctive dome of the Chrysler Building and the Statue of Liberty. In the upper right-hand corner is a graph depicting the course of the NYSE, the Nasdaq and the S&P500 over the past few years. Adjacent to that is another graph, presumably of the Shanghai market. Each shows the ominous fall in value the financial markets have recently endured. And the mountains tumble in concert with the graphs -- an exquisite composition prompting the viewer to consider, perhaps, the artist's deeper intentions.

Each of these works bears the traditional stamp of the artist printed in brilliant vermilion. They also bear a colophon, a column in Chinese characters, providing production information on the work.

Don't miss this. The exhibit will remain on display until Sept. 12, plenty of time to visit and revisit. You'll treasure it's fresh perspective and gain new insight into a culture we often find incomprehensible.

Joan Elder

Clear Improvements

Redfield Learning Center



If you haven't already been, the 2nd floor of the Museum is something to see. No, it's not a new exhibit, but the renovation of the Redfield Learning Center.

Set amongst the Museum's permanent galleries, the Redfield Learning Center is a place for both creation and display of our own local artists. Recently, glass walls were installed to replace the previous construction, resulting in a more open and energetic atmosphere, both in the corridor and the classroom. Clearly an improvement.



Website Heats Up

An "N" of many colors



Our Museum website has been upgraded. In addition to a new easier to use layout, is the inclusion of the "N" logo in the upper left corner.

This is no ordinary N. Not only does it represent the Museum's new image, but it also changes color according to the current temperature. So the next time you're wondering what the weather's like, go to www.nevadaart.org and check out the color of the "N".

Badge of Silver

The New Badges Are Here!



Displaying the new 17 letter Museum logo and unique "N" against a shining silver background, the new badges are another addition to the Museum's identity branding.

Dangling hour tags are also available to display your commitment to our Museum. If you haven't received your new badge or hour tag yet, contact Rosalind Bedell at rosalind.bedell@nevadaart.org.

Annual Museum Meeting
Tuesday, June 1st at 5:30 PM
Museum Theatre
Reception to follow in the Theatre Lobby

Museum News

Dates & Updates



VIA Council

New faces and Old friends

The results of the Volunteers in Art Council 2010 election are in. Congratulations to Helen O'Brien and Heather De Angeli.

Helen and Heather were both re-elected to serve two more years on the VIA Council. Helen will serve as Council Treasurer and Heather will remain on as Council Secretary.

Other VIA Council additions include Sharon Dollarhide, who was selected for Administrative Chair while Nancy Oakley will hold the Education/Art Break seat.

Currently available is the Volunteer Recognition/Support Chair. This committee chair is responsible for events that recognize the Museum's volunteers. If you are interested in this position or would like more information about the duties involved, please contact Rosalind Bedell at rosalind.bedell@nevadaart.org.

Art Break

Double the Art, Double the Fun

Volunteers, You're invited!

Bring a friend and join us Saturday, May 22nd., 11:30 AM at the Museum's front desk as we assemble for a docent led tour of the *Botero* Exhibit and the RBC Wealth Management Show, *The Human Touch*. Afterwards meet fellow volunteers to discuss the exhibits while enjoying lunch at Café Musée.



Julia Jacquette, *Radiant*, 1999. Oil on Canvas

- **Art Bite Series:** Fridays, 12-12:30 PM. May 14th, Latin American History professor Linda Curcio-Nagy will present *Popular Culture and Politics in the World of Botero*. May 21st will feature *Botero and the Cultural Geographies of Latin America*, a visual tour through Columbia and Latin America.
- The next **Art Break** is scheduled for Saturday, May 22nd at 11:30 AM. This docent-led tour for volunteers only, will feature the *Botero* Show and the RBC Wealth Management Show, *The Human Touch*. Lunch and discussion to follow.
- This spring **First Thursdays** will take place 5-7 PM on May 6th, June 3rd and July 1st. May will feature music by *The Sturdy Beggars*.
- **Sunday Jazz Brunch** on May 16th welcomes the *Reno Jazz Youth Orchestra*. Join us again June 20th and July 18th for more great jazz. \$5-\$15, A la carte brunch menu from Café Musée.
- **Bryan Christiansen** Inside the Artist's Studio. Friday, May 7th at noon. \$8 for Members/\$10 Nonmembers. Bryan's *Trophy Hunter* Exhibition in the Hawkin's Contemporary Gallery closes May 9th.
- **Mother's Day Trunk Show.** Saturday, May 8th from 12-3 PM. Admission is Free.
- **Penelope Gottlieb's** *No \$ Down* comes down May 23rd. If you haven't strolled through this neighborhood, you're missing out. See it in the Media Gallery.

Museum Hours

MUSEUM GALLERY & STORE
Wednesday – Sunday 10 AM to 5 PM
Thursdays 10 AM to 8 PM
Galleries and Store are closed Monday & Tuesday and National Holidays

LIBRARY
Wednesday – Sunday 11 AM to 2 PM
1st Thursday 5 to 7 PM

CAFÉ MUSÉE
Wednesday – Sunday 11 AM – 2:30 PM
Closed Monday & Tuesday

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
Tuesday – Friday 9 AM to 5 PM

A Day For Saying Thanks

Volunteer Appreciation Day

On April 8th, the staff and Volunteers in Art Council presented our volunteers with an activity-filled day in appreciation for all their hours of hard work over the year.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's Volunteer Recognition Day on April 8. The day started out with staff joining volunteers at several California Avenue eateries. After lunch, Jennifer Ishimatsu held a hands-on class that centered around quilting, in honor of the Gee's Bend Quilt Exhibit, of which the Volunteers in Art were the main sponsor. Following Jen's class, volunteers gathered in the Theater to listen to Ann Wolfe discuss future museum exhibits. The day's activities concluded with a reception at the home of VIA Vice President Lynda Buhlig. Volunteers enjoyed appetizers, wine, and the company of other volunteers and had the pleasure of a few words from Nevada Museum of Art Board Chairman Mike Hillerby. It was a fun day, enjoyed by all who participated.



Volunteer Appreciation Day reception.

2009 Volunteer Hours

Building A Better Museum, One Hour at A Time

Hours our volunteers put in at the Museum are important not only for the physical improvements and community connections but also for the monetary benefits they provide. When applying for grants and corporate sponsorships volunteer hours show the amount of support within the community and can also be converted into income.

Last year we tallied 10,093 volunteer hours. That equals the work time of over five full-time positions. This means additional assistance for the Museum which it otherwise couldn't afford. The division of those hours is as follows:

Gift Shop	1,420
Docent Activities	2,362
Administration	954
Installation	583
Library	679
Front Desk	451
VIA Council	380
Events	1,188
Hands On/Education	318
Trustees	1,205
Other (misc., special projects, gardening, etc.)	553

Without our volunteers, the Museum wouldn't be where it is today. Your time and commitment is invaluable and greatly appreciated. So that we may continue to better our Museum and encourage art in our community, please be sure to record your hours when you volunteer. If you have any questions contact Rosalind Bedell @ rosalind.bedell@nevadaart.org.



Lynda's home provides refreshments and smiles.



Staff and Volunteers enjoy the evening's warm weather.

Nevada Museum of Art Staff

David Walker, Executive Director and CEO, ext. 229

Scott Bates, A/V Technician, ext. 113
Rosalind Bedell, H.R. and Associate Director of
Advancement and Volunteer Programs, ext. 252
Jackie Clay, Gift Shop Manager, ext. 106
Linda Dierks, Vice President of Advancement, ext. 332
Arlene Feola, Controller, ext. 231
Erik Flippo, Designer, ext. 263
Sara Frantz, Registrar, ext. 258
Bob Gabrielli, Director of Corporations, Foundations
and Gov't Relations, ext. 234
Nancy Hansford, Sales Assistant, ext. 107
Vic Hopner, Director of Operations
and Human Resources, ext. 114
Connie Howard, Grant Writer, ext. 230
Jen Ishimatsu, E.L. Cord Museum School Dir., ext. 260
Sara Kennedy, Mgr. Special Events/Rental Prg., ext. 225
Katie Lewis, Curatorial Asst./Exhib. Coor., ext. 259

Chris Martin, Preparator, ext. 256
Rachel Milon, Director of Comm. and Marketing, ext. 228
Claire Munoz, School Services and Outreach Mgr., ext. 253
Amy Oppio, Deputy Director, ext. 251
Colin Robertson, Curator of Education, ext. 254
Amanda Rookey, Associate Director of Museum
Advancement, ext. 232
Julie Tausch, Membership Coordinator, ext. 265
Kaleb Temple, Support Services Manager
Ann Wolfe, Curator of Exhibitions & Collections, ext. 255

Admissions Desk, ext. 100
Café Musée, ext. 147
Gift Shop, ext. 107
Founders Room, ext. 317
Library, ext. 204
Security Office, ext. 113

Nevada Museum of Art Phone Number 775-329-3333

This newsletter is edited and produced by Gosia Clark and Cami Welsh-Griffith. Your comments and suggestions are welcome.
Please contact us at contact@nmavolunteersinart.org

Volunteers in Art
Nevada Museum of Art
160 West Liberty Street
Reno, NV 89501

