



Fine Arts Center
COLORADO SPRINGS

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TAOS SOCIETY / COLORADO SPRINGS ABSTRACT **Fine Arts Center opens exhibits of contemporary and historical paintings**

COLORADO SPRINGS (Feb. 9, 2009) – The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center presents a pair of new exhibits, featuring works by Colorado Springs and Taos artists.

The Taos Society of Artists: Paintings from the Olson Family Collection enjoyed a sneak preview opening last week at the FAC's First Thursday in the Galleries. Displayed in the Steiner Gallery, the exhibition includes 14 works from the Olson Family Collection and six from the FAC Permanent Collection.

A Society of six academically-trained painters helped place Taos, N.M., on the artistic and tourist map by vividly introducing the formerly obscure Taos region to eastern audiences, painting the unique natural beauty of the landscape and local scenes. As painters, they established the subjects and styles to which many regional artists have since adhered.

The six founding members of the society were Oscar Berninghaus, Ernest Blumenschein, Eanger Irving Couse, William Herbert Dunton, Bert Geer Phillips, and Joseph Henry Sharp. Artists featured in the exhibit include the six Society artists plus are Kenneth Miller Adams, Ernest Martin Hennings, Victor Higgins, and Walter Ufer.

Colorado Springs Abstract, featuring 80 paintings, prints and sculptures, opens Feb. 28 in the El Pomar Gallery. Both shows run through April 19.

Two related shows are currently on view at Denver's Kirkland Museum and Center for Visual Art, in association with the newly published book, "Colorado Abstract: Paintings and Sculpture."

Colorado Springs Abstract distills this theme to a more local level, focusing exclusively on the history of abstraction in the Colorado Springs area. Abstraction has been a vibrant tradition among Colorado Springs artists since the 1950s.

Though pure abstraction was initially developed by European artists, it was adopted as a definitively American art form in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s, and took shape in Colorado Springs as the academically-based Broadmoor Art Academy transitioned into the Fine Arts Center School and began to recognize Modernist forms. While some Broadmoor Academy artists such as Charles Bunnell shifted from landscapes to abstract painting, younger artists were influenced by the vitality of renowned east coast abstract painters such as color theorist Josef Albers, or Robert Motherwell, the great Abstract Expressionist who taught at the Fine Arts Center School in 1953.

Artists featured in the exhibit include Charles Bunnell, Herman Raymond, Herbert Bayer, Robert Motherwell, Emerson Woelffer, Mary Chenoweth, James Trissel, Eric Bransby, Lew Tilley, Ellen O'Brien, Bill Burgess, Betty Ross, Don Green, Bill Hyer, Dawn Wilde, Holly Parker, and Corey Drieth.

"We chose multiple works from each artist for the show, to illuminate the breath of abstract investigations by some, and the meticulous pursuit of profound ideas by others," FAC Curator Blake Milteer said.

The Opening Celebration for *The Taos Society of Artists* and *Colorado Springs Abstract*, as well as *Mikel Glass | The Discarded*, is Friday, Feb. 27, from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Fine Arts Center.

"Together, these three exhibitions span traditional painting media to contemporary cutting-edge materials, from local art to New York, and from historic southwestern subjects to abstraction, to sculpture that looks like cardboard," said Milteer.

Admission is free for FAC Members; \$8.50 - \$10 for non-members. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Visit csfineartscenter.org for more information.

Taos Society of Artists and *Colorado Springs Abstract* are sponsored by the El Pomar Foundation (FAC Annual Sponsor)