



Fine Arts Center

COLORADO SPRINGS

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Bemis School of Art
Performing Arts

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BARBARA SPARKS

Local photographer's work from around the world on display at the FAC

COLORADO SPRINGS (Dec. 6, 2011) – The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center will present ***Coalascence: Photography by Barbara Sparks*** on view Dec. 17 – Feb. 19, featuring a luminous glimpse into the landscapes and cultures of Nepal, Turkey, Italy, Guatemala, New Mexico, and Colorado.

"This exhibition is part of a 75-year commitment to the medium of photography that began in 1936, our founding year, with a major retrospective of Laura Gilpin," said Sam Gappmayer, the FAC President and CEO. Gilpin was a contemporary of Ansel Adams and was best known for her images of the Southwest and of the Broadmoor Art Academy (the FAC predecessor).

For Sparks, a Colorado Springs native, the camera has become an essential part of her experiences traveling throughout the world. She makes photographic decisions based on her emotional response to a scene.

"I have photographed unique cultures in unique geologies," said Sparks. "In the Himalayas, I was interested in the unique geology and the overflow of Tibetan culture into northern Nepal. In Cappadocia, Turkey, I was in an area that was already settled at the time of Christ; then it became home to a large monastic community and 2,000 years later remains a fertile farming region. It was a unique geology and a unique culture. I did the same thing by going to Guatemala and photographing the Mayan villages there."

Sparks studied photography with Myron Wood, Bernard Plossu, Marie Cosindas, Howard Bond, and Chuck Henningsen. In fact, Wood, a next-door-neighbor, taught Sparks how to use a darkroom.

Sparks has taken photographs for various books on the Colorado Rocky Mountains, like *Spanish Peaks: Land and Legends*, *Colorado's Sangre de Cristo Mountains*, and *Aspen: Blazon of the High Country*.

"Barbara's photographs exemplify one of the greatest traits of Coloradans; we love to travel," Blake Milteer, FAC Museum Director and Curator of American Art. "These images are an embodiment of Barbara's profound

experiences travelling the world. As with each of us these experiences have helped define Barbara's life at home in Colorado.

"The way Barbara combines majestic landscapes with her interactions with various cultures is reminiscent of classic photographer and Colorado Springs legend Laura Gilpin. These photos are timeless."

Admission is free for FAC members. Non-member admission includes:

- Free FAC Members, children four and under
- \$10 Adults
- \$8.50 Seniors (62+), Military with ID, Students with ID and youth 5-17

The FAC Docents provide tours of the FAC exhibitions. All tours must be scheduled at least two weeks in advance by calling 719.475.2444 or emailing tours@csfineartscenter.org.

Coalescence: Photographs by Barbara Sparks is sponsored by El Pomar Foundation, Anschutz Foundation and *The Gazette*.

Fine Arts Center

Established in 1936, the Fine Arts Center is home to world-class art galleries, Broadway-worthy live theatre, and an art school for all ages. Built on the foundation of the prestigious Broadmoor Art Academy, the FAC carries the legacy of Colorado's arts and cultural heritage. One of the first 16 institutions accredited by the American Association of Museums in 1971, the FAC offers the best in the world of visual arts via its permanent collection and travelling exhibitions, performing arts through the FAC Theatre Company, and arts education with the Bemis School of Art. The Fine Arts Center's building is considered an architectural landmark in the Rocky Mountain region, designed by John Gaw Meem, and is listed on the National Register for Historical Places. In 2007, the FAC unveiled a \$28.6 million renovation and expansion.

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