

BONE CREEK
 MUSEUM OF AGRARIAN ART
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bonecreek.org



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James Brewer of Heartwell, Nebr. has quietly been making art in his home studio for decades. Since retirement in 2011, activity has blossomed, inspired by the garden surrounding his studio.

Brewer was born in Kentucky in 1949. After serving in the military, he earned a BFA from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio in 1975 and an MFA from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1980. Between those degrees he spent some time in New York City studying at the Art Students League and working at the Frick Art Reference Library.

Despite these professional degrees, Brewer has worked outside of fine art conventions, rarely exhibiting his work.

"I feel a bit like I've discovered a diamond in the rough," said curator Amanda Mobley

Guenther, though she takes no credit for finding him. Brewer is very humble and quiet about his skills, but his passion permeated the visit that the curator had with him this past June. Large unframed canvases filled his storage room, so as not to clutter his working studio space. A couple of reference photos were stuck to the wall with push pins, and paint palettes were covered on a table to stay moist until he could get back to them. One painting in progress hung sideways on the wall, so that Brewer could see the composition from a different perspective. Paint splashes covered the floor and a cat bed rested in the corner. Otherwise the room was empty so as not to distract the creative mind.

Brewer has explored different themes over the years and as with many artists moved from abstraction to realism. In the 1980s Brewer did a large series of color field pastels that are reminiscent of a small-scale Mark Rothko. Brewer burnished the color pigments until the paper resembled leather. Then there were other series (chairs, ladders) and in various media too: oil on canvas, pastel, graphite, and Prismacolor (pencil). Brewer writes in his artist statement that the primary purpose of his painting is to create his own reality and space.

Bone Creek has curated this collection of vibrant Midwestern perennials: zinnias, sunflowers, iris and daylilies that cover all edges of the canvas. The fragrance is almost



palpable. Some paintings are treated with a greater attention to realism than others. "It was fascinating to get a glimpse into some of his experiments. He might have two canvases; the same flower from the same vantage point, but one impressionist and another tightly rendered," said Guenther.

Bone Creek is thrilled to exhibit the work of James Brewer, a talented artist who has honored us by bringing his gift out of hiding.

IMAGES

- J. Brewer, *Zinnias No. 35*, 32x40"
- J. Brewer, *Iris No. 6*, 30x24"
- J. Brewer, *Marigolds*, 24x30"

BONE CREEK
 MUSEUM OF AGRARIAN ART

Agriarian Art
 NEWSLETTER

CALENDAR -of- EVENTS

16
FEB **Ernie Ochsner Retrospective**
Closes Feb. 16, 2020

22
MAR **J. Brewer: Garden Symphonies**
Feb. 19-April 19, 2020
Reception-March 22, 2-5pm

05
APR **The Toasted Ponies Concert**
Sunday, April 5, 4pm

24
APR **Karl Kuerner: Art Spirit in Agrarian Art**
April 22-July 26, 2020
Opening Reception-
April 24, 5-7pm

NEWS & EVENTS

BOARD of DIRECTORS UPDATE

Bone Creek offers sincere appreciation to former board president Ron Clarke who has stepped down from his role as president on the board to serve in other volunteer capacities for the State of Nebraska. Clarke was the president of Bone Creek since 2016. Thank you for your passion and service.

The museum welcomed the talents of local powerhouse Louise Niemann to the Board of Directors in January. Niemann has called Butler County home her entire life, with deep roots in the farming community. Louise is the office manager at Nebraska Extension-Butler County, working with 4-H youth, agricultural producers and leadership programming. She is a member of the Board of Directors Epworth Village, Inc. at York, NE, the Chair of the Committee of Nominations for South Central Jurisdiction United Methodist Women and is an executive member of the Mercy and Justice team of the Great Plains Conference United Methodist Church. We welcome Louise's many skills to the Bone Creek family.

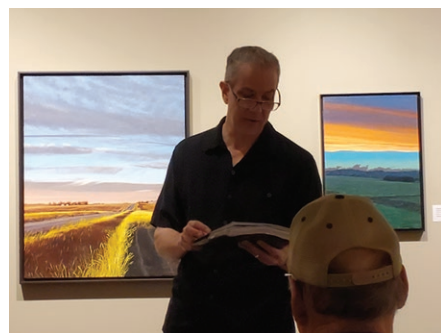


DID YOU MISS IT?

Friday night, November 22nd, the museum was packed for the opening reception of Ernie Ochsner's retrospective exhibition. In addition to visiting with local patrons, Ochsner enjoyed reconnecting with long-time friends and collectors from several states, including California and Oregon, who were there to celebrate with him. You can see the show until Feb. 16.



On December 4th, Nebraska State Poet Matt Mason spoke and read some of his work at the museum. He is also the Executive Director of the Nebraska Writers Collective and runs poetry programming for the State Department, working in Nepal, Romania, Botswana and Belarus. If you missed him or want to hear more, you can find a listing of his next appearances at www.matt.midverse.com.



(Top) Ernie Oschner reception
(Bottom) Matt Mason

Museum Hours

Wed, Fri, Sat 10am-4pm
Thursday 10am-8pm
Sunday 1pm-4pm

Appointments and tours available

FREE admission

402.367.4488
www.bonecreek.org

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UPCOMING EVENTS

(YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS)

MARCH
22

Sunday, March 22—Celebrate spring from 2-5pm with chamber music by Harris Academy of the Arts. Local student art from six area schools will be on display during this reception. *Elegant refreshments celebrating spring will be provided.*

APRIL
05

Sunday, April 5—The Toasted Ponies return to the museum for a concert on Sunday April 5 at 4pm to entertain with traditional and contemporary bluegrass music. Thanks to the ongoing partnership of the Butler County Arts Council, Jim Pipher and his gang are excited to play again for the Bone Creek audience in our intimate setting with great acoustics.

APRIL
24

Friday, April 24—We will celebrate the opening of "Karl Kuerner: Art Spirit in Agrarian Art" exhibition with refreshments. Artist Karl Kuerner will be present to talk with guests, 5-7pm.

JUNE
26

Friday, June 26—Join us for a live, musical, interactive program by Smithsonian recording artists Bob and Sheila Everhart covering the history of country music in America at the museum from 6-9pm.



DALE NICHOLS CORNER

Rarely has Bone Creek had the available funds to grow the museum's collection of original Dale Nichols art work. As you know simply from reading this column regularly, his work is often available for sale at auction. We are also occasionally approached for private sale as was the case recently. Thanks to the generosity of a supporter Bone Creek was able to add this painting (below) into the museum's permanent collection, in honor of Ruth Nichols, niece of Dale Nichols.



Dale Nichols, *Twilight*, 1977, 11x14"

A MAN OF CONNECTIONS

Featured summer artist, Karl J. Kuerner of Chadds Ford, Penn. has a tradition of farming and art in his family. His exhibition which opens April 22 will focus on his thematic connections with Nebraska artist Robert Henri (1865-1925). Kuerner has a close connection with another artist, or artistic family, who have made the Kuerner farm a major focus of more than 1000 paintings. The Wyeth family, namely Andrew Wyeth and his sister Carolyn, have been dear family friends and artistic mentors to Karl since he was seven. A new book is being published this year about Kuerner's apprenticeship under Carolyn Wyeth's training. Kuerner remains absorbed and moved by his farming traditions and Pennsylvania ancestry.



Karl Kuerner, *Pennsylvania Farmer*, courtesy of the artist.



Newly on loan to Senator Deb Fischer in her Washington D.C. office. Purchase the 4x6 greeting card in store or order online.

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