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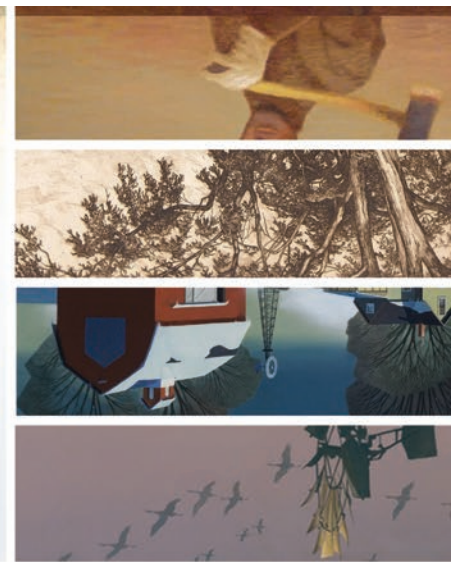
KARL KUERNER

The Art Spirit in Agrarian Art

ON VIEW THROUGH JULY 26

MAY 2020

bonecreek.org



BONE CREEK
 MUSEUM OF AGRARIAN ART

Agriarian Art
 NEWSLETTER

MAY
 2020
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Karl Kuerner's artistic talent was recognized and nurtured at a very young age by the famed Wyeth family of artists. Kuerner grew up doing farm chores alongside painting artists in a world of equal parts art and agriculture. From the age of seven he watched Andrew Wyeth paint some of his greatest works at the Kuerner farm. The family's homestead was a major source of inspiration for more than 1,000 of Wyeth's paintings, and eventually more than 300 of Kuerner's own works.

Beyond the Wyeths, other influences have brought out his own voice, often with subtle humor, in a style that emphasizes mood over method. In this exhibition, Kuerner explores the themes of Robert Henri's famous art treatise *The Art Spirit* (1923).

Robert Henri (1865-1929), a founding member of the Ashcan School of American Realism, was at the forefront of the New York art scene at the beginning of the twentieth century. On the verge of a centenary anniversary of publication of *The Art Spirit*, Henri is still considered to be one of America's finest art teachers. Henri is described as

a dynamic teacher "with an extraordinary gift for verbal communication...and prophetic fire" that drew students to devotion¹. Henri primarily commented on principles of life and art, giving emphasis to connection and creativity. His greatest influence on his students has been to imbue the human subject with dignity.



When you think of a Henri painting an image of a portrait likely comes to mind. Henri particularly enjoyed painting children because of their innocence, honesty and lack of self-consciousness. Here we find the two-fold connection with the teachings of Henri that Kuerner regularly refers to. First, the art spirit is that of dignity toward all living things and second that all humanity has the capacity for great creativity. *The Art Spirit* encourages

boldness to make art about what you know most intimately or feel most deeply.

In Kuerner's portraits, often the human figure is placed in the context of his or her surroundings. The homeplace is of utmost importance to Kuerner, as it is an essential component of his characters' identities. In "Miss Thomas," she stands stoically with



folded hands. "The painting to me is one that can take you away into a world of thought," recalled Kuerner. We infer about who she is by the place she resides in the world of the painting.

Kuerner considers his approach "very straightforward with a technical skill that does not obscure or outweigh [his] emotional message." The quiet feeling he brings to a composition conveys an overarching mood and emotion present in all his paintings. Kuerner could be credited with one of Henri's gifts, to look at contemporary life "with a fresh, unprejudiced, and unacademic eye."

"Percheron at Chadds Ford," seems to say that life will go on as it should. "Pennsylvania

IMAGES

Karl Kuerner, "Third Cutting", acrylic on panel
 Karl Kuerner, "Miss Thomas", 1991, acrylic on panel
 Karl Kuerner, "Farmall", 1990, acrylic on panel

All images copyright by the artist.



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¹Watson.

CALENDAR -of- EVENTS

- 22** APR **Karl Kuerner: Art Spirit in Agrarian Art**
April 22-July 26, 2020
- 03** JUN **Bone Creek Museum Reopening**
Tentatively June 3, 2020
Please call the museum before your visit to confirm open status.
- 26** JUL **J. Brewer: Garden Symphonies**
Extended through July 26, 2020
- 27** JUL **Museum Closed for Installation**
July 27-31, 2020
- 01** AUG **20/20 Vision Exhibition**
Aug. 1 - Nov 15, 2020
Opening Reception- Tentatively Aug 1, 5-8pm

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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Farmer” and “Farmall” suggest that change is inevitable. Like a farmer, Kuerner welcomes and is comforted by seasonal changes and makes them common themes in his work. Kuerner recalls, “My grandfather’s idea of a good time was to do three days’ work in one.” Kuerner has earned the badge of farmer and approaches his subject with an accuracy that comes from experience, using a technique he describes as “abstractions disguised in realism.”

A sense of oneness he feels with his family farm is like the unity in spirit he feels with Robert Henri. “Henri’s style of teaching

was an artist to artist approach,” said Kuerner in an interview. “We are all students no matter where we are in our artistic development.”

As equally life shaping as his artistic friendships is the camaraderie Kuerner has experienced between art and farming. His paintings are autobiographical, but they tell a larger story; a story applicable to everyone’s sense of place, a place we feel at home, a place where we can be creative. “The Art Spirit of Agrarian Art” is one that celebrates a personal connection to each other and the land.

NEWS & EVENTS

PLANS TO REOPEN { JUNE 3 }

The museum has been in close communication with the Four Corners Health Department as it prepares for reopening. At this time, the earliest date we believe we can reopen is June 3 to correspond with the opening date of the Nebraska Passport Program. In order to provide the safest experience possible for all visitors, we will be implementing several new regulations for all guests. These include limiting the number of visitors to the museum to 10 at one time, cleaning high traffic surfaces between groups, and offering hand soap and sanitizer throughout the museum. Our gallery attendant will wear a cloth mask to aid in the protection of visitors. At this time, we are not requiring visitors to wear cloth masks during visits, however it is highly encouraged by the CDC for safety. Most importantly, we ask that anyone with known risk of exposure to COVID-19 refrain from visiting until later in the year.

Because the situation with this virus is constantly evolving, we recognize our responsibility to postpone our reopening date if necessary. For the most up to date information, please call Gabrielle Comte, Gallery Manager, at **402-367-4488** or follow our Facebook business page. Thank you all for your continual support and understanding during this complicated time.

MISSED EVENTS

Our lovely events planned for the spring and summer unfortunately had to be cancelled. We would have enjoyed a “Garden Symphonies” reception with live music and guest speaker, a concert by The Toasted Ponies, a discussion panel with artist Karl Kuerner and Henri Museum director Peter Osborne facilitated by curator Amanda Guenther, and a bluegrass concert and humanities program by Bob and Sheila Everhart.



J. Brewer, *Pink Lilies*, Oil on canvas, 40x60”

Psst—This image is featured on a blank greeting card available in the museum and the online shop!

JAMES BREWER Garden Symphonies

EXTENDED THROUGH JULY 26

James Brewer’s recent debut opened on February 19 and then theoretically went into hiding for the remainder of the scheduled exhibition since the closing of the museum on March 22 to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. We are so pleased to announce that the exhibition has been extended through July 26th.



NEBRASKA PASSPORT PROGRAM

Bone Creek Museum was selected as one of 70 stops on the 2020 Nebraska Passport program, an initiative created in 2009 to encourage in-state tourism and reveal “hidden gem” destinations in Nebraska.

As a Passport stop in 2015, the museum introduced agrarian art to a host of new visitors who are now passionate supporters of our mission. Since that time, the program has proven to have a positive impact on local economies, generating over a million dollars in state and local revenue in 2019.

Program participants are given a passport booklet with information about each stop which can be stamped like a traditional travel passport. The museum as well as many of the passport stops is offering a special merchandise deal to Passport visitors, and those who complete visits to all of the stops in the book are eligible for a variety of prizes.

Those interested in exploring these destinations can pick up a booklet at any Passport

stop or order online at nebraskapassport.com. Program travelers are especially encouraged to utilize the Nebraska Passport phone app this year. The app allows for travelers to get a digital stamp when GPS locates a listed stop nearby. The app will also have important announcements or changes to destination business hours as the situation with COVID-19 evolves. Find the app beginning May 23 by searching “Nebraska Passport 2020” in the app store on your phone.



At the time of this printing, the program is slated to run from June 1-October 31, 2020, but these dates are subject to change to comply with Directed Health Measures in accordance with Nebraska Tourism Commission. For the latest updates on the status of the program, please refer to the Nebraska Passport website.

PHOTOS WANTED

The museum is looking for amateur and professional photographers to share visual documentation of the historic 2019 flooding that impacted much of Eastern Nebraska. Images of the flooding and its impact are planned to be part of an exhibition early next year. Please share your images and information at artinfo@bonecreek.org.



Photo Courtesy Alex Stepanek via welltravelednebraskan.com

EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

To supplement traditional school and summer art instruction that has been disrupted, a series of “Art at Home” project packets will be available from Bone Creek beginning in early July. These packets include written lessons and supplies and are meant to serve elementary and middle school grade levels. There will be no cost to take home one of these packets, though a free-will donation is welcome. Quantities are limited, so if you are interested in participating be sure to call in your reservation soon after the announcement of the first project on June 15 on bonecreek.org and the museum’s Facebook page.

20/20 VISION NEBRASKA'S TOP 20

We are excited to reveal the 20 artists who will be participating in this fall’s 20/20 Vision: Nebraska’s Top 20 exhibition. The museum’s curator has selected 20 of the best of the state’s living and working agrarian artists. Each artist will be represented by one exceptional artwork for exhibition Aug. 1 – Nov. 15, 2020.

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Kristine Allphin | Michael Forsberg | Jennifer Homan | Ernest Ochsner |
| Michael Bristol | Debra Joy Groesser | Keith Jacobshagen | Martha Pettigrew |
| Anne Burkholder | Wendy Hall | Doug Johnson | Susan Puelz |
| David Dorsey | Cliff Hollestelle | Jenny Kruger | Patti Scarborough |
| Michael Farrell | Hal Holoun | Deborah Murphy | John Spence |

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“Irises No. 6” by James Brewer
Purchase in-store or order online
bonecreek.org