

Lure

As all good fishermen know, to catch the biggest fish one needs to use the right lure: something bright, flashy or tasty to dazzle the quarry and entice it to strike. Artists work much the same way. Whether concentrating on composition, various elements and principles of design, size or content, an artist aims to 'hook' the viewer: to draw them into a work and engage their attention, even for the briefest of moments.

The three artists featured in the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition *Lure* – Carmen Gonzalez, Kathy Hildebrandt and Lori Lukasewich – are like good fishermen. Operating within the art style of Contemporary Realism, a North American style of painting, drawing and sculpture which came into existence during the 1960s and 1970s, an important objective of these artists is to create representational art portraying the 'real' and not the 'ideal'. Focusing on the genre of still life, these artists share a desire to work in more traditional forms of representational art and utilize line, shape, colour and pattern, combined with a heightened sense of reality, to entice viewers into actually looking at their works.

While recording what is seen is important to these artists, however, their works are more than accurate documentation. Engaging all the senses, each artist imbues their works with emotional, social and cultural elements as an extension of the visual illusion to transport them beyond, or deeper, than what is rendered on the surface. Whether asking the viewer to recognize and appreciate beauty itself, or stirring memories and associations related to the subject matter depicted, these artists endeavor to create experiences that, as expressed by Lori Lukasewich, are positive, meaningful and uplifting.

The exhibition *Lure* features the art works of three contemporary artists who, through luscious colour, meticulous detail, and playful imagery, tempt viewers into their works to confront desires and memories and participate in knowing, understanding and appreciating the world around them.

The exhibition Lure was curated by Shane Golby and organized by the Art Gallery of Alberta for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program. The AFA TREX program is financially supported by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

The Art Gallery of Alberta is pleased to present this travelling exhibition to venues throughout Alberta. Currently the Art Gallery of Alberta serves over 60 venues in approximately 35 communities. Exhibitions on tour from the Art Gallery of Alberta easily adapt to space requirements of smaller venues: schools, libraries, museums, health care centres and other community facilities. The exhibitions are organized in such a manner as to make unpacking, packing, hanging and shipping as easy as possible. Along with the exhibition, each venue receives an Educational Interpretive Guide. These materials enable teachers to use the exhibition within the school curriculum.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Collection is the primary source of works featured in the travelling exhibitions. Other sources for exhibitions may include community partners, archives, private collections and loans from artists. Each year we welcome new venues to enrich their community art through the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program.

Our Thanks

The artists

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts

and to the many individuals, organizations and communities who contribute to the success of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program each year.

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The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Lure



Carmen Gonzalez
Popcorn and Peanut Blend, 2018
Acrylic on canvas
Collection of the artist

Carmen Gonzalez was born and raised in Edmonton. She graduated with a diploma in Fine Art from the University of Alberta, Faculty of Extension, in 2013. Since then she has participated in a number of local exhibitions and Edmonton art festivals such as Edmonton's Whyte Avenue Art Walk.

At the beginning of her art studies Gonzalez focused on watercolour floral paintings. When she started her University studies, however, she began to zero in on her present subject matter. As expressed by the artist:

I have always liked objects. I love the form of objects but also their associations and the memories associated with them. This is how the 'candy theme' of many of my works came about. Watching my children eat candies led to memories and this became the subject of my grad show - the joy of being a child with no cares in the world except my bag of candy.

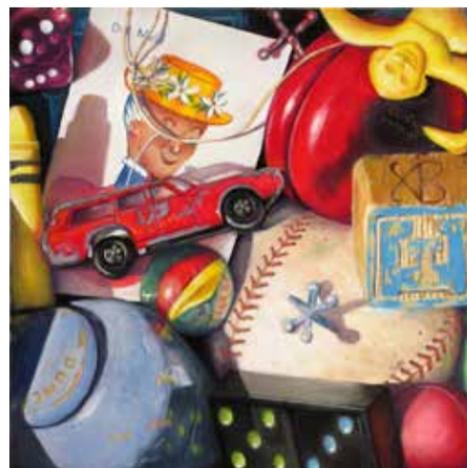
Over time Gonzalez has developed a number of themes focusing on still-life subjects. In all of these series the artist is drawing on memories, childhood experiences, and her impressions of an earlier time.

Gonzalez's art style is quite hybrid in nature: it is not totally realism; not totally pop art; a little illustrative and not totally contemporary. She also states that her painting style is influenced by hyper-realism where, unlike in photorealist work, there is an emotional content being expressed. As articulated by Gonzalez:

I am not trying for photorealism and lean more towards illustration. For me there is not enough character in photorealist work. I like to add my own flair to a work. I also want to make the work playful: I want to make people smile and go right into their childhood. Today there's so many things that drag people down and I want to make them happy.

A further intent of Gonzalez is to encourage the viewer to stop and notice things; to notice the details and the beauty of everything around them. In their boldness her paintings demand attention and through the use of meticulous detail and rich, often exaggerated colour, she aims to trigger all the senses. As revealed by the artist:

I'm always trying to lure people in; my paintings are always screaming 'hey, look at me, look at me'.



Kathy Hildebrandt
Inside the Toy Box, 2015
Pastel on paper
Collection of the artist

Born and raised in Edmonton and area, **Kathy Hildebrandt** moved to Calgary in 1984. While she did a bit of drawing when younger, it wasn't until she moved to Calgary that she became interested in practising art.

When she began painting Hildebrandt initially focused on landscapes and other subjects such as people and animals. She also tried her hand at a variety of media such as oil and acrylic painting. When she received a box of chalk pastels, however, she 'found her medium' and has worked mainly with pastels ever since.

For the past few years Hildebrandt has focused on still life subjects such as toys and memorabilia as the subject matter for her art. Describing herself as a very detail orientated person, she states that

With still life I can control things. I can control the setup and the lighting and I'm not hampered by outside factors. Also, I've always taken a certain amount of pride in my ability to draw and still life subjects allow for this.

Beyond controlling the more formal aspects of her still life subjects, Hildebrandt is also cognizant of what the subject matter is in her works. When she began painting still life works, she began with objects from her childhood and then began scouring antique and thrift stores for source materials. For the artist, such subject matter reminds her of simpler times. She also likes it when viewers walk up to her images and discover things and remember things they can relate to.

Hildebrandt demonstrates a great deal of independence in her art practice. As stated by the artist:

I want to paint the way I want to paint. I want to paint the things that interest me and I want to paint realistically as (this style) bucks the trends. I ignore what others say and just do what I want.

Beyond fulfilling a sense of independence, however, Hildebrandt's choices of subject matter and style challenge her creatively. As described by Hildebrandt:

I am a very detailed person in life. The objects in my paintings have different shapes, colours, patterns and textures and there's a lot of time and effort involved in getting this level of precision and detail. To be able to take these things and re-create them in pastels is both challenging and very rewarding.



Lori Lukasevich
Bunny Arabesque, 2016
Oil and Alkyd on canvas
Collection of the artist

Lori Lukasevich was born and raised in Calgary. She attended the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary, majoring in textiles, and later dove into painting on her own. She had her first exhibition in 1987 and has shown her work consistently since then.

Describing herself as a self-taught painter, Lukasevich's early works were complex 'abstract' constructions. After about 15 years working in this style she 'hit a wall' and found that, in order to move forward, she had to develop a 'new' practice. As she describes this change in her art practice:

I didn't expect to be a realist but I got seduced by what happens when it takes a long time to look at something. The seduction of long-seeing is akin to meditation, a very powerful thing for me.

Lukasevich has been pursuing a contemporary realist style for the last 20 years. At the beginning she approached her subject matter rather arbitrarily, painting a variety of things just to see what she could do. Later, however, she developed a series of works based around 'kitschy' porcelain ornaments that her mother owned. When her mother passed away Lukasevich began painting these objects as a way to deal with her grief and found that these objects 'worked their whimsical magic' on her.

For Lukasevich it is important that her work provides something that is of value. As she states:

It is hugely important to me that the effect I have on people is opening them a little in a positive way. If a person is 'gently arrested' and open to some small intangible lightness then I am successful. I want to give the viewer a brief respite from daily life and I believe these little things help us survive our lives.

Integral to this aim is the recognition of 'beauty'. As expressed by the artist:

Beauty is our real home; that is where we're most whole and comfortable. My life work is to continue to continue to persist to allow people a moment away from daily turmoil and connect them to the wholeness that beauty brings us.

In her work Lukasevich dangles an object and the experience of the painting in front of the viewer in order to attract their attention. As she sees it, her 'job' is to affect people in that moment and space and provide something that is both meaningful and uplifting.