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A SELECT LOOK AT SANTA FE ARTS, CRAFTS, TASTES AND STYLES



"Interior with Flowered Drape" by R. B. Sprague, oil on linen, 32" x 28"

A SANTA FE SHOWCASE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

*At the Joyce Robins Gallery you will find
an intriguing collection of broadly
diverse styles and subject matter.*

By Gussie Fauntleroy





PHOTOS BY WENDY MCEAHERN

Paintings by Brad Aldridge and ceramics by David Carter

Having lived in Europe for more than 20 years, Joyce Robins has a deep sense of something Americans generally are not taught: that there is a vital, indispensable place in daily life, and in our homes, for original fine art. Art should be lived with and enjoyed every day, she believes, rather than simply purchased as an investment and stored away.

This philosophy is at the core of Robins' criteria for accepting artists into her gallery, and it radiates from her as a lively and contagious passion for the art and artists she represents. Her love for each work of art, and a strong component of rich, but not garish, color are the primary qualities that tie together a broadly diverse collection of styles and subject matter.

Robins describes the gallery's aesthetic as contemporary but not over the edge. It contains elements of venerable artistic traditions, but it's far from boring, she notes, flashing a smile.



Gallery owner Joyce Robins

For example, the quiet, intriguing, and masterfully painted interiors of R.B. Sprague combine still life with a sense of expectancy. Painter Michele Stapley often depicts people engaged in cultural life,

where a gesture, glance, or the placement of a hand immediately draws the viewer into the scene.

A restful old world atmosphere, often suffused in mist or the golden hues of sunrise, characterizes the large-scale landscape paintings of Brad Aldridge of Utah. Aldridge builds his own fine-crafted frames, often in arch form, incorporating 18- or 22-karat gold leaf.

Landscapes in pastel offer two very different—but each appealing and satisfying—interpretations of the natural world in the hands of Mary Silverwood and Susan Mayfield West. Silverwood is a California resident who spends much time painting the New Mexico landscape, using strong color and soft simplification of line. Mayfield West, of Charleston, South Carolina, creates an impressionistic southeastern atmosphere in rich, deep hues.

Lest one become too comfortable in landscapes that envelop the viewer with



Works by Susan Stamm Evans in bronze and porcelain



Paintings by Dick Evans



PHOTOS BY WENDY MCEAHERN

Paintings by R.B. Sprague

warmth and tranquility, the eye is riveted across the room by the paintings of Dick Evans. Large and arresting, with sharp edges, energetic brush strokes and brazen colors, these works are abstracted just enough to merge the psychological landscape with familiar forms from nature.

Eva Carter, also of Charleston, takes abstraction to its consummation in large oil on canvas works with spirited movement and strong contrasts in warm and dark color.

While most of the 14 artists represented by Robins are painters, two notable exceptions are sculptor Susan Stamm Evans and ceramic artist David Carter. Stamm Evans, known for her small, delicately detailed figures of women in hand-sculpted porcelain, has begun working larger and in bronze, creating compelling, sometimes pensive, portraits of women.

David Carter made the radical shift from figure skater and dancer to ceramic artist two years ago, and appears to have crammed a lifetime's worth of artistic development and talent into that time. Among his large, exquisite porcelain vessels, some incorporate rust and turquoise highlights, while others resemble fine-grained, hand-turned wood.

Robins' own life took a dramatic turn a

few years ago, when she returned to the United States after more than 20 years of living and working in Germany and elsewhere. Her career as an intercultural trainer for corporate professionals was endlessly interesting and challenging, she recalls, but eventually she realized she missed some aspects of living in this country, such as American humor and casualness.

She settled in Santa Fe for the art, opera, skiing, abundant sunshine—after oftendreary northern Europe—and this community's rich cultural mix. ("I actually go on vacation so I can hear foreign languages," she jokes, underscoring a dislike of monocultural environments.)

Knowing that a satisfying corporate position was unlikely to be attainable in Santa Fe, she decided to open her own business. Surrounded by art and with a lifelong love of art, she found herself standing in her kitchen one day, thinking, "Why not open a gallery?" Her delight in her new career is unmistakable.

"I just like artists, I really do. They think differently, and creativity is just exciting," she professes. "The people I work with are very special. This is a business, but it's a business with a heart. In the corporate world, many decisions are based only on

the bottom line. We have to do that here, too, but it can be done a little softer.

"There's an extremely important fact that artists and gallery owners must never overlook: To be successful, it is really a matter of cooperation and supporting each other. That's what I really want and am working toward. I feel it necessary for success for both artist and gallery."

The Joyce Robins Gallery is located at 201 Galisteo Street. Hours: 10:00-6:00 daily during the summer. (505) 989-8795 or 1-800-989-8795. E-mail: JRobinsArt@aol.com; on the web at www.collectorsguide.com/joycerobins.

Southeast/Southwest, an exhibition of works by the three Charleston, South Carolina artists: Eva Carter, abstract expressionism; Susan Mayfield West, landscapes in pastel; and Mickey Williams, landscapes in oil; can be viewed at the gallery from June 25th through July 9, 1999. All three artists will be at the opening reception, from 5:30-7:30 p.m., June 25th. The gallery will also host an exhibition of works by Brad Aldridge with an opening reception for the artist July 16th from 5:30-7:30 p.m. The showing continues through July 30th.