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Nebraska's largest art museum reopens in Omaha

BY LISA TRUESDALE

After nearly two and a half years of being closed for renovations, the Joslyn Art Museum in downtown Omaha reopened on Sept. 10. Though it cost an estimated \$100 million to build a new pavilion, add a 3-acre sculpture garden and acquire more than 100 new works for the collection, general admission is still free for everyone.

That's just how Sarah Joslyn would have wanted it. She and her husband, George, a successful Omaha businessman at the turn of the 20th century, were well known for their philanthropy that supported a variety of causes. They donated to child and animal welfare, nature preservation, higher education and more; it's estimated that they donated \$7 million towards the arts alone.

George died in 1916, and in 1928, Sarah gave the City of Omaha another \$3 million, this time to fund the Joslyn Memorial, a cultural center intended to

help make the arts accessible to all. The building featured a concert hall, and galleries filled with artwork donated by private collectors. From the center's opening in 1931 to Sarah's death in 1940 at age 88, Sarah spent much of her time in the building's reception room, greeting visitors to the center.

The original Art Deco building, heralded in the 1930s as one of the nation's grandest buildings, remains an integral part of the museum's campus. The Joslyn Memorial was renamed the Joslyn Art Museum in 1987, and it was expanded in 1994 to include the Suzanne & Walter Scott Pavilion.

Now, the new Rhonda & Howard Hawks Pavilion adds another 42,000 square feet, including gathering spaces, art-class studios and 16,000 square feet of gallery space. The museum is now comprised of three distinct yet separate buildings, including a new outdoor space with 22 sculptures set among winding paths

lined with native plants. It is now the largest art museum in Nebraska.

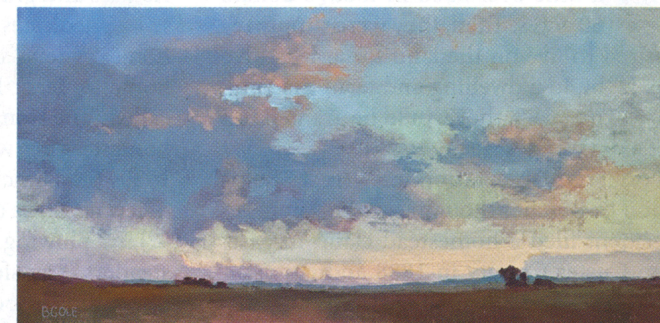
The inaugural exhibition in the Hawks Pavilion showcases 52 paintings from the Phillip G. Schrager Collection, including works by Roy Lichtenstein, Richard Diebenkorn and Richard Artschwager. A commission by Dyani White Hawk, *Wopila | Lineage III*, 2023-24, is a shimmering, beautifully beaded painting crafted with nearly half a million glass bugle beads, woven into strips by a team of Native American woodworkers. The six hourglass-shaped symbols "represent the Lakota aesthetic and spiritual concept of balance between the cosmos and the earthly realm," according to the artist.

If you can't make it to the museum in person, or want a preview before your visit, download the free Bloomberg Connects app, which includes a free digital guide to not only Joslyn Art Museum but also more than 550 other museums around the world.

Nic Lehoux, Joslyn Art Museum



Beth Cole's artistry began on the piano and has evolved into painting contemporary landscapes in oil, focusing on the simple and calm.



Holly Howe; Beth Cole

Merna artist credits music for her talent

BY LISA TRUESDALE

Like many artists, Beth Cole is quick to give partial credit for her success to her family, her friends, her faith and everyone who has ever purchased one of her oil paintings. Yet the true passion behind her work comes from her years of playing the piano, beginning at a young age.

"Piano was my first art form and remains a faithful friend to this day," said Cole, who grew up on a wheat farm in Chappell and now lives in the tiny village of Merna in Custer County. "I give piano the credit for helping me learn the value of practice. I was disciplined and, in turn, I was able to see the payoff." She approached her journey into painting in the same way, knowing that she would need many hours of study and practice.

Cole began painting in 2012, mostly

through online workshops. After gaining a few years of practice and experience, she switched to in-person workshops where she was able to learn from other artists.

When painting her muted, almost ethereal landscapes, Cole's approach is to simplify what she's seeing to create a peaceful, calming piece of art for others to view and enjoy. Playing the piano all those years helped with that, too. "It taught me when to use a delicate touch and when to use speed and force," she explained. "In the same way, my painting gestures and brushstrokes communicate a certain energy or calmness."

Cole's works have earned accolades and awards all over the state, connecting her with people around the country and the world. "Subtle Shifts," a painting of the morning sky, lives at the Museum of Nebraska Art in Kearney, after receiving

the MONA purchase award via the Association of Nebraska Art Clubs. (MONA is currently closed for renovations, but the collection can be viewed online.)

"The Golden Hour," a studio painting of a barn Cole created based on a plein study, hangs at Bryan Medical Center in Lincoln, in honor of a retired board member. Cole also teaches her own in-person workshops now, including one at MONA next March after the museum reopens.

As for her ability to convey feelings in her paintings, Cole credits her piano-playing for that, too. "Sometimes my emotions are strong and I can't find the words to talk about things. Piano helped me process those feelings that I couldn't articulate. Painting is like that, too; it helps me speak without saying a word."

www.bethcoleart.com