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PAST & PRESENT

Peruvian art exhibit showcases modern works next to historical antecedents

BY ADRIAN GOMEZ
JOURNAL ARTS EDITOR

It's not often that New Mexicans get to see Peruvian art in New Mexico.

The National Hispanic Cultural Center is changing that with its new exhibit, "El Perú: Art in the Contemporary Past." An opening reception will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 6. The exhibit runs through May 31.

"Part of our mission here at the center is cover everything Latino," says Tey Marianna Nunn, director and chief curator of the NHCC Art Museum. "We've done Chile and Brazil. It was time to do Peru."

The exhibit aims to break down stereotypes of what visitors expect to see in a "Peruvian art exhibit."

It celebrates the work of artists Baldomero Alejos, a photographer from Ayacucho; Ana de Orbegoso, a multimedia artist inspired by the Cuzco School, Pre-Columbian pottery and Peruvian history and identity; Kukuli Velarde, a ceramicist who addresses class racism, and exclusion in her ceramics; and Lorry Salcedo, a photographer whose striking black-and-white images connect the country's past to its present.

Works include photography, sculpture, ceramics, painting, and multimedia in juxtaposition with examples of their historical antecedents. The exhibit features more than 70 artworks.

Some pieces are on loan

from the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, Museum of Spanish Colonial Art and the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation.

"It was a personal exhibit for me," Nunn says. "My grandfather was Peruvian, and I wanted to showcase that culture and honor him. Part of the other reason is there are so many other exhibits about Peru. The interest has grown in the last 10 years, especially in New Mexico. I wanted to highlight what contemporary artists are doing now."

Nunn says that in recent years, interest in Peru and all things Peruvian has increased.

From llamas invading popular culture and home décor to traditional weaving patterns as sources for contemporary style magazines to global foodies recognizing Peru's culinary contributions, Peru is in the international spotlight. "Tourism to the country has increased so much that the government is considering establishment of an airport between Cuzco and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Machu Picchu," she says. "While the construction project is controversial and contested, it focuses a contemporary spotlight on the issue of balancing the Peruvian present with its past — particularly as the country approaches its bicentennial of the proclamation of independence in 2021."



COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CULTURAL CENTER

"Reflexión Dual/Dual Reflection" by Ana de Orbegoso.