

Western artists showcase work at Noyes

By Emily Pyeatt
Staff writer

Seeing a 5-foot rabbit could give a child nightmares for the rest of his or her life.

Fortunately, the rabbit isn't a real one.

The 5-foot bunny does, in fact, exist and is currently in Lincoln. But have no fear, the rabbit is safely on display at the Noyes' Focus Gallery throughout the month of April.

The rabbit is actually a gigantic bronze sculpture created by artist Richard Tucker. His rabbit, along with about 15 other sculptures and creations from three other artists, can be experienced this month in the Focus Gallery within the Noyes.

Julia Noyes, director of the gallery, said four diverse artists were chosen for April's exhibition so that a variety of art work could be represented.

"We didn't want just paintings," Noyes said.

Painter Carol Sexton organized the exhibition and said she wanted to

select artists specifically from Western Nebraska.

"I thought this was a good opportunity for people from the West to exhibit their work," she said.

Sexton selected artists Maxine Yost, Richard Tucker and Alice Rodgers to have their work pack the Focus Gallery.

"The room is really filled up right now," Noyes said. "We have about 30 of Sexton and Yost's paintings, Tucker's 15 sculptures and at least 30 pieces of Alice Rodgers' pottery all on display."

Sexton's own paintings are made with pastels and each illustrate the beauty she sees in the Nebraska landscape.

"I really enjoy the beauty of Nebraska's land that most people here don't take advantage of," Sexton said.

Sexton's romantic influences are also evident in her work.

"I enjoy painting landscapes with people in them to show the relationship between the two," she said.

Yost is presenting 12 of her transparent watercolor paintings. Yost said

her paintings are primarily of still-life arrangements she creates of antiques and collectibles. Yost also paints still-life images of what she terms as "close-up vegetation." She cites her interest in the plant forms that complete her vegetation stills.

Yost said she has achieved much success while her paintings have awarded her distinction across the nation.

"I got back to art about 30 years ago," Yost said. "And now I've had paintings in shows from New York to California."

Although Yost has been recognized across the country, she served as the President of the Association of Nebraska Art Clubs for two years. Since Yost's presidency, she has earned 12 excellent achievement awards for her paintings.

Yost is passionate about her realistic still-life paintings and said that she feels painting "is something you have to do and are driven to do."

Rodgers, like Yost, has been similarly driven to create pottery since she

PREVIEW Focus Gallery

WHERE: Noyes Art Gallery, 119 S. Ninth St.
WHEN: Through April
COST: free
THE SKINNY: Group of artists work together on show.

was a child. As a little girl, Rodgers said she would sit under trees and make dishes from the mud. Then, after seeing a man create a pot, Rodgers knew, she too, could create such pottery.

Rodgers said she has created various forms of pottery for about 20 years. The 30 pieces on display at the Noyes are symbolic of Rodgers' body of work.

"I work with primarily the same colors: brown, off-white, blue and black," she said.

Rodgers creates baking dishes, cups, goblets and candle holders. The candle holders are the most difficult for Rodgers to create.

"I thought this was a good opportunity for people from the West to exhibit their work."

Carol Sexton
exhibit organizer

"I carve the bottom of them while they are spinning, so they definitely take more time and are much more intricate," Rodgers said.

While the Focus Gallery is showcasing Sexton, Yost, Tucker and Rodgers' work, the main gallery in the Noyes is displaying creations by feature artists Jo Brown and Shelia Downey. The main gallery is packed with abstract mixed-media paintings and watercolor paintings.

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Houston struggles through show

■ Critics of the singer continue to question her health and wellness.

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Whitney Houston took the stage to a standing ovation at Arista Records' 25th anniversary tribute to her mentor Clive Davis, then the diva struggled at times in a heavily scrutinized six-song performance.

Rumors about Houston have swirled in the wake of drug abuse allegations, a much-discussed absence at last month's Academy Awards telecast and a disjointed magazine interview.

Houston tripped walking onstage Monday night, and sometimes she spoke rather than sang the words to her hits while four backup singers, including her brother, Gary, carried the load.

She stopped abruptly before the final dramatic notes of "I Will

Always Love You" to signal for a drink of water. Husband Bobby Brown walked on stage with the water. She took a sip and kissed Brown, who patted her sweaty forehead before walking off.

Brown injected himself into another song, too, cavorting wildly back and forth on stage before grabbing his wife's microphone and letting loose with a chorus.

"The record's not over yet, remember," Houston said cryptically at the end of her 20-minute performance.

Dressed in a shimmering long gown, Houston wore her hair in a flip.

"She looks fabulous," Dionne Warwick, a cousin of Houston's, said backstage.

Houston didn't appear backstage to talk with reporters.

She joined some of the biggest names in Arista's history to perform for label-founder Davis, who signed

Houston when she was 19. The two-hour special will air May 15 on NBC.

"You ask anybody in the industry who is the great singer in the world today, it is she," Davis said backstage. "When you see her, you'll see an artist at the top of her form."

Three weeks before the Oscars, the singer failed to appear at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame dinner where she was scheduled to help induct Davis.

At 66, Davis is fighting Arista's owner, BMG Entertainment and German media conglomerate Bertelsmann, to keep his job. Bertelsmann traditionally enforces a retirement age of 60 on its top executives.

Before she performed, Houston sat smiling in the audience with her arm resting on Brown during a medley by Barry Manilow. Seated next to Davis, Houston sang along as Manilow performed "I Write the Songs."

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