

Huerfano County Judicial Center’s Art Exhibition Program with the Museum of Friends

The Museum of Friends is honored to partner with the 3rd Judicial District in helping to select the contemporary photographs and paintings on view in the new Judicial Center with Chief Judge Leslie J. Gerbracht and Court Executive Bob Kreiman. We are working on including sculpture as well.

On the first floor as you walk into the new Judicial Center, you will find a large painting called *Huerfano* by artist Radeaux. The setting for this painting is the west side of the Sheep Mountains in Huerfano County. The viewpoint is from the county road overlooking his property. The flying tree swallows, magpie and mule deer are common to this area and are painted life sized. The imagery in the band that frames the painting is based on the late artist Orlin Helgoe’s prairie alphabet. Helgoe was influential to many Southern Colorado artists. The painting was created during the Spring Creek Fire in 2018. Drought conditions prevailed, thus the lack of green in the lower part of the painting. Radeaux runs an art gallery in Pueblo called the John Deaux Gallery where you can see more of his works and those of many diverse artists the gallery represents right on Union Street.

The beautiful art continues as you make your way to the 2nd floor and into each courtroom.

As you come up the stairs or exit the elevator, in the hallway between the two courtrooms, you will see Walsenburg’s children creating art during an in-school museum project. The joy they exude has to do with the surprise of creativity. These images were taken during the post School-Tour visit in the classroom at Peak view Elementary school in Walsenburg in 2008. In these you will see how they created the plates to make the wonderful prints on view. MoF continues to offer programs for school-aged children (pre-k thru 12th) both at the museum and in the classroom. Please see the informational panels on view that explains the different offerings. All the school programs relate to the concurrent changing exhibitions at MoF and to the curriculum taught in the classroom.

The photographic portraits in both courtrooms attempt to capture a glimpse into our shared experience of the human condition. Those that are specific to Walsenburg and Huerfano County come under the heading of *Who is Walsenburg?* We are honored to feature photography by retired Chief Judge Claude A. Appel (see his biography in the first-floor kiosk) and visiting artist Zoe Childerley.

As you enter District Courtroom B please enjoy Judge Appel’s large and colorful photograph called *1950*, 2008. He describes this work: *In April 2008, I saw this truck parked out front of the building previously occupied by the old Trail’s End Cafe on W. 7th St. in Walsenburg, Colorado. It had such unusual and beautiful old rust marks and numerous battle scars from all the years it had been driven so I wanted to make a portrait of it because if any truck had personality, this one did. On April 6, 2008 at high noon, I photographed it with a wide-angle lens from a tripod set low to the ground under bright sunlight-- the kind of harsh light that photographers usually avoid. When I processed the photo, I blacked out the background so this GMC truck, circa 1950, appears to emerge from the past via a pitch-black background illuminated by bright lights.*

In this Courtroom you will find two additional photographs by Judge Appel. His iconic photographs on view *Lady in Waiting* from 2011 and *Backstory* from 2010 allow you the viewer to create a narrative that imagines where they are? Who they are? And what is their story?

The other two photographs in Courtroom B were taken by Zoe Childerley during her stay in Walsenburg in 2012. The Museum of Friends (MoF) brought her here from England for an artist residency that lasted two months. Childerley’s portrait of the couple is of *Emma and Joe Feiccabrino*. Joe lived to be 102 and Emma was 93 when she passed away. They were married 69 years and known in Walsenburg for running the J&L Electric that was located less than one block from this Courthouse. Their appliance store was known throughout the region and a well-known repair center. Emma attended nursing school and served as a Naval nurse in California during World War II. Joe served as a civilian “essential” in Walsenburg. Joe was a 1935 graduate of Huerfano County High School now called John Mall High School. They married in St. Mary’s Church in 1944 as soon as Emma completed her duty as a Naval Nurse in San Francisco. In 1961, she joined Joe at J&L Electric where they worked together until it closed in 1993. In this portrait Childerley captures their love for one another and their devotion to their Catholic Faith and community. Many visitors to the 2012 exhibition at MoF remembered the couple’s civic pride and visiting their store to buy an electric appliance or just having a nice conversation with them.

The single portrait on view is of a visitor to MoF who was photographed by Zoe. Although only known as *Armando* – he was able to express profound joy at being the subject of Zoe’s work and being present that day for the photo shoot.

The two photographs on view in the Albert Tomsic Courtroom A (please see his biography in the first-floor kiosk) are also the work of Zoe Childerley during her stay in Walsenburg. The expansive view of the city with the centrally positioned male figure is a portrait of *Nick Faris* of the Faris Land & Cattle Company. Zoe captures his love of this place – the land- with his posture and infectious smile. Nick studied at the University of Wyoming and the University of Colorado Boulder. He comes from a large family and each greatly contribute to our community. He went to Walsenburg High School and resides here now.

The other portrait is of *Mary Cocchiarelli* who moved to Walsenburg in her later years. Mary was born in Brooklyn, New York to Italian immigrant parents. She graduated from Girls High School with a degree in dress making and book-keeping. She ran her parents’ grocery store until she married her husband Joseph in 1948. After their marriage they began a successful business as pioneers in the importation of Italian food products. They worked tirelessly to provide for and educate their family. When Mary came to Walsenburg it was to live with her son-in-law Brendt Berger and daughter Maria who run the Museum of Friends. When she visited the museum in 2011, having to be carried up the stairway in her wheelchair by volunteers, and after viewing the permanent collection she commented “I think you made the right choice.” She lived until 2017 when she passed away at 97. Before that she loved meeting her new neighbors and care-givers in Huerfano County and expressed true contentment.

Zoe Childerley is the photographer of the four portraits discussed above and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Brighton for the School of Media for photography in practice and theory. The University of Brighton is a multi-campus university on the south coast of England.

Zoe has created many videos and written books about her projects based throughout the world. In *The Land of Milk and Honey*, made during her artist residency at the Museum of Friends, she uses images, drawings, interviews and states that: *these build a portrait of the community who live in the shadows of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. From the gold rush pioneers to the Spanish farmers to the hippies of the 60's, attracted by the unspoiled beauty and isolation of the Huerfano valley, people have been coming to Southern Colorado to start a new life. They are steadfast in their love for the land, still determined to reject the system and cling to the once promised freedom of the wild west.*

This vimeo film is available at: www.museumoffriends.org/ Please stop in at the museum located one block South East of the new Judicial Center.