

Press Release

For immediate release through January 18, 2020

Stauth Memorial Museum Contact: Kim Legleiter, Director

Phone: 620.846.2527 stauthm@ucom.net

High Resolution images available upon request.



The West Comes to Life in Art Exhibit

The Stauth Memorial Museum of Montezuma is proud to announce an amazing exhibition of three exceptional Garden City artists. **Best in the West: The Art of Ronald Smith, Colleen Sternberger and Robin Valenzuela** will be on display from **December 10, 2019** through **January 18, 2020** in the Special Exhibitions Gallery.

Ronald Smith creates 3-D images with abalone shells, as well as wood, metal, turquoise and Native American beaded rosettes and medallions. As a self-taught artist he feels his art is a gift from God. Mr. Smith has no Native American heritage, but he has developed a kinship with many who do, discussing and sharing beliefs and legends. Every object in nature has a spirit, according to some Native American beliefs. Ron tries to convey that spirit in his art linked to the tribes of the Plains and Southwest. His images include historic shapes such as turtle, bears, geckos, buffalo, thunderbirds, and Kokopelli, the flute player figure of ancient petroglyphs.



It is believed that turquoise brings good fortune, strength, and helps overcome illness. Turquoise got its name from Levantine traders call "Turks"; these were the people who brought the stone to Europe from Persia via Turkey centuries ago. The turquoise Ron uses in his art comes from the American Southwest.

Ron's interest in abalone (paua shells) dates back over 50 years, when he was first introduced to the brilliance of the shells.

Abalone shells have been treasured by many ancient tribes throughout the world as a magical gift from the sea and are believed to stimulate fertility of the mind and body; as well as providing protection against negative attitudes and actions. Ron started collecting shells with the dream of someday creating breathtaking pieces of art. After putting his artistic ability on hold to provide for his family, he has revitalized his artistic talents and has fulfilled his interest and passions as shown in his Southwestern art. Appreciating the beauty of God's creations is a part of Ron's life.

Colleen Sternberger is a fine art photographer who specializes in photographs of The American West.

It seems she has always had a camera in her hand – Kodak Instamatic or Polaroid to start with – snapping away on family vacations and gatherings. She came late in life to the world of Fine Art Photography, but has embraced it with a passion. Mostly self-taught, her inspiration comes from the places she travels to and the people she meets along the way.

Using her digital darkroom she elevates her photographs with painterly qualities. "I want to guide the viewer of my images toward the "story", the one I found hidden away waiting to come to life," says Colleen. Adding depth and dimension with light and shadows it draws the viewer into the image. Her work has won numerous awards and is included in private and corporate collections.



Robin Valenzuela has practiced as a professional artist since 2008, showing at Kansas area galleries and multi-state juried art festivals. Being mostly self-taught, Robin currently utilizes acrylic paints, particularly using the blending powers of high flow acrylics. She loves how the colors combine to create organic shapes and how they flow together to make textural values.



Robin comes from a very creative background, with family members who made sure she experienced art, photography, and writing. She is a product of her family's influence, having been given the many tools as a youngster to be creative. Robin has two associate degrees, one from Garden City Community College and one in Apparel Design & Illustration from Wade College, Dallas. She now works full time in her dream career as an artist, entrepreneur, and freelance graphic designer.

Prior to 2017, she worked (over 15 years) as a graphic designer and pre-press expert for a small printing company. There, she learned a great deal about the printing process and now incorporates that skill to reproduce many of her artworks, along with digital art, into other products for your home. She is an active member with Garden City Arts and keeps a retail display within the downtown gallery. She also teaches several art workshops throughout the year. Robin has a colorful presence on social media and loves to follow other artists around the world.

Be sure to see this once in a lifetime group of Western Artists from southwest Kansas. We should all be very proud to have three such amazing, gifted artists in our area. The Stauth Museum feels it is our mission to provide cultural enrichment to the community not only through art but by sharing new experiences that they cannot find anywhere else. It is important to support the arts, encourage and promote area artists, and be proud that they are from southwest Kansas. This is a great exhibit to share these three artists' unique art and very special talent with family and friends who visit for the holidays.

Call the Stauth Museum at 620-846-2527 for more information about the exhibit or to set up a tour for groups of 5 or more. Business hours for the Stauth Memorial Museum, 111 N Aztec Street, Montezuma KS are: Tue -Sat 9-12 1-4:30. We are closed on Sundays, Mondays and all major holidays including Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Admission is free, but donations are gratefully accepted! Check out our WEBSITE for information about this and all the exciting exhibitions and events coming to the museum at www.stauthmemorialmuseum.org.