

Oscar Peña's work is on display at Sisters library

By Helen Schmidling
Correspondent

As a youngster growing up in Mexico City, Oscar Peña loved to draw. He studied art along with his other subjects, and his grandfather gave him a book about how to draw animals. He sketched a lot, but even if art was a passion, it wasn't destined to be his career. He set aside his sketchbook and went out for soccer.

He opted to further his education at the Universidad Iberoamericana, graduating with a degree in electrical engineering. He worked for technology companies and lived in Mexico, Brazil, and the United States.

When it came time to retire, Oscar and his wife, Gabriella, wanted to move to the mountains, after living in Florida for 15 years. Colorado didn't feel quite right. They drove around the country, and 7,000 miles later, visited some friends that they knew from Florida who were living in Bend. Three months later, they moved to a new home in Sisters on December 31, 2016.

Peña laughs now as he recalls that winter's heavy snow. What it did was give him a chance to pick up a project that he'd begun some 45 years earlier — painting and drawing. A series of Peña's portraits and a landscape are framed and on display in the Computer Room

of the Sisters Library through October 30.

His first new drawings were with charcoal, as he recreated scenes from his cross-country travels. He found that people liked his work, and he began to get commissions from friends and neighbors. He dove into his work, experimenting with pastel, oil, watercolor, acrylic, and scratchboard.

Since retirement, Peña has traveled to several countries, enjoying nature and getting to know the arts and cultures of different lands. He enjoys getting closer to nature and wildlife. On one such visit, he got very close to a mountain gorilla, and made a portrait he calls "Silverback."

"He looked into my eyes for a very long time," Peña recalled.

The memories and photographs of his travels provide material for his paintings. So do photographs of animals. Look for a pair of Saint Bernards hanging their heads through the back window of a car; a happy black lab, two boxers — one serious and one not so much.

Besides travel, Peña enjoys hiking, playing golf, and taking photographs. He loves to read, especially novels, in both Spanish and English (he speaks fluent Portuguese as well).

He still alternates the different media in his paintings, but his portraits of both people and animals are very close



PHOTO BY HELEN SCHMIDLING

Eyes on Oscar Peña's portraits at Sisters Library.

to his heart. It has a lot to do with the eyes that seem to communicate from the page to the viewer.

Peña keeps on learning, and he has studied techniques in all media by watching hundreds of online videos. He particularly enjoys scratchboard, where he can experiment in playing with the light.

"I just follow my instincts and the videos," Peña said. "The incredible Sisters artistic environment motivates and helps me. I enjoy other artists' work, and I love to learn from them as well."

Friends and family continue to encourage his artistic pursuits, and Peña will do

commissions upon request.

The Art Committee of the Friends of Sisters Library (FOSL) arranges monthly exhibitions in the library. Also this month, look for a display of work by the Central Oregon Spinners and Weavers in the Community Room. Stay tuned for news on the FOSL Annual Exhibit, which takes place in January and February. A call to artists will be issued in the next few weeks for early January.

The Sisters Library is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

CBD producer sues hemp seed seller

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A Kentucky-based company that produces CBD has filed a \$44 million lawsuit against an Oregon company it claims sold it nearly worthless hemp seeds that ruined a giant 2019 crop.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports the crop was destined to help fulfill the country's booming demand for CBD, a plant extract soaring in popularity as a treatment for health problems from anxiety to insomnia.

But Elemental Processing of Lexington, Kentucky, claims those plans tanked when HP Farms of Troutdale, Oregon sold it more than 6 million seeds that were mostly "male." The female plants produce a CBD-rich flower.

The suit says it was only after the Kentucky company had distributed the seeds to farmers and those farmers' crops had sprouted that the company learned the seeds were male.

Elemental Processing estimates it lost at least \$44 million in profits.

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