



**New Orleans
Museum of Art**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jim Mulvihill, Director of Communications and Marketing, (504) 658-4106

**New Orleans Museum of Art Presents
*The Baroque World of Fernando Botero***

One hundred works by famed Latin American artist on view June 28 to Sept. 21

[Hi-res images available upon request.]



The First Lady, 1989. Oil on canvas. Private collection.

NEW ORLEANS, La. (Monday, April 28, 2008)—This summer, the New Orleans Museum of Art will present *The Baroque World of Fernando Botero*, the first major U.S retrospective of the artist's work in more than 30 years, from June 28 to September 21, 2008. Recognized as one of the most well-known and commercially successful artists to emerge from Latin America, the Colombia native now has his work exhibited and collected by major museums around the world, including the New Orleans Museum of Art.

-more-

The Baroque World of Fernando Botero
2/2/2/2

“Botero is an artist that uses his distinctive style to comment on all facets of human life,” said New Orleans Museum of Art Director E. John Bullard. “His portly figures can appear gentle and endearing in a family portrait, but the same style used to depict a political leader can have a satirical bite. We are proud to host this retrospective showcasing a beloved hero in Latin American art and further reinforcing NOMA’s commitment to exhibiting significant international artists.”

Fernando Botero (born 1932) is a painter, sculptor, and draftsman who highlights the comedy of human life—moving or wry, baroque in expression, sometimes with a mocking observation, sometimes with a deep, elementary emotion. Working in a broad range of media, Botero has created a world of his own, at once accessible and enigmatic, with a particular blend of violence and beauty. Fernando Botero has spent most of his years as an artist away from his native country, Colombia, but his art has maintained an uninterrupted link to Latin America.

The 100 paintings, drawings, and sculptures in this exhibition span the length of Botero’s career—from paintings executed in 1959 in Colombia, to sculptures executed as late as 2005. The works were selected by John Sillevius, curator of the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague, and editor and contributor to the accompanying exhibition catalogue. The exhibition is organized and circulated by Art Services International, Alexandria, Virginia.

More on *The Baroque World of Fernando Botero*

All of the works are generously on loan from the artist himself. This collection, assembled over the last 50 years, includes favorite works that Botero was heretofore unable to part with, as well as pieces reacquired years after they left his possession. Many of these objects are being exhibited in public for the first time, providing an opportunity to investigate the complex workings of this artist not only by viewing some of his most renowned masterpieces, but also by studying his most personal works of art.

The Baroque World of Fernando Botero presents a selection of the best works from various stages in his development as an artist, with occasional “flashbacks” to the early works of the 1950s, when Botero devised images of children that resembled giant dolls with frightening expressions. Here his struggle to define his own style is still evident. In 1957 he painted “Still Life with a Mandolin,” enlarging the volume of the musical instrument in a manner that we now identify with Botero’s style. He continued in this vein, painting a figure of a young girl inspired by Leonardo da Vinci’s “Mona Lisa.” This painting was acquired—against the current of abstract expressionism that was dominating the art world in the United States at the time—by Dorothy Miller, curator at the Museum of Modern Art for that collection. After her initial support of Botero, museum curators the world over soon followed suit, presenting Botero’s works in major solo exhibitions.

-more-

The Baroque World of Fernando Botero
3/3/3/3

The exhibition also follows Botero in his extensive studies of the history of European art. In Spain he was particularly entranced by Velázquez's *Infantes*—the daughters of the Spanish king—in their elaborate court dresses. In France he studied Ingres, the nineteenth-century master of neoclassical perfection in line, and Delacroix, the master of romantic color. Botero would find inspiration in Italy through artists from the Renaissance, including Uccello and Piero della Francesca.

As a young boy he had already admired some contemporary artists, such as Pablo Picasso. He was now confronted with the paintings and sculptures of Giacometti, who was in the habit of reducing his figures to an extreme slimness. These encounters were important for Botero's development. He was inspired by European art, but not seduced. He turned his attention to Mexico, where the monumental murals by Diego Rivera and David Siqueiros had a profound impact. Botero absorbed the dramatic self-portraits of Frida Kahlo and her idiosyncratic interpretation of Latin American folklore, and was intrigued by the mysteries of pre-Columbian artifacts.

The Baroque World of Fernando Botero is divided into eight sections, corresponding to epochs and themes in Botero's oeuvre. First, early works from the 1950s, the period during which Botero first defined his unique style. Second, paintings which draw from colonial baroque pieces Botero observed in Latin America, including religious images of clergy, Jesus Christ, and the Virgin Mary. The third section contains works inspired by European masters, ranging from Titian to Vincent Van Gogh. Fourth, are Botero's eerie still lifes of lush and decaying fruit and flowers. Fifth, are images of power and violence in Latin America: scenes of presidents, earthquakes, and executions. The sixth section is based on memories from Botero's childhood in Colombia: street scenes, intimate interiors, and local figures. The seventh section focuses on Botero's works on paper, including detailed chalk drawings and watercolors. Lastly, the exhibition closes with Botero's elegant and imposing monumental bronze and marble sculptures.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with essays by John Sillevs, guest curator; David Elliot, Director of the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo; and Edward Sullivan, Dean of Humanities and Professor of Latin American Art at New York University.

The Baroque World of Fernando Botero is on a national tour that continues through 2010.

-more-

The Baroque World of Fernando Botero
4/4/4/4

Credits

The Baroque World of Fernando Botero is sponsored in New Orleans by Pan-American Life Insurance Group.



Additional support is provided by the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel, the New Orleans Hispanic Heritage Foundation and the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia.



This exhibition is organized and circulated by Art Services International, Alexandria, Virginia.

Catalogue

The Baroque World of Fernando Botero is accompanied by a fully illustrated, full-color exhibition catalogue. Dr. Sillevis, creator of more than twenty important exhibitions since 1978 on subjects ranging from *Van Gogh and the Hague School* to *Frida Kahlo* and *Degas*, is the author. In addition to individual entries and full-color illustrations of all of the objects in the exhibition, and numerous comparative images, this scholarly catalogue includes an introductory essay by Dr. Sillevis, entitled "Botero's Baroque." Additional essays in the catalogue include "Fernando Botero: A Painter of Lost and Angry Pictures" by Dr. David Elliott, Director of the Mori Arts Center in Tokyo, and "Fernando Botero: Critical Strategies" by Dr. Edward J. Sullivan, Dean of the Humanities and Professor of Fine Art, New York University. The book also includes a biography of the artist, a list of Botero's works in public collections, a list of selected solo exhibitions, a select bibliography, and an index. The catalogue is published by Art Services International.

Itinerary

The Baroque World of Fernando Botero premiered at the **Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec** in Canada (January 27 – April 21, 2007), and continued to the **San Antonio Museum of Art**, San Antonio, Texas (May 26 – August 19, 2007); the **Oklahoma City Museum of Art**, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (September 15 – December 9, 2007); the **Society of the Four Arts**, Palm Beach, Florida (January 18 – February 24, 2008); and the **Delaware Art Museum**, Wilmington, Delaware (March 15 – June 7, 2008).

-more-

The Baroque World of Fernando Botero
5/5/5/5

Following its presentation at the **New Orleans Museum of Art**, the exhibition will travel to the **Memphis Brooks Museum of Art**, Memphis, Tennessee (October 18, 2008 – January 11, 2009); the **Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center**, Colorado Springs, Colorado (May 23 – August 15, 2009); and the **Crocker Art Museum**, Sacramento, California (September 12 – December 6, 2009).

About Pan-American Life

Founded in 1911, New Orleans-based Pan-American Life Insurance Company is a leading international insurance company, employing more than 700 worldwide, providing top-rated life and health insurance, worksite benefits and financial services in 46 states, the District of Columbia (DC) and Puerto Rico. Its international operations, offering individual and group life and health insurance throughout Latin America, includes affiliates in Panama, Guatemala and Colombia, and branch offices in Ecuador, El Salvador and Honduras. For more information, visit the Pan-American Life Web site at panamericanlife.com.

Pan-American Life Insurance Company is a member of Pan-American Life Insurance Group. The Group is comprised of a number of insurance and reinsurance companies serving nearly half a million customers throughout the Americas.

About NOMA and the Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden

The New Orleans Museum of Art, founded in 1910 by Isaac Delgado, houses more than 30,000 art objects encompassing 4,000 years of world art. Works from the permanent collection, along with continuously changing temporary exhibitions, are on view in the Museum's 46 galleries Wednesdays from noon to 8 p.m. and Thursdays to Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission to the Museum is free to Louisiana residents through the generosity of The Helis Foundation.

Admission to the adjacent Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden, featuring work by 57 artists, including several of the 20th century's great master sculptors, is always free during regular Museum hours.

The New Orleans Museum of Art and the Sculpture Garden are fully accessible to handicapped visitors and wheelchairs are available from the front desk.

###