Text by Kellie Houx

The Color of Inspiration

Ana Maria Hernando's Multi-Disciplinary Work Debuts at the Kemper at the Crossroads

Visitors to the Kemper at the Crossroads, 19th and Baltimore, these days will see the spiritual, colorful and mesmerizing art of Argentinean born and raised artist Ana Maria Hernando. The exhibition, "Ana Maria Hernando: When the Women Sing," features paper sculptural pieces, paintings and an installation piece of stiffened rainbow-hued petticoats that come from the women of Peru's Andes Mountains called "La Montaña Trae Barcas de Azucenas" (The Mountain Brings us Boats Full of Lilies). The exhibit runs through Jan. 15.

"I love the work of women, especially embroidery. There are still embroidery circles where women get together. It happens in many cultures that women unite. I grew up in Buenos Aires and there are nuns whose embroidery work is seen throughout homes. Their tablecloths become background, but I realized it's an expression of love. They are made with love. The Barefoot Carmelites Cloistered Nuns from the Monastery of Santa Teresa of Jesus are seemingly invisible and ethereal. Their vocation is prayer and embroidery pieces. Then there are the women of Peru and their petticoats. They raise children and do laundry. They move in bunches, groups moving up and down the mountains like little bouquets of flowers. They are another image of women, connected to the earth, strong and prayerful in their own way. They develop and create and they seemingly hold the world for me," she says.

Kemper Curator Barbara O'Brien says Hernando's work creates a narration about the everyday lives of women through pattern, color and abstraction. "Her work will appeal to a diverse audience. There are many points of entry. Look at the patterns and energy. There is tenderness, light and air moving in the crocheted skirts that reference flowers or shells. Take the time to walk around the art. It's exciting to advocate for artists like Ana Maria. These are works that need a larger audience and I am glad to be starting my second year at the Kemper with this exhibit."

Hernando is multi-disciplinary artist, working in drawing, painting, installation work, video and poetry. As for her art, »»

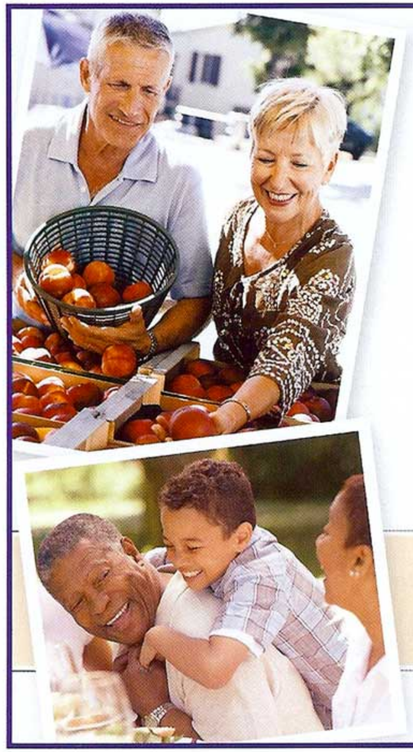
poetry is one of her newer expressions. She started six years ago. "I never thought to write poetry. I am a visual artist, but there are so many parts of ourselves that can be tapped for that creativity. I have three children and I am a single mother. Life is full and I have learned that I can make art with everything I do. There is a big pool from which to call upon." Hernando moves fluidly from one aspect of her art to another. She cherishes change. She says one day it could be small paintings and resin work. The embroidered pieces, primarily the flowers, are placed in resin for her many displays. "I like variety. I work on many things at once. I think it helps broaden my thinking and keeps me engaged."

O'Brien invited Hernando to town. "I first became aware of Ana Maria when she was a graduate student. For a few years, I kept track of her work. Before moving here, I was in Denver and went to the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art and saw Ana Maria's art. The gallery director there put us back together. That exhibition had a version of 'The Mountain Brings us Boats Full of Lilies.' I knew I needed to bring her to Kansas City."

Inspiration is almost as vast as the round world for Hernando. She moved to the United States in the mid-1980s and earned a BFA from California College of Art and Crafts, Oakland, and a MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She now lives in Colorado. She traveled to Peru as a translator for a mystic named Americo Yabar, starting in 2005. Hernando says he talks often of the energy in the world that is like a fire. "That energy nourishes me. All these cultures and people feed me. The cloistered nuns and the brief time I saw them, there was a light on their faces. It struck me »»

ARTREACH: THE ART OF FIBER
Nov. 6
Students, 11 to 18, in these workshops learn about the artist's inspiration of working with hand-made skirts made by the women of Mollamarca, Peru, located in the Andes Mountains of South America. In this workshop, students will work with everyday fiber items associated with different cultures and will transform them into works of art. Space is limited to 12 participants per session. To register, call 816-457-6107 or education@kemperart.org.

START WITH ART FRIDAYS POETRY PERFORMANCE
Nov. 12
Join the Latino Writers Collective of Kansas City at Kemper at the Crossroads for a poetry night. Poets from the community will read original works inspired by the works in "Ana Maria Hernando: When the Women Sing."



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Previous spread: Ana Maria Hernando holds the colorful petticoats of the women of Peru.
Above: 'The Mountain Brings Us Boats Full of Lilies' almost floats on the floor of the Kemper at the Crossroads

"It is like a chain. The artists before me inspired me and I hope I can do the same."

that I was looking at love. Of course, going home to Buenos Aires inspires me. It is the movement of the city, the aesthetics that help feed me. Then there are my children," she says.

As a woman artist, Hernando hopes to inspire younger artists. "It is like a chain. The artists before me inspired me and I hope I can do the same. My best advice, in a word, is perseverance. Imagination, inspiration and that – all great, but in many ways, the more you work, the better you do. All the time you are mastering your craft, your skills. You have to keep going. It is really good advice for anything you do in life. When I was younger and I would try to enter a show, I saved my rejection letters. It helped harden me some so I would try to present again." Hernando has known since childhood that she was going to be an artist. "I was 4 years old and an English teacher stopped by our home twice a week to teach my older sisters. I would be given a word to copy in English from the teacher. I had a certain number of lines on the paper to fill, but then I had the opportunity to paint or draw. I remember such a feeling of happiness while doing that. At 5, I announced to the family I would be an artist. I am fortunate with the life I have to put my life together in a way to do this."

www.KEMPERART.org

BELL CULTURAL EVENTS CENTER
at MidAmerica Nazarene University

November 7 3:30 p.m.	Choral Concert "Great Choral Masterworks" (free admission)
November 13 7:30 p.m.	Nathan Granner/Ben Gulley "The Joy of Music"
December 5 3:30 p.m.	MNU's Heritage Choir "A Christmas Celebration" (free admission)
December 11 7:30 p.m.	Fountain City Brass Band "Bells-A-Plenty IX"
December 16 7:30 p.m.	Overland Park Civic Band (free admission)

For tickets, visit www.mnu.edu/bellcenter or call the Box Office at (913) 971-3636.

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