

---

## TOURING *Bernard Arnest: Scenes From Life*

January 19 – June 9, 2019

---

This touring packet emphasizes experiential inquiry-based learning by asking questions to help visitors think about the exhibition. Expertise on every work is not necessary. Before taking visitors into this space, spend time with the artwork so you know your comfort level with content and the appropriateness of the exhibition for various groups.

---

### WITH VISITORS

---

**INFORM:** *Scenes From Life* is a series of works produced by American artist Bernard Arnest (1917 – 1986) between 1974 and 1975 that address world events during that period. During his career, Arnest was a student of Boardman Robinson at the Fine Art Center School, A Professor of Art at Colorado College, and Chief War Artist in the US Army during WWII. This series, presented in its entirety, is a 2017 gift from the estate of the artist.

**PREPARE VISITORS:** The artwork in this exhibition contains graphic imagery of immediate and implied violence that may be disturbing.

- **DIRECT:** As you walk through this gallery consider what might be going on in these artworks. Find an artwork that recalls an event that is familiar to you or that has occurred in your lifetime – *it does not have to be the event Arnest was depicting.*
  - **SHARE:** Participants can share their selected artworks if they wish.
- **SHOW VISITORS:** The booklet of collected quotes beneath the artist statement **INFORM:** While working on the series *Scenes From Life*, Bernard Arnest compiled quotes by public figures. Arnest's artist statement, produced upon the conclusion of the series, refers to these sound bites as telling of the political and social climate of the time. The artist was a collector of many things, quotes being just one; the typed list reproduced within the context of the exhibition was saved amongst other preparatory images and sketches for *Scenes from Life*, now in the collection of the FAC.
  - **Distribute laminated quote cards (participants can exchange if they would like)**
    - **ASK:** Which artwork do you think best relates your quote?
    - Give participants time to search the exhibition
    - Have them share in groups: What do you see in the artwork you've selected that connects to the quote?
- **INFORM:** As was mentioned earlier, Arnest utilizes grotesque/violent imagery in many of these works. **DIRECT:** Find an artwork that you think contains this kind of imagery
  - **ASK:**
    - How do the people in the artwork appear to be responding to the violence around them?
    - If the grotesque imagery were removed from the work of art, how would it change the story you see unfolding?
- **ASK:** If this series, *Scenes From Life*, was a call to action, what do you think it would be asking us to do?

---

## RECOMMENDED FOR VTS

---

\*All the artworks in the exhibition are part of a single series and therefore, do not have individual titles. Artworks are described by their location in the gallery and were intentionally selected for non-violent content.

### West Wall

To the immediate left of Artist Statement (disorderly room)

4 groups to the right of Artist Statement (3 figures with papers) – *this is in proximity to some more challenging images, use judgement*

### North Wall

Center-Right (Series of 3 images Nixon with Birds)

### South Wall

Right of Intro text (any of these portraits)

---

## IF VISITORS WANT MORE INFORMATION

---

### Exhibition Wall Text

Over the course of more than five decades, Colorado-born Bernard Arnest (1917–1986) depicted the best and worst of humanity. Perhaps the most important works of his long career, the untitled objects in *Scenes from Life* (1974–75) encapsulate the artist's reactions to a world that he decided was essentially tragic. Though often grotesque, these images are masterful, rendered with a thoughtful poignancy characteristic of Arnest's work. *Scenes from Life* distills a lifetime of experience into a few harrowing images that remain as relevant today as they were in 1975.

Bernard Arnest began his formal training at the Fine Arts Center School under nationally renowned instructors Boardman Robinson and Henry Varnum Poor, both critical observers of social and political inequities. The two instructors' powerful influence is not only evident in Arnest's visual approach to realism, but also in his desire to capture the emotional experience of being human.

Arnest's impressive career as an exhibiting artist began in 1940 with a Guggenheim Fellowship and solo exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Art. As an educator, he held teaching positions at the University of Minnesota, Colorado College, and the Fine Arts Center. In service to his country, Arnest was Chief War Artist for the United States Army during World War II in Europe from 1944 to 1945. A true story-teller, Arnest immersed himself in the world and in his work, sharing his experiences with the understanding that reality is indeed subject to interpretation. This series, presented in its entirety, is a 2017 gift from the estate of the artist.

Joy Armstrong

Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

---

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

---

Born in Denver in 1917, Bernard Arnest's life as an artist was uniquely stable. Arnest began his formal training at what was at the time the Fine Arts Center School under Boardman Robinson and Henry Varnum Poor. He emphasized that this training centered on "how to make a painting work when it is considered only as a light-modifying machine" and which he described as "picture making" versus painting.

Once he finished his education Arnest began an impressive art career, which included exhibiting, teaching, and advising. In 1940 he was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship for Creative Work in Painting and had his first one-man show at the San Francisco Museum of Art. Additionally, Arnest exhibited at the Whitney, the Guggenheim, and the National Gallery of Art as well as one-man shows at the Fine Arts Center, the Denver Art Museum, and Colorado College. In 1947 he became chief instructor at the Minneapolis School of Art and throughout his life held teaching positions at the University of Minnesota, Colorado College, and the Fine Arts Center. He was represented by Kraushaar Galleries in New York from 1947 until his death in 1986.

---

## RELATED EVENTS

---

**100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Jan 26<sup>th</sup> 10a – 2p or  
Members Reception 2p – 4p Deco**

**Member Tour – April 6<sup>th</sup> 12 PM**