

GREENVILLE COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART

420 COLLEGE ST. GREENVILLE SC 29601 864-271-7570

News Release



News Media Contact:

Mary C. McCarthy
864-271-7570, extension 28
email: marymc@greenvillemuseum.org

For Immediate Release

November 4, 2009

Greenville (SC) Art Museum Announces Ben Long Exhibition

The work of American realist painter Ben Long will be featured in an important new exhibition at the Greenville County Museum of Art. *Ben Long: Paintings and Drawings* features work from throughout the artist's career and includes some recent paintings that have not previously been publicly exhibited. Opening on November 11, 2009, the exhibition will be on view through February 7, 2010.

Long is the grandson of artist McKendree Robbins Long and a native of Statesville, North Carolina. He is highly regarded for his works in fresco for churches and public buildings in the Carolinas. Fresco painting, which involves working directly on wet plaster, was used by the masters of the Italian Renaissance, and often depicts religious subject matter. It has been Long's ambition to develop an audience for fresco painting in this country. His frescoes in the lobby of the Bank of America Corporate Center in Charlotte—modern allegories about the human condition—are the largest secular frescoes in the United States.

Long is also an accomplished easel painter who renders penetrating likenesses of Old Master-style nudes in contemporary settings. His commissioned portraits include such notables as former North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt, former Bank of America CEO Hugh McColl, musician Boz Scaggs, and author Danielle Steele. The Greenville exhibition includes commissioned portraits as well as figurative and allegorical subjects. There are also several drawings, in addition to a study (called a cartoon) for the well-

known *Crossroads* fresco at the Civic Center in Statesville, North Carolina. In all, there are nearly forty works in the exhibition.

Long majored in creative writing at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, then moved to New York to study at the Arts Students League. Serving in the Marine Corps during the war in Vietnam, he commanded the Combat Art Team in Da Nang. Later, he journeyed to Florence, Italy, studying for eight years as an apprentice to the noted fresco artist Pietro Annigoni. During that time he was awarded the first International Leonardo da Vinci Award. Long moved to France in the 1980s, returning to the United States from time to time for portrait and fresco commissions. His work has been exhibited in the Royal Academy and the Royal Portrait Society in London and in public and private collections in the United States. He received the Arthur Ross Award for Excellence in the Classical Tradition.

In 2002, Long established the Fine Arts League of the Carolinas to instruct select students in a multi-year atelier tradition. An atelier (literally, a workshop) program is an apprenticeship in which the aspiring painter works under the tutelage of a master artist to develop skills in draftsmanship and anatomy, before taking on the study and practice of color theory and composition. Finally, these building blocks are drawn together into the precise rendition of the human form. Long also uses his fresco commissions as teaching opportunities. His teams of students and experienced artists work together to meet the challenges of one of the most difficult artistic media, large-scale fresco painting.

The Greenville County Museum of Art is located at 420 College Street, on Heritage Green in downtown Greenville. Its galleries open at 11:00 Tuesday–Saturday and at 1:00 on Sunday. The Museum closes at 5:00 except on Thursdays, when the facility is open until 8:00.

Admission to the Museum is absolutely free.