

# Lynn Newman Art

lynnnewmanart.com

Uncle of Kate Ehnert, Lynn was touched by the efforts of the Hillsboro community coming together to help ease the burden of the Hillsboro School district's hot lunch deficits. As a teacher, artist, and devoted family man, he has spent his life working to enrich people's lives through art and kindness.

Lynn has donated six watercolors as an addition to the 'Cupcakes for Lunch' Program. 100% of the proceeds will be donated to the Hillsboro School to help kick start the school year. He hopes this offer not only helps Hillsboro families, but inspires local artists to participate as they're able.

Sharing the Hope, Love and Dreams is what its all about for Lynn.

## Cheyenne artist shares 'Hope, Love and Dreams' at Nicolaysen

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Lynn Newman, a Cheyenne artist and retired art teacher, sets up a show of his work May 22 the Nicolaysen, Casper. "Hope, Love and Dreams" is on display through Aug. 18.

Josh Galemore, Star-Tribune

Cheyenne artist and retired art teacher Lynn Newman recalls a class of first-graders who all made paintings of snowmen with blue paint.

But one boy dipped his brush in red.

Red is the way snow feels, the boy explained, when he pressed his hands onto the snow to make a snowman.

“Some of my best teachers were little kids,” Newman said.

Their lesson that day was to learn about dark and light values by using only one color. The boy had gone far beyond the class lesson into what artists strive for at the highest level — to gain meaning from elements like color or shape, he said.

“So again, I think that that’s what art is,” Newman said.

“There’s kind of these parameters, but we’re always trying to push those parameters.”

His show “Hope, Love and Dreams” is on display through Aug. 18 at the Nicolaysen Art Museum.

He plans an artist talk June 20 and will give a painting workshop June 21.

Newman has expressed his hopes and dreams through art since he was 6 years old, according to his artist statement.

“So whether you’re 60, 6 or pushing 70, the reality is the drawing is literally the same — it’s the same experience that I felt when I was 6 years old, and I still feel today,” Newman said last week while hanging his show. “Because, essentially, I just love doing this stuff. If other people, hopefully, can connect with that, I think that’s part of what we want to share. But it begins with essentially just digging in and seeing where it goes. So these are all examples of digging in a different ways.”

## ‘Art and learning’

More than 80 of Newman’s paintings fill the main gallery at the Nicolaysen with vibrant colors and motion-filled brushstrokes. The oil and watercolor images span 30 years of his life. Images of draft horses, migratory birds, Western landscapes and flowers often symbolize bonds with loved ones, his aspirations and ideas about art.

Some paintings featured “coded messages,” which at first were inspired by his time as the art coordinator for Laramie

County School District 1 when meetings focused on data, and words like “assessment” and “accountability” were bandied about, he said. “But really, for artists, it’s how do you take something and how do you keep growing with it?”, Newman said.

After he retired, he began to incorporate words into the paintings to represent what he learned from the process of creating them, he said.

He’d tear words out of dictionaries and glue them to paintings after he painted them. In “The Migration of the Sandhill Cranes,” depicting birds in flight, he added words including “suspension,” “quality,” “dreams” and “express.” He thinks of adding the words to the paintings as a test for himself.

“It’s like the discovery is what did I learn?” he said. “Because it’s never what I thought it would be. You know I think that there’s always this — it’s a transformation. I think as you work on something, it changes the way you observe things.”

The words further communicate his ideas. He was taught in art school that the art needs to speak for itself, he said.

“And then at 68 I decided, ‘Eh, I can tell people.’ Here’s a hint,” Newman said.

Another painting in the show came from a workshop in an Art Institute of Chicago teacher exchange program, which focused on the idea of whether a subject is necessary if the goal is color, movement and line, he said.

“So that idea really made me uncomfortable,” he said. “But it stuck with me, so I kept thinking about it.”

As he wondered later what the painting was and what it’s really about, he summarized what he learned in the lesson in words he wrote around the four sides.

“Drawing lessons always start even though you don’t know where to begin,” the words begin. “Always give yourself permission to fail so you can succeed. Always connect with your heart as well as your mind.”

“To my mind, this is a drawing lesson,” Newman said. “And to my mind, this is accountability.”

## ‘The power of images’

In a painting of loose, fluid lines forming a group of running horses called “Chemistry of Love,” Newman glued on pieces of drawings his children made when they were little and one

his daughter drew to explain to him some of her work in her inorganic chemistry doctorate program. He glued on words, some handwritten, including “sharing,” “respect” and “love.”

“I don’t understand a word she’s saying, but I love the fact that she’s trying to share with me,” he said. “And so I think that to me, this is that idea of what art is. It’s really a hidden language.”

The messages, like those in ancient pictographs that always strike him, are left to one’s own interpretation, he said.

“So to me that’s that the art part, where the flower is part of a symbol, a horse is part of a symbol or these images on rocks,” he said. “And so we’re each coming in and we’re creating our own marks for other people to decipher in some way. And so again the words become part of that.”

A few pieces tell stories directly about his experiences, like one of his earlier paintings in dark, contrasting colors, illustrating the time he and his family heard a grizzly bear roar while camping at night, followed by the scream of a horse running away.

Other storylines are more abstract, he said, like another earlier painting of a boldly colored flower bud that to him represents the idea of “breaking free,” Newman said.

He painted it during a time when he was pondering questions like how to find time to create art while making a living, he said.

“To me that was just kind of a reminder (that) a flower doesn’t have to look like a flower when it’s done,” he said. “Just let it be what it wants to be.” He painted flowers for his three children around the time they graduated from high school, he said. Two appear in the show.

“They’re flowering and they’re blooming and they’re going their own direction,” he said. The flowers happened to be from the backyard, and to him they represent the work of keeping a dialogue going with family members. It can be sharing a flower, he said.

Newman’s paintings of draft horses are inspired by his family when he was growing up. He’s been drawing draft horses since childhood visits to his grandfather’s farm, he said. As time goes on, they take on different meaning to the artist.

For instance, Newman spotted some plow horses raking hay while he was on the way home from a visit to his brother

in North Dakota that ended on bad terms. Newman sent his brother some images of the horses, which helped them connect over memories of their grandfather pulling them with horses as kids.

“The dreams and hopes were tattered,” Newman said, “but the love was enough to keep it going.” Newman later painted “Hidden Language — Horses” referencing his past with his brother and continuing connections, he said.

“So it’s that power of images,” he said.

## ‘We learn as we go’

Newman, a North Dakota native, created about half of the paintings in the show after retiring from a career teaching kindergarten through 12th grade. He’s taught in South Dakota and Shoshoni before finishing his teaching career at Cheyenne Central High School. He attended the Columbus College of Art and Design and finished his bachelor’s and masters degrees at Montana State.

With his upcoming “Painting FUNdamentals” workshop, Newman will aim to inspire others to enjoy the process of creating, he said. They’ll explore how Van Gogh created different moods with color. At one point they’ll paint with twigs, which helps free people to enjoy immersing themselves in art rather than being concerned with skill or materials, he said.

The twigs break, and they decide to use the other end or break another one. That becomes part of the process, Newman said.

The unexpected can lead to new discoveries and developments artists didn’t think of at the start, he said.

“And whether you’re 6 or 60 or 70, we learn as we go,” he said. “And I think just keeping that in mind, that’s a freeing thing — that ‘Hey, if that one didn’t turn out so good, I’ll do another one.’” He encourages others to allow themselves permission to simply begin creating art and to think in terms of questions.

“It’s not a declarative sentence,” he said. “There is not one way of looking at it.”

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Elysia Conner, Reporter