

ARTIST EVELYNE BOREN

ALWAYS LEARNING, ALWAYS EVOLVING

By Emily Van Cleave

Santa Fe artist Evelyne Boren has always been drawn to experiences that offer challenge and adventure. Now in her eighty-first year of life, she still seeks ways to grow artistically and personally.

It's not enough that Boren has established herself as one of the country's premier landscape and cityscape painters. Resting on laurels is not her style. Instead, she continues to try new ways of making of art in order to explore her artistic potential. On the homepage of her website, for example, she writes about how, after more than forty years of working with brushes, she transitioned to using palette knives when painting in oils.

And there's more. Boren started working with clay and creating sculptures right before the onset of the pandemic. "For twenty-five years I carried around sculpting wax with me," she says. "I eventually threw it away because I thought I'd never use it. Then, two years ago during a visit to Shidoni [a gallery and sculpture garden in the village of Tesuque, five miles north of Santa Fe], I passed up an opportunity to buy sculpting tools at a great price. I just wasn't ready to sculpt."

Her interest in clay and sculpting resurfaced more than one

year ago when she was invited by artist friends in Mexico to bring clay to a class featuring a live model. "I loved the feeling of clay in my hands, so I continued to work with it," she says. "So far, I have seven sculptures in my collection."

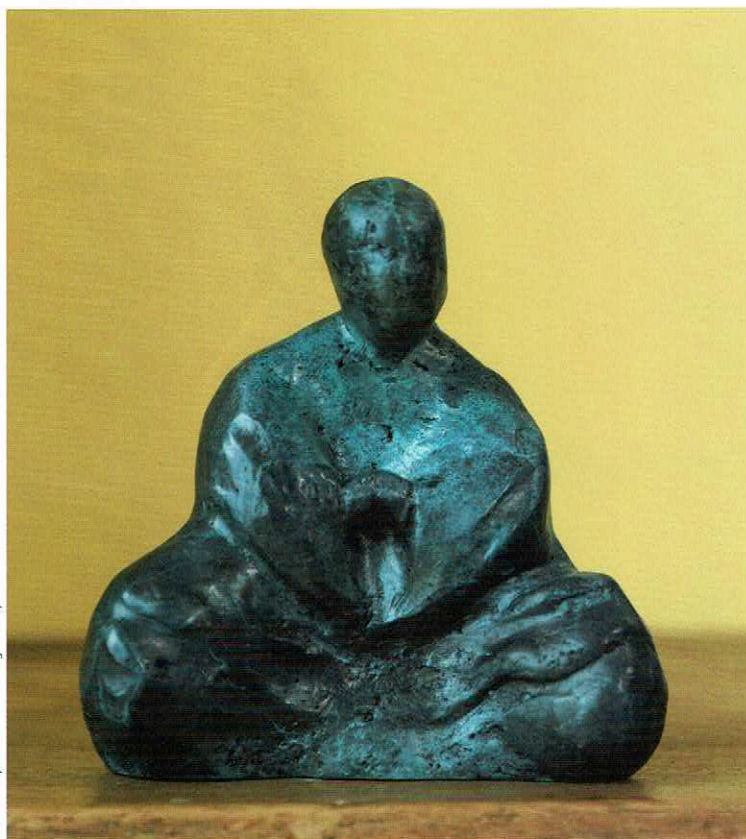
Boren's clay models are cast in bronze at a foundry in Puerto Vallarta, the Mexican resort community forty-five miles from the small village in which she lives four months of the year. The forms she has chosen to create are people. "I'm interested in the essence of the human being," she says, "and I love putting this work in bronze. There's something beautiful about bronze."

Acosta-Strong Fine Art in Santa Fe displays Boren's new sculptures, along with her watercolor and oil paintings that capture heartfelt scenes of New Mexico, Mexico and two other places of importance to the artist, Tuscany and Provence. Although Boren hasn't been able to visit Europe since the pandemic began, she says her favorite locations there are so ingrained in her that she can paint them even when she isn't there. "But nothing can take the place of the thrill of being in a small restaurant in Tuscany and experiencing all its sights, sounds and smells," she says. "I think I'll be able to travel freely in 2022."

Still, New Mexico and Mexico have been providing plenty of inspiration for Boren during the past year. As is her habit, she first finds a subject that excites her, something that makes her heart go pitter-patter. She creates a small watercolor sketch of her subject, making sure to note the scene's quality of light. Photographs of the changing light conditions give her information that she later incorporates into the painting. A preliminary charcoal sketch on newsprint also serves as another tool for gathering information for the final work.

At the appropriate time, Boren gets out her color wheel and chooses four or five colors with which to work. Usually, she'll pick four cool colors and one warm color, or vice versa. "I'm not interested in copying a scene but capturing the feeling of a scene," she says. "As I'm working, I actually see the finished painting in my mind."

Some of her watercolor paintings are created on canvas. Traditionally, artists apply watercolors to paper since canvas is generally not absorbent enough to work well with watercolors. "This is a very hard way to paint," Boren says. "Canvas is very smooth, and the watercolors go into it again and again. I build layer upon layer of watercolors on the canvas. The end result is that the watercolors don't look transparent but closer to opaque. When I'm finished with a painting, I apply a varnish to the surface







so that it's not necessary to put the painting under glass like you would with watercolor on paper. The process is a challenge, but a rewarding challenge."

Borena's journey in art didn't begin in childhood but rather when she was in her early twenties. Born in Germany in September 1939, the month World War II began, she moved to the United States in the late 1950s. Not long after settling in California, she met her first husband, Lamar Borena, a director of photography in motion pictures who specialized in underwater filming.

An accomplished swimmer, Borena worked with her husband on two television series — *Seahunt* and *Flipper*. She also appeared underwater in two James Bond movies — *You Only Live Twice* and *Thunderball*. Borena's most notable movie appearance was in *Namu, the Killer Whale*, in 1965. She befriended the whale and was able to swim with him, feed him and ride on his back. This was the first time a woman accomplished such a daring feat.

Borena's art career began in 1961 when she was working on films and found herself with nothing to do between her scenes. She started painting, capturing the colors and scenery around her.

After her marriage ended in 1972, Borena was in a position to devote much more time and energy to her art. She enrolled in an art workshop in Puerto Vallarta, where she met the man

who would become her husband of forty-six years, real estate developer Michael Sadlier. The couple married in 1973 and eventually moved to Santa Fe in the early 1980s. "I fell in love with Santa Fe straightaway," she says. "Santa Fe is an earthy place, and I'm an earthy person." Sadlier passed away in 2019.

Carlos Acosta, the co-owner of [Acosta-Strong Gallery](#) which has been representing Borena's work since 2014, says about the artist, "Her very inviting and colorful work tells the story of what she's feeling when she paints. She wants to bring happiness to people's lives."





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Page 34: Evelyne Boren, *Pachamama*, bronze, 4" x 4". Page 35: Celebrated artist Evelyne Boren, arriving at Paloma restaurant to enjoy dinner. Page 36: Evelyne Boren, *Back Street Bloom*, acrylic on board, 16" x 20". Page 37: Evelyne Boren, *Flowering Jacaranda*, watercolor, 30" x 34".