

Fernando Botero's "Country Wedding"

by Peter Selz

Fernando Botero, born in Colombia, has achieved worldwide fame for his painting and sculpture. He presently lives and works in Paris, New York, Monte Carlo and Pietrasanta. In 2004-05, compelled by the reports of torture inflicted by the American military on Iraqi prisoners, he produced a remarkable series of paintings and drawings on that topic, 60 of which he donated to the Berkeley Art Museum.

After completing this painful collection, Botero resumed painting his former subjects, mostly men and women engaging in their daily activities. His figures — impassive, voluptuous and voluminous — seem larger than life. Typical is "Country Wedding" (2009), which presents a peasant and his bride, dressed in festive attire as they stand silently in front of hills and mountains to pose for the requisite wedding picture. Botero has remained aloof from all the different modes of modernist art. Nevertheless, he wrote in 1997: "My painting and sculpture recapitulate much of the history of art, but belong ineluctably to the 20th century. The important thing to me is that anybody viewing a work of mine shall recognize it as a Botero."

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"Country Wedding," 2009, oil on canvas, 180 x 142 cm.
Image courtesy of Fernando Botero.

