

“Artist brings his creative world to UNLV art museum”  
Carol Cling / June 1, 2018



Los Angeles-based artist, Andrew Schoultz, poses for photo with his artwork at the UNLV Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art.

Welcome to Andrew Schoultz’s world.

It’s a colorful, sometimes fantastical place, populated by prancing beasts breathing fire.

Eyes peer out from the middle of spiraling circles. Bluebirds take to the air and castles climb to the skies. Pyramids come to a point. Ropes coil and waves boil as painted lines pulsate before your eyes.

But artist Schoultz’s world extends beyond those exotic elements, as he demonstrates in his exhibit and installation “In Process: Every Movement Counts,” which opens a 3½-month run Saturday at UNLV’s Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art. (The artist will be at Saturday’s opening reception; the next day, he flies to Germany for another exhibit of his work.)

Vegas Golden Knights fans will be struck by a series of paintings featuring medieval-style helmets, rendered in thick layers of silvery gray and white paint, sparked by the occasional flash of red or blue.

They’re a decided contrast to the vivid hues he employs in other works — including the red eye, surrounded by spiraling lines, he’s busy painting on one museum wall, a week before “In Process” opens.



“Dark Arrangements,” 2018

“This is a pretty large space,” Schoultz observes, climbing down from a ladder he’s been using as a painting perch. “It’s a challenge,” but a welcome one, he says, to create new work on the Barrick walls that echoes, in some way, the visual motifs he used in older works featured in the show.

An interior gallery provides “more of a quiet zone” for museum visitors to experience those works, curator (and San Francisco gallery owner) Andres Guerrero says. “It’s like an idea within an idea.”

Because “In Process” is in a museum, rather than a commercial gallery, “you can explore other ideas and not necessarily have to market the work,” Guerrero adds.

Having Schoultz’s vibrant, energetic paintings — and newly created murals — on the walls of the Barrick expands on the idea of what a museum can be, says the Barrick’s interim executive director, Alisha Kerlin.

Rather than “a white cube,” where “you speak in hushed tones, we want to invite visitors to fill in those walls,” she says. (Visitors will have the chance to do just that during the museum’s June 22 community art day, which features a variety of workshops.)

Other exhibit elements range from a giant drawing — one that’s been torn off the wall and torn up, setting the stage for another painting — to a parklike plaza, complete with benches where visitors can sit and interact with artwork that “interacts with this background,” Schoultz says.

As for what all those distinctive visual motifs mean, you’re on your own.

“Artists should be able to talk,” Schoultz says, but “I like the idea of things being a little bit more objective or ambiguous,” he says. “There’s a whimsical-ness to it. It’s like an alternative universe.”

Within that universe, Schoultz’s work addresses everything from politics to globalization, history, humanity and the environment, the artist acknowledges. (One obvious example: a series of flags covered with paint.)

“But you can’t really talk about the environment without talking about the economy,” the artist says. “You can’t talk about war without talking about natural resources. It’s a large sort of spectrum.”

Kerlin expects Schoultz’s work to “inspire a lot of conversation,” she says, noting “there’s so much happening at one time” within his works.

Schoultz’s exhibit runs through Sept. 15. The free-standing paintings will have a life after “In Process: Every Movement Counts,” but the murals the artist has painted directly on the Barrick walls will exist only as long as the exhibit does.

Afterward, the museum will “just paint over ‘em,” he says. “That’s the nature of these things — an ephemeral nature.”

Except, of course, in the memories of those who experience his work, Schoultz adds.

“To me, I love creating these immersive environments,” he says. “That experience will stay longer with the viewer” than just perusing a painting on a wall. Even one with fire-snorting horses prancing across the canvas.

Artist Andrew Schoultz had a lot of walls to paint for “In Process: Every Movement Counts.”

But taking art beyond museum walls remains a priority for the Los Angeles-based artist, who first visited Las Vegas in April to transform the Winchester Center’s skate park with vibrant imagery.

“There is a way with art, when you come into the confines of a gallery — the general public might not feel like they’re included,” he says. “There’s real power in people being exposed to art.”

Schoultz experienced exactly that, as a youngster, when a neighbor “painted his garage doors with Spider-Man and the Incredible Hulk,” he recalls, in part tracing his interest in art to “that simple thing.”

When an artist is “doing things in public, you’re putting yourself out there,” Schoultz says.

His recent Winchester work brought Schoultz back to the skate parks that provided early stimulus for his art, which “was transitioning from what you would call, I guess, graffiti.”

Artworks can keep transforming, he says, noting that when his murals “get vandalized,” he’ll sometimes return to “add more elements. Maybe something’s never done. It’s only finished for a while.”

Such a thing is unlikely to occur at the Winchester skate park, where Alisha Kerlin — the Barrick’s interim executive director — recently spoke with a 10-year-old who told her “ ‘It’s the most beautiful park,’ ” adding “we’re making sure nobody bombs it ” by tagging it with graffiti.

For Schoultz, “to do that skate park and not have to deal with tons and tons of red tape, to reignite the place, it’s pretty amazing,” he says. “It’s pretty crazy what paint can do.”