

Artist takes wing

Imagery captures
spiritual side of birds

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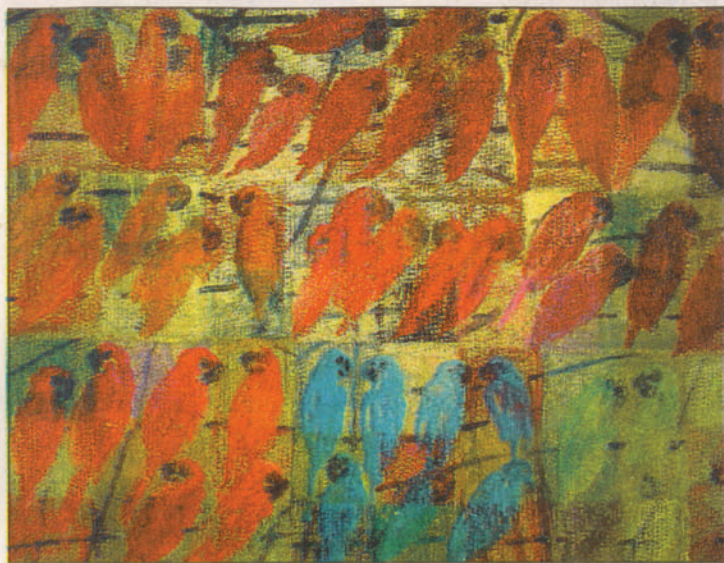
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Hunt Slonem's artwork often includes birds. His work has been described as "modern baroque." Above is *Casino*, and below is *Haitian Rope Screen*.



Gallery to host artist at reception for current show

By Dolores Tropiano

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SCOTTSDALE — Nearly 70 tropical birds fly about Hunt Slonem's famous New York studio.

And one, Oliver, is usually perched on the artist's shoulder as he paints.

Slonem believes birds are spiritual beings, the living symbols of the human soul and its spiritual liberation.

Not surprising, most of the artist's paintings are focused on birds.

Slonem will make an appearance at a reception for his current show from 7 to 9 p.m. today at Chiaroscuro Contemporary Art, 7160 E. Main St.

"The imagery he presents is very much a part of his spirit and person and reflective of the cultures he's experienced," said Bill Lykins, director of Chiaroscuro. "He studied in Mexico where the people have an intense devotion and faith. They appreciate animals as higher beings."

The gallery will exhibit more than 30 paintings by Slonem, whose work has been described as "modern baroque."

The pieces were created within the past 15 years and range in size from 5 by 7 inches to 10 by 12 feet. One of the larger ones, *Barcelona*, is priced at \$57,000.

Two sculptures are included in the exhibit, one featuring ocelots.

Slonem's paintings have been described as expressionistic overtures. His canvases often incorporate a grid design worked into a heavy impasto (a build up of paint), which can mimic a wire cage separating people from captive birds.

Slonem was born in Kittery, Maine, in 1951. His childhood in Hawaii and his experience as an exchange student in Nicaragua may have influenced his interest in exotica.

Slonem received his bachelor of arts degree from Tulane University in Louisiana, and studied painting at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

Slonem's work is in public and private collections across the nation, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and