

# BETTY LaDUKE

CELEBRATING LIFE: BETTY LADUKE RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION  
JANUARY 8 - APRIL 3, 2016



BRAUER MUSEUM OF ART

VALPARAISO  UNIVERSITY

**THE BRAUER MUSEUM OF ART** presents “Celebrating Life: Betty LaDuke Retrospective Exhibition,” curated by Gloria Ruff. “Celebrating Life” is an ideal title for this exhibition, since LaDuke has created works throughout her life that are celebratory in color, concept, and format. Each of the artist’s works presents her thoughts about the world around us and the worlds within us, with LaDuke encouraging new points of view as she blends representation and fantasy in her innovative creations.

LaDuke is skilled in many media and has traveled extensively; as a result, she is able to share with viewers her appreciation for people of many cultures through paintings and prints that reflect sophisticated, delightful styles and techniques. Exhibition visitors can both enjoy the narratives the artist relates and explore the way she confidently uses color, shape, and gesture. LaDuke is an artist and educator who generously shares the lessons she has learned about art making and about seeing sensitively one’s surroundings.

We are grateful to the Brauer Museum of Art’s Robert and Caroline Collings Endowment, the Brauer Museum of Art’s Brauer Endowment, Valparaiso University’s Cultural Arts Committee, and the Partners for the Brauer Museum of Art for making this exhibition possible.

Gregg Hertzlieb, Director/Curator  
*Brauer Museum of Art, Valparaiso University*

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**I MET BETTY LADUKE** in 1980 in Ashland, Oregon, when I took her printmaking class at Southern Oregon State College (now Southern Oregon University). Betty was an excellent teacher, showing us all aspects of printmaking which she had mastered.

Years later, while here at Valparaiso University, I saw an advertisement from Heifer International, a nonprofit organization I had been aware of and had supported, whose mission is to “end world hunger and poverty and to care for the Earth.” I recognized immediately Betty’s painting style and knew it was her work. I looked her up online and found that she was still very active as an artist living in Ashland, Oregon, and had been traveling for years throughout the developing world with her sketchbook.

During the annual celebration of MLK Day in January 2009 we hosted poet Lawson Inada to read at the Sunday night event. Inada also taught at Southern Oregon University and turned out to be a friend of Betty’s. Through him Betty contacted me and the following year we were able to show some of her large-scale paintings in the Chapel of the Resurrection as part of the 2010 MLK celebration. Soon after Betty donated works to the Brauer which have been shown in Mueller Hall Commons and in exhibitions of the permanent collection in the Brauer Museum of Art.

After our reconnection in 2009, Betty and I worked together to create a retrospective of her works for the main galleries of the Brauer Museum of Art. It is a wonderful space to show her large, vibrant, and colorful paintings. They are also important to exhibit at this time when the struggle to help the world’s poor and hungry is ever present in our lives.

It has been very exciting for me to be working again with a professor I studied with long ago and with an artist I greatly admire.

Gloria Ruff  
*Associate Curator*



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Mexico: Guanajuato, Mexico, 1953  
Oil on Masonite  
36 x 24 inches  
Courtesy of the Artist

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ON THE COVER  
Africa: After the Rain, 2009  
Acrylic on wood panel  
25 x 46 inches  
Courtesy of the Artist

## ARTIST STATEMENT + BIOGRAPHY

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**IN THIS, MY EIGHTY-THIRD YEAR,** I have created an exhibition that celebrates life. Not only my life but that of my nuclear and “international” family. These are the people who have shaped my vision. This exhibition represents a broad interweaving of cultural diversity that conveys our shared humanity. This is a complex project because of the many adventurous experiences that have shaped my life. The exhibition brings together 65 years of art production that tells the story of who I am, where I’ve been, and where I am still going—from the Bronx, N.Y., to urban and village centers on five continents, returning to Ashland, Oregon, my home of 52 years.

What unites the body of work? What pulls us all together in a need to survive. How we coexist depends upon basic components—tilling the earth, forming communities, celebrating the transition of seasons and the rites of passage from birth to death. I yearn for peace in a world where life can blossom and where creative potential allows for “constructing” rather than “deconstructing” as the primary force. My sketches, prints, acrylic paintings, and shaped wood panels often embrace the following themes: *spiritual traditions* that connect us to our past, present, and future; *honoring the earth*—plowing, planting, and harvesting; *peace* that brings an end to conflict and war; and *transitions* that recognize our life cycle from birth to bonding to ultimately letting go.

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**BETTY LADUKE** (American, b. 1933) resides in Ashland, Ore., where she is professor of art emeritus at Southern Oregon University, having taught there from 1964-1996. Born to emigrant parents in the Bronx, N.Y., at age 16 she was accepted into the High School of Music and Art in New York City. Upon graduation, she continued her education with scholarships at the University of Denver, the Cleveland Institute of Art, and the Instituto Allende in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. In 1963, she graduated from California State University in Los Angeles with a special secondary art teaching credential and a master’s degree in printmaking. LaDuke has exhibited widely around the United States including the Schneider Museum of Art, Ashland, Ore.; the Brauer Museum of Art, Valparaiso University, Indiana; University Museum of New Mexico State University, Las Cruces; Dallas Museum of Art, Texas; The Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago; Chattanooga African American Museum, Tennessee; Indianapolis Art Center, Indiana; the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Ore., and the Albany Museum of Art, Georgia. Her work is represented in public collections including Jordon Schnitzer Museum of Art, Eugene, Oregon; Brauer Museum of Art, Valparaiso, Ind.; Rensselaer Newman Foundation and Cultural Center, Troy, New York; Heifer International, Little Rock, Ark.; Portland Art Museum, Ore.; the Rogue Valley International Airport, Medford, Oregon and the Rhode Island school of Design, Museum of Art, Providence, R.I. LaDuke has received numerous awards such as the Oregon Governor’s Award in the Arts (1993) and the National Art Education Association’s Ziegfeld Award for distinguished international leadership (1996).



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Oregon: Summer Joy, 1972  
Acrylic on canvas  
68 x 54 inches  
Courtesy of the Artist



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Burkina Faso:  
Women on the Move, 1993  
Acrylic on canvas  
72 x 68 inches  
Courtesy of the Artist



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Eritrea: Tree of Life, 1998  
Acrylic on canvas  
68 x 54 inches  
Courtesy of the Artist



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Africa Market Day, 2009  
Acrylic on wood panel  
80 x 40 inches  
Courtesy of the Artist



Oregon Pear Harvest, 2012  
Acrylic on wood panel  
48 x 36 inches  
Courtesy of the Artist

The artist thanks her studio assistant, Barney Johnson, for his fine work cutting and routing the plywood panels.

## BRAUER MUSEUM OF ART

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Hours for spring semester when classes are in session:

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Wednesday	10 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Thursday & Friday	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday	Noon – 5 p.m.