

FERNAND  
BOTER

OPERA GALLERY  
HONG KONG

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There are simply no criteria, no references or standards set by 20<sup>th</sup> century Modernism that allow us to grasp or decipher the work of Fernando Botero. The artist's disregard for leading contemporary trends in the beginning of this century remains unique in our dominant artistic world.

In the 50s, artistic mainstream currents forced painters to abandon the illusion of depth in exchange for a radical exploration of the canvas two-dimensional space; but Botero insisted on volume. From the start of his career, Botero's challenge was (and still is) to reconcile his use of extremely voluptuous figures - the artist's trademark - with the images of his Colombian childhood and the popular culture that he so deeply respects. Whether the subject is nudes, still life or Colombian influences, his themes all share the artist's unique esthetic vocabulary. The artistic coherence between the models used and their generous curves blending on canvas, the disproportion of these combined elements, the precise strokes and the softness of the resulting portrait all contribute to an atmosphere of plenitude and abundance that seem to hover over Botero's works.

Throughout his career, the artist has remained on the fringe of any dialogue or rebellion; Botero has always refused to take part in the fierce war of influences that defined artistic relations between Europe and the United States since World War II. His creations prove that alternative, major artistic productions can thrive alongside the New York - Paris mainstream. The niche created by this artist is one of exception.

With this exhibition, Opera Gallery strives to pay tribute to the prolific artistic production of this prodigious artist. From the opening of our very first gallery in 1994, we have always shown an immense interest in the genius of Fernando Botero and are proud to host the first showing of his work in Hong Kong.

Gilles Dyan  
Founder and Chairman  
Opera Gallery Group

Shirley Yablonsky  
Director  
Opera Gallery Hong Kong

# FORERUNNERS

# BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1932, Medellín, Colombia, Botero is the son of a travelling salesman and a mother who worked as a seamstress.

Botero published his first illustrations in the Sunday supplement of the *El Colombiano* daily paper at the early age of 16. He started his career as a set designer and in 1951 held his first solo exhibition at the Galería Leo Matiz in Bogotá. In 1952, Botero travelled with a group of artists to Barcelona, where he stayed briefly before moving on to Madrid. In Madrid, Botero studied at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. Later that year, he won the ninth edition of the Salón de Artistas Colombianos.

At the age of 21, Botero travelled to Paris and Italy to study under the works of great Renaissance Masters, mastering the painting and drawing techniques of perspectives and portraits. In the mid 50's, Botero married Gloria Zea and moved with her to Mexico where he found his own style under the influence of mural paintings by the Mexican artist Diego Rivera. It was then that he experimented with proportions and fell in love with voluptuous curves. In 1960, Botero moved to New York and won the Guggenheim National Prize for Colombia. In the mid 70's, he moved to Paris and began works in bronze making his voluptuous curves three-dimensional. His subject at the time remained classical, painting families and portraits in the modern world.

Since the birth of his son, Pedro, from his second marriage in 1970, the artist captured all phases of his life in

his art. After the death of his son only aged 4 in a car accident, Botero often returned to this motif.

In the early 80's, Botero moved to Tuscany where he only painted bullfighting scenes for two years. The millennium found Botero's work mature, with bigger and bolder paintings of family portraits and landscapes. Being compassionate about his culture and the people in his contemporaries, Botero captured a series of works documenting the brutal, drug-fueled guerrilla war that has been going on for 40 years in Colombia. Kidnappings and massacres, funeral processions, car bombs and death-squad fighters filled his canvases. His following series *Abu Ghraib* capturing Iraqi soldiers being tortured in prison won him international acclaim as a political artist, a complete contrast to his so far whimsical and playful reputation. In 2007, following a visit to the circus, Botero was fascinated by the variety and excitement it contained. He started painting in detail the acrobats, the costumes and animals that made the circus such a fascinating world.

Since the beginning of his career, Botero has participated in over 100 exhibitions worldwide and is collected by all major international museums. His monumental sculptures decorate important institutions and have played center stage for outdoor showings in Park Avenue in New York and throughout the city of Singapore just to name a few. Today, Botero shares his time between Paris, Monte-Carlo, Pietrasanta and New York.

**PAINTINGS**



**The Family 2010**

Signed and dated "Botero 10" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 146 x 176 cm - 57.5 x 69.3 in.



**Family 1995**

Signed and dated "Botero 95" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 106 x 100 cm - 41.7 x 39.4 in.

**The House with a woman at the door 1995**

Signed and dated "Botero 95" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 152 x 126 cm - 59.8 x 49.6 in.

**Exhibited**

Museo d'Arte Moderna, Lugano, Jul. 31 - Oct. 12, 1997

**Literature**

Ana María Escallón, Botero: new works on canvas, 1997, No. 142, ill. in colour





**House 1995**

Signed and dated "Botero 95" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 118 x 156 cm - 46.5 x 61.4 in.



**National Holiday 2003**

Signed "Botero" (lower left corner) and "Uribe" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 100 x 130 cm - 39.4 x 51.2 in.

**Public notes**

This has been the only painting on which the master, during his career, has allowed an additional signature, in this case the Colombian president, Mr. Álvaro Uribe Vélez.



### Interior 1995

Signed and dated "Botero 95" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 100,5 x 130,3 cm - 39.6 x 51.3 in.

### Provenance

Galleria d'Arte Contini, Venice, Italy (acquired from the artist)  
Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

Marlborough Gallery, Fernando Botero: Paintings, New York,  
Oct. 23 - Nov. 23, 1996, No. 9, pp. 14 - 15, ill. in colour

### Literature

Ana María Escallón, Botero: new works on canvas,  
New York, 1997, p. 117, ill. in colour

### La Toilette 1980

Signed and dated "Botero 80" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 185 x 145 cm - 72.8 x 57.1 in.

#### Provenance

Marlborough Gallery, New York, USA  
Acquired from the above by the present owner

#### Exhibited

Marlborough Gallery, Fernando Botero - Recent Work, New York,  
Nov. 7 - Dec. 2, 1980, p. 29, No. 21, ill. in colour

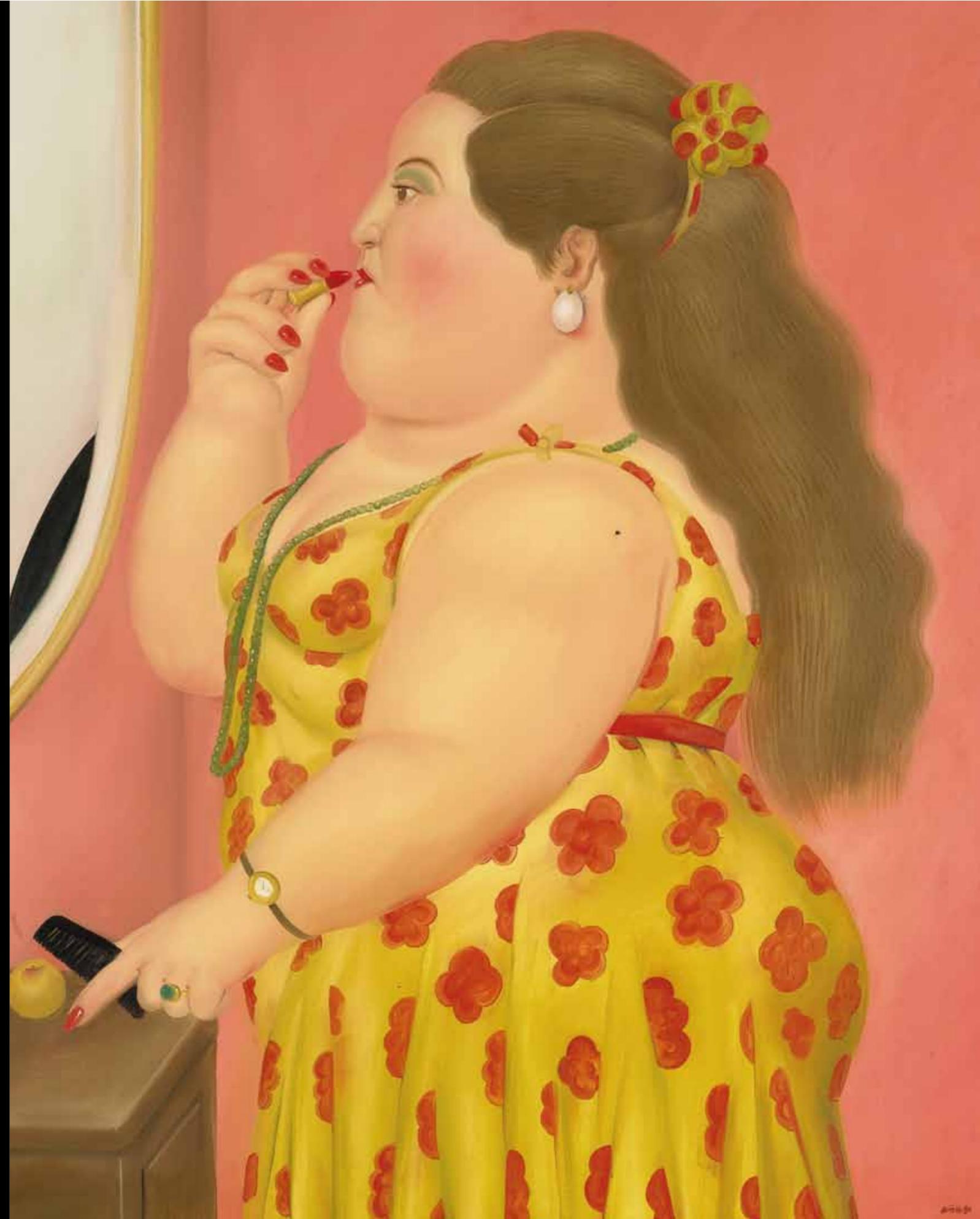
#### Literature

Pierre Restany, Botero, SJS Publishers, Italy, 1983, ill. in colour  
Botero, Découvrons l'art - 20<sup>e</sup> siècle, Paris, 1996, ill. in colour and reproduced on dust jacket

#### Public notes

Painted in 1980, Fernando Botero's *La Toilette* is a masterful rendition of one of the artist's favorite subjects, the female in an intimate setting. Botero tends to primarily focus on standing and reclining female nudes that are posed in surroundings reminiscent of the old Masters who were inspirational to his painting.

Characteristic of works painted during this period, *La Toilette* exalts the flourish that Botero commands with his brush. Botero has made great efforts to carefully delineate the figure's coiffed hair, as evidenced by the comb in her hand. Additionally, the woman's flesh has been rendered delicately; a small beauty mark adorns her shoulder. Her beaded necklace glistens from the light reflected by the large looking glass. Extraneous elements have been eliminated in order for the viewer to focus on the moment when the woman is applying her bright-red lipstick, prior to her meeting her lover or client.



### Hombre Fumando 1980

Signed and dated "Botero 80" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 189 x 136 cm - 74.4 x 53.5 in.

#### Provenance

Marlborough Gallery, New York, USA  
German Duque Gallery, Medellín, Colombia  
Private collection, Mexico City, Mexico  
Sale: Christie's, New York, Important Latin American Paintings, Drawings and Sculptures (Part 1),  
May 15, 1996, lot 38, pp. 80-81 of the catalogue  
Private collection, Guadalajara, Mexico

#### Literature

E.J. Sullivan and Jean-Marie Tasset, Fernando Botero: Monograph & Catalogue raisonné,  
Paintings 1975 - 1990, Sylvio Acatos, Lausanne, 2000, p. 300, No. 1980/16  
Pierre Restany, Botero, SJS Publishers, Italy, 1983, ill. in colour  
Giorgio Soavi, Fernando Botero, Fabbri Editori, Milan, 1988, No. 103, p. 131, ill. in colour





**Mujer 1980**

Signed and dated "Botero 80" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 39 x 34 cm - 15.4 x 13.4 in.



**Venus 2005**

Signed and dated "Botero 05" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 171 x 128 cm - 67.3 x 50.4 in.



**Woman undressing 1992**

Signed and dated "Botero 92" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 100,5 x 78 cm - 39.6 x 30.7 in.



**The Party 2009**

Signed and dated "Botero 09" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 147 x 183 cm - 57.9 x 72 in.



**Wedding night 2009**

Signed and dated "Botero 09" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 37 x 54 cm - 14.6 x 21.3 in.



**The Whore house 2009**

Signed "Botero" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 150 x 177 cm - 59.1 x 69.7 in.



**Woman in bed 2009**

Signed and dated "Botero 09" (lower left corner)  
Oil on canvas - 34 x 38 cm - 13.4 x 15 in.



**Reclining nude with book 1997**

Signed and dated "Botero 97" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 128 x 206 cm - 50.4 x 81.1 in.



**The Beach 2009**

Signed and dated "Botero 09" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 147 x 208 cm - 57.9 x 81.9 in.



**Equilibrista 2007**

Signed and dated "Botero 07" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 151 x 100 cm - 59.4 x 39.4 in.

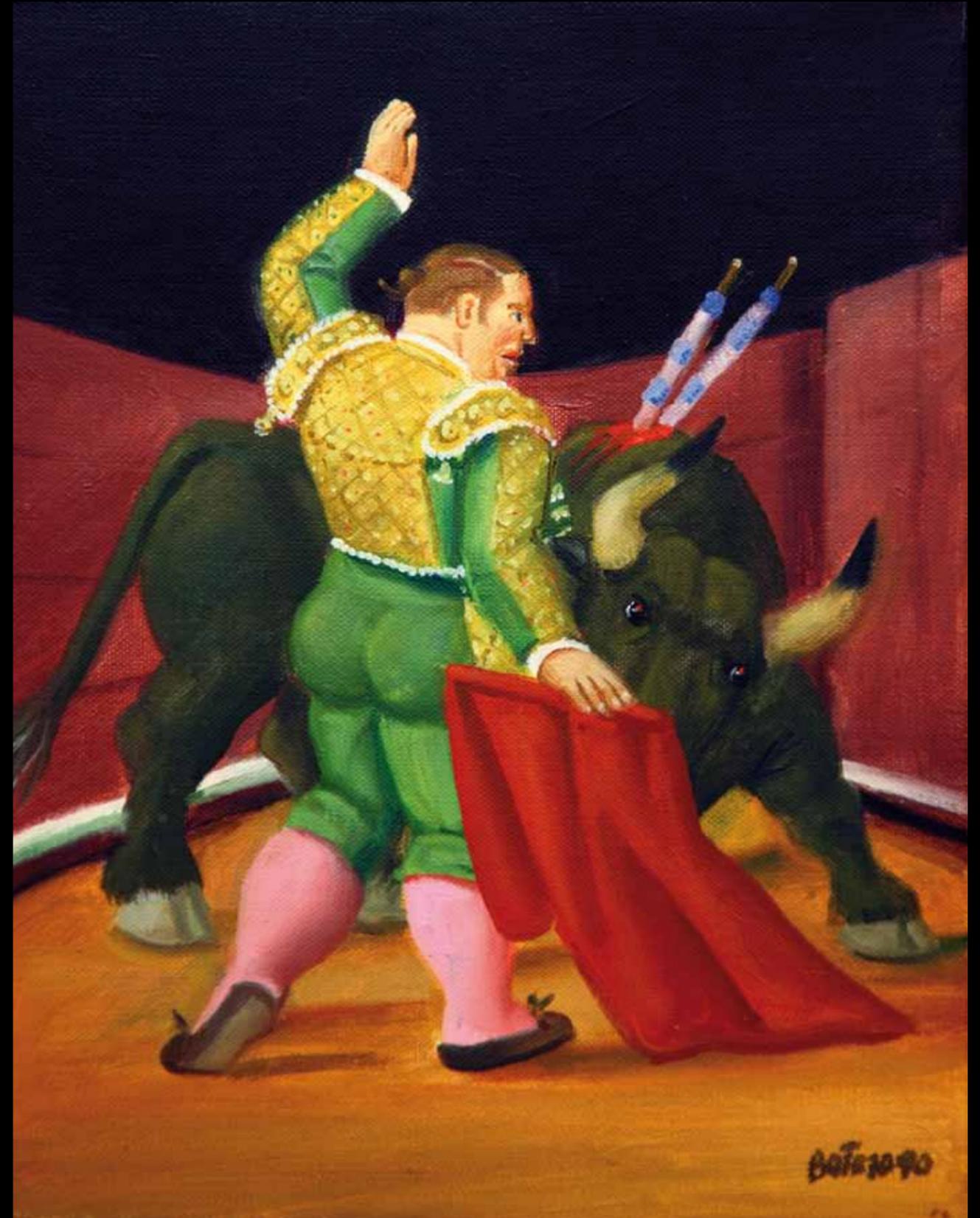


**Target 2007**

Signed and dated "Botero 07" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 174 x 107 cm - 68.5 x 42.1 in.

**Derechazo 1990**

Signed and dated "Botero 90" (lower right corner)  
Oil on canvas - 31,5 x 25,5 cm - 12.4 x 10 in.

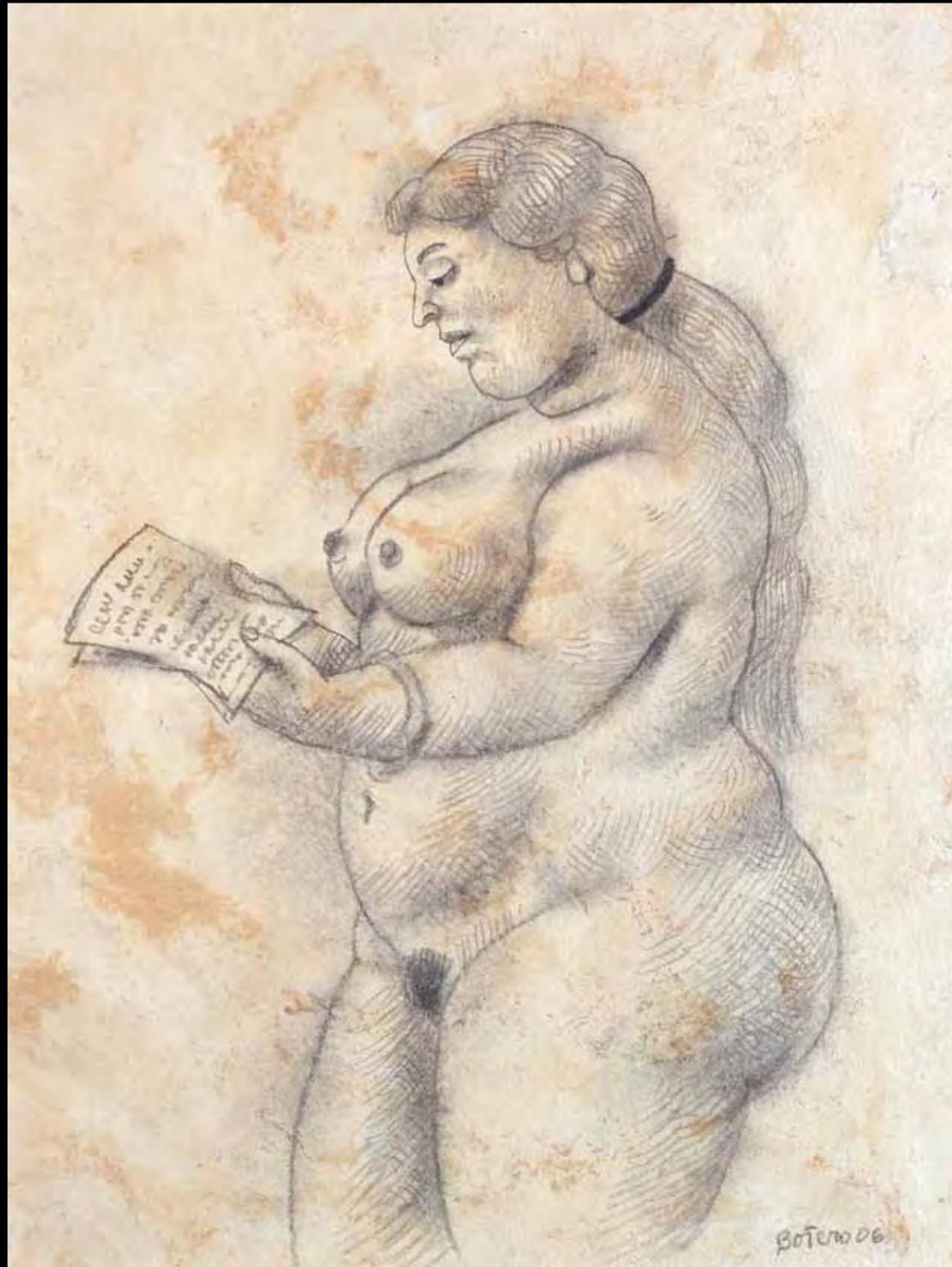


**DRAWINGS**



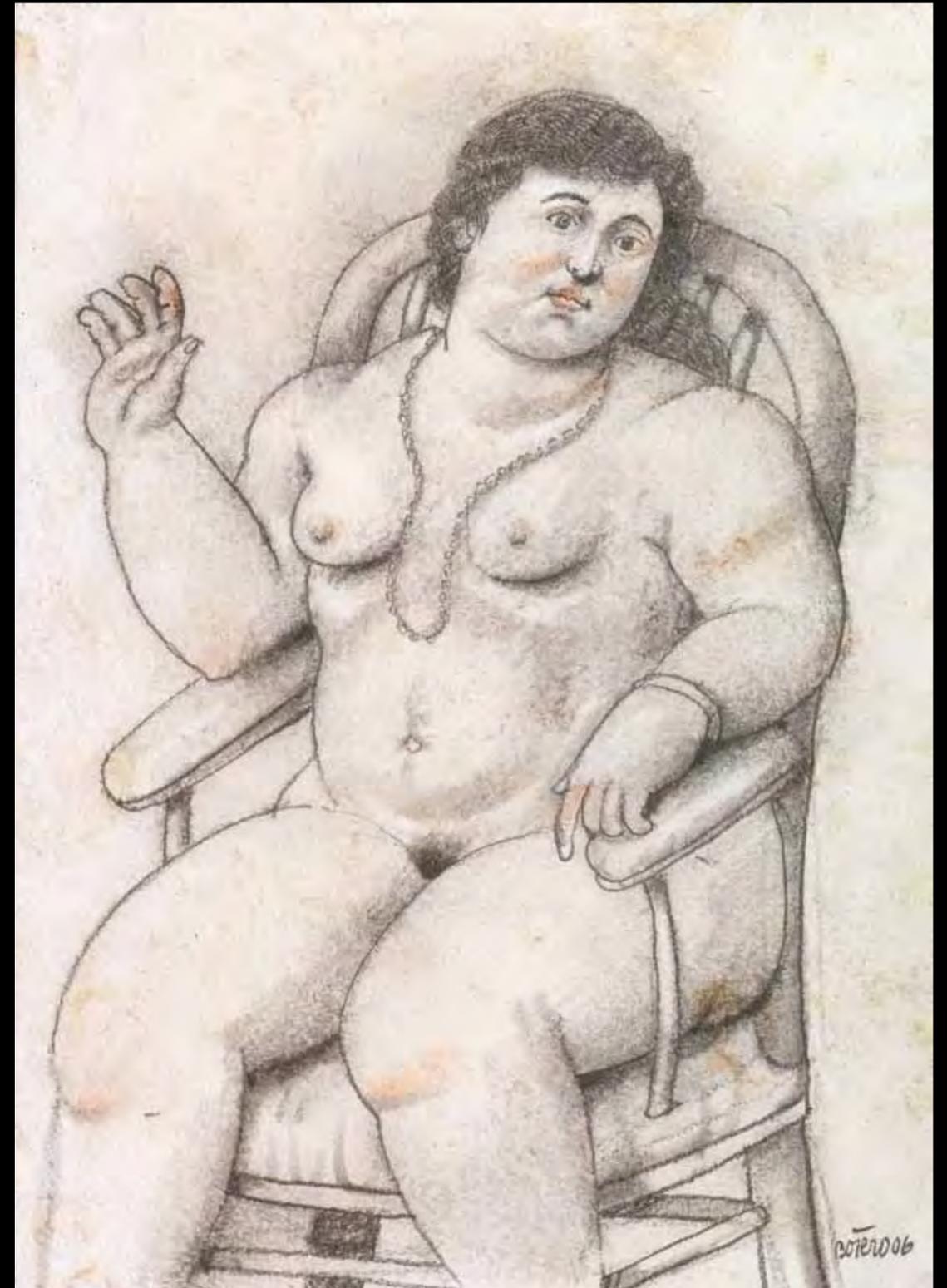
**La Toilette 2009**

Signed and dated "Botero 09" (lower right corner)  
Watercolour on paper - 106 x 74 cm - 41.7 x 29.1 in.



**Femme nue lisant 2006**

Signed and dated "Botero 06" (lower right corner)  
Charcoal drawing on Mexican paper - 38 x 29 cm - 15 x 11.4 in.



**Femme assise 2006**

Signed and dated "Botero 06" (lower right corner)  
Charcoal drawing and colour pencil - 40 x 30 cm - 15.7 x 11.8 in.



**Man 2004**

Signed and dated "Botero 04" (lower right corner)  
Pencil and bistre on paper - 39 x 30 cm - 15.4 x 11.8 in.



**Femme élégante au chat 2006**

Signed and dated "Botero 06" (lower right corner)  
Colour pencil on paper - 40 x 30 cm - 15.7 x 11.8 in.

**The Seamstress 2009**

Signed and dated "Botero 09" (lower right corner)  
Watercolour on paper - 100 x 65 cm - 39.4 x 25.6 in.





**Danseuse équilibriste à cheval 2006**

Signed and dated "Botero 06" (lower left corner)  
Red chalk on paper - 40 x 30 cm - 15.7 x 11.8 in.



**Homme à la mandoline 2006**

Signed and dated "Botero 06" (lower right corner)  
Pencil and gouache on paper - 40,5 x 30 cm - 15.9 x 11.8 in.

**Three Musicians 1990**

Signed "Botero" (lower right corner)  
Red chalk on canvas - 190 x 160 cm - 74.8 x 63 in.

**Provenance**

Private collection, Colombia  
Felipe Grimbert, Miami, USA  
Private collection, Tulsa, USA

**Literature**

Marc Fumaroli, Botero: Drawings, Villegas Editores, Bogotá, 1999, ill. in colour p. 62





**Still life with coffee pot 2004**

Signed and dated "Botero 04" (lower right corner)  
Watercolour on paper - 31 x 37,5 cm - 12.2 x 14.8 in.

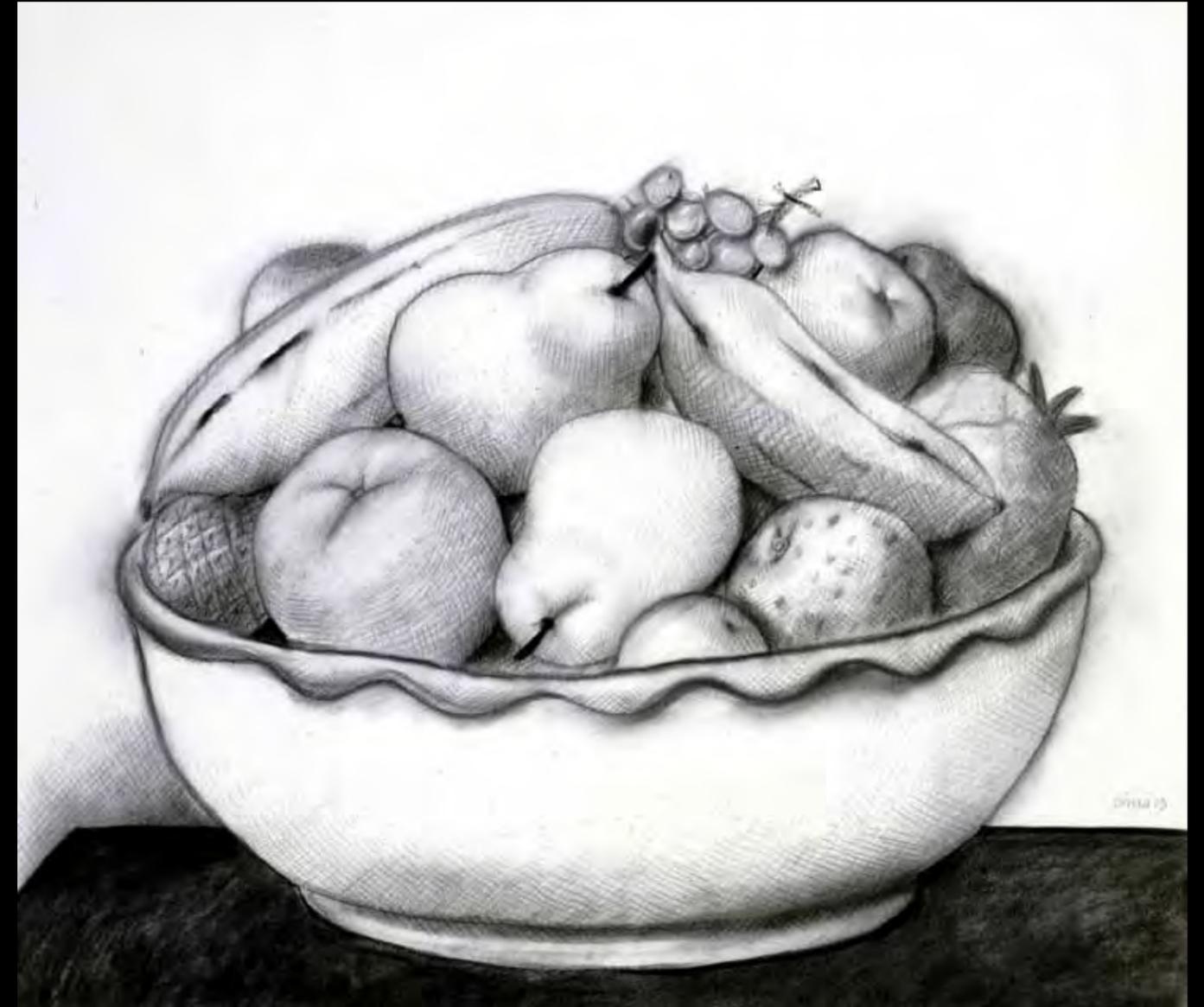
**Exhibited**

JPL Fine Art, Botero, Aquarelle und Zeichnungen, Zurich,  
June 1 - July 15, 2005, ill. p. 42



**Still life 2009**

Signed and dated "Botero 09" (lower right corner)  
Watercolour on paper - 105,5 x 75 cm - 41.5 x 29.5 in.



**Corbeille de fruits 2003**

Signed and dated "Botero 03" (lower right)  
Charcoal drawing on paper - 91,5 x 107 cm - 36 x 42.1 in.

**SCULPTURES**



**Woman in bed on her stomach 2005**

Signed "Botero" (on the back of the base)  
Bronze, edition of 6 - 26,7 x 52,7 x 25,4 cm - 10.5 x 20.7 x 10 in.



**Ballerina**

Signed "Botero" (on the back of the base)  
Bronze, edition of 6 + 2 AP - 64 x 41 x 25 cm - 25.2 x 16.1 x 9.8 in.



**Cavallo 2007**

Signed "Botero" (on the horse's leg, lower right)  
Bronze, edition of 6 + 2 AP - 92 x 106 x 61 cm - 36.2 x 41.7 x 24 in.



**La Poupée 1977**

Signed "Botero" (on the front right hand corner of the base)  
Bronze, edition of 6 - 161 x 104 x 64 cm - 63.4 x 40.9 x 25.2 in.



**Reclining woman 2007**

Signed "Botero" (on the lower right of the base)  
Bronze, edition of 6 - 47 x 114,3 x 47 cm - 18.5 x 45 x 18.5 in.

