



# State-of-the-Art: A profile of Hans Erni's century of creative artistry

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Monday, February 20, 2012 - Travels with Peabod by Bob Taylor

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**CHARLOTTE, NC.** February 20, 2012 - Erni was remarkable even then, not only for his prolific volume of work, but also for his tireless optimism and enthusiasm for life. That spirit does not go unrecognized in his creations which combine futuristic vision with a flair for history and an understanding of mankind's role in the world. Add in a vibrant use of color and you begin to penetrate the soul of an artist who has witnessed a world of extraordinary technological innovation during his lifetime.

Erni's museum, the Hans Erni Haus, is located on the shores of Lake Lucerne on the outskirts of town beside the Swiss Transportation Museum. The purpose for my visit was a project I was doing about the art and culture of Switzerland. At the time Mr. Erni was unknown to me, but I quickly learned that he is a beloved cultural icon throughout his tiny alpine homeland.

Little did I realize that the popular artist himself would be on hand to give me a personal tour of his museum. Though I only spent a couple of hours with him, when it was over, I felt I had come to understand much about the man within the man who regarded as a living legend throughout Switzerland.

Erni is a painter, sculptor and designer who is, perhaps, best known for his illustrative postage stamps. Among his designs are stamps for the 250th anniversary of the principality of Liechtenstein, issues for the Winter Olympics in Sapporo, Japan and the Summer Olympics in Munich, Germany plus a series of stamps for the Swiss postal service featuring Alberto Giacometti, Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz, Le Corbusier, Albert Einstein and Arthur Honegger. The tireless centenarian also created a series of lithographs for the Swiss Red Cross.

Be it sculpture, painting, tapestries or murals, Erni's artistic contributions are displayed in virtually every nook and cranny of Switzerland. His themes are vast and varied but are almost always filled with optimism ranging from technology, environment, science, sports, nature and the arts. Little wonder that Hans Erni has discovered the secret of longevity through his insatiable curiosity and never-ending inventiveness.

During the tour, Erni recalled that he had met Albert Einstein on several occasions. Einstein had lived in the nearby Swiss capital of Bern until 1909, the same year that Hans Erni was born. Though not in the same field, the artist felt a kinship with Einstein's intellectual curiosity, which resulted in several depictions of the great physicist in Erni's work.

As we strolled through his domain representing decades of his voluminous work, I asked the artist how he maintained his youthful outlook on the world and what motivated him to be so productive. With an infectious smile and twinkling eyes that radiated optimism beneath his locks of curly gray hair, Erni's answer was not surprising, yet it was profound in its simplicity.

"I'm a dreamer," he replied. "Dreams are necessary because a man who only stays within his reality and is not able to step forward from that is, in a way, already dead. Dreams involve stepping into a new world, into what you could achieve."

When the visit concluded, we paused at a display case and chatted a while longer before I requested some brochures about the museum and his collection. Erni signaled to a docent to gather some research materials for me, and then he asked for a card.

As I fumbled through the myriad of documents I had accumulated over several days of site inspections, the docent returned with a small stack of publications. Oblivious to what was happening, I continued my search as Erni grabbed one of the larger booklets and opened it.

Finally I located a business card and handed it to the artist who was still engrossed with the brochure. Seconds later he closed the cover, took the card and presented me with the periodical he had been working on containing a sampling of his work.

Then unexpectedly he asked, "You like naked women don't you?"

Under normal circumstances I would have replied with a resounding, "Yes," but admittedly I was somewhat taken aback. Though my ultimate response was still in the affirmative, it was definitely restrained as I momentarily regained my composure.

Then, opening the brochure, I discovered a simple but elegant pencil line drawing of a naked woman with her hair flowing in the breeze. To be sure the sketch wasn't elaborate or polished, but it was undoubtedly the work of a master craftsman that had been created and executed in mere seconds.

Throughout the remainder of my journey I was greeted with expressions of awe and envy by everyone I encountered whenever I proudly displayed the spontaneous sketch given to me by the master artist.

It was then that I realized the greatest gift a creative person can give to someone else is a genuine work of their own. Whatever the representation may be, regardless of the form or the format, his works represents something unique in the entire world; something that is one of a kind; something that belongs only to you from someone who belongs to the world.

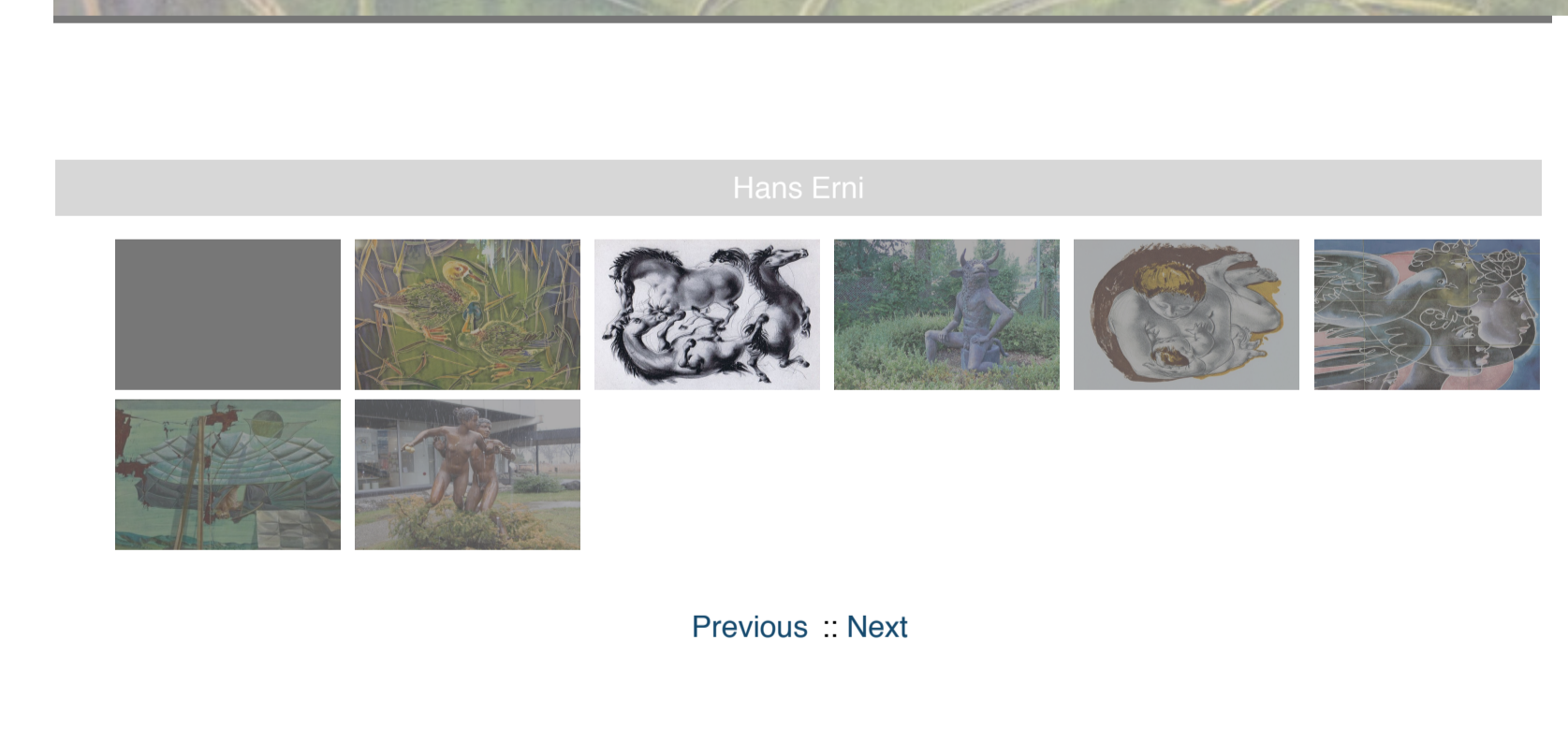
Today, most of the collection of brochures from my 8-day tour of Swiss museums hides sequestered in a box in my office. But the line drawing by Hans Erni is conspicuously exhibited on a wall in my home for everyone to see. I like to call it "State-of-the-Art" for it is my link to an inspirational man who continues to thrive more than a century after he was born; a man who is truly living his dreams.

([http://www.verkehrshaus.ch/en/hans\\_erni\\_museum/](http://www.verkehrshaus.ch/en/hans_erni_museum/)) ([www.myswitzerland.com](http://www.myswitzerland.com))

*Peabod is Bob Taylor, owner of Taylored Media Services in Charlotte, NC, founder of The Magellan Travel Club which creates and escorts customized tours to Switzerland, France and Italy for groups of 12 or more. Inquiries for groups can be made at [Peabod@aol.com](mailto:Peabod@aol.com) Taylored media has produced marketing videos for British Rail, Rail Europe, Switzerland Tourism, the Swedish Travel & Tourism Council, the Finnish Tourist Board, the Swiss Travel System and Japan Railways Group among others. As author of **The Century Club** book, Peabod is now attempting to travel to 100 countries or more during his lifetime. To date he has visited 69 countries. Suggest someplace new for Bob to visit; if you want to know where he has been, check his [list](#) on Facebook. Bob plans to write a sequel to his book when he reaches his goal of 100 countries.*

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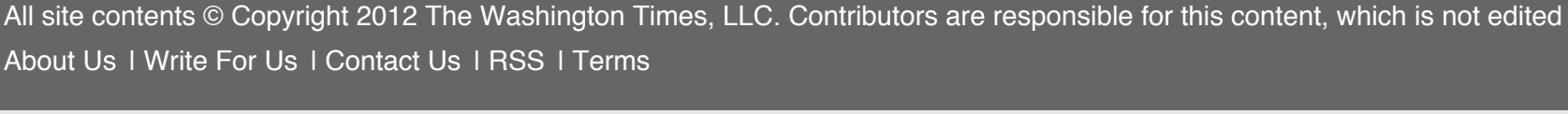


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**Urban Game Changer**  
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**Can California be a contender in the Presidential race or are we dreaming?**  
California will not win this year 55 Electoral College votes. We are not winners here because we have not prepared for a presidential candidate.

**Video: Kira Davis offers her apology to President Karzai, standing for America**  
"I am sorry that our President would make such a public spectacle of apologizing ... while giving you and your military a pass at murdering out military personnel in cold blood"  
-Kira Davis

**California GOP convention theme: Communication deficit**  
There is "communication deficit" in the state and the GOP is failing to reach out to specific voters on issues that excite them.

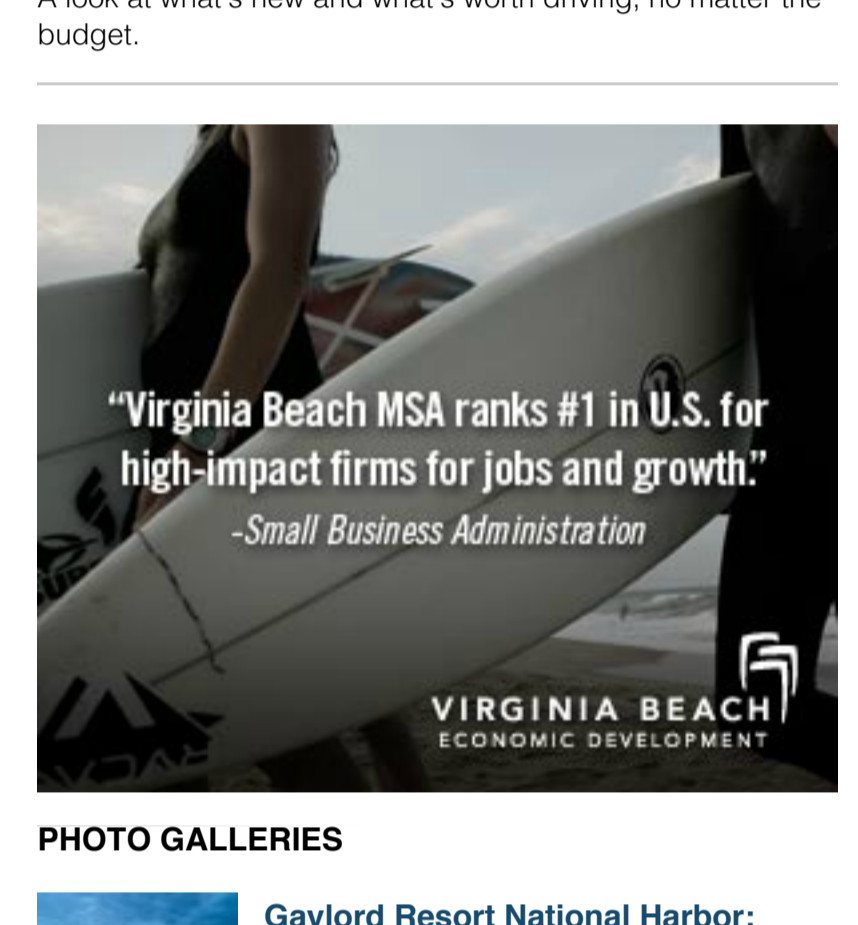
**2012 PAFF Awards celebrates Black History Month (Original Video)**  
The 2012 The Pan-African Film and Arts Festival (PAFF) helped Los Angelesans celebrate Black History month with their 20th anniversary screening films made by or about people of African descent.

**End of the Day**  
As the sun sets, the day ends, thoughts crowd our minds...

**Curtain Up!**  
Classical music and the performing arts: news and reviews you can use.

**Egypt: Pyramids and Revolution**  
Egypt is filled with first hand accounts about Egypt - sharing stories, culture and news.

**Behind the Wheel**  
A look at what's new and what's worth driving, no matter the budget.



**PHOTO GALLERIES**

**Gaylord Resort National Harbor: Love is in the air during Valentine's Month**  
Image - Gaylord Resort National Harbor: Love is in the air during Valentine's Month  
26 Photos

**the Smithereens**  
The Smithereens appeared at the Rums Head Live in Annapolis on January 13, 2012  
12 Photos

**New Years Celebrations: Fireworks from around the Globe**  
Fireworks are often a part of the NYE celebrations and from grand to quaint, they are all beautiful  
18 Photos

**Cotto vs. Margarito - Madison Square Gardens December 3, 2011**  
Miguel Cotto, of Puerto Rico, defeats Antonio Margarito, of Mexico, reacts after Cotto was declared the winner of the WBA world junior middleweight boxing title, Saturday, Dec. 3, 2011.  
13 Photos

**Natchitoches Christmas Festival**  
Festival of Lights, Natchitoches, Louisiana  
14 Photos

**Occupy Wall Street: Zuccotti Park images**  
Signs of protest from Zuccotti Park, OWS  
10 Photos

**Pacquiao vs. Marquez**  
Images from the November 12 Pacquiao Marquez fight in no particular order  
14 Photos