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## Governor presents Loveland with annual arts award

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The bright hues and decorative brush strokes of Loveland art surrounded Gov. Bill Ritter on Friday as he presented the city with the Governor's Arts Award at the Loveland Museum/Gallery.

As an embodiment of the art he was awarding, Ritter gifted Loveland with a bright orange and yellow oil painting of a team of two horses.

"There's a reason we're here in Loveland, and there's a reason we take time out to do this," Ritter told a small invitation-only audience. "It is important that we remain, in state government, committed to inspiring artists and art communities like Loveland."

Ritter's visit lasted nearly 40 minutes and consisted of a six-minute speech and a brief meet-and-greet with people from the art community.

When he first arrived inside the Loveland Museum/Gallery, he was greeted by a human statue and a live Mona Lisa painting that spoke with a French accent.

"I love a twist every time," the governor said.

Several times during his speech, Ritter stressed the importance of art in school curricula.

"(Art) allows you to reflect on the past, express the present and really communicate with the future. I think it does all three of those things, and it really is, at the end of the day, a vehicle for talking and learning about culture," Ritter said.

"I know in our education system there's been a real focus in core subjects, and art didn't happen to be one of them.

"It may be one of the most important things we can do for our children is express culture in alternative ways — ways other than just verbally expressing to them things that we think about culture," he said.

Ritter was welcomed Friday by an appreciative community of Loveland artists and art advocates. Many stated the importance of leaders openly celebrating the importance of art.

"The recognition by politicians gives art more status and allows people to give it more thought instead of just saying 'that's just art,' and dismissing it," said Marcey Mushore, administrator of the Chapungu Sculpture Park in Loveland.

The artist who was commissioned to create the 3-by-3-foot painting for Loveland, Duke Beardsley of Denver, also painted a nearly identical picture for the governor's office. Beardsley said the works took him about three months to complete.

"My work is usually centered on Western icons, so I automatically thought of a team of horses to represent all these great communities that support the arts," he said. "It's several different layers of paint. It was a charcoal drawing, and then a black and white painting, and then I turned the whole thing orange and then I brought in the yellow background," he said.

Beardsley said Ritter's endorsement was "personal and official" and a positive endorsement for art statewide.

"To have the top brass in the state saying 'we think this is essential,' it trickles all the way down to those of us who are doing it for a living," he said.



Gov. Bill Ritter laughs as he is greeted by live representations of a Victorian lady sculpture and a Mona Lisa painting Friday before presenting Loveland with the Governor's Arts Award at the Loveland Museum/Gallery. Erica and Paul Borrillo bring the sculpture and the painting to life. Reporter-Herald/Jenny Sparks

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