



*Cirque*, oil on canvas, 108 x 93 cm, 2008

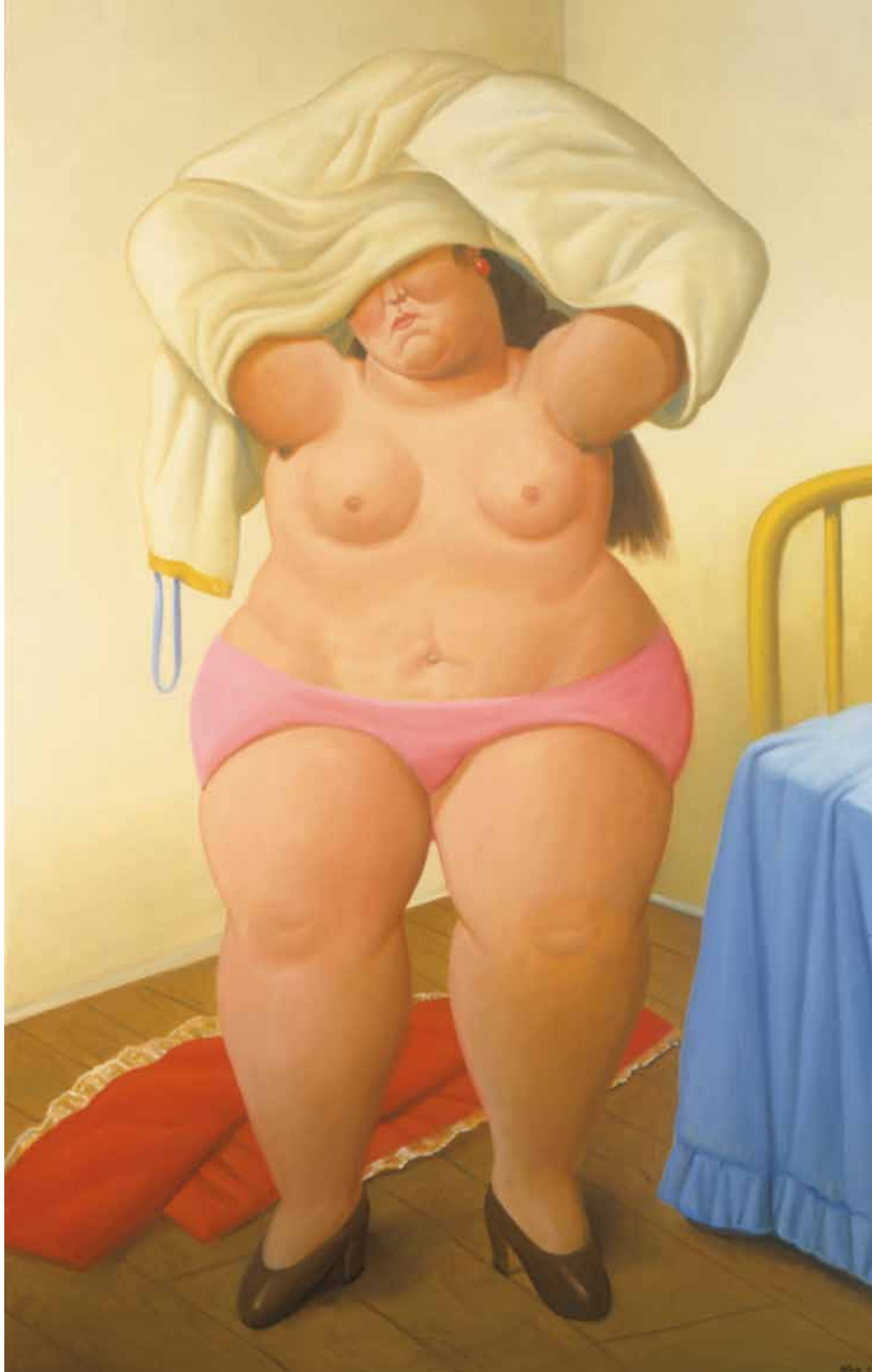
# Fernando Botero

## Contemporary artist in the footsteps of the old masters

Whether as a drawer, painter or sculptor, Fernando Botero creates a world of his own with exaggeration and voluptuousness. He distorts reality to make it, in the most pure sense of the word, more 'sensual'.

Fernando Botero was born in 1932 in Medellin, Colombia. At the insistence of his uncle – his father died when he was only four years old – he was educated to become a torero, but Fernando was more interested in sketching than challenging the bulls. He soon dropped out of school and devoted all of his energy to drawing. As a teenager, he earned himself some money by making sketches for the local newspaper. At 19 years of age, he moved to Bogota, where he had his first exhibit. The exhibition turned out to be a success and with the profit, he bought himself a boat ticket to Europe.

At the age of 21, he arrived in Barcelona. He moves on to Madrid and Paris where all the modern artists, like Picasso, reside. Unfortunately, he did not find anything to his liking. Only after moving to Firenze and discovering the Renaissance art, did he begin to feel inspired. He was very impressed by the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci (later on in his career he will make a caricature of the famous Mona Lisa, which was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York) and with all of his attention, he studied the technique of the old masters like Velazquez, Dürer and Rubens. After three years, Botero returned to Colombia, still searching for his own style. Which finally he found around 1956, when he moved in Mexico and made his first 'blow up' painting; a still life with a mandolin.





Botero succeeds in creating his own world with a style that unites Latin-American art and Old Master techniques, which are both dear to his heart. The characters in his work are fat, but are actually a reflection of abundance and sensuality. Exaggeration will also be found in his work that reflects still lives, landscapes, bull fights or abundance. This becomes a recognizable element of his oeuvre.

In 1960, he decided to move into a studio in New York, where he will worked for ten years. During the 1970s, he returned to Paris, where he develops an interest in sculpting; a true revelation for him. His sculptures in bronze will be exhibited throughout most important European cities. In 1974, his four year old son died in a car accident from which Botero will never recover; a force that will become visible in his oeuvre. Some say this gave his work more depth.

Nevertheless, Botero underwent his own evolution and reveals himself to be more engaged, like he recently did by creating a series of fifty paintings. which are an indictment against the outrages committed by American soldiers at the Iraqi Abou Ghraib prison.

Despite this phase, Botero's oeuvre stays mild. He will mostly returns to 'his' usual themes. Regularly he interprets works of his role models, the Old Masters, in his own way, but according to 'the rules of art'.

The artist, who has made over 4000 works of art, is still active and divides his time between Paris, New York and Tuscany.

For more information on Fernando Botero:

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Above: *Maternity*, oil on canvas, 125 x 94 cm, 2003

Below: *Cirque*, oil on canvas, 120 x 98 cm, 2008

Left: *Cirque*, oil on canvas, 134 x 100 cm, 2008

