

AIKEN CENTER
for the **ARTS**

"Over Land and Sea"

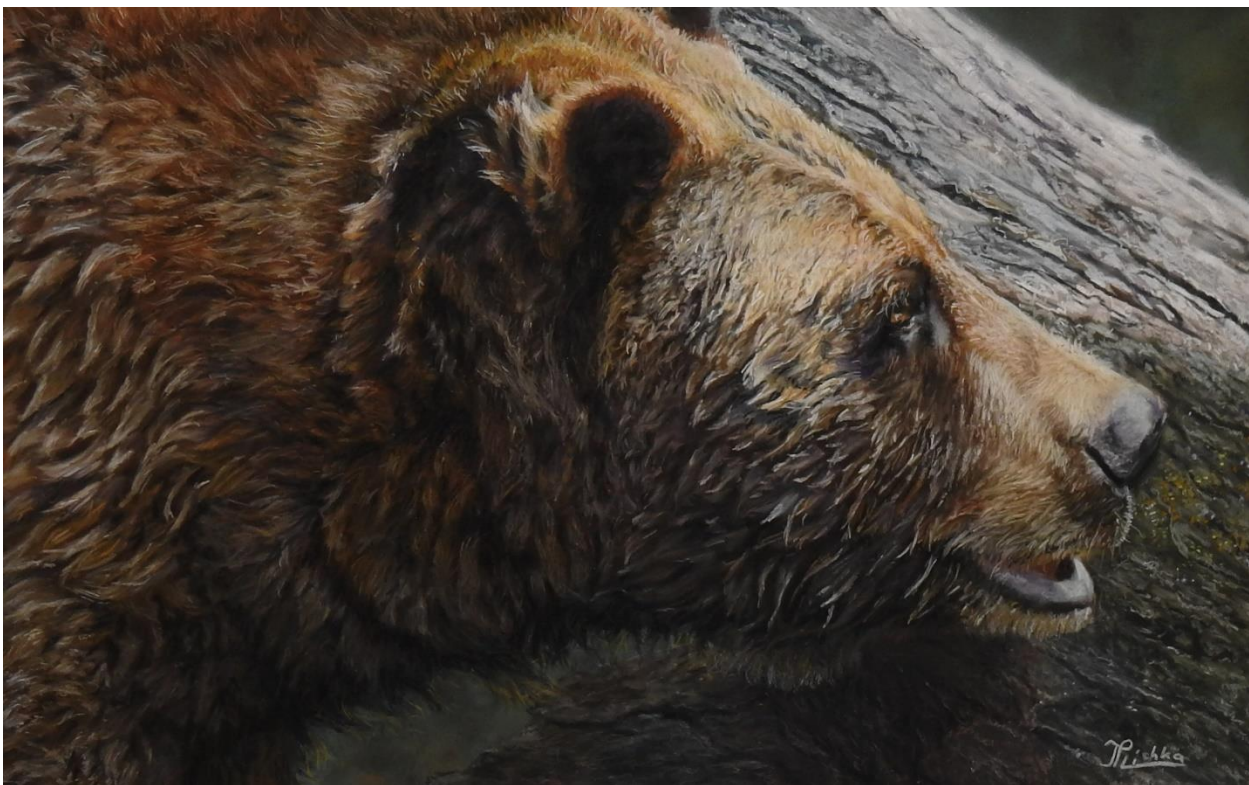
*wildlife art from the hearts and hands of
internationally acclaimed artists and sculptors*

Aiken Center for the Arts – Aiken, South Carolina

March 21 - April 30, 2024

Opening reception: Thursday, March 21, 2024 from 6-8pm

Works by Joy Beckner, Jeff Birchill, Beatrice Bork, Carel Brest van Kempen, Jamie Cassaboon, Tim Donovan, Lori Dunn, Martin Gates, Christine Knapp, Judy Lalingo, Walter Matia, Calvin Nicholls, Carrie Nygren, Patricia Pepin, Anne Peyton, John Plishka, Jan McAllaster Stommes, Chris Wilson, Sherrie York



From Behind the Old Log, pastel, John Plishka



Cozy Smooth, bronze sculpture, Joy Kroeger Beckner



Merry Sunshine, bronze sculpture, Joy Kroeger Beckner

Exhibition Summary

This exhibition brings our community the rare chance to view fine art by internationally acclaimed painters and sculptors working in the genre of animal art. Learn what draws them to the animals they choose to portray in their art and their methodologies for creating, in language that the lay person can understand. Many of these artists are members of the Society of Animal Artists (SAA) and National Sculpture Society whose works are exhibited in galleries and museums across the world. President of SAA, Renee Bemis, summarizes the artist's passion by saying, "As animal artists, we share a deep connection to Mother Earth - and we express our appreciation and concern for our planet through our art. In doing so, the public is made aware of just how important the animal kingdom is to our human spirit. Be inventive, inspired, and courageous in your art, for you are the voice of the animals." These artists are highly qualified in each of their respective art forms, but this exhibition also highlights the artists as people who have deep passion for their subjects and the environment which comes through each work of art in this exhibition. We are all connected to the natural world in our own way, giving this exhibition relevance for us all. We hope people will take this opportunity to engage with these artists and gain new perspectives on animals and their habitats among us.



Aiken Center for the Arts

**122 Laurens St SW
Historic Downtown Aiken, SC 29801**

803-641-9094

Aikencenterforthearts.org

Aiken Center for the Arts is a community arts center located in the heart of downtown Aiken. It is extremely meaningful to our community to have these internationally acclaimed artists and sculptors share their work here. Aiken Center for the Arts is amongst a wonderful variety of charming retail shops and restaurants. This dynamic, two-level visual arts space hosts a wide range of contemporary art from local, regional, national, and international artists, stimulating discussion and dialogue among audiences. In addition to their exhibition space, they host classes and workshops for all ages and have a Gallery Shop with artworks from local artists available for sale. The mission of Aiken Center for the Arts (ACA) is to inspire and educate by providing unique visual and performing art experiences for all ages.



Over Land and Sea: wildlife art from the hearts and hands of internationally acclaimed artists and sculptors will be on display March 21 - April 30, 2024.

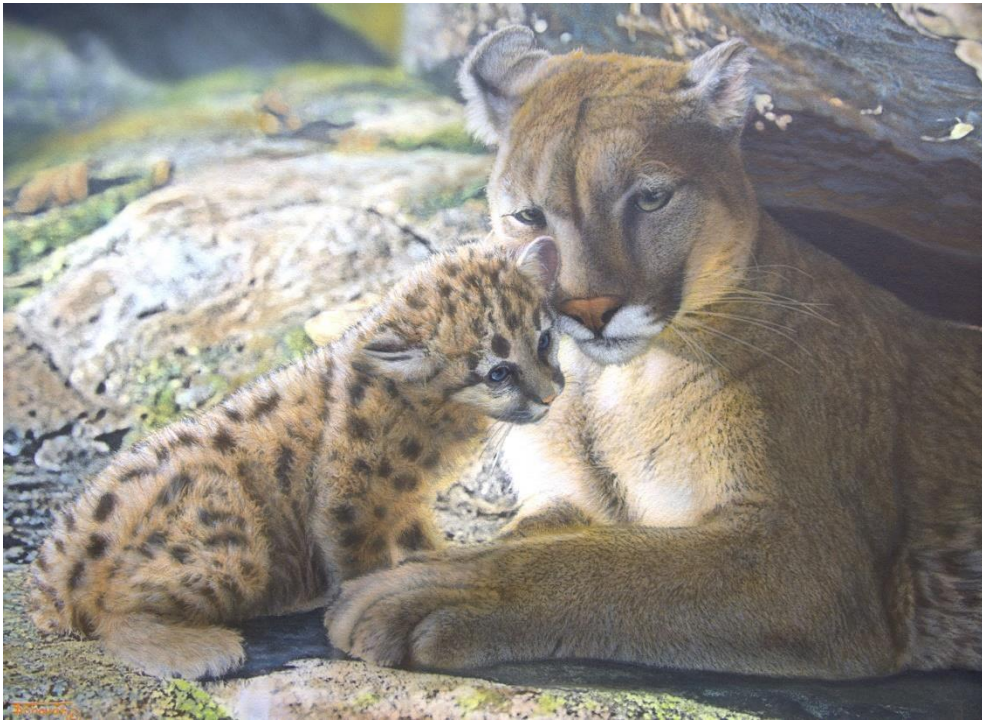
Select Exhibition Works



Nothin' But a Hound Dog
Bronze Sculpture
Edition 2/24
19"h x 16"l x 17"d
Walter Matia



Whistles Chaos
Oil on canvas
Size: 30 x 40"
Framed Size: 33.5" x 45.5"
Carrie Nygren



Matron
Egg Tempera
20"x14"
Tim Donovan



Reef Explorer
Persian Red Travertine
24" x 11" x 9"
Jeff Birchill



"Mourning Light" - mourning dove #2/2
 100% cotton fine art paper by Strathmore – dove
 "Ontario Flax" 330gsm fine art paper by St. Armand Montreal – support
 20"w x 16" h x 2" d
 Calvin Nicholls



Split Rock Lookout
 Oil on linen
 16"X20"
 Patricia Pepin

Artist Statements and Biographies

Joy Beckner Artist Statement



Joy Kroeger Beckner is inspired by sensuous shapes of skin, bone, and muscle. She models clay or wax into classical forms, which are then cast into bronze. She is thrilled to make something move in-the-round bringing smiles, giggles or tears to the eyes of those who see and touch her work. She first showed in a national competition in 1996. Her bronze dachshunds have earned numerous awards, including the National Sculpture Society Silver Medal, seven Best-in-Shows and eight

Best-Sculpture-in-Shows! Her works are in the permanent collections of thirteen public institutions, including the American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog, NYC. Joy attended Washington University School of Fine Arts in St. Louis, MO.

Joy Beckner Biography

Joy Kroeger Beckner has had a love of art since childhood and is inspired by the sensuous shapes of skin, bone and muscle in human and animal forms. A native of St. Louis, Missouri, and trained at Washington University School of Fine Arts there, she first worked in fashion, then fund-raising, and returned to art in the late 80s. A 1990 sculpture class reawakened her love for modeling clay. She is thrilled to make something move in the round and to bring memorable experiences, from giggles to tears, to those who view her finished creations.

Meticulously involved with every step of the sculptural process from modeling clay or wax to chasing and finish work, Joy also hires the best in the United States to produce her vision into bronze. This attention to detail and commitment to creating strong representational work has resulted in many awards and invitations to membership in prestigious organizations.

Professional memberships include: National Sculpture Society Fellow, 2014; The Salmagundi Art Club, Non-Resident Artist Member, 2012, (Resigned 2021); the Society of Animal Artists, Signature Member, 1999; and, numerous other prestigious organizations. In 2007, Curator David J. Wagner, Ph.D. invited Joy to show in “Paws & Reflect, Art of Canines” an exhibition that traveled to nine museums through 2010. The Margaret Harwell Art Museum, Poplar Bluff, MO, invited Joy for her first solo exhibition in 2012 and, the American Kennel Club Museum of the

Dog, then in St. Louis, MO, gave Joy a solo show in 2014. PBS Nine Network of Public Media first featured Joy on Arts America on Nov. 5, 2016. Curator David J. Wagner, Ph.D. invited Joy to show in “Animal Groups” Celebrating the 2021 Reopening of the Newly Renovated Dane G. Hansen Memorial Museum, in Logan, KS.

Best known for her series of dachshunds, Joy has earned international recognition and over 100 awards portraying these endearing animals. To date, she has exhibited in twenty National Sculpture Society shows earning four awards, including their Silver Medal. Other major awards include the Ellin P. Speyer Prize from the National Academy; six Best in Shows; thirteen Best Sculpture in Shows including two Audubon Artists Gold Medals and, from the Society of Animal Artists, two Awards of Excellence, the Leonard J. Meiselman Award and the Elliot Siskin Award, and two Mary Kay & Paul Jeynes Memorial Sculpture Awards for an Animal Bronze from the Allied Artists of America. Two works are finalists in the Art Renewal Center International Exhibits.

Joy’s article “Clay to Collector” is printed in Danish in DGK Gravhunden. Her work is collected on six continents and New Zealand by museums and corporations including Brookgreen Gardens, SC; UMSC Hollings Cancer Center, Charleston, SC; American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog, New York, NY; Fountain Hills Cultural & Civic Assn., Fountain Hills, AZ; Art on the Avenues, City of Wenatchee, WA; The Library of Hattiesburg, Hattiesburg, MS; the Dunnegan Gallery of Art in Bolivar, MO, the Red River Valley Museum, Vernon, TX, and the Professional Beauty Association, Scottsdale, AZ. Works range from 1:6 scale miniatures to life-size and an over life-size white oak acorn! Learn more at <https://joybeckner.com>

Jeff Birchill Artist Statement



Jeff Birchill was juried into/as a Signature (artist) Member of the prestigious international Society of Animal Artist, a group of artists who have been recognized in 23 countries for reaching the standard of excellence in the medium they choose to create their art. He also is an Elected Member of the National Sculpture Society with his stone animal sculptures and was a Signature (artist) Member of The American Society of Marine Artist. His peers refer to him as a dinosaur as he

prefers using traditional hand tools that have been used for centuries. He uses the “direct”

carving method, that is he carves directly on the stone releasing the image within the stone. He does not sculpt a clay model first and then have a machine do the carving.

His love of the animal kingdom becomes apparent when you spend a moment with his sculpture. You will find him, when not carving stone, walking through the forest with the wild creatures he calls his friends. He has a deep sense of humanity as part of the greater kingdom of living creatures.

Jeff Birchill Biography

Jeff Birchill lives and sculpts in Aiken County, however his sculptures are better known nationally and internationally. He sculpts mostly animals out of various marbles and other stones of the same density, using mostly traditional hand tools. His outdoor studio is at the edge of the forest where he listens to the birds sing as they watch the progress. He is what is known as a “direct carver” in that he does not use copying machines from clay models. His sculptures have been exhibited in over 20 art museums across the country. He is an Elected Member of the National Sculpture Society and was a Signature Artist Member of The Society of Animal Artists. “Reef Explorer” a red Travertine octopus was selected to be part of the 86th National Sculpture Society Exhibition in 2019 at Brookgreen Gardens. “Rock Crawler” a Pacific Giant Octopus, a dark Steatite stone sculpture is now in the permanent collection of the Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum, Oradell, NJ, and recently his life-size Georgia Marble “Born to run Free”, a Greyhound” was selected into Brookgreen Gardens, Pawleys Island, SC, permanent collection. “Reef Explorer” and “Sushi on the River Bank” (a Brown Fossilized Marble Bald Eagle eating a salmon) were selected for the Art Renewal Center’s “Salon 15” prestigious coffee table book. These were the only two stone animal sculptures selected out of nearly over 900 entries from 83 countries that made the “Finalist List”. “Treasures Under the Surf” (a Marine Ray sculpted out of white Marble) traveled the country for 3 years being exhibited in over 12 art museums. It was not until his retirement from a normal 8-5 job that now allows him time to pursue his first love of the visual arts. His stone sculptures can be found in private collections in both Canada and the U.S.

Beatrice Bork Artist Statement



its very inception. My artistic expression finds its roots in firsthand encounters and personal

Since my early childhood, I have nurtured a deep passion for art and an unwavering love for animals. The presence of pets always amplified my excitement whenever I visited relatives, driving my artistic journey from

experiences. Throughout my life in New Jersey, where I grew up and currently reside, birds and the creatures that grace my surroundings have been my primary sources of inspiration. However, my travels have introduced me to new and diverse inspirations with each journey. Yet, it is the ubiquitous presence of birds that has become my artistic specialty. These captivating creatures, in my eyes, embody the epitome of fascination. Their kaleidoscope of colors and shapes, coupled with their extraordinary lifestyles, showcases their unparalleled diversity. From the virtuosos of song to the masterful predators and intrepid travelers, birds manifest a mesmerizing array of talents. Some soar through the skies, others gracefully navigate the waters, a few even possess the remarkable ability to hover like helicopters, while certain species remain grounded altogether. Witnessing their existence is an exhilarating experience. Inspiration perpetually envelops me; all I need to do is embrace the inherent beauty that surrounds me, regardless of my location.

Beatrice Bork Biography

Watercolorist specializing in animal art “My art is a reflection of personal experiences through a lifetime of observation and discovery, resources gifted to me by my time in nature. Each encounter fills my soul uniquely, and is a never-ending source of inspiration.” —Beatrice Bork

Beatrice Bork is an accomplished artist who draws inspiration from firsthand experiences in nature. Her preferred medium of watercolor enables her to convey intricate detail and composition, as well as capture the emotional and personal connections she feels with her subjects. Her focus on animals is apparent in her work, as she imbues her paintings with sensitivity and visual poetry that capture the essence of her subjects. Over her impressive 30-year career, Beatrice has become a respected figure in the field of animal art, with her extensive portfolio displayed in solo and juried group exhibits across galleries, educational institutions, and museums. Her artwork has been showcased in group exhibits around the world, including the United States, United Kingdom, and China, and has earned recognition both locally and internationally. Beatrice's talents have been recognized with Signature status from renowned organizations such as the Society of Animal Artists (SAA) and Artists for Conservation. Her paintings have received numerous awards, been featured in books and magazines, and sought after by collectors worldwide. Her awards include the international Don Eckleberry Award for achievement in bird art, Finalist in the Animal category in the annual Artist Magazine, first place in "Feathers & Flight" at a D&R Greenway exhibit in Princeton, NJ, and the "Albert Hunker Memorial Award" at the 52nd Annual Open Juried Exhibit of the Garden State Watercolor Society in 2022. Beatrice's artwork has been featured in notable international exhibits, including the Society of Animal Artists "Art and the Animal" 55th and 59th Annual Premier Exhibits, "Wildlife Treasures," and "Art that Matters to the Planet" a SAA Special Exhibit. Her passion for animals is clear in her artwork, which conveys her deep appreciation for the natural world. Every

brushstroke in her paintings reflects her unwavering fascination and love for animals, making her an exceptional artist in her field.

Carel Brest van Kempen Artist Statement



As ecology is the engine that drives evolution, so is it the motivating force behind my work. As a visual artist I'm concerned with form, but as a naturalist it's function that fascinates me, and on the surface, much of my work explores that complex relationship between the two. Behind this, though, there's also a deeper intent: to deepen awareness of the natural world and the global ecosystem that supports us all. We stand today at the brink of a biological collapse. The current loss of biodiversity is as critical as any of the

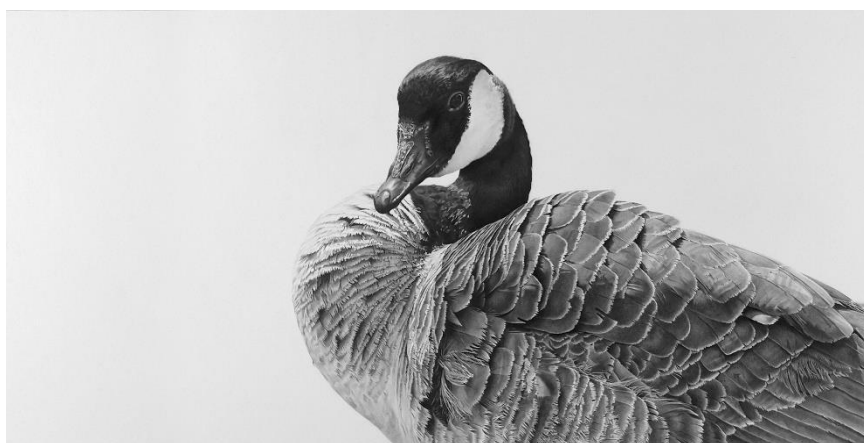
problems our society faces. Averting that disaster will require us to make wise and well-informed decisions about the way we live and the way we use our land. Sadly, as Human impact on the natural world increases, our routine awareness of it and our active participation in its processes diminish. But whether it's visible to us or not, our lives are irrevocably dovetailed into the vibrating matrix of nature. An awareness of our own ecology and the organisms that share it is more critical today than it's ever been, and I hope that the little stories told in my paintings might awaken in the viewer a heightened sensitivity to the tiny ripples broadcast throughout that natural matrix by every one of its components. If I can paint a piece that makes people think for a little while about the natural world and their relationship with it, or better yet, if it makes them think in a *new way* about it, then I feel I have succeeded.

Carel Brest van Kempen Biography

Carel Brest van Kempen's artistic mission has always been to deepen awareness of the natural world and how it functions. He grew up in the Wasatch Mountains of northern Utah, a land he has explored obsessively since childhood, trying to understand its ecology and how it's changing over time. These studies have profoundly informed his paintings, the creation of which has been his full-time occupation since 1990. Uncompromisingly detailed and realistically rendered, his work tells stories rooted in real-world nature and twists them a bit with an exaggeration, an

unexpected juxtaposition, or an impossible point of view, casting suspicion on old preconceptions. These paintings are carefully composed, and reward close scrutiny, just as the natural world does. Brest van Kempen's solo exhibition has toured museums across the U.S. since 2003. He has been awarded the top honor given specifically for animal art, the Society of Animal Artists' Award of Excellence, a record nine times, a record shared only with British Columbia's Robert Bateman and Washington state's Leo Osborne. His many other awards include the America's Parks Wildlife Award and the Artists For Conservation Medal of Excellence. He was named a "Most Honored Artist of Utah" in 2002 and a "Master Signature Member" of the Society of Animal Artists in 2008. In addition to creating fine art, Brest van Kempen is a freelance natural science illustrator. He also writes and blogs about natural history topics and authored the book *Rigor Vitae: Life Unyielding*. He is currently working on a comprehensive field guide to the birds of Utah.

Jamie Cassaboon Artist Statement



The essence of my work is in observation. I am attracted to the captured frozen moment; Energy, movement, light, and shadow all tell a story. And by painstakingly rendering the simple or commonplace the artist has the ability to inspire a deeper look and engagement with the natural world, and the

greater world generally.

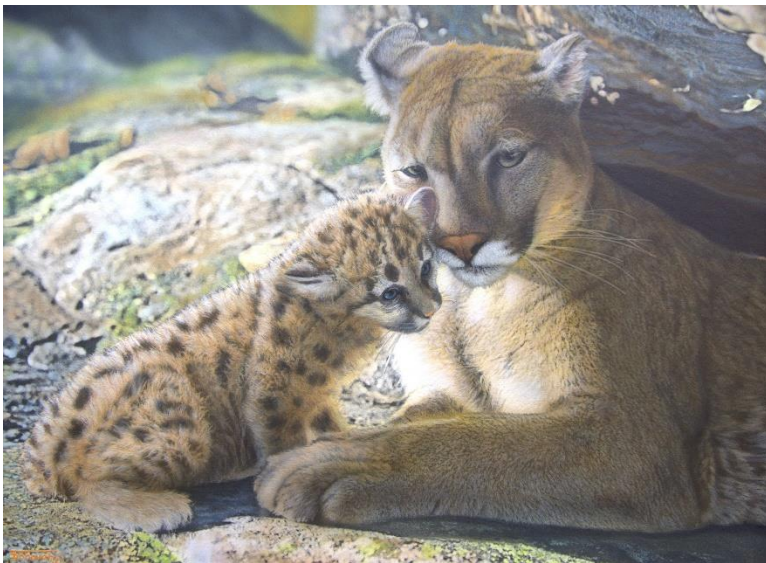
While my work does revel in the minute, it also seeks that simple beauty which occurs around us all the time; The line, and rhythm, and gravity of all things. Engaging with nature, and the myriad beings we cohabitate and share this planet with, leads to a broader understanding of the world and our place in it. There is so much overlap and similarity in the appearance, drives, and behaviors of all living things, that exploration and understanding of any informs all.

Jamie Cassaboon Biography

Jamie Cassaboon is a Hudson Valley based artist working primarily in graphite with a strong affinity for birds, still lifes, portraits and landscapes (mostly urban). Jamie grew up in and around southern New York hiking and exploring the bounty of the Hudson River and the woods and mountains along her shores; as well the culture and pulse of New York City. Jamie Graduated from SUNY Purchase in 2005 with a Bachelors Degree in English Literature and a double minor

in History and Philosophy. He studied at Hertford College, Oxford University in 2003 and 2004. At 16, Jamie apprenticed as a tattoo artist, a pursuit he picked up full time after college. Tattooing allowed him to pursue art full time, and explore a number and different media and styles including graffiti, comics, portraiture, tribal/symbols and floral motifs. Daily drawing was the result, and that repetition and persistence has continued and grown consistently ever since. Breaks from the studio led to hikes and bird watching, which inspired more travel and observation, and eventually photography and field studies. Jamie carries a camera with him everywhere at this point. Back in the studio Jamie combines a photographer's eye with tight technical rendering to achieve a sense of realism that retains the 'touch of the artist' and evidence of the human hand at work. Jamie is a Signature Member of the Society of Animal Artists, and has shown internationally and garnered numerous awards for his work. Jamie currently resides in Dutchess County, NY.

Tim Donovan Artist Statement



Over the last several years his attention has been focused on using his art to support organizations for the preservation of wildlife and their habitats. He has donated his time and art to support various conservation organizations including Ducks Unlimited, Vital Ground, Center for Birds of Prey, and The Timber Wolf Alliance just to name a few.

Tim Donovan Biography

Wildlife and the outdoors have always been Tim's love, and bringing these scenes to life on canvas is his passion. Growing up in Maryland, Tim spent his summers on the shores of Solomon's Island by the Chesapeake Bay. As a young boy, he experienced a wide diversity of wildlife from otters to ospreys that would both capture his spirit and direct his path.

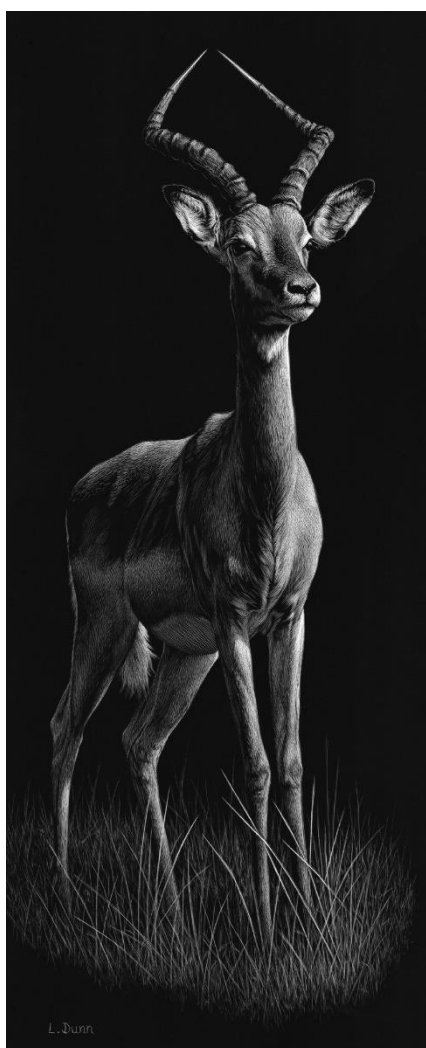
He went on to study art in Texas, originally planning to become a medical illustrator, but his love for the outdoors found him returning home and investing his time in wildlife. Tim received the Conservation Service Award from Ducks Unlimited in 1999 and won the Virginia State Duck Stamp contest in 2001, 2002, and 2006. He would later be the winner of the Wolf Awareness poster contest in 2009 and 2011.

Lori Dunn Artist Statement

Conservation is not about acknowledgement of beauty - it is the understanding of the role that species plays in the environment. Using art as a vehicle to highlight biodiversity and/or break down misguided perceptions of an animal, is of particular importance to me.

Working with an achromatic medium allows me to focus on using values, texture and detail to relay information about my subject. Whether it is capturing a scene I've witnessed, an animal I find fascinating, or creating something from my imagination, each piece is inspired by my passion for all of nature and our intimate connection with it.

Lori Dunn Biography



Canadian wildlife artist Lori Dunn has had a long history of combining science and art. With a natural artistic ability from a very early age, teachers tried to steer her towards a career in art, but her real desire was to study nature and wildlife. Enrolling in the zoology program at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada was a first step towards gleaning the knowledge she craved. Lori was interested in all forms of nature, but she was always drawn towards those creatures that other people paid little attention to, or were even frightened of.

After graduating with her zoology degree, Lori Dunn embarked on a 15 year career as a zookeeper in Canada, spending much of her time working with small animals and reptiles, doing public presentations and volunteering her free time toward conservation efforts in Ontario including surveys, habitat restoration, and outreach. Eventually, Lori left zoo keeping embarking on a new journey as an artist. She feels her need to put her animal education and experience first was key to her eventual success as a wildlife artist, and she still considers herself a naturalist first, with artwork a vehicle to express her passion to the viewer.

Lori's chosen medium of scratchboard consists of three layers of material. A hardboard base is coated with a layer of white kaolin clay, sanded smooth, and a layer of black India ink applied over top. The image is engraved through the ink into the clay layer using an extremely fine tool such as an x-acto blade. This medium is considered by many artists to be one of the most difficult to master. It takes a

very steady hand to maintain the correct pressure required to etch each fine line to a particular depth on order to achieve tonal variation. Lori particularly loves this medium for the ability to focus on light and shadow, rather than color, as well as the unsurpassed level of detail that can be created using just the tip of the knife.

Lori Dunn's scratchboard artworks have garnered National and International recognition, winning awards in several world class exhibitions. She is a Signature member of the Society of Animal Artists, and a Master member of the International Society of Scratchboard Artists. She currently teaches scratchboard art via private lessons and workshops. Lori works from her pioneer log home in Norwood, Ontario, Canada, and when she isn't creating artwork she is invariably out kayaking, hiking and enjoying nature in all of its forms.

Martin Gates Artist Statement



I made my first woodcarving from a piece of firewood using a claw hammer and old chisel at my grandparent's cabin outside Sisters, Oregon, when I was 13 years old, and have loved carving ever since. I learned the details of woodcarving by restoring and carving missing pieces on the fine European antiques furniture my father imported from Europe. In the fall of 1976, I enrolled in a woodcarving class at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC. I have had my woodcarvings cast into limited edition bronzes; I also enjoy sculpting softer stones like alabaster. I have always had a passion for old antiques and vintage woodworking tools especially old carving tools. At the folk school, I learned traditional carving techniques using all hand tools and still prefer to work that way using chisels, mallets, and knives. The quiet and peaceful nature of working that way has a meditative

quality and produces a sense of satisfaction watching the pile of chips on the floor grow each day.

Martin Gates Artist Statement

My process starts with an idea for the subject and setting. I then draw and cut out of paper, a pattern of the head profile and body. I lay it over the wood or stone many times as the lines get carved away. Sometimes, changes have to be made midstream to the initial design. Due to defects which come to light when carving into the unknown chunk of wood or stone (knots, holes,

cracks, etc.). My favorite part of the process is getting the design to work within the material. Once I reach that point, it's just a matter of adding details and lots and lots of sanding!

Christine Knapp Artist Statement

Art is an intimate way of communicating a message, feeling or emotion to others. My goal is to spark a fond memory, inspire an idea or enlighten my viewers of the varied subjects I have chosen to portray. Of ultimate interest to me is that special bond that develops between people, animals, and each other.

Christine Knapp Approach to Sculpture



There are many reasons why I choose certain subjects to create in bronze, but first and foremost is my fascination about the animal and a desire to learn even more about it. Animals and the natural world have always been one of my first loves in life. My desire is to teach others about the animals I portray in hopes that they too will develop a deep appreciation for nature.

I begin each sculpture with extensive research regarding the animal's anatomy, behavior, and habitat. Most of my research is from personal observations through photography, video and sketching the live animals. When I am satisfied with the information, I have gathered, I develop a pencil sketch which then is further refined by making a small clay study to work out compositional details in 3-D. Because I use an oil-based clay that is soft, a

supportive metal armature that closely mimics the animal's skeletal anatomy is then created, upon which I begin applying the clay. While sculpting, I surround myself with photos of the creature I am creating, including details of the head, feet, legs etc. Once I am satisfied with the finished clay sculpture, I take photos of it from several different angles (for reference and marketing) and deliver it to a bronze foundry that I have been working with for the past 30 years. It takes approximately 3 to 6 months for the foundry to finish the lost wax casting process on each sculpture. I keep close tabs on the sculpture as it moves through the multi-step process from mold through application of the patina. If the sculpture is a private commission I keep the

patron informed of my progress with images to make sure I am creating the vision they have in mind.

Judy Lalingo Artist Statement

My work has always been focused on my greatest passion: Animals, most notably horses. This creative pursuit of attempting to express the beauty, the spirit, and the power of these creatures through my paintings is as ancient as our primal animal connections. Spending as much time as I can with a variety of animals is a continuing source of inspiration and joy. Observation provides both practical knowledge as well as more insight into their inner lives; this feeds the inspiration to paint what I know and feel about them. Inspired by their magic, I create with the desire to inspire others. “One touch of nature makes the whole world kin” - Shakespeare

Judy Lalingo Biography



Originally from Toronto, Canada, Judy has spent most of her life pursuing her passion for horses, wildlife, and nature through her animal paintings.

Her award-winning work ranges from tightly rendered miniatures in acrylic to looser oils of landscapes and animal studies. These two different mediums prove to be both challenging and invigorating. Acrylic miniatures are rendered with the aid of a magnifying glass and very small brushes to control the detailed realism achieved in these little paintings, while the larger oils are meant to be more expressive and immediate, done in the alla prima (all at once) method. By switching back and forth from one painting style to the other, the artist feels that she is more mindful, and the work remains fresh.

Judy is a Signature Member of the Society of Animal Artists (SAA) and the Miniature Artists of America (MAA) and has won Awards of Excellence in both organizations. She also retains memberships in several art groups, including the Miniature Art Society of Florida (MASF), American Academy of Equine Art (AAEA), the Cider Painters of America, and Resident Member of the Miniature Painters, Sculptors & Gravers Society of Washington D.C. (MPSGS).

Her work has been exhibited in galleries and museums throughout the US and beyond, including Russia and South Africa, as well as being included in several permanent collections, including Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Miniature Art Society of Florida, and the Dufferin County Museum. The painter lives and works in the beauty of northern Maryland's horse country.

Walter Matia Artist Statement

There is nothing subtle about Kingfishers, the colors are loud, their call a racket of sound. Their silhouette and gestures are simply grand. Proud, cocky and sure. Sculpt a Kingfisher and their attitude better come through.

Walter Matia Biography



Walter Matia was educated at Williams College in Massachusetts, where he earned degrees in Biology and Art Design. Upon graduation he worked in the Exhibits Department of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and The Nature Conservancy. He started his art studio, Curlew Castings in 1984.

His works have been exhibited shows across the country. He is a Master

Signature member of the Society of Animal Artists, Fellow of the National Sculpture Society and Master Wildlife Artist at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum. He resides in Dickerson, MD with his wife, daughter, son, Pip the Setter and Tink the Lab.

Calvin Nicholls Artist Statement



The illusion of depth, texture and form is created by the interaction of light and shadow on my low relief paper sculptures. A variety of blades and metal tools allow me to cut, emboss and transform the world's finest papers into the feathers and fur of my favourite wildlife species. The delicate characteristics of paper communicate the vulnerability that so many of those very species endure in our changing world. I work from my home/studio north of Toronto in Lindsay, Ontario Canada.

Calvin Nicholls Biography

Inspired by the role art plays in communication, I began my art adventure by enrolling in the Graphic Design program at Sheridan College in Oakville, Ontario, Canada. Assignments in a class called Materials and Structures provided an introduction to the idea of paper as a medium.

Five years later in 1983 as a freelance graphic designer, I included paper sculpture imagery in one of my design projects and I was instantly hooked. Enthused by the effects achieved through simple scoring and folding, I expanded my search for specialized knives and embossing tools. Consultation with paper mills, while researching paper for my design projects, had provided a valuable understanding of the various types and weights of fine papers. A select line of archival papers of varying weights proved to be perfect for fine detail and structural components. The introduction of paper sculpture to my design clients provided a fresh look for their marketing campaigns and a distinct look and personality to my portfolio.

Combining my childhood interests in model making, sculpture, drawing and photography was fulfilling but in 1986 I sculpted my first bird and everything changed. I realized that the layering of feathers was the perfect application of this amazing art form. Images from my youth of wild fowl on the wing, hawks soaring overhead and songbirds punctuating the rural landscape rushed through my mind and I recognized the opportunity that lay in front of me. In 1989 I released my first series of wildlife prints and two short years later I completed the first of seventy-five

sculptures for Follett Library Resources near Chicago that would establish my career as a wildlife paper sculptor.

Collaborating with corporate clients, private collectors, wildlife photographers and biologists continues to inspire me in this wonderful art adventure from my home based studio in Lindsay, Ontario, Canada.

Carrie Nygren Artist Statement



There are few things more noble than a horse. Few things more rewarding, or more heartbreaking, than a horse. This is what my art chases. That horse. That bond. The athlete, the hero, the partner, the work, the rest, the nobility, the quiet – captured unaware in ‘the moment’, when the world falls away, and only the horse is there, in that moment. That horse, who will stay in your heart, forever.

Carrie Nygren Biography

Born in Nashville, Tennessee, Ms. Nygren graduated from Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, Virginia cum laude with BA in both studio art and art history. She received her MFA from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

An accomplished equine and sporting artist, Ms. Nygren has won numerous awards over the past seven years. She placed 2nd in the animal category for the 11th International ARC Salon Competition, with her work exhibited at the MEAM in Barcelona, Spain followed by an exhibition at the Salmagundi Club, NY. She has consistently been a finalist or semi-finalist in subsequent International ARC Salon Competitions through 2022. Additionally, Ms. Nygren has repeatedly won or placed in the American Academy of Equine Artists (AAEA) juried competitions, along with numerous other national and international competitions. Ms. Nygren has been a frequent participant in the Society of Animal Artist (SAA), Oil Painters of America (OPA), and American Women Artists competitions. She was recently the Artist of Record for the Windsor Charity Polo Cup in Vero Beach, Florida.

Her work has appeared in numerous publications: American Art Collector, Sidelines Magazine, Southwest Art Magazine, Fine Arts Connoisseur, Chronicle of the Horse, The Artist's Magazine, Nashville Arts Magazine and Vero Beach Magazine.

Working in larger formats, her work is primarily held in private collections in the US and Argentina, focusing on the sporting art of polo. Similarly, she has work in private collections the Hunter Jumper category, and has recently expanded into western art of the horse as well. Private commissions command the majority of her painting time, though she tries to reserve time for her own projects.

Painting in traditional oils within a modern format, has become a trademark of her work. Capturing the inherent spirit, character and personality of each horse is the inherent privilege of her painting. Whether it's a portrait, or a captured moment in action, there is nothing nobler than the horse and his relationship with the rider.

She never wants the viewer to be aware of the process, rather, just be aware of the subject. The intent is to find a balance between traditional painting and contemporary composition, intentionally focusing the eye on the subject. Integral to that is attention to anatomy, motion, emotion, dimensional volume, weight and tension, which all contribute to paintings that capture not only the "portrait" of the horse, but the nuanced and unique power and strength of equine form. It's that unique relationship – that level of trust, partnership and athleticism, the translating that relationship to canvas, is what she finds to be the ultimate challenge.

She is a Signature Member of the American Academy of Equine Art (AAEA); Signature Member of the Society of Animal Artists (SAA); Associate Member of Distinction, American Women Artists (AWA); Associate Member, Oil Painters of America (OPA); and a Member of the Portrait Society of America. Ms. Nygren currently lives and works in Wisconsin.

Patricia Pepin Method and Approach



Oil paints have been my favourite medium since an early age. I took painting lessons as a child with a very good teacher and after that I gleaned knowledge by looking at past or living painters whose work I admire. I paint on linen canvas primed with a special paint, usually white, called Gesso, which keeps the oils from being absorbed by the linen fabric. I also sometimes paint with acrylics, then I use acrylic Gesso to prime fibre board. I like to paint all subjects, but I specialize in animals because they are so fascinating and

beautiful. I use my own photos as reference. I am looking for beautiful light, often at sunset, or the animal in an interesting position, in its natural habitat.

Patricia Pepin Biography

Patricia Pepin lives in Bromont, Quebec, with her husband Pierre. At age 9 she started painting lessons. Like most young girls she loved horses and that's what she painted most of the time. Later she sketched them live in the stables where she boarded horses. After a few years of working as a racehorse groom she quit and then worked in a headstone shop.

She had been painting more or less seriously through the years, doing live portraits, still life, plein air and animals. In 1997 she saw the 'Birds in Art' exhibition of the Leigh Yawkee Woodson Art Museum, WI. She was struck by the quality and diversification that was possible within the animal art genre. One year later one of her paintings was part of the same exhibition, and her career as a wildlife artist has been going forward ever since. Except for the lessons taken as a child, Patricia is mostly self-taught. She learns by looking at other painter's works, absorbing information here and there. Some of her favourite artists are Wilhelm Kuhnert, Lanford Monroe and Richard Schmidt, to name a few.

Oil on canvas is her favourite medium, but occasionally uses acrylics. Light is very important to her, and her subjects are almost always shown bathed in sunshine. She tries to capture a fleeting moment in nature, when the light is just right, the fugitive expression in the eyes of a coyote, the flash of orange of a goldfish, or the graceful curve in a bird's neck.

Patricia works from photographs she takes near and far. Her travels have taken her to Kenya, to Florida's J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge and Venice Rookery among other, and to the Grand Canyon and other National Parks of Utah, Arizona and New Mexico, and lately in California. In July 2007 she was part of a two week expedition along Lake Superior's Black Bay Peninsula with other artists and professional canoeists to paint and photograph the region for upcoming exhibition.

Patricia has earned the recognition of her peers and is a master artist after winning 5 awards of excellence from the Society of Animal Artists of which she's a member since 1999. Her plan is to keep producing good paintings to try to remain in the heart of the Wildlife Art Movement.

Anne Peyton Artist Statement



I have a motto for my life: All birds, all of the time. I am either looking at birds, painting birds, training birds or feeding birds. But most days, one will find me painting birds. There are days when I am lucky enough to spend time sitting with and handling birds of prey. This includes everything from eagles, hawks, owls and falcons. The time spent with them allows me to study them carefully, which comes in quite handy when painting a raptor. But I have found field study to be just as useful. Over the years, I have become convinced that the painters I admire most are the ones with direct knowledge of their chosen subjects.

Because of this belief, I try to spend as much time as possible studying raptors and other birds in the wild. Cameras allow me to take details home with me but I find I remember the best behaviors when seen with my eyes.

My main intention with my art is to bring the birds I have seen in the field closer to the eyes of the viewer. I am hoping to share their beauty and behaviors. I am also hoping to spark an emotion. As a wildlife conservationist, I believe that people will care for only the things they love. If my paintings can inspire the viewer to want to know more about birds and to care for them a bit more, then I have had a successful day.

Anne Peyton Biography

There are two criteria for a painting that Anne Peyton places in each of her finished pieces: One is that the final image shows respect for the subject; the second is that viewers can learn something after studying the art. They are two principles that the artist has carried over to her new career as a wildlife artist, concentrating on birds and avian art.

For 20 years, Anne was one of the most sought after motorsports artists. Since 2000 she has turned her eye and hand to the natural world. "In a way, it's closing a circle," she said. "Birds and other wildlife were the subjects of my earliest paintings. My grandfather had a number of feeders

at his Fort Collins (Colorado) home and he was very proud of the birds that visited his yard. I would spend several hours at the table sketching and painting the birds I saw.

“Painting birds may seem to be on the opposite end of the art spectrum, but in truth there is a lot of similarity. Birds can be brilliantly colored or purposefully drab. They are technically difficult. The artist must be able to capture and represent the proper attitude of a bird in its natural setting.”

An avid birder, Anne has spent countless hours viewing birds around Arizona and the Southwest. “Observing birds and their habits is a way to discover more about their nature – the motions a Sandhill Crane makes during preening, the way a Golden Eagle walks along the ground instead of hopping or taking a short flight, or the frantic scolding of a House Wren guarding its nest hole,” she said. “Each of these actions means something for the bird and it is these actions and their meanings that I want to convey to the viewer.”

Anne dedicates several hours each month to volunteering at Liberty Wildlife, a Phoenix-based rehabilitation and education organization that treats injured animals. Sometimes a bird cannot be released back into the wild. Zoos claim some while others become avian ambassadors for their species at Liberty's public presentations. Anne's responsibilities include training the birds to be comfortable on both the handler's glove and in front of an audience, daily care of each bird, and working with other education team members so they can become proficient with handling the birds.

“Each bird is an individual and behaves differently. Even among the same species, each bird has a distinct personality, Anne said. “That surprised me when I first started working with these amazing creatures, but it is an aspect that has served me well in the field and in my artwork.”

John Plishka Artist Statement

My entire life has been deeply involved with animals. From having pets, to becoming a veterinary health professional, to animal artist, I have had the privilege and pleasure of sharing my existence with them. They all have their own inherent beauty. Each one has its own features and adaptations that help it fit into its niche on earth. They display every color in the spectrum and exist in different shapes and forms. They have various superpowers like flight, echolocation, sensing magnetic fields, superhuman strength and camouflage. Some can see different spectrums of light. Some migrate thousands of miles without GPS. The Animal Kingdom is overflowing with variety and is never ordinary.

It is that uniqueness that I long to capture in my paintings. When I am painting, I reflect on my subject. Why is this structure the way it is? What does it do? That utter fascination with all these aspects drives me to faithfully manifest the nobility of the living being before me.

Using elements of lighting, composition, and texture rendering, I enjoy taking on the difficult task of trying to enhance the natural grandeur of my subjects.

We should all be honored share our lives with the animals of this planet. Unfortunately, we lose sight of this, putting their and ultimately our survival in peril. If, as an animal artist I can bring about a sense of wonder and fascination for my subjects, then perhaps we can be on our way to securing a future for the both of us.

John Plishka Biography



John Plishka is a mostly self-taught artist who paints mostly in pastels. Born in Chicago, he grew up in the suburb of Northbrook and now resides in Lindenhurst, IL. He loved to draw and paint from an early age but was also very interested in science and biology. Thus, he opted for the science route and became a veterinarian. He was in private veterinary practice for 25 years before making the switch to academia, where he is now a professor of Anatomy and Physiology, and Animal Biology at Gateway Technical College in Elkhorn, WI. However, he never gave up his love of painting and continued his art throughout his professional

career.

He paints in a realistic style with an emphasis on light interactions with his subjects. He spends a lot of time ensuring his compositions will draw the viewer in and get them to linger on the painting for more than just a few seconds. He has loved pastels from his junior high days; the immediacy and the ability to blend the colors are just a few of the reasons. Animals are typically his most frequent subjects as his love of animals has carried on from his veterinary career to his art career. John often chooses to paint subjects that are not often depicted by other wildlife artists. He realizes each and every individual animal possesses its own uniqueness and inherent beauty.

His work has garnered awards at the national level and his art has been featured in various publications. His paintings have been exhibited throughout the U.S. and his pieces are in private collections throughout the country. He is a Signature Member of the Society of Animal Artists, a

member of the Masters Circle of the International Association of Pastel Societies, an Associate Member of the American Academy of Equine Art and a Signature member of the Chicago Pastel Painters.

Jan Mcallaster Stommes Artist Statement



The art of deception, trompe-l'œil, is created by painting various items in such a way as to give the illusion that the three-dimensional items exist. If viewers feel compelled to touch the paintings to see if the items are real, then I feel like I have accomplished my goal. I am a self-taught artist. My education was in science, specifically physiology. How the brain works is important to know when I create a trompe-l'œil painting. Using both my love of science and love of art combine when I try to “fool the eye”.

Jan Mcallaster Stommes Biography

Jan Stommes is a self-taught artist whose work has evolved during her many years of painting. She is an eclectic person and feels that her painting should reflect that aspect of her personality. Her academic endeavors trained her to be a research scientist, which developed the observational skills necessary for creating art. During her artistic journey, her interest in subject matter has varied and the choice of her medium has evolved.

Jan is a Signature Member of The Society of Animal Artists and is also a member of the International Guild of Realism, the Oil Painters of America, the Portrait Society of America and the American Impressionists Society.

Jan started her painting career using watercolor on paper, and after many years, she switched to super-realism by means of acrylic on illustration board. She then added impressionism and painterly realism in oils, on supports of canvas or panel, to her repertoire along with soft pastels.

Jan constantly strives to take on challenges by trying something new in each painting that she creates. Creating trompe l'oeil images connects her art and science. These paintings are so life-like that viewers of her work have thought that the images are collages instead of paintings.

Jan feels that her paintings show the consistent level of excellence that she aims for. This is evidenced by the acceptance of her artwork to numerous juried museum exhibitions, international shows as well as art magazine contests. Her life activities have contributed to how

she views the world. Her desire is to use her experiences to connect with others through her artwork.

Jan's love of cooking gourmet cuisine led her to create a series of food paintings. These images have been licensed into many format, some of which are print, calendars and coasters. In addition to her work in fine art, Jan has written, illustrated and published several children's books about science. These books, written in a humorous, rhyming form that are illustrated in a manner to intrigue children of all ages about the various marvels of science. In addition, she has created a line of children's books to teach coping skills for young students that have the learning differences of dyslexia and dyscalculia.

Chris Wilson Biography



Chris Wilson, founder, and owner of Wilson Wildlife Sculpture, began his career over 40 years ago as a student of Creative, Able, and Committed – a magnet school of the arts program. His earliest mentors were talented wildlife artists – Marilynn Arn, an art instructor, and Gary Denzler, former head of the Bird's of Prey Center at the Cincinnati Zoo. Mr. Denzler trained Chris to value close observation of his subject matter. As a teenager, Chris designed a large aviary in the purlieu of his family home in Atlanta where twelve beautiful waterfowl were conveniently available to Chris for close inspection and to aid

in the refinement of his artwork. Chris was trained by several nationally known sculptors as a high school student before receiving his Bachelors Degree in Art from Kennesaw State University in 1994 and his Masters of Fine Arts Degree in sculpture from Georgia State University in 2001. Chris continued to enhance his craftsmanship, form, and concepts as a professor of art for over seven years. Today, Wilson Wildlife Sculpture is his exclusive focus. His training and attention to detail have culminated in over 100 best of show awards; among them include Best of Show in 3D and People's Choice Award at the Nature Works Art Show in 2014, 2018, and 2022. Additionally, he has won 75 purchase awards with work in the Ella Sharp Museum of Art and History in Jackson, Michigan and in collections across the world.

Chris' work is inspired by nature. The beauty of birds and their ability to fly captivates him. In 2001, Chris traced the journey of his ancestor, William Bartram, through parts of the Southeast. Bartram – America's first naturalist artist – was the first to describe many birds, plants, and animals. Wildlife, such as a great blue heron, ancient stand of trees, and primeval wilderness overwhelmed Chris with a spiritual feeling; others can experience this emotion through Chris' fervent sculptures. In a statement by Chris, he states, "I have been blessed with a talent that I love sharing with others, and I aspire to create one-of-a-kind sculptures that can be enjoyed for generations".

Sherrie York Artist Statement



Curiosity and long walks across landscapes have brought me into the paths of scientists, biologists, and birders, who taught me to pay close attention to the interactions of living things. I strive to represent those interactions both as a moment in time and as a story of the wider experience of life on earth. I am especially interested in strong rhythms and patterns between subject and environment. I find it's the shapes

around an object, rather than the object itself, that are often the most compelling. Human relationships with wild lands and wild creatures are as individual as we are, whether we see nature as a nourishing mother, a suite of resources to be exploited, or a frightening and dangerous wasteland. When an image I create sparks a memory or reflects an experience familiar to the viewer, it provides common ground for sharing our stories and understanding each other's perspective. And shared stories can help us not only to celebrate the beauty found in nature, but also to tackle larger issues of wildlife, water, and land conservation. Linocut is a labor-intensive and repetitive process, with the skills of a draughtsman, painter, and sculptor all coming in to play. Once I have drawn a composition onto a linoleum block, I carve away any areas that I do not want to print. When the carving is complete, ink is rolled onto the surface of the linoleum and transferred to paper. The resulting print is a mirror image of the carved block. There are several techniques for creating multicolor linocuts. I most often use the reduction method, in which all the colors of an image are printed from a single block in successive layers. After each new color is applied to the print, more material is removed from the linoleum block, reducing the printable surface until the image is finished and the block is destroyed.

Sherrie York Biography

A self-taught printmaker and compulsive wanderer of landscapes, Sherrie York grew up in Colorado but now lives in Bristol, Maine. A long-ago college field trip to draw backyard chickens was the unexpected genesis of a career that encompasses environmental education, natural history illustration, birding, and printmaking. Observation is the core of Sherrie's work, whether she is making a watercolor sketch of tidbits collected on a walk in the woods or carving a complex linocut block of birds and ocean waves. Sherrie's linocuts have been presented in national and international exhibitions, including the Woodson Art Museum's prestigious Birds in Art, and the Society of Animal Artists' Art & the Animal, and her work is represented in corporate and museum collections. She has been an invited artist on projects of the international Artists for Nature Foundation and has been Artist-in-Residence at Acadia National Park, the National Audubon Society, and the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum. Sherrie also serves on the board of the international Society of Animal Artists and is the Coordinator of the Audubon Artist Residency at Hog Island in Bremen, Maine.