

Wildlife Treasures

July 25th - September 3rd

We are delighted to be able to present this unique selection of works by members of the Society of Animal Artists (SAA), based in the USA. We hope that this will be the first of an ongoing series of initiatives with the SAA.

The Society of Animal Artists was founded in 1960 by the late Patricia Allen Bott and Guido Borghi, two visionaries who sought to reposition animal art as an important contemporary art form by creating a community of like-minded artists. It is devoted to promoting excellence in the artistic portrayal of the creatures sharing our planet, and to the education of the public through art exhibitions, informative seminars, lectures and teaching demonstrations. Although the majority of its members live and work in the USA, it has members working throughout the world.

Since its inception, the Society has grown by leaps and bounds and has generated tremendous response through its museum and gallery exhibitions throughout the USA. The annual 'Art and the Animal' exhibition and USA tour are eagerly awaited events in the American art scene and provide SAA artists with the opportunity for greater recognition. This new initiative, 'Wildlife Treasures', conceived jointly by Nature in Art and the SAA, brings the work of some SAA members to the attention of the UK public for the very first time and helps us further strengthen our international links.

The exhibits by 58 artists, including a number of sculptures, were selected by a group of international judges following an invitation to members to submit work for a juried exhibition of small works, on the scale

of the 'cabinet paintings' which were so popular with collectors in years gone by.

Small paintings have been produced at all periods of Western art and have often been referred to as 'cabinet paintings' which, from the fifteenth century onwards, wealthy collectors of art would keep in a 'cabinet'. This was, in fact, more usually a relatively small and private room or study to which only the privileged were allowed access.

To the owners, the small paintings in these rooms were treasures. Indeed, other small precious objects, 'curiosities', prints, books, small sculptures and so on, might also be displayed, if not in a room, in a cupboard or case designed for the purpose.

Most surviving large houses or palaces, especially from before 1700, have such rooms. One of the best surviving examples is at the National Trust property, Ham House in Richmond, London. It is less than ten feet square and is called 'The Green Closet' (left). Although today there is no evidence of such a room having been in Wallsworth Hall, it is highly likely that Samuel Hayward, who built the house as a wedding present for his wife in the mid 1700s, would have had a cabinet of some sort in which precious items were displayed.

The collectors of cabinet paintings of the past hid their treasures away for their own personal enjoyment and for those whom they specially invited. The best treasures of course, are those accessible to and valued by all. The best skills are those shared and appreciated by all. This exhibition reminds us of some of the creatures that should be valued so much more by the world and celebrates the skill of the artist that adds so much to our quality of life.

For some of the artists, working on a small

scale was a fresh departure. For the viewer, the small size encourages us to look, to peer into the scene or gaze at the creature almost as if through the slit in a hide. Our relationship with the subject is different when it is not on a grand scale. The small size engenders a different emotional response. We are also more aware of the artists' technique.

This exhibition has given us the opportunity to make fresh associations with artists new to Nature in Art. To celebrate this we are delighted that a number of SAA artists will be joining us for the launch of the show. Peter Gray (based in South Africa) and Elwin van der Kolk (based in the Netherlands) will be artists in residence 1st - 6th August. In addition they, together with other artists from home and abroad, will be at the museum on July 29th and 30th when they will have the opportunity to meet the public, share experiences and work together. We hope many people will come and talk to them and join in the celebrations. Do come!

We particularly record our thanks to the SAA Board and Bob Mason, Executive Director, for their assistance, to the judges, and to Julie Askew and Hans Nygaard whose energy and input have been strategic in making this project possible. **The launch night takes place on July 28th. All are welcome.**



Detail

EXHIBITING ARTISTS:

John Agnew	Karen Laurence-Rowe
Paul Apps	Roger Martin
Julie Askew	Jan Martin McGuire
Renee Bemis	Rob Mullen
Linda Besse	Dale Muller
Beatrice Bork	Anne Peyton
Sharon Call	John Pitcher
Jamie Cassaboon	Kelly Leahy Radding
Guy Combes	Robert I Ratterman
Carrie Cook	Derek Robertson
Mary Cornish	Rosetta
Annie Crouter	Jocelyn Russell
Leslie Delgyer	Joanathan Sainsbury
Andrew Denman	Gayla Salvati
Peter Elfman	Cathy Sheeter
Linda Feltner	Rachelle Seigrist
James Fiorentino	Wes Seigrist
Susan Fox	Morten Solberg
Anthony Gibbs	Debbie Stevens
Peter C Gray	Aleta Rossi Stewart
Stebve Hamlin	Frederick Szatkowski
Cindy House	Edward Takacs
Robin Huffman	Dana Lee Thompson
Alison Ingram	Chirag Thumbar
Kate Jenvey	Ezra Tucker
David Keihm	Elwin van der Kolk
Michelle Kondos	Val Warner
Brent Langley	Marilyn Wear
	Leon White
	Scott Yablonski



Previous page: Linda Feltner, Cathy Sheeter

This page clockwise from top left:
Karen Laurence-Rowe, Alison Ingram, Anthony Gibbs,
Jonathan Sainsbury, Ezra Tucker, Rosetta.

Over the years, the Society of Animal Artists (SAA) has held exhibitions in over 100 US museums and institutions and one in Canada. For us it is a particular pleasure to be able to welcome some SAA artists in person too. Elwin van de Kolk and Peter Clinton Gray, who are the SAA artists in residence at Nature in Art, have very different backgrounds which reflect the international nature of the SAA.

when he was 12 years old. Living near the Hwange National Park and a stone's throw from the Matobo Hills National Park, Peter grew up with a passion for these wilderness areas that became the nurturing ground for his career as an artist. He was educated at the University of Cape Town's, Michaelis School of Fine Art and furthered his studies in gemology, jewellery design, copper plate and seal engraving. In 1973, he moved to London, setting up home and studio and opening and operating a fine-art business trading in the UK, USA and Zimbabwe. During this time, Peter took on commissioned portraits and participated in group exhibitions in and around London. In 1983, he relocated to Zimbabwe and established studios, a workshop, foundry and gallery. Currently, he lives in Cape Town, South Africa and works from his studio in the Silvermine Nature Reserve.



Elwin van der Kolk (above), born in 1972, is an artist and biologist from Holland. His paintings (all in acrylics) reflect his commitment to ecology and the preservation of our natural world. Birds especially play an important role in his work and he cannot remember a time not watching and drawing birds. He has made illustrations for numerous publications of nature organisation in the Netherlands. He is the main illustrator of Vogelbescherming NL, the Dutch society for the protection of birds. In 2017 he illustrated the birdguide for the birds of the Netherlands and Belgium. The Woodson Art museum in the USA selected his work eight times for the prestigious exhibition Birds in Art.

Peter Clinton Gray (right) was born in Zimbabwe in 1950 and sold his first artwork

