

WILDLife
AT HEATHER JAMES FINE ART, JACKSON, WY



Aug 12, 2011 - Jackson, WY - Heather James Fine Art is pleased to present WILDLife, a group exhibition of art on view August 18 - September 30, 2011. For more information, please contact Jim Carona at jim@heatherjames.com.

Understanding the importance of wildlife to the community of Jackson, *WILDLife* playfully reinterprets the traditional notion of animal depictions in art by displaying conventional imagery with avant-garde portrayals of the creatures of nature. The exhibition parallels Heather James Fine Art's program of presenting art from a wide-range of genres, movements and cultures by bringing together a diverse group of art and artists from cultural antiquities to modern and cutting-edge contemporary with works representative of the wildlife art genre. Artists featured in the exhibition include Maryam Amiranyi, Earl Cunningham, Henry Darger, Diego Giacometti, Penelope Gottlieb, Tim Hawkinson, Zhang Huan, Zeng Jianyong, Lawrence Lee, Kaoru Mansour, Gwynn Murrill, Paul Pitsker, Kour Pour, Bill Traylor, and Eugene Joseph Verboeckhoven along with exquisite examples of cultural antiquities from China and Japan.

Maryam Amiranyi's paintings of Animal Constructions represent animal "skins", referencing the paper cut-outs of folded animal creations by Japanese artist Keiji Kawaguchi. Amiranyi's work communicates a subversive interpretation of wildlife painting and the idea of trophy hunting.

Earl Cunningham (1893-1977) was a self-taught artist who painted mostly landscapes of the coasts of Maine, New York, Nova Scotia, Michigan, North and South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. He used vivid colors, flat perspective, and a few recurrent themes. He added incongruous details, such as flamingos and other species of water fowl to his work.

Henry Darger's (1892-1973) work is characterized by his masterful sense of color and composition that provides a framework for his fanciful illustrations of the imagination and his appropriation of images from popular culture is paralleled by movements in mainstream post-war art. The creatures represented in the work on display were part of his massive manuscript *In the Realms of the Unreal* which included watercolors, paper copies and cut-outs.

Diego Giacometti (1902-1985) was a Swiss sculptor and designer, and the younger brother of the sculptor Alberto Giacometti. Animals regularly adorned his works and his fascination with the animal kingdom was tied to the mythological and dream-like world of his childhood. Giacometti was well-known for his bronze sculptures and functional design pieces.

Penelope Gottlieb's paintings showcase a unique synthesis of her modern graphic design background and the vintage botanical renderings of natural scientists. Painting directly over preexisting Audubon prints, Gottlieb envelops the wildlife in a tightly woven braid of plant leaves, tendrils and tentacles, so that what would normally be part of the creatures' natural habitat has suddenly turned on them as a form of domestic colonization.

Tim Hawkinson is well known for his sculptural creations out of found and manipulated materials that explore the physical connections of our everyday experience and the objects encountered. In this show, his use of Jello molds form a perfect rams horn trophy. Over the course of his nearly two-decade career, Hawkinson has garnered a reputation as one of America's most imaginative contemporary artists.

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Zhang Huan is noted for his performance work, in which he has subjected himself to extreme physical and mental ordeals in an effort to communicate societal problems of his native China. In one of Zhang's best known performance pieces, he covered himself with fish oil and honey and sat immovable in a public rest room in one of the poorest areas of Beijing while his body was completely enveloped by insects. Zhang's painting included in this exhibition references the concepts communicated during his performance.

Zeng Jianyong has a unique style and subject matter, both of which he exploits to their fullest potential in his Spare Time series which represents animals with the faces of cats, dogs, horses, and other creatures. Portrayed as though they are human, like classic works of caricature, these studies become mirrors of mortal emotions.

Lawrence Lee creates elaborate illustrations grounded in classic mythological tales such as Hercules. The art from the Ringmaster series tells the story of unrequited love between the male and female characters of Lee's imagination. His world of talking creatures and plants, characterized by their representation of the strangeness and randomness of life, allows Lee and the viewer to search for an ultimate purpose.

Kaoru Mansour creates paintings out of botanical collage elements on wooden panels. Delicately colored organic forms are covered with twenty to thirty different layers of encaustic, which gives her work a rich and highly textured appearance. Mansour's paintings connect images of plants and animals with abstract mark making, bridging her Japanese upbringing with her contemporary art education.

Gwynn Murrill creates sculptures of animal forms that relate to her interest in the inherent complex beauty of the beasts and a relationship that is simultaneously abstract and figurative. She devotes many hours perfecting a piece with the goal to utilize all of the negative space surrounding the form as a vehicle for the abstract part of the sculpture. The negative space is as important as the positive space, evoking somewhat of a Yin and Yang relationship.

Paul Pitsker's watercolors are about mortality, fragility, and thwarted desire. His images find dark humor in the trials of living in a world filled with lethal hazards. Derived from his studies of the fauna "native" to his studio and adjacent outdoor work space, these pictures uncover the hidden beauty and potential pathos of a world that is all too often overlooked.

Kour Pour's art deals with the concept of Persian tribal textile designs synthesizing the traditional cultural patterns into paintings representing the rituals of the animal hunt with psychedelic colors and faded symbolism. His painting communicates the impact of reproduction and what happens to culture/meaning/society when it is represented in different media such as the internet and digital images, playing with issues of authenticity and simulation.

William "Bill" Traylor (1854-1949) was a self-taught artist born into slavery on a plantation near Benton, Alabama. Traylor is known for his intriguing use of pattern versus flat color, a sophisticated sense of space, and the simplified figures that give his work a startlingly modernist look. Using a stick for a straightedge, he created geometric silhouettes of animal figures based on wildlife he encountered as a child living on a farm, which he then filled in with pencil, colored pencil, or poster paints.

Eugene Joseph Verboeckhoven (1798-1881) paintings of sheep, of horses and of cattle in landscape brought him universal fame, and were eagerly sought for by collectors. Precise and careful finish is the chief quality of his art. Examples of his art are to be found in nearly all the important galleries of Europe and the United States, notably in Brussels, Antwerp, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Berlin, Munich, New York, Boston and Washington D.C..

Heather James Fine Art is located at 172 Center Street in Jackson and features a wide array of art ranging from Impressionist and Modern art to Post-War and Contemporary, American, Latin American, Old Master, Photography and Design. For more information about the gallery and upcoming exhibitions, please visit our website www.heatherjames.com or contact the gallery at 307-200-6090.