

Woodson Art Museum *in your classroom*



Birdsⁱⁿ**Art**
— 2018 —

September 8 – November 25, 2018



Leigh Yawkey
Woodson
Art Museum

Introduction

The forty-third annual [Birds in Art exhibition](#) features artwork by 114 artists whose evocative and empathetic depictions of birds invite close study and conversations about narrative, emotions, and artistry. *Birds in Art* sets the worldwide standard for avian art and this year's exhibition includes thirty-one international artists, representing fourteen countries as well as eight Wisconsin artists. [2018 Master Wildlife Artist Cindy House](#), twenty-one past [Master Artists](#) honored during previous *Birds in Art* exhibitions, and 92 artists whose work was selected by three jurors who reviewed 904 entries submitted by 575 artists comprise this year's exhibition.



Twelve first-time artists joined the flock, offering striking representations of birds in two and three dimensions. Take, for example, [artist James M. Clow's](#) sensitive yet bold painting, *Arizona Sun King* (left), of a raven sheathed by a warm golden glow. Following an encounter with a pair of ravens in the desert, James captured the mythology and mystery of these birds in this portrait, conveying his subject as he observed it, under the vivid, bright desert sun. *Arizona Sun King* showcases a painstaking hand-oxidizing process, which James carefully applied to delicate silver leaf. A human hair is about seventeen microns thick; fragile sheets of silver leaf are four microns thick.

James M. Clow, *Arizona Sun King*, 2018, acrylic and sterling silver on cradled birch board

[Tyler Vouros'](#) expressive snowy owl, *Bubo Scandiacus* (right), commands attention, perched high in the galleries at sixty-eight inches tall and forty-two inches wide. Tyler's dark, velvety layers of charcoal create a moody backdrop for this imposing owl as it towers above us, phantom-like, against a dark, stormy sky. The dramatic, chiaroscuro combined with the artist's dense, precise use of lines make this monumental drawing reminiscent of a Rembrandt etching, pulling the viewer into and through the lush landscape beyond. The owl's direct gaze is engaging, calling upon its receiver to step into the enchanting, gothic world of this artwork.

To create the rich and varied values achieved in his drawing, Tyler carefully develops the surface of his paper utilizing mixtures of water and charcoal powder to yield specific ink values. Describing his process, he writes: "I employ a variety of washes to stain the paper, keeping the hierarchy of light and dark in a specific order. The brightest values are neither chalk nor paint, but the original paper surface achieved through a lighter ground and the use of electric erasers and sandpaper."



Right: Tyler Vouros, *Bubo Scandiacus*, 2017, charcoal and water on Fabriano paper; previous page, from left: Carl Brenders, *Maritime Nostalgia*, 2018, gouache and watercolor on illustration board; Jan Wessels, *Young Blackbirds*, 2017, oil on panel

New to the Galleries and Grounds

Living Willow Dreams

In late June, [artist Bonnie Gale](#) and her assistant Jonna Evans erected a living willow sculpture in the Woodson Art Museum's Margaret Woodson Fisher Sculpture Garden. The seven-foot-tall domed structure uses ten-foot-long willow rods harvested in New York and transported to Wausau in an enclosed trailer.

Bonnie has designed and fabricated living willow sculptures for more than fourteen years, creating [fifty willow structures](#) throughout the United States. Commenting on her medium and process, Bonnie says: "It is very challenging to work with a living sculptural material, but there are tremendous rewards with this high energy and interactive work. I am continually being inspired to create new forms and see how far the living willow will cooperate with my ideas."

Bonnie Gale's living willow sculpture project is supported by a grant from The Dudley Foundation. Learn more about *Living Willow Dreams* in this interview with the artist: <https://youtu.be/uemMDLLNTpg>



Bonnie Gale, *Living Willow Dreams*, 2018

Museum Collection Exhibitions

[*Dynamic Designs: The Serigraphs of Anne Senechal Faust*](#) – on view through February 17, 2019

Vibrant silk-screens affirm Anne's mastery of the medium and her knowledge of and affinity for birds and their habitats. Honored by the Woodson Art Museum as the *Birds in Art* Master Wildlife Artist in 1999, she was the first woman and the first printmaker to receive this recognition. Anne designated the Woodson Art Museum as the repository for her artistic oeuvre, representing a commitment by the artist to ensure the Museum's collection includes each of her screen-prints.

Learn more about the international travels and avian encounters that inspired Anne's artwork via the [exhibition's audio tour app](#).

[*Sharing the Shoreline*](#) – on view through August 18, 2019

Discover the beauty of shorebirds – sanderlings, stilts, turnstones, whimbrels, yellowlegs, and others – through sculptures and works on paper from the collection.

[*Regal Bearing: Bird Portraiture*](#) – on through August 11, 2019

Regal Bearing applies the tenets of portraiture to more than sixty artworks from the Museum's collection. As with human portraits, the artists represented captured the essence of their subjects using a variety of formats, including a focus on single birds without backgrounds as well as the inclusion of habitat or attributes that help to characterize a species or place it in context.



Andy Warhol, *Rooster*, ca. 1957, watercolor on paper



Cindy House, *Evening Dunes*, 2016, pastel on sanded paper

2018 Master Wildlife Artist Cindy House

New Hampshire [artist Cindy House](#) creates elegant and ethereal pastel landscape paintings of the northeastern coast and countryside. Punctuating Cindy’s landscapes are birds, often intersecting the skies or dotting the shoreline; Cindy’s birds are not the focal points of her artwork, but are critical to her compositions.

A background in biology, love of bird life, and enthusiasm for painting “en plein air” or from life, in the field, inform Cindy’s resonant depictions of understated environments. Cindy’s paintings won’t transport you to soaring mountain peaks or thundering waterfalls; instead the artist will guide you across quiet marshes in early spring, through foggy meadows, or a stand

of trees lining a stream. Encountering one of Cindy’s panoramas is reminiscent of the experience of surveying a landscape in life – first absorbing the atmosphere, light, and color of the setting, then observing the environment’s specific. As you scan the horizon or look across the water’s surface, you’re rewarded with the distant sighting of a bird, a gratifying sensation both in the field or through Cindy’s artwork.



Cindy House, *Late Summer Marsh*, 2016, pastel on sanded paper



Cindy’s pastel landscapes appear – by design – to be oil paintings; her style and choice of medium evolved as she discovered her life’s passion in pastels. House developed and refined a method throughout more than twenty-five

years as her work gained increasingly wider recognition and appreciation. Initially [drawing inspiration](#) from American Impressionist William Merritt Chase, Cindy’s accomplished [pastel technique](#) yields the sophistication and finesse of an oil painting with the ephemeral, sublime quality of this delicate medium.

Born in 1952 in Providence, Rhode Island, Cindy grew up in that state’s coastal town of Bristol and often accompanied her mother – a natural history teacher and photographer – outdoors to observe nature. While working at a local bird sanctuary during high school, she developed an interest in art and later received her bachelor of science degree in wildlife biology from the University of Maine in 1975.

Cindy worked as a bird-book illustrator, creating precise watercolor plates of bird species. While Cindy's current landscapes include smaller, less exacting depictions of bird life, this deep knowledge of avian subjects, their habitat, and behavior infuse integrity into her paintings.

Cindy has been selected for inclusion in *Birds in Art* twenty-six times since 1981, her first year in the exhibition, House attended exhibition-opening festivities twenty-three of those years. Cindy's Master Wildlife Artist gallery includes fifteen contemporary pastel paintings.

Bird's Eye View: Vantage Points in Painting



A visit to the *Birds in Art* galleries affords viewers dynamic interpretations of diverse avian subjects posed, painted, and patinaed just so, achieving each artist's singular vision for his or her artwork. A bird's gesture, placement, and surroundings communicate a narrative and also describe a relationship between viewer and subject. The 2018 exhibition invites consideration of how artists employ vantage points to create distinct avian encounters, making their artwork engaging and memorable.

Irish artist Julian Friers painted an intimate scene of a fulmar pair – subarctic seabirds, perched high above the cold Atlantic waves along the edge of a rocky ledge. Describing his artwork on the Museum's audio tour, Julian notes: "We're looking down on the scene; there's no horizon in the painting. Everything we see in this picture, we're looking down on. At this height we're almost in the birds' world and we can watch these fulmars from just a few feet away, eye to eye."

Julian Friers, *Bickering*, 2017, oil on canvas

Hear more about Julian's painting, *Bickering*, via this link: <https://youtu.be/kBHg2r53a8Y>



Jan McAllaster Stommes, *Cliffside Nursery*, 2018, oil on canvas

Catching glimpses of elusive bird behavior in the field often requires stealth, patience, and luck. In her painting, *In the Balance*, [artist Kimberly Beck](#) positions viewers just above a pair of loons she observed fishing and caring for their young during a visit to Lake Tomahawk. The proximity of this loon pair would be a rare treat to experience on the water, but Kimberly has placed viewers right alongside these birds as if we were calmly bobbing beside them, perhaps looking down over the side of a canoe, watching the loons as they float on the still, sunny waters.



Kimberly Beck, *In the Balance*, 2017, oil on Belgian linen

Jan McAllaster Stommes' tall painting, *Cliffside Nursery* (left), boasts a strong, vertical composition stretching forty-eight inches tall. Looking at the painting, viewers' heads tilt back as eyes gaze upward toward the imagined cliffside. The vantage point Jan created in this painting reinforces the unusual and seemingly precarious nature of the swallows' nests clustered on the rock, appearing suspended, defying gravity.

Portrait or Landscape? More than Orientation



Rose Tanner, *Bee Curious*, 2017, oil on linen on gator board



Roger Folk, *Hawaiian Honeycreeper*, 2018, watercolor on Arches paper

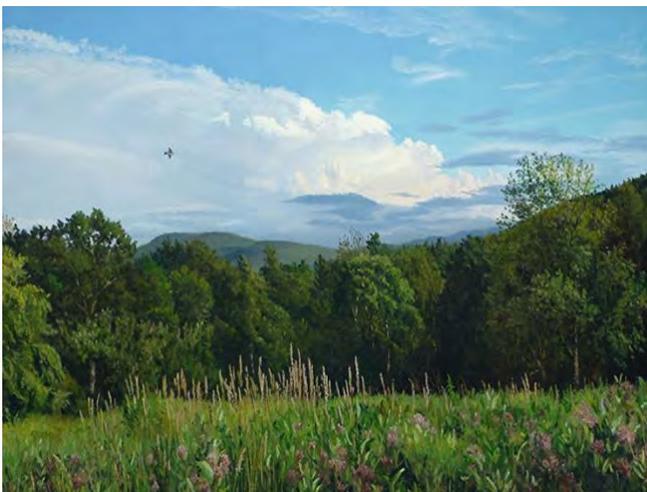
While the theme of the *Birds in Art* exhibition is clear, artists don't always place their avian subjects front and center. Sometimes depicted intimately and others from afar, exhibition artworks present a colorful range of environments and bird species. Which do you prefer and why? A personality-filled portrait of a single subject or the expressive landscapes taking viewers out of the galleries and around the world? Consider the emotional responses these artwork images elicit and try to identify what elements of portraits and landscapes appeal to you more.



Ralph Grady James, *Silence*, 2018, oil on linen on board



Brian Jarvi, *Feather Essence Iridescence*, 2018, oil on Belgian linen



Cindy House, *The Last Swallow*, 2013, pastel on sanded paper



Gail Stanek, *The Tenant*, 2017, watercolor on Arches paper

Extraordinary in the Ordinary

Master Wildlife Artist Cindy House isn't the only *Birds in Art* artist whose artwork challenges viewers to pause and see familiar birds and places anew. Share with students the artwork images below featuring modest settings and the ever-present house sparrow. Encourage them to try to draw or write a description about an everyday object, familiar place or animal, seeing and appreciating their subjects in a new light.



Michael Dumas, *Sparrow's Rest*, 2016, oil on Russian birch panel



Berry Fritz, *Jack's Sparrow*, 2018, oil on Belgian linen



Ryan D. Jacque, *The Otis Company Mill No. 1*, 2016, pencil on Fabriano hot press paper

When describing the inspiration behind the painting *Jack's Sparrow*, artist Berry Fritz wrote “Sparrows are the most common visitors to my south Texas backyard. This little painting brings together a male sparrow and a recreation of a hair ornament worn by Johnny Depp in his portrayal of Jack Sparrow in *Pirates of the Caribbean*.” To get the creative juices flowing, invite students to try pairing their familiar subject with something unusual or unexpected, and see where their imaginations takes them.

On the Hunt



Raptors like owls and eagles use their sharp eyes and sharper talons to catch prey, while insect-eating birds like swallows employ aerial acrobatics to chase down their small but speedy meals. Shorebirds rely on careful, calculated movements to pluck prey from the water, while also utilizing clever ruses to trick fish into swimming within reach. Artist Kris Parins noted that “Green herons have been observed using tools; they sometimes drop an insect or a twig into the water and then grab the fish that is attracted by their bait” as she described the genesis of her watercolor painting *Green Heron, Red Mangrove* (left) for the *Birds in Art* audio tour. Hear the rest of the story behind her artwork via this link: <https://youtu.be/Q9Wn9AIdJzA>

The green heron in Kris’ painting is watching the water intently, waiting to strike. Observing shorebirds on the hunt can be suspenseful; many artists make use of the careful, slow movements of these birds to create dramatic artwork, often begging the question – what happens next?

Ask students to share what they think will happen next in these shoreline scenes – will the birds catch their next meal or move on to new hunting grounds?

Kris Parins, *Green Heron, Red Mangrove*, 2018, watercolor on Arches cold press paper



Julia Rogers, *Third Time’s the Charm*, 2018, oil on linen



Thomas R. Schultz, *Pad Walker*, 2018, acrylic on hardboard



Carel P. Brest van Kempen, *Stalks*, 2017, acrylic on illustration board



Debbie Stevens, *Sandy 25*, 2018, oil on canvas

@ the Woodson

A [docent-led experience](#) through *Birds in Art* affords students an enriching visual-art experience crafted through close observation, thoughtful conversation, storytelling, and hands-on art making.

Students in Pre-K through second grade participate in a “Making Friends Through Art” experience in the galleries and classroom where they’ll use Crayola Slick Stix to color a feather. Older students, grades three through twelve will use pastel pencils to create drawings inspired by Master Artist Cindy House’s pastel landscapes.

Activity Guides

Each participant on a docent-led Experience receives an [Activity Guide](#) to extend learning beyond the Woodson Art Museum and as a way to share the visit with friends and family.

Audio Tour App

Gain additional insights into artworks, processes, and subjects from *Birds in Art* artists via the [Woodson Art Museum’s free audio-tour app](#), available at the Museum, for download on Apple and Android devices, or online at <http://app.lywam.org/>.

Enjoy a memento from your *Birds in Art* experience . . .

Educators who schedule docent-led *Birds in Art* classroom visits will receive a complimentary 2018 exhibition poster to display in the classroom.

Fall Artist Residencies

Don’t miss an opportunity for you and your students to learn from [visiting artists](#) this fall.



Kris Parins, Tuesday, October 2 – Sunday, October 7

During her [residency](#), Kris Parins will work with visiting school groups (fourth grade and up) to create watercolor paintings inspired by her exhibition artwork. Students will spend a half-hour on a docent-led tour of the *Birds in Art* galleries, followed by an hour in the classroom with Kris and a Museum educator working on small watercolor paintings. Students will use a variety of bird stencils combined with a masking fluid/resist to create layers of color and texture on watercolor paper, transferring color to their paper using eyedroppers to observe color-mixing and movement (see sample projects below).



Jane Kim, Friday – Sunday, November 9 – 18



Artist, science illustrator, and founder of [Ink Dwell](#) – a studio designed to inspire people to love and protect the earth, [Jane Kim](#) specializes in creating large-scale public installations. Her paintings capture the awe-inspiring realism of the natural world. She received widespread acclaim for her [Cornell University Lab of Ornithology mural](#) celebrating the evolution and diversity of birds.

During Jane’s Woodson Art Museum [residency](#), students and Museum visitors can observe her at work as she completes a large, commissioned painting onsite, illustrating how bird feathers get their color. She also will lead a *Birds in Art* gallery walk, offer a full-day scientific illustration workshop for teens and adults, and present an evening presentation about her work and artistic process as well as sign copies of *The Wall of Birds*, which chronicles the Lab of Ornithology project.

Schedule Your Visit

Schedule a docent-led *Birds in Art* experience or artist residency visit for your class, by connecting with Museum program support specialist Tina Meverden via email, scheduling@lywam.org, or by phone, 715.845.7010.



Woodson Art Museum Information

Please encourage your students to visit the Museum again.

Hours

Tuesday – Friday	9 am – 4 pm
Thursdays during <i>Birds in Art</i>	9 am – 7:30 pm
Saturday – Sunday	Noon – 5 pm

Closed Monday and holidays, including Thanksgiving

Contact

Call the Woodson Art Museum or visit the website for more information:

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