

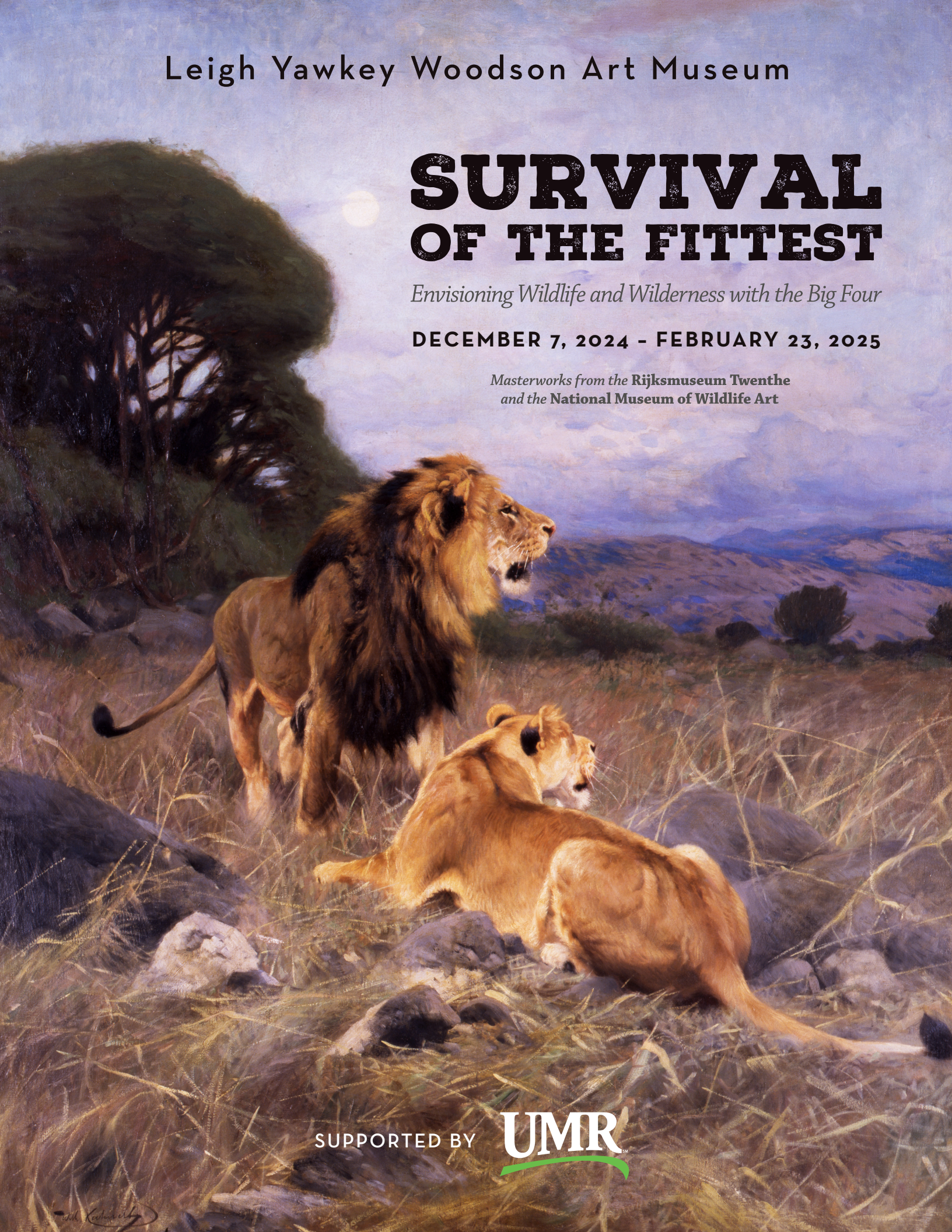
Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Envisioning Wildlife and Wilderness with the Big Four

DECEMBER 7, 2024 - FEBRUARY 23, 2025

*Masterworks from the Rijksmuseum Twenthe
and the National Museum of Wildlife Art*



SUPPORTED BY



SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Envisioning Wildlife and Wilderness with the Big Four



Journey into the vast wilderness and explore forty-five masterworks from four influential wildlife painters, known today as the “Big Four.” *Survival of the Fittest* features the paintings of German-American Carl Rungius (1869-1959), German Wilhelm Kuhnert (1865-1926), Swede Bruno Liljefors (1860-1939), and German Richard Frieze (1854-1918).

Survival of the Fittest: Envisioning Wildlife and Wilderness with the Big Four, Masterworks from the Rijksmuseum Twenthe and the National Museum of Wildlife Art is curated by Adam Duncan Harris, Grainger/Kerr Director of the Carl Rungius Catalogue Raisonné and organized by the National Museum of Wildlife Art; (ABOVE) Carl Rungius, *Three Caribou at Mount Robson*, n.d., oil on canvas, Collection of the Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede, Netherlands; (RIGHT PAGE) Wilhelm Kuhnert, *Elephants*, c. 1917, oil on canvas, JKM Collection, National Museum of Wildlife Art; Bruno Liljefors, *Migrating Mute Swans*, 1925, oil on canvas, Collection of the Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede, Netherlands; Richard Frieze, *Polar Bear and Eiders on the Coast*, n.d., oil on canvas, Collection of the Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede, Netherlands; (COVER) Wilhelm Kuhnert, *African Lions*, c. 1911, oil on canvas, JKM Collection, National Museum of Wildlife Art



In the late 1800s, an emerging conservation movement, influenced by Charles Darwin's theories and often in collaboration with affluent hunters, aimed to preserve remaining wildlife populations. These developments influenced the Big Four, who began depicting animals in their natural environments, departing from previous portrayals of animals as characters in fables and biblical narratives or as anatomical subjects in natural history illustrations. Each of the four artists worked in different parts of the world. Still, they all shared a common intention: to present a vision of wildlife that valued the animal, its behavior, and its natural environment.

This stunning exhibition captivates viewers with awe-inspiring large-scale works depicting the beauty of nature and encourages visitors to contemplate their own relationship with the natural world.



Through **FEBRUARY 23, 2025**

THE BIRD ROOM REDUX

In 2001, Midwest artist Nancy Hild (1948–2017) exhibited three larger-than-life canvases at the Chicago Cultural Center. Their installation was unusual. Rather than the typical museum or gallery wall, the three paintings instead hung in a structure-within-a-structure, a small-scale mausoleum and temple custom built for them. The structure, as well as the paintings' avian subjects, provided the inspiration for the exhibition's title: *The Bird Room*. The paintings housed inside the structure reproduced taxidermy displays from the nearby Field Museum. Placed *in situ*, the three paintings became an immersive experience and an invitation into a complex conversation around the animal domain and sacred spaces. *The Bird Room Redux* redisplay the three original paintings, now in the Woodson's collection, and reproduces their historic display. The exhibition invites you to experience the “feeling of being overwhelmed...by a muted sense of wonder,” as one critic described of the original installation.



FEBRUARY 8 - JUNE 8, 2025

MYTH & FOLLY

Throughout art history, myths have served as a rich source of inspiration, shaping cultural narratives and artistic expression across different civilizations. Animals in particular have long held symbolic significance in mythology, representing powerful forces of nature, deities, and aspects of human experience. Across cultures, different animals are seen as embodiments of strength, wisdom, cunning, or protection, connecting the physical and spiritual worlds. Whether depicted as sacred companions, mythical hybrids, or tricksters, animals in myth help illustrate the relationship between humans and nature, conveying moral lessons and cultural values. *Myth and Folly*, featuring artwork from the Woodson's collection, explores these themes through several different mediums and animal avatars and examines how the use of myth and animals in art allows for the blending of imagination and tradition, offering insight into how these timeless stories inflect modern artistic movements.

(ABOVE) Nancy Hild, *The Appropriating Magpie*, 2001, acrylic on linen; *The Bird Room*, Chicago Cultural Center, Michigan Avenue Galleries Publication, August–October 2001;
(BELOW) Millie Whipplesmith Plank, *Am I Real* (2 of 25), 2022, woodcut on Torinoko paper



Wednesday, **FEBRUARY 19**, 7 pm

OUT OF THE PICTURE DOCUMENTARY SCREENING

@ The Grand Theater

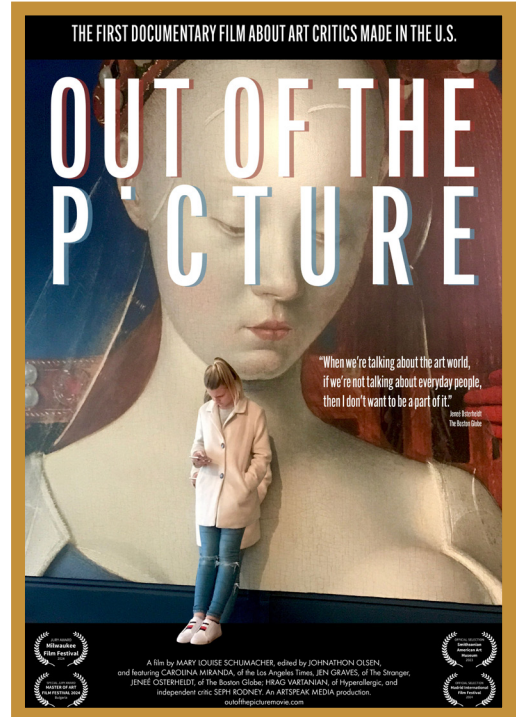


Enjoy a free screening of *Out of the Picture* at Wausau's Grand Theater (401 N 4th St, Wausau, WI 54403). This is the first feature-length documentary film about art critics in the United States that explores a period of dramatic change for art and media. Following the film, director Mary Louise Schumacher will hold a Q&A

session. Doors open at 6:30 pm for the screening at 7:00 pm. No ticket or RSVP required.

Out of the Picture director Mary Louise Schumacher is a journalist, critic and filmmaker based in Portland, Maine. She is the Executive Director of the Dorothea and Leo Rabkin Foundation, known for giving a prize for excellence in arts journalism to writers each year. She was the longtime art and architecture critic for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, was the 2019 Clarice Smith Distinguished Critic at the Smithsonian, and the 2017 Arts & Culture Fellow with the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University, where she spent a year studying documentary film, among other things.

(ABOVE) Photo courtesy of Kevin J. Miyazaki



CALL FOR HIGH SCHOOL POETRY

WFoP Student Ekphrastic Poetry Competition - Deadline to Submit: January 15, 2024



The Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets partners with the Woodson Art Museum, inviting high school students to participate in a statewide ekphrastic poetry competition. Students will write and submit poems inspired by artworks from the Museum's collection. An installation of the winning poems and collection artworks will follow in April during National Poetry Month. A reception and poetry reading will be held on April 12, 2025. Visit the Museum's website for artwork images, additional information and, entry guidelines at lywam.org/ekphrasticpoetrycompetition/.

David Kroll, *Landscape (Rose Vase)*, 2019, oil on canvas on board

WISCONSIN
FELLOWSHIP
of Poets

Winter Programs



Friday, **DECEMBER 6**, 5 - 7 pm

MEMBERS OPENING

Woodson Art Museum Members are invited to be the first to view *Survival of the Fittest*. The evening is sure to be a showstopper as we share the galleries with the monumental works by the "Big Four."

Interested in becoming a member? Exhibition openings are one of the many benefits you receive as a Woodson Art Museum member. Learn more about the offerings accompanying a Museum membership and get involved on a deeper level with the institution you love by becoming a member today, scan the QR code or visit lywam.org/become-a-member/.



Select Saturdays, 1 - 3 pm

DECEMBER 7, JANUARY 4, FEBRUARY 1

ART PARK OPEN STUDIO

Stop by the lower-level classroom studio for family friendly hands-on projects guided by members of the Wisconsin Valley Art Association.



Select Fridays, 5 - 6 pm

NOVEL NOTIONS

Join monthly conversations as part of a book club program hosted in the galleries with discussions led by youth and family program manager Emily Wesenick. From novice readers to avid bookworms, all are welcome to join. Book selections will draw from a wide range of genres and interests.

DECEMBER 27

STARTER VILLIAN

By: John Scalzi

JANUARY 31

THE MUSHROOM AT THE END OF THE WORLD: ON THE POSSIBILITY OF LIFE IN CAPITALIST RUINS

By: Anna Tsing

FEBRUARY 28

REMARKABLY BRIGHT CREATURES

By: Shelby Van Pelt



ALTERNATIVE ART MAKING

Four-Part Workshop Series

This process-based workshop series designed for teens and adults will provide guidance on alternative art-making techniques. Enjoy experimenting with outside-of-the-box processes and open your mind to the possibilities of creating with any material. Try out new methods each class and take home ideas to implement into your own creative practice. **Fee: \$85 for Museum members, \$100 for non-members; includes all four classes, materials, and dinner for each session. Register online or call 715.845.7010. Scholarships available.**

Tuesdays, 5 – 7 pm

FEBRUARY 4

PART 1: IMAGE TRANSFER TECHNIQUES

FEBRUARY 11

PART 2: IMPLEMENTING FOUND MATERIALS

FEBRUARY 18

PART 3: SURFACE BUILDING

FEBRUARY 25

PART 4: NON-TRADITIONAL COLLAGE



DROP-IN ART MAKING

@ The Glass Box Studio

Drop-in to the Glass Box Studio to participate in a free, vibrant creative community on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 1 – 3 pm. Bring your own project to work on in our collaborative space or explore free materials associated with the studio's monthly theme.

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Fridays,
1 – 3 pm

**DECEMBER
PRINTMAKING**

**JANUARY
FIBER ARTS**

**FEBRUARY
BOOK ARTS**



Register for Museum
programs online!

Scan the QR code or visit
lywam.org/learn-do/program-registration

Select Tuesdays, 4 – 6 pm

DECEMBER 10 & 17, JANUARY 7 & 21

SELF-GUIDED DRAWING

@ The Glass Box Studio

Improve your drawing skills during free, drop-in still life drawing sessions at the Glass Box Studio. Practice proportions, mark making, and value through direct observation during self-guided sessions designed for teens and adults. Basic drawing supplies available. Registration encouraged but not required.



Accessible Programs



SPARK!

CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS *for* PEOPLE
WITH MEMORY LOSS *and* THEIR CARE PARTNERS

Adults with early-to-mid-stage memory loss and their care partners gather for interactive, multi-sensory experiences in the galleries followed by hands-on art making inspired by observations and conversations. Register online at www.lywam.org/learn-do/program-registration or call 715.845.7010.

Select Thursdays, 10:30 am – Noon

DECEMBER 12, 2024

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

JANUARY 9, 2025

FUN & GAMES

FEBRUARY 13, 2025

MYTH & FOLLY



Programming for adults with memory loss is generously supported by Abbie Spire in memory of Dr. Lyman J. Spire.



Saturday, **FEBRUARY 8, 10:30 am – Noon**

ART BEYOND SIGHT

Survival of the Fittest

Individuals with low vision and blindness explore *Survival of the Fittest* via a multisensory gallery experience led by Museum educators. Time in the galleries is followed by conversations and hands-on making in the lower-level classroom. Register online or call 715.845.7010.

WE WANT TO SERVE YOU

To schedule a specialized SPARK! or Art Beyond Sight experience, contact scheduling@lywam.org or call 715.845.7010.

MAY 1 - 3, 2025

ART AND PRESERVATION IN MINNEAPOLIS

Set off to our neighbors to the west with an artfully considered trip to Minneapolis. Experience a boutique hotel that combines rustic Minnesota history with modern amenities while staying at the Hewing Hotel. Learn about the preservation of both art and architecture through a tour at the Midwest Art Conservation Center (MACC), the lab that the Woodson Art Museum trusts with conserving our collection objects, and a private trolley tour across the city. We will immerse ourselves in art and culture at numerous institutions across Minneapolis including a performance at the Guthrie Theater and a making activity at the Minnesota Center for Book Art. In addition to comradery throughout with your fellow travelers and Woodson Art Museum staff, there will also be plenty of conversation held over delectable meals. **Register up online or call 715.845.7010.**



Interested in traveling with us? Scan the QR code or visit

<https://www.lywam.org/get-involved/travel-opportunities/>

OCTOBER 27 - 31, 2025

SANTA FE'S ART SCENE

Join the Woodson Art Museum to explore one of America's favorite art destinations. Stay in the heart of Santa Fe in authentic New Mexican architecture, surrounded by vibrant decor and art of the Southwest at La Fonda on the Plaza. Opportunities abound to dive deep into Southwestern art exploring indigenous, wildlife, and contemporary arts and touring the areas renowned institutions such as the Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Santa Fe Opera House, and the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. We will even have a little slice of the Woodson while in Santa Fe with New Mexican and *Birds in Art* artist, Timothy David Mayhew joining us for a day. In Woodson Art Museum fashion, there will be exceptional culinary experiences and congenial conversation throughout. **Register up online or call 715.845.7010.**





ART BABIES For Kids 2 Years & Under

Bring your littlest artists for an hour of learning-infused fun, sensory exploration, and socializing to explore the animal kingdom in the Museum's galleries and Art Park. Prams, strollers, and front packs are welcome.

Select Tuesdays, 9 - 10 am

DECEMBER 17
SAFARI SCRIBBLES

JANUARY 28
YEAR OF THE SNAKE

FEBRUARY 18
MISCHIEF MAKERS



Register for Museum programs
online! Scan the QR code or visit
lywam.org/learn-do/program-registration

CREATIVE EXPLORERS For Kids 2 - 4 Years

Toddlers and accompanying adults explore art through movement and hands-on projects.
Register online or call 715.845.7010.

Select Fridays, 10:30 - 11:30 am

JANUARY 31

ART BEATS FOR LITTLE FEET

Go on an electric safari adventure! Dance and play while crafting glowing masterpieces, mixing vibrant colors and energetic beats to create a sensory experience featuring the tracks of our favorite safari animals.

FEBRUARY 28

1,000 PAPER CRANES

Explore myths and legends through the story of the 1,000 paper cranes! Little hands will fold, tear, and decorate special paper, exploring textures and colors through sensory play. Fly through Myth and Folly with music, movement, and storytelling using your own colorful paper crane creations.





Art Babies: 2 years & under



Creative Explorers: 2 to 4 years



Art Kids: 8 to 12 years



ART KIDS

For Kids 8 - 12 Years

Emerging artists join Museum educators at the Glass Box Studio to learn hands-on processes to add to their artistic toolbox.

Register online or call 715.845.7010.

Select Thursdays, 4:30 - 6 pm

DECEMBER 5

WILD THINGS

Young artists will explore multi-color reduction printmaking techniques inspired by the works featured in *Survival of the Fittest*. Unleash your creativity while learning to capture the beauty of nature through vibrant prints and unique artistic expression.

FEBRUARY 6

CRYPTID COLLAGE

Dive into an enchanting world of myths and legends where Art Kids create captivating cryptids using collage techniques. Inspired by *Myth and Folly*, participants will bring these mythical creatures to life in colorful, mysterious creations.





700 North 12th Street
Wausau, WI 54403-5007 USA

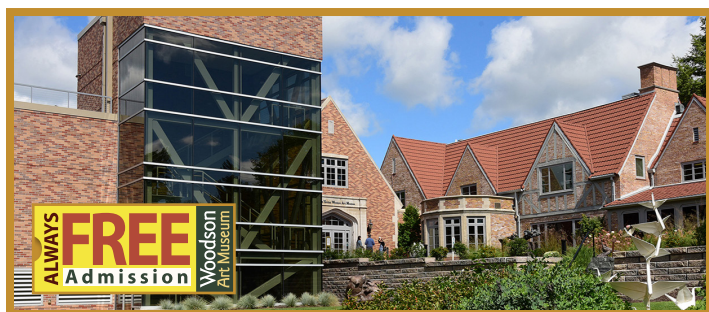
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Woodson Art Museum thanks members, donors, grantors, and sponsors who support exhibitions and programs. Additional exhibition and educational support comes from Pam and Walter Matia; additional educational support comes from Dwight and Linda Davis, Mary Dresser, Kathy Kelsey Foley and Ernie Foley, Sandy Ott, Robert and Ann Dudley Shannon, Gary and Amy Sweet Family, and Gregory Wojciechowski.



WEEKLY BLOG: WOODSON WANDERINGS

EXHIBITION EXTRAS

Art Park

Visit the Museum's interactive family gallery and explore the world of the "Big Four" wildlife painters by adding your own mark to a collaborative installation inspired by animals and landscape.

Pop-Up Possibilities

Watch for additional opportunities to look, learn, and make! Follow the Museum on social media for more details; Museum members will receive email notices.

Art Kits & Stop-by-Studio

Pick up Art Kits—free, take-and-make art materials for all ages—in the Museum or from the always-open Stop-by-Studio, for in-gallery or at-home art making. Art Kits are supported by grants from the M&T Charitable Foundation and Wilmington Trust as well as the Bell Family Charitable Foundation.

Learn More

Explore additional educational content like Activity Guides and videos during your visit and online at www.lywam.org/learn-do/digital-resources.

MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday – Friday	9 am – 4 pm
First Thursday of each month	9 am – 7:30 pm
Saturday – Sunday	Noon – 5 pm
Closed Monday and holidays, including Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day	

CONTACT US

Phone: 715.845.7010
Email: info@lywam.org
Online: www.lywam.org

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& Share Your Images

