

# Biggs Museum to Open Rare Audubon Exhibition on August 3<sup>rd</sup>

*Audubon, Then and Now* Exhibition Features Original John James Audubon  
Prints Alongside Contemporary Art Under His Influence



**Dover, DE (July 24, 2018)** – From August 3, 2018 – November 25, 2018, the Biggs Museum will host an exhibition of over 50 original etchings and lithographs of well-known artist and naturalist John James Audubon. The works will be displayed alongside the work of contemporary artists from America and the United Kingdom who have been influenced by his monumental animal studies.

The Biggs Museum will kick-off the exhibition with an opening party on Friday, August 3, 2018 from 5:30 -7:30 p.m. with a hosted bar and cocktail reception.

### **About the *Audubon, Then and Now* Exhibition**

In 1826 when John James Audubon turned 41, his wife encouraged him to travel to England to find innovative ways to reproduce over 300 watercolor bird studies into one of the most important projects in art history. He had been studying rare and beautiful birds across the North American landscape for over a decade and had amassed an enormous library of original images and field notes. These images formed his iconic, monumental *Birds of America* totaling over 400 life-size studies of his avian obsessions. In a few years, Audubon also began the equally

ambitious project of recording mammals as well in the *Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*.

The best-known accomplishments of this painter, printmaker, publisher and naturalist were immediately popular on two continents, influencing artists and designers throughout America and the United Kingdom. The creation of his images have remained a constant influence upon science, natural preservation and the visual arts to this day. Artists continue to draw upon his aesthetics and the romantic impression of his artistic process with a wide variety of works, from photography to painting to sculpture.

The Biggs Museum is proud to display over 50 original Audubon prints from both *Birds* and *Quadrupeds*, graciously lent by Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library and the Huntsville Museum of Art, with 20 works created by leading contemporary artists today including, but not limited to, Jamie Wyeth, Kevin Sloan and Beth Cavener. Today's artists allow viewers to see Audubon's artworks in new lights, to think about this adventurous and entertaining naturalist in new ways. This exhibition of contrasts, new and old, is crafted to explore the novel artistic choices that Audubon made, to witness his attention to scientific observation, to appreciate him as an early recorder of American regionalism and better understand his complicated relationship to the animal world.

"We are exceptionally proud of this exhibition that the staff of the Biggs Museum has carefully curated over the past several years," shared Director Charles Guerin. "Many of the original Audubon prints in this show have not been on view in our area for several decades. Furthermore, the exhibition will be a regional introduction of several of the international contemporary artists in the exhibition. Artists of stature within the contemporary artworld really responded enthusiastically to the museum's invitation to show work in this exhibition - what they sent is amazing."

### **Contemporary Work**

The works of the exhibiting, contemporary artists were selected for *Audubon, Then and Now* for their fresh and unique perspectives on the tradition of naturalist artworks by early practitioners such as Mark Catesby, Alexander Wilson and, of course, John James Audubon. Today's opinion of the naturalist tradition are quite varied, encompassing criticism, veneration, irony and modern techniques which bring a rich layer of interpretation to the historical images on view within the Biggs Museum's exhibition.

### **Contemporary artists featured in *Audubon, Then and Now* Exhibition:**

Julie Blackmon  
Beth Cavener  
Ann Chahbandour  
Kate Clark  
Hunter Clarke  
Kevin Fleming  
Laurie Hogin  
Kay Jackson  
Tom Judd



Karen Knorr  
Kate MacDowell  
Claire Morgan  
Deidre Murphy (work pictured)  
Kevin Sloan  
Amy Stein  
Jamie Wyeth

**Partnering Antiques Dealers, Art Galleries and Museums on *Audubon, Then and Now*:**

Clark Gallery, Lincoln MA  
Danziger Art Gallery, New York  
Delaware Museum of Natural History  
Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, Cologne, St. Moritz  
Gross McCleaf Gallery, Philadelphia  
Huntsville Museum of Art  
Jason Jacques Gallery, New York  
Minniesland.com, LLC  
Robert Koch Gallery, San Francisco  
Robert Mann Gallery, New York  
Somerville Manning Gallery, Greenville DE  
William Holman Gallery, New York  
Winterthur Museum and Library

**About the Exhibition:**

**Audubon, Then and Now**

**Open August 3 – November 25, 2018**

In 1826 when John James Audubon turned 41, his wife encouraged him to travel to England to find innovative ways to reproduce over 300 watercolor bird studies into one of the most important projects in art history. The iconic images of this painter, printmaker, publisher and naturalist remain relevant for the artists and art lovers of today. The Biggs Museum is proud to display over 50 original Audubon prints made for his two best-known publications, the monumental *Birds of America* and the ambitious *Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*. Rarely seen hand-painted etchings from the collections of Winterthur Museum and Library and lithographs from the Huntsville Museum of Art will illuminate Audubon's ideas about scientific examination, depicting birds and animals within the emerging United States and their relationship to the vast wildernesses of early America. Modern opinions of Audubon's legacy will also be explored with displays of artworks by living artists influenced by this paragon of 19th century naturalist art. More information at [www.BiggsMuseum.org/Audubon](http://www.BiggsMuseum.org/Audubon)

**Opening Party Quick Facts**

**A Night with the Birds: Exhibition Opening Party**

**Friday, August 3, 2018 | 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.**

**Tickets: \$25/\$20 for Members**

Celebrate this extra special exhibition with an extra special opening party. Enjoy a lovely evening out with wonderful company, a hosted bar and cocktail party. Space is limited. Ticket can be purchased at [www.BiggsMuseum.org/Audubon](http://www.BiggsMuseum.org/Audubon) or call 302-674-2111.

The exhibition will also be accompanied by a variety of programming including nature hikes, watercolor workshops and collaborative nature-related, partner programming. Visit [www.biggsmuseum.org/Audubon](http://www.biggsmuseum.org/Audubon) for a full list of programs.

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