



A DAY IN THE ARTS

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WILDLIFE ART: ITS HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT, PART 2

BY THOMAS GOLDMAN

age both business investment and interest in the natural history of the continent.

In response to the decadence of the Rococo period, neo-classicism arose in the late 18th Century (1750-1830). This genre is more acetic, and contains much sensuality, but none of the spontaneity which characterizes the later Romantic period. This movement focused on the supremacy of natural order over man's will, a concept which culminated in the romantic art depiction of disasters and madness.

Francois Le Vaillant (1769-1832) was a bird illustrator (and ornithologist) around this time.

Georges Cuvier, (1769-1832), painted accurate images of more than 5000 fish, relating to his studies of comparative organismal biology.

Edward Hicks is an example of an American wildlife painter of this period, who's art was dominated by his religious context.

Sir Edwin Henry Landseer was also painting wildlife at this time, in a style strongly influenced by dramatic emotional judgments of the animals involved.

This focus towards nature led the painters of the Romantic era (1790 - 1880) to transform landscape painting, which had previously been a minor art form, into an art-form of major importance. The romantics rejected

the acetic ideals of Neo-Classicalism.

The practical use of photography began in around 1826, although it was a while before wildlife became a common subject for its use. The first color photograph was taken in 1861, but easy-to-use color plates only became available in 1907.

In 1853 Bisson and Mante created some of the first known wildlife photography.

In France, Gaspar-Felix Tournacho,



Francois Le Vaillant, "Histoire Naturelle Des Perroquets", C.1801

Wildlife art in the 18th to 19th Centuries

In 1743, Mark Catesby published his documentation of the flora and fauna of the explored areas of the New World, which helped encour-



Jacques-Laurent Agasse, "Two Leopards Lying in the Exeter", ca. 1787-1849



"Phoenicopterus ruber, the Greater Flamingo". Drawn by John James Audubon for his book **The Birds of America**

"Nadar" (1820-1910) applied the same aesthetic principles used in painting, to photography, thus beginning the artistic discipline of fine art photography. Fine Art photography Prints were also reproduced in Limited Editions, making them more valuable.

Jaques-Laurent Agasse was one of the foremost painters of animals in Europe around the end of the 18th C and the beginning of the 19th. His animal art was unusually realistic for the time, and he painted some wild animals including giraffe and leopards.

Romantic wildlife art includes "zebra", "cheetah, stag and two Indians", at least two monkey paintings, a leopard and "portrait of a royal tiger" by George Stubbs who also did many

paintings of horses.

One of the great wildlife sculptors of the Romantic period was Antoine-Louis Barye. Barye was also a wildlife painter, who demonstrated the typical dramatic concepts and lighting of the romantic movement.

Delacroix painted a tiger attacking a horse, which as is common with Romantic paintings, paints subject matter on the border between human (a domesticated horse) and the natural world (a wild tiger).

In America, the landscape painting movement of the Romantic era was known as the Hudson River School (1850s - c. 1880). These landscapes occasionally include wildlife, such as the deer in "Dogwood" and "valley of the Yosemite" by Albert Bierstadt, and more obviously in his "buffalo trail", but the focus is on the landscape rather than the wildlife in it.

Wildlife artist Ivan Ivanovitch Shishkin demonstrates beautiful use of light in his landscape-oriented wildlife art.

Although Romantic painting focused on nature, it rarely portrayed wild animals, tending much more towards the borders between man and nature, such as domesticated animals and people in landscapes rather than the landscapes themselves. Romantic art seems in a way to be about nature, but usually only shows nature

from a human perspective.

Audubon was perhaps the most famous painter of wild birds at around this time, with a distinctive American style, yet painting the birds realistically and in context, although in somewhat over-dramatic poses. As well as birds, he also painted the mammals of America, although these works of his are somewhat less well known. At around the same time In Europe, Rosa Bonheur was finding fame as a wildlife artist.

Amongst Realist art, "the raven" by Manet and "stags at rest" by Rosa Bonheur are genuine wildlife art. However in this artistic movement animals are much more usually depicted obviously as part of a human context.

The wildlife art of the impressionist movement includes "angler's prize" by Theodore



Shishkin, Ivan Ivanovitch , "Morning in a Pine Forest, 1889"



Henri Matisse, "Polynesie la Mer", Serigraph

Clement Steele, and the artist Joseph Crawhall was a specialist wildlife artist strongly influenced by impressionism.

At this time, accurate scientific wildlife illustration was also being created. One name known for this kind of work in Europe is John Gould although his wife Elizabeth was the one who actually did most of the illustrations for his books on birds.

Post-impressionism (1886 - 1905, France) includes a water-bird in Rousseau's "snake charmer", and Rousseau's paintings, which include wildlife, are sometimes considered Post-impressionist (as well as Fauvist, see below).

Fauvism (1904 - 1909, France) often considered the first "modern" art movement, re-thought use of color in art. The most famous fauvist is Matisse, who depicts birds and fish in his "Polynesie la Mer" and birds in his "Renaissance".

Other wildlife art in this movement includes a tiger in "Surprised! Storm in the Forest" by Rousseau, a lion in his "sleeping Gypsy" and a jungle animal in his "exotic landscape". Georges Braque depicts a bird in many of his artworks, including "L'Oiseaux Bleu et Gris", and his "Astre et l'Oiseau".

Ukiyo-e-printmaking (Japanese wood-block prints, originating from 17th C) was becoming known in the

West, during the 19th C, and had a great influence on Western painters, particularly in France.

Wildlife art in this genre includes several untitled prints (owl, bird, eagle) by Ando Hiroshige, and "crane", "cat and butterfly", "wagtail and wisteria" by Hokusai Katsushika.

Wildlife art in the 20th Century, Contemporary art, postmodern art, etc.

Changing from the relatively stable views of a mechanical universe held in the 19th-century, the 20th-century shatters these views with such advances as Einstein's Relativity and Freuds sub-conscious

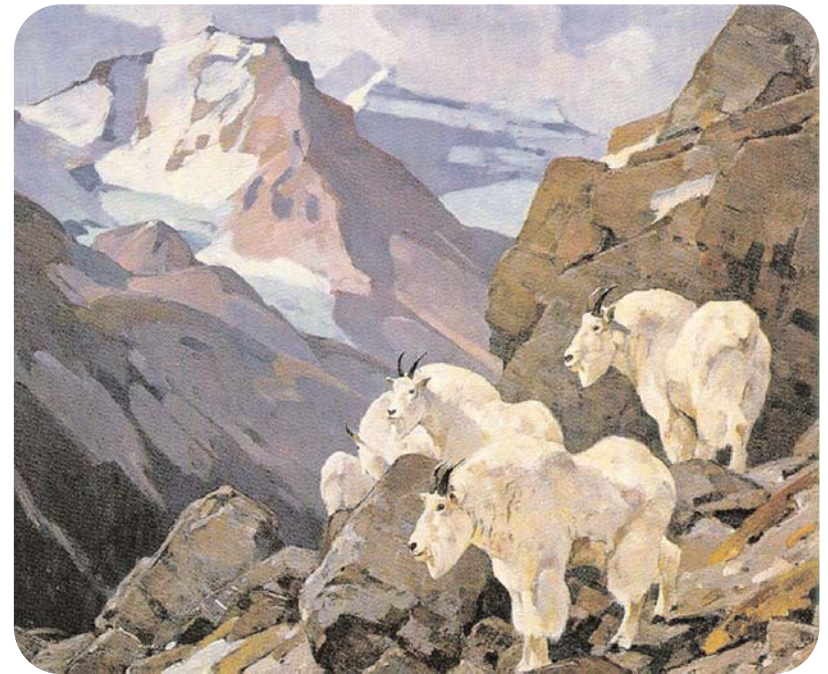
psychological influence.

The greater degree of contact with the rest of the world had a significant influence on Western arts, such as the influence of African and Japanese art on Pablo Picasso, for example.

American Wildlife artist Carl Rungius spans the end of the 19th and the beginnings of the 20th Century. His style evolved from tightly rendered scientific-influenced style, through impressionist influence, to a more painterly approach.

The golden age of illustration includes mythical wildlife "The firebird" by Edmund Dulac, and "tile design of Heron and Fish" by Walter Crane.

George Braque's birds can be defined as Analytical Cubist (this genre was jointly developed by Braque and Picasso from 1908 to 1912),



Carl Rungius, "Mountain Goats II"



George Braque, "Castle at La Roche-Guyon", La Roche-Guyon, summer 1909, Oil on canvas, Stedelijk van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven, Romilly 42

(as well as Fauvist). Fernand Leger also depicts birds in his "Les Oiseaux".

There was also accurate scientific wildlife illustration being done at around this time, such as those done by America illustrator Louis Agassiz Fuertes who painted birds in America as well as other countries.

Expressionism (1905 - 1930, Germany). "Fox", "monkey Frieze", "red deer", and "tiger", etc by Franz Marc qualify as wildlife art, although to contemporary viewers seem more about the style than the wildlife.

Postmodernism as an art genre, which



Franz Marc, Deer in the Woods II, 1912, oil on canvas, Stadtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich

has developed since the 1960's, looks to the whole range of art history for its inspiration, as contrasted with Modernism which focuses on its own limited context. A different yet related view of these genres is that Modernism attempts to search for an idealized truth, where as post-modernism accepts the impossibility of such an ideal. This is reflected, for example, in the rise of abstract art, which is an art of the indefinable, after about a thousand years of art mostly depicting definable objects.

Magic realism (1960's Germany) often included animals and birds, but usually as a minor feature among human elements, for example, swans and occasionally other animals in many paintings by Michael Parkes.

Robert Rauschenberg's "American eagle", a Pop Art (mid 1950's onwards) piece, uses the image of an eagle as a symbol rather than as something in its own right, and thus is not really wildlife art. The same applies to Any Warhol's "Butterflies".

Salvador Dali, the best known of Surrealist (1920's France, onwards) artists, uses wild animals in some of his paintings, for example "Landscape with Butterflies", but within the context of surrealism, depictions of wildlife become conceptually something other than what they might appear to be visually, so they might not really be wildlife at all. Other examples of wildlife in Surrealist art are Rene Magritte's "La Promesse" and "L'entre ed Scene".

Op art (1964 onwards) such as M. C.



Robert Bateman, "POLAR BEAR PROFILE"

Escher's "Sky and Water" shows ducks and fish, and "mosaic II" shows many animals and birds, but they are used as image design elements rather than the art being about the animals.

Roger Tory Peterson created fine wildlife art, which although being clear illustrations for use in his book which was the first real field guide to birds, are also aesthetically worthy bird paintings.

Young British Artists (1988 onwards). Damien Hirst uses a shark in a tank as one of his artworks. It is debatable whether this piece could be considered as wildlife art, because even though the shark is the focus of the piece, the piece is not really about the shark itself, but probably more about the shark's effect on the people viewing it. It could be said to be more a use of wildlife in/as art, than a work of wildlife art.

Wildlife art continues to be popular today, with such artists as Robert Bateman being very highly regarded, although in his case somewhat controversial for his release of Limited-Edition prints which certain fine-art critics deplore. 🐼

Sources: Wikipedia
<http://www.wildlife-art-links.com>
More than 150,000 links to wildlife art.

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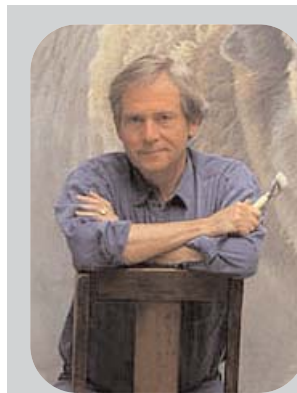
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WORD OF THE DAY

SERIGRAPH

A print made using a stencil process in which an image or design is superimposed on a very fine mesh screen and printing ink is squeegeed onto the printing surface through the area of the screen that is not covered by the stencil. 🐼

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I can't conceive of anything being more varied and rich and handsome than the planet Earth. And its crowning beauty is the natural world. I want to soak it up, to understand it as well as I can, and to absorb it. And then I'd like to put it together and express it in my paintings. This is the way I want to dedicate my work. **-Robert Bateman**