

The Society of Animal Artists

Eva Stanley, SAA Associate Member, 2008

Our History

The Society of Animal Artists (SAA) is a world-renowned organization that has become the standard bearer of excellence in the field of animal art and within the greater fine art community. Founded in 1960, The Society of Animal Artists is an international association of animal and wildlife painters and sculptors, and is regarded world wide as the most prestigious artist membership organization dedicated to the theme of animals in art, and devoted to promoting excellence in the portrayal of the creatures sharing our planet, and to the education of the public through its informative art seminars, lectures and teaching demonstrations. Some of the finest animal artists from the United States, Canada, Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, South America, and Japan are represented in the Society's membership. Its headquarters are located in the historic Salmagundi Club on Fifth Avenue in New York. Historically, the Society of Animal Artists has an affinity with conservation organizations such as the Audubon Society and the New York Zoological Society or Bronx Zoo as it is now called, which emerged in the 19th Century to promote conservation and public support, and organizations that grew out of a movement to form associations and clubs dedicated to art. Like the National Academy of Design, for example, the Society of Animal Artists is mandated by its bylaws to organize annual exhibitions to ensure new, strong and fresh work and afford its members with ample opportunities to display their paintings and sculptures of animals.

Our Mission

The mission of The Society of Animal Artists is to promote excellence in the portrayal of animals, domestic or wild, in art. Over the past 50 years, the work created by these artist members from The Society of Animal Artists have established new standards of artistic excellence, helping animal and wildlife art to achieve a place of honor and respect in the field of fine art.

The Society was founded in 1960 by the late Patricia Allen Bott and Guido Borghi, two visionaries who sought to reposition animal art as an important contemporary art form by creating a community of like-minded artists. Since its inception, the Society has grown by leaps and bounds and has generated tremendous response through its museum and gallery exhibitions. The annual "Art and the Animal" exhibition and tour are eagerly awaited events in the art world and provide our artists with the opportunity for greater recognition. SAA is devoted to promoting excellence in the artistic portrayal of the creatures sharing our planet, and to the education of the public through informative art seminars, lectures and teaching demonstrations.

The Society's first board president was the sister of Carl Rungius, Elizabeth Rungius Fulda. Past SAA members have included such highly-respected artists as Dharbinder S. Bamrah, Paul Branson (board of directors president from 1961–1976), Simon Combes, Don Richard Eckelberry, Bob Kuhn, Fred Machetanz, Stanley Meltzoff, Lanford Monroe, Roger Tory Peterson, Arthur Singer, and Richard Sloan to name but a few. Current, active "Master Signature Artists" include such noted artists as Charles Allmond, Chris Bacon, Gerald Balciar, Robert Bateman, Burt Brent, Carel Pieter Brest van Kempen, Guy Coheleach, Walter Matia, Leo Osborne, Sherry Salari Sander, Morten Solberg, and Kent Ullberg.

Art And The Animal

Art and the Animal is the flagship exhibition of The Society of Animal Artists. *Art and the Animal* refers to both the Annual Exhibition of the Society of Animal Artists, and the Traveling Exhibition and Tour that is generated from it. *Art and the Animal* has been featured at more than 50 venues including museums, zoos, and art, cultural and science centers throughout North America over the past 50 years.

Only the best animal art is selected for *Art and the Animal*. Consequently, it is extremely difficult, and therefore prestigious, for artists to have artwork accepted into the exhibition. Combining natural history and fine art in creative ways, SAA members compete to have their work included in annual exhibitions chosen by a selection jury comprised of SAA members who meet at the Salmagundi Club in New York each Spring.

The Annual Exhibition of the Society of Animal Artists typically contains over 120 flatworks and sculptures. The traveling *Art and the Animal* exhibition is comprised of about 45 flatworks and 15 sculptures. Each Autumn, an entirely new *Art and the Animal* exhibition is chosen from the Annual Exhibition to represent the SAA on tour. Tour venues typically include an equal mix of art and natural history institutions. After premiering at the Nevada State Museum, in Carson City, the 2005 Tour Itinerary included, for example, The Wildlife Experience, Parker (Denver), CO; West Valley Art Museum, Surprise (Phoenix), AZ; Muscarelle Museum of Art, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA; Stifel Fine Arts Center, Oglebay Institute, Wheeling, WV; and the Neville Public Museum, Green Bay, WI. In September 2010, the San Diego Zoo hosted a special Society of Animal Artists Day in conjunction with the premiere of the 50th Anniversary Annual Exhibition at the San Diego Natural History Museum in Balboa Park.