

Western Visions

National Museum of Wildlife Art, September 11-12

THIS MONTH the National Museum of Wildlife Art hosts its 27th annual Western Visions Show & Sale. The event has three distinct parts: the Wild 100 show of paintings and sculptures, the Jewelry & Artisan show, and the Sketch show. To create a more tightly focused show in 2014, the museum has carefully selected a cadre of 100 artists, down from 160 last year. This esteemed “Wild 100” comprises both established and emerging artists working in the wildlife and western genres, in a wide range of media and sizes.

Western Visions events begin on August 30 and continue through September 21. The Wild 100 Show & Sale, a ticketed event, takes place on Friday, September 12. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and final bidding closes at 7 p.m. Online bidding is available prior to the show, on both intent-to-purchase and silent-auction lots. Potential buyers can view artwork, register to bid, and buy tickets for the various activities online.

“Although we’re located in Wyoming, this is not your typical Wild West art event,” notes Becky Kimmel, director of programs and events for the museum. “Our Western Visions Wild 100 offers a chance to experience, and purchase, the work of some of the best international talent in the field.” To that end, the museum has chosen Dutch painter Ewoud de Groot and American sculptor Gwynn Murrill as the Western Visions featured artists for 2014. Both artists are present on September 11 to discuss their respective work.

Veteran Western Visions painter de Groot has selected three pieces—two of birds and one of a bison—to present in this year’s exhibition. Widely recognized for his naturalistic portraits of birds against lush, enigmatic backgrounds, he has incorporated the same style into his Wyoming-inspired bison depictions. De Groot is especially “honored and flattered” to be named the Wild 100 featured painter.



Gwynn Murrill, Little Horse Trotting, bronze, 13 x 17 x 3.

Murrill makes her Western Visions debut in 2014, contributing four bronze maquettes. The spare and elegant eagle, horse, coyote, and bighorn typify Murrill’s style, which regards equally positive and negative space and how the two interact. Reduced detail and minimal lines allow each figure’s identity to emerge, while also eliciting elements of the universal. She remarks, “My sculpture bridges the gap between wildlife art and contemporary art, and I truly am a product of the West. It is an honor to have my vision included in this year’s Western Visions.”

The Wild 100 also features several 2013 award winners, including Britt Freda, who was the first to receive both the Trustee Purchase and People’s Choice Awards. Freda brings three pieces depicting graphic animal figures and evoking

conceptual narratives through dissolving layers of color, line, and pattern. Sculptor Walter Matia, recipient of last year’s Red Smith Award, offers two bird sculptures, while 2013 Robert Kuhn Sketch Award winner Pete Zaluzec presents three pieces fashioned in river stone and bronze.

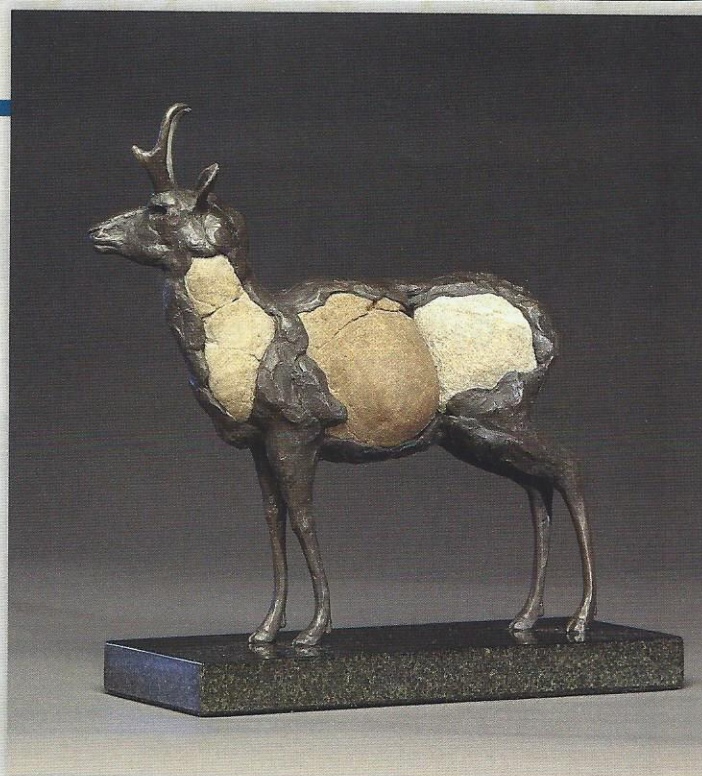
Among the artists new to Western Visions in 2014 are Barbara Kassell, Robert McCauley, and Theodore Waddell. A complete schedule of events is available online. —Elizabeth L. Delaney

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Britt Freda, Ursus Horribilis, acrylic/graphite, 12 x 9.



Pete Zaluzec, Pronghorn, riverstone/bronze, 8 x 10 x 4.



Ewoud de Groot, Arctic Loon, oil, 22 x 22.



Robert McCauley, The Only West Left is the One in Your Head, oil, 36 x 24.