

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

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New Museum Exhibit Showcases Nature in Charcoal

Art exhibit “The Beauty of Wild Things” opens March 2

BEND, OR — The work of April Coppini, a Portland-based artist known for her large, gestural renderings of animals, will debut on Saturday, March 2 at the High Desert Museum in the new exhibition *The Beauty of Wild Things: Charcoal Drawings by April Coppini*.

Coppini is renowned for her ability to breathe life into depictions of the Pacific Northwest’s wild inhabitants, capturing them in a way that’s both arresting and authentic to the moment. Working from photographs, Coppini draws the immediacy of something about to happen and animal behavior that is true to life.

“She wants you to experience the same sense of wonder you have when you happen upon animals in the wild,” said Andries Fourie, Museum curator of art and community engagement. “With the trumpeter swans, you can almost hear the cackling sound. With the foxes, you can feel the buzz of motion right before something momentous.”



Foxes, Circling by April Coppini

Coppini created these drawings specifically for *The Beauty of Wild Things*. She moved to Oregon in 1995 after receiving a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Alfred University School of Art and Design in New York state, where she focused on printmaking and drawing. She has exhibited her work at galleries regionally as well as in Ireland and New Zealand.

For Fourie, Coppini’s use of charcoal is itself is significant. Charcoal is one of the world’s oldest fine art materials, used by ancient humans who drew entire galleries of animals on the walls of caves in places like present-day Borneo and France.

“There’s a real parallel,” Fourie said. “These ancient people lived with these animals. They knew their anatomy and behavior, and so they captured them so well.”

Visitors to *The Beauty of Wild Things* will learn about the art, and they will also be exposed to the ecological importance of the animals depicted and their habitat.

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“For the Museum, sharing the context of both science and art provides a deeper understanding of the High Desert,” said Museum Executive Director Dana Whitelaw, Ph.D. “April Coppini’s work provides a thrilling glimpse into the natural world that we’re certain will appeal to visitors of all ages.”

Visitors will be able to see *The Beauty of Wild Things: Charcoal Drawings by April Coppini* (highdesertmuseum.org/wild-things) through June 23. The exhibition is on display with support from Century Insurance Group, Inc. and the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM:

THE HIGH DESERT MUSEUM opened in 1982 and brings regional wildlife, culture, art and natural resources together to promote an understanding of the natural and cultural heritage of North America's High Desert country. The Museum uses indoor and outdoor exhibits, wildlife in natural habitats, and living history demonstrations to help people discover and appreciate the High Desert environment. The Museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and is a Smithsonian Affiliate. highdesertmuseum.org

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