

**ANIMALS: DREAMED & DREAMING**

Concord Art Association • Concord, MA • [concordart.org](http://concordart.org) • October 19–November 24, 2013

Curated by long-time painter Tamara Krendel and two years in the making, this exhibition imaginatively and considerably stretches the concept of “animals.” The works by nine artists range from realistic and representational to fanciful and electronically produced. Some suggest forms in the process of emerging, others portray stasis and calm. They enact the theme across painting, sculpture, prints and installations.

A number of the most interesting interpretations are abstract. Elizabeth Awalt creates a series of circles taken from the form of frog eggs. These are exceptional in both color and layered form. In larger oil paintings she captures the swirling momentum of eddies



Susan Heideman, *Proteanna Series #11*, 2009, thread, monotypes, and aqueous media on paper, 87 x 54½". Photo: Dana Salvo.

on ponds. Some, such as *Swimming in Circles*, suggest insect or animal life caught in the moving whirlpool.

Susan Heideman represents nature in very large sewn watercolors with collaged monotype fragments. Her *Proteanna* series shows nature and its denizens constantly evolving in gracefully arced compositions that recall Chinese landscape painting scrolls.

Modern technology informs the light installations of Beth Galston and the kinetic sculpture of Steve Hollingsworth. Emerging from a wooden sea captain's box placed in a fireplace, sparkling lights suggest the flight of fireflies that Galston saw from her porch in Carlisle at dusk, evoking a dance of light and

evanescence. In Hollingsworth's *Pods*, strings with glass containers surround mechanical seed-like elements to create continuous sound as well as sight.

Created more traditionally, the small box-wood carvings of Anne Oldach represent with skill and humor an octopus, a manatee, a caterpillar and other creatures large and small. An encaustic and mixed-media collage of a shining green frog is vibrant and amusing. Also traditional in representation are curator Tamara Krendel's watercolors, with her cat as featured feline muse in a number of drawings.

The works in this exhibition, inspired by the animal and insect worlds, range from tiny (a mere two inches) to tall (some 8 x 5 feet). The most exciting are installations that recreate a world of wonder and diversity. Yet each vision is different, as the media change from traditional to experimental. The membership based Concord Art Association, founded in 1917, has attracted members who practice an impressive gamut of media, as reflected in this special sampling.

—Alicia Faxon

**JAMES PROSEK: THE SPACES IN BETWEEN**

Addison Gallery of American Art • Andover, MA • [andover.edu/museums/addison](http://andover.edu/museums/addison) • Through January 5, 2014

While observation and biological research form the key components of modern nature study, James Prosek explores a somewhat quirky valley in between: human imagination. With earnestness and wry wit, this artist and naturalist looks at some of the fanciful ways humans consider nature.

—Addison Gallery

Prosek is a very serious naturalist—fly fisherman, world wildlife observer, and illustrator of nearly a dozen books on aquatic animals—and he was the Edward E. Elson artist-in-residence at Phillips Academy this past fall. All this makes him an unlikely candidate to create a taxidermy beaver with a chain spliced to its tail. Kitschy roadside attractions with photo sightings of taxidermied jackalopes come to mind.

However, it's important to really stand back and examine this exhibition as a whole. The walls are lined with Prosek's rich watercolor, gouache, and pencil studies of animals—surrounded by plants and other bits of habitat—set on backgrounds painted to resemble

aged paper. In the center of the room stand taxidermy specimens. It's not a huge leap to see this as a 19th-century gentleman's trophy room.

The trophies, as with the *Industrial Evolution* (beaver with chainsaw), illustrate human myths or fantastic ideas humans once held about these creatures. For instance, in *Flying Fox with Lady's Slippers*, we see a taxidermied sleeping fox with wings attached to its back (from a sea duck). Similarly, *Drill Duck with Pitcher Plant* is a taxidermied hooded merganser, except a drill bit has been substituted for its beak. On the wall is the *Parrotfish Nocturne*, a vibrant watercolor and gouache that gives form to this real animal's fanciful name. In a past era, those never seeing a real “parrotfish” might conjure exactly what Prosek illustrates, a parrot head with a fish body.

Before science and the photography of fast shutter speeds, naturalists drew what they thought they saw. What they didn't know, they



James Prosek, *Parrotfish Nocturne*, 2012, watercolor, gouache, colored pencil, and graphite on paper, 19 x 24". Courtesy of the artist and Waqas Wajahat, New York.

imagined. For most of history, humans have seen animals through myths, dreams, and pure creativity. Though Prosek is very grounded in modern biology, he realizes that science can't define everything. Imagination must remain.

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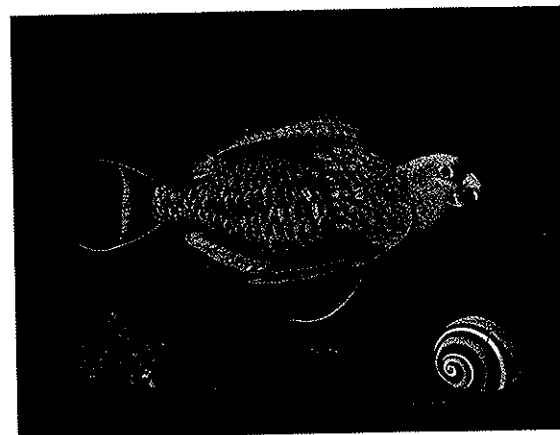
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