

# NEWS RELEASE

## Oakland Museum of California

[www.museumca.org](http://www.museumca.org)

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition dates February 18–June 4, 2006

## **The Art of Seeing: Nature Revealed Through Illustration** California Species Exhibition at Oakland Museum of California

Pine cones, thistles, seed pods, and songbirds captured in exquisite detail. A grizzly bear skull carved in oak, a watercolor osprey in flight, his body a composite of the fishes he hunts. Where else does science meet art but at the Oakland Museum of California?

The remarkable diversity of California's native plant and animal species is celebrated in *The Art of Seeing: Nature Revealed Through Illustration*, at the Oakland Museum of California February 18–June 4, 2006. The triennial juried exhibition showcases the centuries-old craft of botanical and wildlife illustration, rendered in pen and ink, watercolor, gouache, oil, acrylic, pastels, graphite, textiles, and sculpture. Fifty artworks were chosen from among more than 300 entries; forty artists are represented.

The museum has offered biological art and illustration exhibitions since 1980. The early exhibitions presented traditional scientific illustration, according to curator Gail Binder, a preparator in the Natural Sciences department. "In 2003 we encouraged people to experiment with different media, try to capture the essence of the species and go beyond strict representation," said Binder, who has curated the exhibition since 1997.

**The Art of Seeing** demonstrates that high-quality scientific illustration and wildlife art can bring California species to life in a new way for the observer—as seen through the artist's eye. Biological illustration can also provide more clarity to plant and animal anatomy than photography. The exhibition helps clarify the techniques of biological illustration by presenting the artists' reference materials, tools, and field sketches.

Adults and kids can try their hand at drawing from specimens on display from the Natural Sciences collection. Tables in the gallery have colored pencils, paper, and simple specimens to work from; artwork by local elementary students is on display nearby.

This year's judges for **The Art of Seeing** were Jim Ales, art director for the Monterey Bay Aquarium; Harvey L. Jones, senior curator of art at the Oakland Museum of California; and Catherine Watters, a botanical art instructor at Fioli in Woodside (CA), and member of the American Society of Botanical Artists.

**The Art of Seeing 2-2-2**

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

**Sunday, March 19, 1–4 p.m. Illustrating Nature, a Family Explorations!** program for families to learn the techniques of biological illustrators. Visitors can make sketches from live animals and specimens, create fish prints, and more. Included with museum admission.

**Saturday, April 1, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Creating an Illustrated Field Guide for the Sierra Nevada.** Naturalist and artist John (Jack) Muir Laws presents an illustrated lecture about the natural history of the Sierra Nevada and the process of creating a field guide, including how to finish illustrations in the field. He'll bring his backpacking field kit and illustrations he painted in the field and studio. Presented with the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators. Included with museum admission.

**Saturday, April 1-2, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. How to Create Your Own Field Journal.** Day-long, interactive workshop with Andie Thrans, painter and educator. For reservations call 510/238-3884 or email [gbinder@museumca.org](mailto:gbinder@museumca.org).

**Sunday, April 30, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Using Art to Teach Science: Biological Illustration as a Way of Seeing,** with Vicki Jennings, biological illustrator. Workshop to introduce educators to biological illustration techniques and how they help students learn about the biological world. Includes drawing from museum specimens and live animals. All experience levels welcome. \$50 Oakland teachers and museum members; \$60 non-Oakland teachers and non-members. For reservations call 510/238-3818 or email [abillstrom@museumca.org](mailto:abillstrom@museumca.org).

**Saturday, May 20, 10 a.m.– 4 p.m. Botanical Illustration** taught by Catherine Watters. Introduction to traditional botanical art skills, such as plant observation, drawing, color mixing, and watercolor painting using fresh wildflowers from the museum's annual California Wildflower show (May 20–21). No prior art experience required. For reservations call 510/238-3884 or email [gbinder@museumca.org](mailto:gbinder@museumca.org).

**Sunday, May 21, 1–4 p.m. Demonstration: Botanical Illustration** by Catherine Watters. Part of the museum's annual California Wildflower show (May 20–21). Included with museum admission.

**Sunday, May 21, 1–4 p.m. Family Explorations! Plentiful Poppies.** Discover California wildflowers at the museum's annual California Wildflower show. Families can explore a wide variety of wildflowers, make an origami flower pin, and create a gift card for someone special! Included with museum admission.

**Sunday, June 4, 2–4 p.m. Beginning Biological Art and Illustration for Youth (and the Youthful).** Ages 9 and older. Oakland Public Schools Artist-in-Residence Claudia Goodman-Hough introduces young (and youthful) illustrators to illustration techniques: observation, sketching, and drawing. Be inspired by the exhibition *The Art of Seeing: Nature Revealed Through Illustration*. Work with animal specimens and live plants. For reservations call 510/238-3818 (voicemail #3) or email [abillstrom@museumca.org](mailto:abillstrom@museumca.org).

**The Art of Seeing 3-3-3**

*The Art of Seeing: Nature Revealed Through Illustration* is made possible in part by the generous support of the Oakland Museum Women's Board, with additional support provided by the Anne Macpherson/Ruth Williams Endowment for Biological Art & Illustration.

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The Oakland Museum of California is located at Oak and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets in downtown Oakland, one block from the Lake Merritt BART. Museum hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.; first Friday of the month, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$5 seniors and students with ID, free for children five and under. Free admission the second Sunday of the month. For more information, call 510/238-2200 or visit the museum web site at [www.museumca.org](http://www.museumca.org).

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#### MEDIA ALERT

High-resolution images from **The Art of Seeing** are available on the museum Web site, at [museumca.org/press\\_images/artofseeing\\_images.html](http://museumca.org/press_images/artofseeing_images.html)

The **user name** is `pressomca`; the **password** is `omcapix`.

Call Elizabeth Whipple 510/637-0177 for information.

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# Oakland Museum *of* California

## The Art of Seeing: 2006 Contributors

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