Berkshire Museum presents the original exhibition ArtZoo
Opening day Saturday, January 23, 2016

[Pittsfield, Mass.] – The family-friendly exhibition ArtZoo will be on view at the Berkshire Museum this winter from January 23 to May 1, 2016. Set out on an exciting excursion through ArtZoo and discover a magnificent menagerie of creatures portrayed in photography, painting, sculpture, ceramic, video, and more. This wild kingdom of animals from every corner of the world is grouped by species, as in a real zoo, and displayed with scientific specimens and engaging interactive stations. ArtZoo is generously sponsored by Greylock Federal Credit Union.

Be among the first to experience ArtZoo at the family friendly Preview Party on Saturday, January 23, from 5 to 7 p.m. Tickets are $10 for adults, $5 for children, and Museum members enjoy free admission. RSVP to 413.443.7171 ext. 313.

Artists have been portraying animals and birds since the days of the cave paintings, and ArtZoo is a panoply of such animals in art, showcasing loaned works of art created by contemporary artists and photographers as well as pieces gathered from the Museum’s permanent collections.

A stunning life-like rhinoceros head, cast in bronze by award-winning French artist Quentin Garel, is one of the centerpieces of the African savannah area of the gallery. An expressive turtle and a realistic ostrich, also bronze sculptures by Garel, have their own places in the galleries, both displayed with scientific specimens: a pair of real sea turtles and a life-size ostrich skeleton and enormous 10-inch eggs offer a sense of scale.
Vivid images of gorillas, giraffes, and lions by award-winning wildlife photographers Sally Eagle and Dan Mead offer an exciting glimpse of life in the wild, while a compelling video by Sally Eagle of a jaguar attacking a caiman is an extraordinary real-time look at the raw power of nature. The video, titled Ambush in the Pantanal, was selected as the winning video for the 2014 Windland Smith Rice International Awards by Nature’s Best Photography. It is currently on display at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C.

“We think visitors will be intrigued by the wide variety of ways artists have chosen to portray animals, from magnificent photographs showing wild creatures in their habitats to the whimsical portrayals of frogs and birds in the decorative arts,” says Jason Verchot, Berkshire Museum’s exhibition manager and curator of ArtZoo. “Many of the objects are from the Museum’s permanent collection; ArtZoo is a creative way for us to share some of these rarely seen items with our audience.”

Activities for kids and families visiting ArtZoo include Animal Yoga (imitate poses such as Downward Dog, Butterfly Pose, Cobra Pose and many more), a live monitor lizard, an animal riddle game, and a zoo quest through the galleries. Visitors of all ages will learn amazing new things about the birds and beasts around them. How does the domestic tabby cat qualify as an apex predator? Did the velociraptor evolve into the present-day chicken? Can an eagle’s nest weigh nearly two tons? All these fascinating questions and more will be discovered on your journey through ArtZoo!

Works by some of the other contemporary artists in the exhibition include small woodblock prints by illustrator Barry Moser depicting a cunning alligator and a smiling monkey; the monkey print will be on view alongside a piece titled Three Primates by Turi MacCombie, in the area of ArtZoo dedicated to apes. Exquisite drawings of birds by Jada Fitch are featured in the ArtZoo Aviary, and the bronze sculpture, Walktopus, by Scott Musgrove, delights with its humorous pose in the Aquarium section of ArtZoo.

Some of the significant pieces on view from the Museum’s collections include a painting of bighorn sheep in the Rockies by noted wildlife artist Carl Rungius; exquisite
ivory miniatures of elephants; Audubon prints, and imaginative depictions of birds and fish on majolica tableware. Life-size specimens of a mountain lion and a black bear and dioramas of a hippopotamus, a tiger, and a moose in their habitats will all be part of the ArtZoo adventure.

About the Berkshire Museum
Located in downtown Pittsfield, Massachusetts, at 39 South St., the Berkshire Museum, a Smithsonian Affiliate, is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is $13 adult, $6 child; Museum members and children age 3 and under enjoy free admission. For more information, visit www.berkshiremuseum.org or call 413.443.7171.

In association with the Smithsonian since 2013, Berkshire Museum is part of a select group of museums, cultural, educational, and arts organizations that share the Smithsonian's resources with the nation.

Established by Zenas Crane in 1903, Berkshire Museum integrates art, history, and natural science in a wide range of programs and exhibitions that inspire educational connections between the disciplines. Spark!Lab, the hands-on creative laboratory developed at the Smithsonian Institution by the Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation at the National Museum of American History (NMAH), is on view through 2016. Little Cinema is open year-round. Feigenbaum Hall of Innovation, Worlds in Miniature, Aquarium, and other exhibits are ongoing.

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