

Art, You Owe it to Yourself

by Sheldon Dingle
Los Angeles, California

Most of us who like birds also like books, ceramics, sculptures, photos, prints and paintings that depict birds. With that particular flaw in my own background, I found myself wandering through the myriad displays of art work at the October West Wildlife and Western Art Show held last October 16 and 17 at the L.A. Equestrian Center in Burbank, California.

It was thoroughly enjoyable. There was a plethora of paintings and prints (and some bronze castings as well) that I wanted but, of course, my annual art budget was depleted

months before.

In addition to enjoying the excellent examples of art by well known artists, I had the great pleasure of running across several old friends — a couple of whom I hadn't seen for 10 or 15 years.

Lyrae Perry and husband Fred are friends of many years. We spent a lot of time together in years past comparing notes about raising birds. Perrys are noted aviculturists specializing in Asiatic psittacines. Perhaps that is why I was somewhat surprised to see that Lyrae had created several excellent

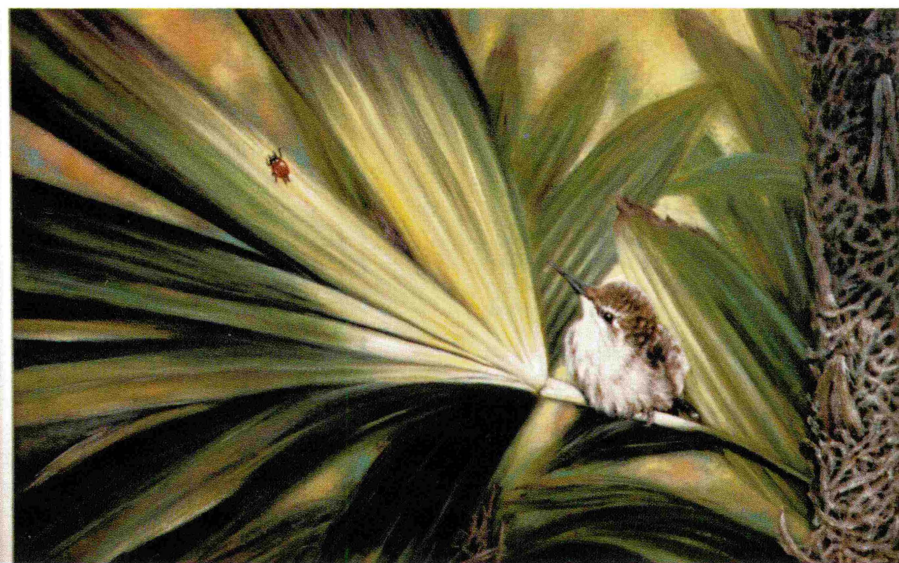


Photos by Sheldon Dingle, Los Angeles, CA

Lyrae Perry, winner of 1st Prize in Marine category.



"California Brown Pelican", Lyrae Perry. Note that the bird is in breeding color. This painting was donated to the Pacific Wildlife Project, Laguna Niguel, California which is dedicated to wild bird rehabilitation. The painting will be raffled to raise support money.



"Just Fledged" baby Anna's Hummingbird just out of the nest. Lyrae Perry 1993.



"Surf Scoter", Lyrae Perry 1991. First prize in Marine category.



Don Harmon, an extraordinary worker in metal. His artistic talent and skilled labor produce pieces of outstanding beauty.

*Bronze casting by Don Harmon.
The detail and colors are
exquisite.*



Bob Quick, wildlife artist, specializes in bears and wolves but his avicultural background occasionally brings up a bird.



Gamini Ratnavira surrounded by some of his fantastic paintings. Ratnavira served as one of the judges at the October West Wildlife and Western Art Show.

OOPS! We wish to correct two typos in the March/April '94 issue — page 48, should have been Ray Vander Leest in the News & Views section, and page 30, Letters to the Editor, should have been Edward L. Spenser.

Deadline Schedule

July / Aug '94

June 1 — editorial copy
June 15 — display ADS

Sept / Oct '94

Featuring SETTING UP AN AVIARY OF COMMONLY KEPT SPECIES

Aug. 1 — editorial copy
Aug. 15 — display ADS

Nov / Dec '94

Oct. 1 — editorial copy
Oct. 15 — display ADS

Jan / Feb '95

Featuring HANDFEEDING

Dec. 1 — editorial copy
Dec. 15 — display ADS

Mar / Apr '95

Feb. 1 — editorial copy
Feb. 15 — display ADS

May / June '95

April 1 — editorial copy
April 15 — display ADS

paintings of marine birds. In fact, her "Surf Scoter" completed in 1991 won first prize in the marine category. Her "California Brown Pelican" in breeding color was another entry in the same category. I think I like the pelican because it reminds me of an old time aviculturist most of us have known for years. Perhaps Perry was a little adrift with the sea birds for awhile but she finally landed and created a very nice painting called "Just Fledged." A fledgling Anna's Hummingbird is trying to figure out what to do about the ladybug close at hand. In addition to making her mark in wildlife art, Perry served as one of the directors. She is also treasurer of the Southern California Wildlife Artists Association.

As Perry showed me around, we turned a corner and bumped into Gamini Ratnavira, an artist most AFA members know of. Ratnavira is such a pleasant fellow that I would like him immensely even if he couldn't paint. He is doubly blessed, however. In addition to a very engaging personality, he has an extraordinary talent.

Ratnavira's work just gets better and better. He had 18 or 20 paintings or prints on display, each of which was a masterpiece. The outstanding item of the whole show, in my opinion, was also a painting by Ratnavira. It is a large work (36 x 48 inches) titled "Macaw Sun Rise." This magnificent work depicts four Scarlet Macaws flying through a dim rain forest with beams of morning light filtering through the jungle trees. It is breathtaking. I urged Gamini to sell the thing so he could stand us to an excellent lunch. The \$20,000 price tag, no doubt, would have covered dessert, too.

Down the aisle from Ratnavira was Bob Quick's display. Quick disappeared from the world of aviculture many years ago. I remember when I was at Dave West's bird ranch, Quick was a frequent visitor. An excellent fellow. Worries more than anyone in the whole world. Now, of course, all he has to worry about is what to paint, what to do with it once it's painted and a plethora of other things artists must fret over. Quick remembers his birds well, though, because along side paintings of wolves and bears was a beautiful rendition of a Scarlet Macaw. Quick and I had a good time catching up on 15 years of B.S. and worrying about the next 15 years.

"I think I know you," said a voice from one of the display booths. It was Don Harmon, a neighbor about 16 or so years ago. Harmon got started in birds through association with his neighbors Dave West and myself. Like Quick, he has long been out of aviculture but the birds still surface in his fantastic bronze castings. What a pleasure it was to run into a friend after so many years.

The point of this simple little article is, I suppose, be sure to attend all art shows possible. You never know what you'll find. For those fortunate few of you who have extra sacks full of greenbacks, there are many excellent works of art to be gotten at quite fair prices. Go for it. Someone has to support artistic creativity and the finer things of civilization.

My fellow impecunious brothers and sisters, you go to the art shows also. You are likely to have one of the best times of your life and you *could* meet long forgotten old buddies and, perhaps, make a new friend or two. I did. ●

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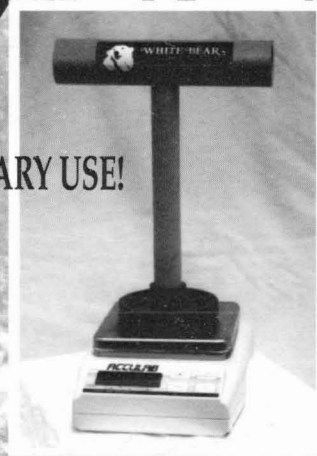
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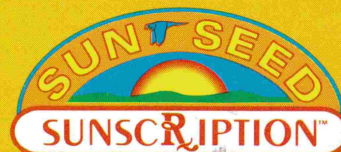
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