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WHERE IN THE WORLD...?

*The National Museum of Wildlife Art Lies Nestled in the Hills of the Old West*

By Erin Caslavka



Question: Where can you find a 51,000 square-foot building constructed of red Arizona sandstone, that was inspired by the ruins of a Scottish castle, and that contains over 5,000 works of art inspired by wildlife and the landscapes they inhabit?

Answer: In Jackson Hole, Wyoming - at the National Museum of Wildlife Art.

In 1984, ten founding trustees set about opening a museum focused on “images of wildlife” that was initiated by the gift of an extensive artwork collection from Joffa and Bill Kerr. Today, over 25 years later, the museum welcomes more than 75,000 visitors each year who come to view its changing exhibitions, permanent collection, engage in its interactive displays, or utilize its classrooms, conference space and 200-seat auditorium.

According to the museum's website, their permanent collection includes paintings, sculptures and works on paper by over 100 distinguished artists. These artists run the gamut from early American Tribes, to contemporary masters - yet each one has made a contribution to the collection worthy of reflection and observation.

Consider the work of contemporary painter John Nieto, who utilizes vibrant colors and a graphic quality to represent images of plains animals, as he does in *Taos Buffalo*. Crafted of hot pinks, flaming reds, soft lavender, turquoise and purple, it showcases a single buffalo silhouetted against a mountain range. Contrast that with the soft, muted



tones in George Catlin's *Buffalo Hunt, Chase No. 6* - a hand-tinted lithograph created in 1848 that has almost a fish-eye quality to the depiction of Native Americans giving chase to a herd of



buffalo - and you'll soon realize the scope of work present within the confines of the museum.

The various galleries at the museum reflect different topics that relate to the permanent collection:

*The Wapiti Gallery* displays artwork that depicts local landscapes and wildlife, with a special emphasis on the area of Wyoming that surrounds the museum.

*The Greene Pathways Gallery* provides an overview of how wildlife has been represented in European and American art. The well-recognized painting *Peaceable Kingdom* (by Edward Hicks) can be found here, along with other masterpieces by artists such as Richard Friese, Wilhelm Kuhnert and Carl Runglus.

*The JKM Gallery* showcases artwork in a thematic fashion. Much of the artwork on display comes from the JKM Collection (the core of the museum's holdings) and includes works by Georgia O'Keefe and Charles Russell.

*The Runglus Gallery* houses the largest public collection (in the U.S.) of Carl Runglus' work. The artist began his career as a painter in Wyoming, but spent the majority of his summers in Banff, Alberta painting the Canadian Rockies and the resident populations of sheep, goats, bears and moose.

*The American Bison Gallery* was originally assembled as a traveling exhibit. It chronicles the changes that surrounded the hunting and exploitation of the American bison during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

*The John Clymer Studio* has been a fixture at the museum since 1991, when the Clymer family donated the gallery to represent the artist's Jackson Hole studio. The installation includes books, costumes, props and other artifacts associated with his life and work.



Temporary exhibits are just as compelling and eclectic. Current titles range from "Collection Spotlight: Rembrandt Bugatti and the Antwerp School," which explores the use of live animal models at the Jardin des Plantes in Paris and the Antwerp Zoological Gardens in Paris, to "Wild New Ways: Maurice Sendak's Animal Kingdom," which showcases animal illustrations from the celebrated author.

If you find yourself in the Jackson Hole neighborhood, or if the thought of an entire museum's worth of art devoted to the animal kingdom gives you reason-enough to plan a trip there, the treasures contained within the National Museum of Wildlife are sure to delight, entertain and inform anyone lucky enough to visit.

#### **FAST FACTS**

***National Museum of Wildlife Art***

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*[www.wildlifeart.org](http://www.wildlifeart.org)*

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