

Gallery Walk



Through Jan. 9, 2010

Pensacola Museum of Art

407 S Jefferson St, Pensacola

Open Tue.-Sun.; closed Mon.

Admission: \$5 and \$2

(850) 432-6247

www.pensacolamuseumofart.org

The Pensacola Museum of Art features Birds of America Exhibition

“To Nature I went, and tried to imitate her.” —John James Audubon

The Pensacola Museum of Art (PMA) is currently exhibiting a spectacular survey of America's most celebrated naturalist. An exhibition of John James Audubon's Birds of America will feature approximately 40 prints by the renowned ornithologist, naturalist and artist, whose work remains the unparalleled example of its genre.

Audubon was born in Les Cayes, Haiti (then the colony of Saint-Domingue) on his father's sugar plantation. He was the illegitimate son of Lieutenant Jean Audubon, a French naval officer and privateer, and his mistress Jeanne Rabin, a French/Spanish Creole chambermaid from Louisiana. Audubon was raised by his father and stepmother Anne Moynet Audubon in Nantes, France.

In 1803, his father obtained a false passport so that Audubon could go to the United States to avoid conscription in the Napoleonic Wars. Audubon set about to study American birds with the goal of illustrating his findings in a more realistic manner than most artists did then.

Over the course of a lifetime, Audubon provided the first comprehensive portraits and field observations of American birds. Having little interest in taxidermy, he turned to illustration and draw his birds in lifelike attitudes. “I wished to possess all the productions of nature, but I wished life with them,” he said. Depicting in detail more than 489 species, he traveled

to all corners of the country to observe and draw, from the Rocky Mountains down to Florida and Galveston Bay. He painted dozens of birds unknown to science at the time, portrayed in their natural habitats.

Deborah Keller, Senior Policy Representative at The Nature Conservancy (TNC), was a special guest at the opening reception. She took a moment to speak of conservation and the original works of art—on display and in nature.

Keller shared these statistics. Of the species of birds, 888 are known to live in the US, 925 if you include Canada. Since the publication of Audubon's book of prints six of the 435 birds have gone extinct; four are on the endangered species list; three of those live or visit Northwest Florida — The Bachmans' warbler, the Red Cockaded Woodpecker and the whooping Crane. The fourth is the California Condor.

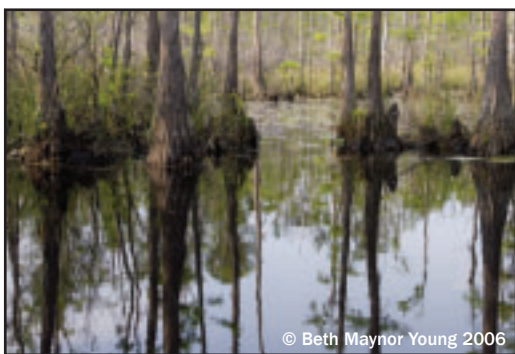
“We know a fraction of the world's species, and understand little of what they mean to the living and physical environment we depend upon. Yet we know diversity is in decline. We can thankful for people like Betty and Crawford Rainwater who cared enough about preservation to leave an original masterpiece -- The Betty and Crawford Rainwater Perdido River Nature Preserve now owned and managed by TNC.” added Keller. (www.nature.org)

The Perdido River Preserve is working hard to preserve these masterpieces—the original works of art from which Audubon painted the works in this exhibit. View many of Audubon's live versions here in your own backyard at the Preserve.


The PMA exhibition contains both original signed engravings and vibrant one-of-a-kind watercolor facsimiles. Because of their fragility and sensitivity to light, each watercolor can only be exhibited once every ten years. In addition, the exhibition will feature several original Havell and Bien edition engravings, as well as Alexander Wilson and Mark Catesby engravings.




Right: The New-York Historical Society Edition, circa 2006
Plate 26: Carolina Parrot
Below: The New-York Historical Society Edition, circa 2006
Plate 281: Great White Heron



Betty and Crawford Rainwater Perdido River Nature Preserve, base of cypress trees—on the Florida side of the Perdido River below I-10.

 Pensacola Museum of Art presents
John James Audubon Limited Editions
Exhibition and Sale of additional prints in conjunction with
Audubon: Birds of America
December 1-13, 2009



407 South Jefferson Street-Pensacola, FL 32502-(850) 432-6247
www.pensacolamuseumofart.org