THE HOUSE OF OWLS

TONY ANGELL
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Introduction

This new exhibition of owls comprises both low-relief carvings of ink on clayboard as well as sculptures in bronze and stone. The carvings demonstrate the deep understanding Angell has of his subjects. An understanding gained first hand from owls he observed, admired and depicted throughout his life. For twenty five years, Tony and his family lived in close company with Western screech owls during which time he developed a great respect and attachment to them and they became a major focus of his art and writing.

The sketches and notes he produced over these years and among those birds have led to the writing and illustration of his recently published book, The House of Owls. Ink on clayboard pieces in this exhibition were created for the book and many of those drawings were the foundation from which a new body of sculptures in bronze and stone were created. We are delighted to have them on display at Foster/White Gallery as part of an exhibition of the same name.

The ink on clayboard drawings you will see demonstrate how owls live and behave. In action in their natural habitat, the settings Angell has created or interpreted are magical and add to the sense of mystery which surrounds these creatures.

Angell’s sculptures here, as always, go after the personality of his owl friends. These are not rigid renderings designed merely to relay form or to document various species in a scientific manner. When experiencing these sculptures, one feels a genuine fondness for the individual birds which are being depicted. We get a sense of their characters: inquisitive, protective, sometimes caring and courting, sometimes fierce or stoic.

Cover page: Night, 2014, bronze, 17.75 x 10.5 x 10 inches
Owls at Roost, ink on clayboard, 20 x 12 inches

Grounded Owlet, ink on clayboard, 12.25 x 10 inches
Courtship, ink on clayboard, 9.75 x 12 inches

A Confrontation, ink on clayboard, 10 x 8 inches


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Owlets Viewing the World, ink on clayboard, 14.25 x 10 inches


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Protective Parent, ink on clayboard, 12 x 7.5 inches

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Snowy Owl over Slough, ink on clayboard, 6 x 8 inches
Gifting Owl – Courtship, ink on clayboard, 10 x 12 inches
Flicker at Nesting Cavity, ink on clayboard, 14 x 11 inches


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Ancient Forest Owl, ink on clayboard, 12 x 9 inches


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A Saw-Whet Owl in the Light and Darkness, ink on clayboard, 11 x 14 inches


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Artist and Owlet, ink on clayboard, 10 x 8 inches

Short-eared Owl, ink on clayboard, 6 x 8 inches
Night, ink on clayboard, 14 x 11 inches

Nest Defense, ink on clayboard, 14 x 11 inches
Among all the creatures with which we share the earth, owls are the most enigmatic. It is fair to say they have fascinated humankind since we were first capable of expressing awe and admiration. Indeed, among the earliest artistic depictions of life are images of owls, whether on cave walls or carved in bone or ivory. To some owls are emissaries from the spirit world while others consider their presence as indicators of the health and vitality of our natural world. Their images are emblazoned on coins and coats of arms. Throughout the world their calls are harbingers of events to come and metaphors for the dark mysterious night they occupy, of which we have little understanding.

Like my book, this exhibit is entitled The House of Owls. Over the years many of these species lived within my home while wild owls took up residence for several decades in a nesting box outside my bedroom window. Such intimate proximity allowed me to get to know these birds very well.

Possessing almost supernatural senses and breathtakingly beautiful form and plumage, owls have been and continue to be spirited subjects that stir my deepest artistic passions. This collection of sculpture and drawings represents a tangible tribute to what I feel and have witnessed in this lifetime with owls. My art has enhanced my understanding of these subjects but moreover it has allowed me to record and sustain some of the more memorable moments spent with them.

For example among the sculptures a bronze piece Night preserves the first moment I confronted the startlingly elegant form of the barn owl. The alabaster carving Awaiting the Night is my enduring memory of the young owls recently fledged from their nest outside my home and on alert for their parents to provide sustenance. Inquisitive Snowy Owl carved in Carrara marble is intended to preserve the gesture of a singularly lovely sentient being with which we share the earth.

Many of my drawings are intended to artistically reveal something about the subject that photography has yet to record. The compositions are conceived both from what I see and what I feel. The Grounded Owlet on the dark forest floor shows the vulnerability and the vitality of the subject. With Owls in Magnolia I hoped to convey the beauty of the subjects in their natural setting and the enduring strength of their pair bond. Owlets Viewing the World shows the open eyed awe that young owls feel when first encountering life outside the nesting box -- something akin to a human child’s sense of wonder.

Tony Angell
2015
Alert Saw-Whet, 2014, bronze, 14 x 7 x 5 inches

Elf Owl Pair, 2014, bronze, 9.5 x 8 x 6 inches


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Owlets Awaiting the Night, 2014, gray alabaster, 16 x 15 x 10.5 inches

Desert Owl, 2014, bronze, 12 x 7.25 x 7.5 inches

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Calling Forest Owl, 2014, bronze, 7.75 x 6 x 4.5 inches


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Diminutive Owl, 2011, bronze, 11 x 5.5 x 5 inches


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Eastern Screech Owl in Display, 2014, Colorado River sandstone, 11 x 5.5 x 6 inches

Owlet, 2014, nephrite and jade, 5 x 11 x 6 inches

Inquisitive Snowy Owl, 2014, Carrara marble, 14.5 x 13 x 12 inches


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Marsh Owl, 2005, bronze, 9 x 8 x 8 inches


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Night, 2014, bronze, 17.75 x 10.5 x 10 inches

Resting Screech Owl, 2012, bronze, 12 x 4.75 x 5 inches

Owl Icon, 2006, bronze, 6 x 5.5 x 4.5 inches


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TONY ANGELL

Education

1958-62 Bachelor of Arts, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
1963-66 Master of Arts Program, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Selected Exhibitions

2015 ‘The House of Owls,’ Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
2013 ‘Spirit Companions,’ Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
‘Responding to Nature in Form and Line,’ Robert Graves Gallery, Wenatchee, WA
2012 ‘Celebrating form: An Artist’s Response to His Life Amid Nature,’ Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
2011 ‘Conversations with Nature in Bronze and Stone,’ Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
2009 ‘Companions from Land and Sky,’ Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
‘Tony Angell: Spirits of Place,’ Museum of Northwest Art, La Conner, WA
2007 ‘Artists Honor Puget Soundscape,’ Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
‘Birds In Art,’ Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI
2006 ‘In Recognition of Victoria and Albert Award,’ Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
2005 ‘In the Company of Crows and Ravens,’ Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
‘Birds in Art,’ Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI
‘Wildlife Art for a New Century II,’ National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson, WY
2004 ‘Silver Anniversary Rendezvous 2004,’ Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK
‘Birds in Art,’ Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI
2003 ‘Birds in Art,’ Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI
‘Wildlife Art for a New Century I,’ National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson, WY
2002 ‘Birds in Art,’ Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI
‘Iridescent Light: Origins of Pacific Northwest Art,’ Museum of Northwest Art, LaConner, WA
‘The Frye at Fifty: Five Decades of Collecting,’ Frye Art Museum, Seattle, WA
‘Spirit Companions,’ Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
2001 ‘Master Artist Retrospective/Birds in Art,’ Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI
1999 ‘Images of Forest and Shore,’ Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
‘Earthscapes,’ Frye Art Museum, Seattle, WA
1998  ‘Natural Habitat,’ Spanierman Gallery, New York, NY
     ‘Distillations of Place,’ Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
     Prix de West Invitational, Oklahoma City, OK
     ‘Birds in Art,’ Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI
1997  ‘Great American Artists,’ Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, OH
1996  C.M. Russell Museum, Great Falls, MT
      National Academy of Design, New York City, NY
1994  ‘Community of Images,’ Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
     ‘Wildlife Art in America,’ James Ford Bell Museum, MN
1993  ‘Recent Work by Gallery Artists,’ Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
1992  ‘Birds In Art,’ National Touring Show of Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum,
      Wausau, WI
1991  ‘Drawing Show,’ Foster/White Gallery at Frederick & Nelson, Seattle, WA
      Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA, solo show
      National Academy of Western Artists, Oklahoma City, OK
1987  ‘Animals in Art,’ traveling show in United States,
      Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI
1986  ‘Retrospective,’ Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK
1985  ‘Birds In American Art,’ Cape Cod, MA
1980  Washington State Capitol Museum, Olympia, WA
1979  ‘Coastal Art Forms,’ Tacoma Art Museum, WA
1978  ‘Birds In American Art,’ Cape Cod, MA
1976  ‘Nature In Art,’ Tacoma Art Museum, WA
1975  ‘Animals In Art: An International and Historical Review,’ Royal Ontario
      Museum, Toronto, Canada
      ‘Tony Angell Drawings,’ James Ford Bell Museum, St. Paul, MN
1972  Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA
1971  Allied Arts/Richard White Gallery, Seattle, WA
1970  ‘Tony Angell, Drawings and Paintings,’ Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

Selected Public and Corporate Collections

Redmond City Hall, Redmond, WA
Bainbridge Island Public Library Garden Complex, Bainbridge Island, WA
Boeing, Seattle, WA
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
Frances Anderson Arts Center, Edmonds, WA
Frye Art Museum, Seattle, WA
Gilcrease Museum of Art, Tulsa, OK
Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI
Museum of Northwest Art, La Conner, WA
Seattle Aquarium, Seattle, WA
Seattle Public Schools Administration Center, Seattle, WA
Seattle Woodland Park Zoo/Educational Center, Seattle, WA
Selected Books Written and/or Illustrated by the Artist


Selected Awards

2014  The Puget Sound Keeper’s Alliance, Puget Sound Hero Award
2011  University of Washington Department of Communications Alumni Hall of Fame, Artist and Environmentalist
2001  Master Artist Award, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum
1994  The Virginia Merrill Bloedel Lecture Fellow
1989  American Association of University Presses Design Production Award, Sea Brothers: American Sea Fiction since Moby Dick
1986  Association of Graphic Design Award, ‘Blackbirds of the Americas’ Fifty Best Books Award, ‘Blackbirds of the Americas’ Governor’s Writer’s Day Award, ‘Blackbirds of the Americas’
1980  Silver medal, International Book Design Competition, Leipzig, Austria, ‘Ravens, Crows, Magpies and Jays’
1974  Governor’s Writer’s Day Award, ‘Owls’
1973  Governor’s Writer’s Day Award, ‘Birds of Prey in the Pacific Northwest Slope’
Selected Books, Articles, and Catalogues about the Artist

2015   Todd Wilkinson, ‘Through Wild Rock,’ Western Art and Architecture, April
       Nancy Worssam, “Of a Feather’: Northwest Artists’ Visions Take Flight,”
       The Seattle Times, March 6
2012   James Gorman, ‘The Games Crows Play, and Other Winged Tales,’
       The New York Times, June 11
2007   Mary Ann Gwinn, ‘Crows and Ravens’: Fear and Fascination, Evermore,”
       The Seattle Times, October 23
2000   Richard Seven, ‘A Life In Stone,’ Seattle Sunday Times Magazine, December
1996   Todd Wilkenson, ‘Summoning Spirits from Stone,’ Seattle Magazine, November
1987   ‘Sculptor: Tony Angell,’ KCTS Channel 9 special program, fall, TV show
       ‘Raven Into Flight,’ Seattle Sunday Times, May 21
1969   ‘Tony Angell: Learning is an Experience,’ Seattle Times Magazine, November

Selected Films

1997   ‘Beyond Walls/Across Disciplines,’ Pew Trust, content advisor
1985   ‘Spirits of the Dune: Flocks Across The Sky,’ writer and narrator
1976   ‘Winter is Life,’ writer and director
1973   ‘Our Northwest Legacy,’ writer and director

Complete Resume Available Upon Request