

A large, spreading acacia tree with a thick, gnarled trunk and dense green foliage dominates the center of the image. The tree is set in a savanna landscape with a herd of dark buffalo grazing in the foreground. In the background, several giraffes are visible, along with white birds flying in the sky. The overall scene is bright and clear under a blue sky.

NATURE OF THE BEAST

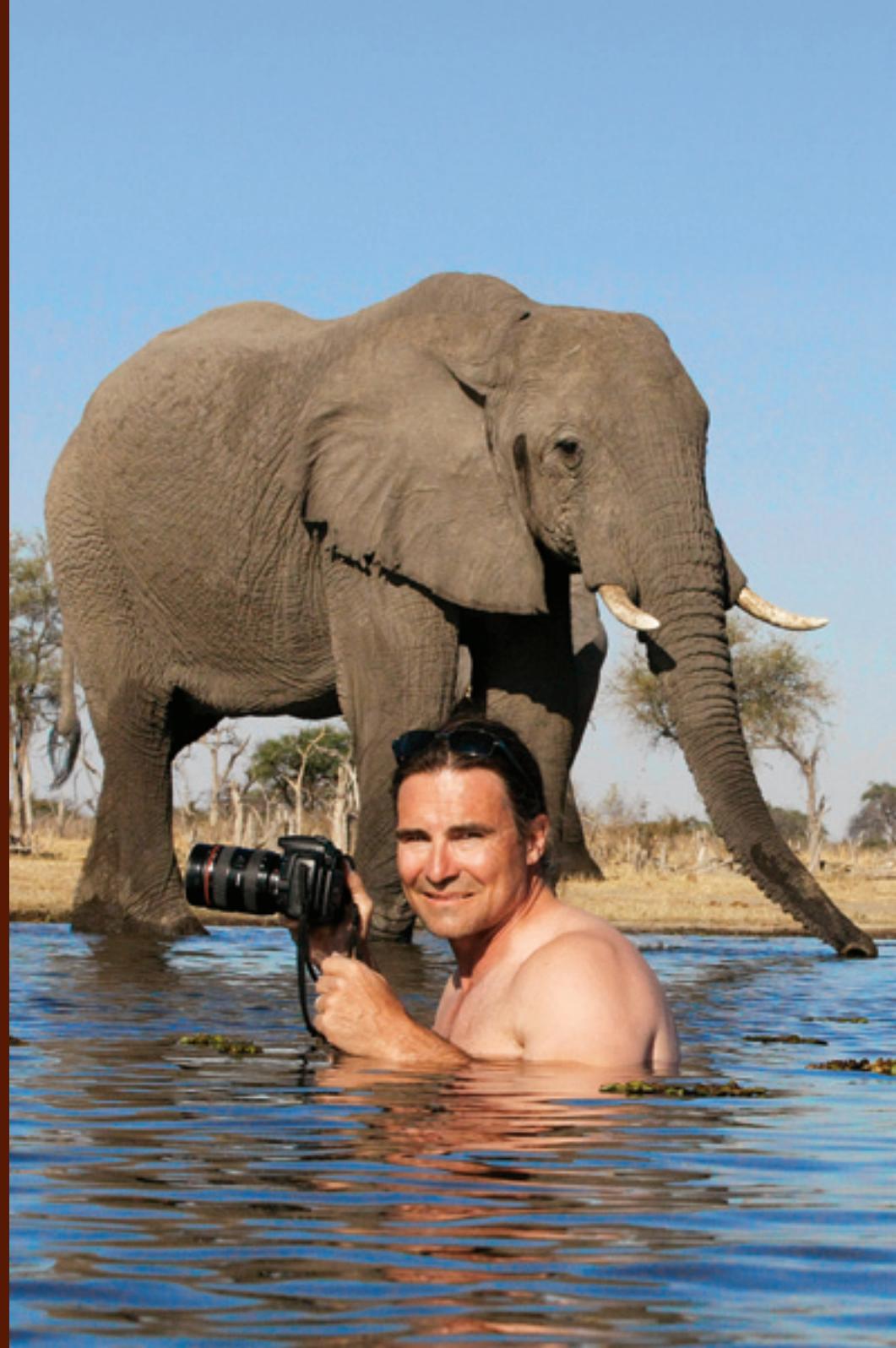
Works by John Banovich

The Wildlife Experience | May 22–July 25, 2010 • The Museum of the Southwest | August 19–October 19, 2010

"I BELIEVE ALL CREATURES are born with certain beast qualities needed to survive. Our modern human existence often dilutes these original instincts. If we lose them, we lose the beast within ourselves. The beast is about survivability, about sharpened instincts, about understanding the conditions around us. The beast is the beating heart of what it means to be alive.

The pure essence of the beast represents millions of years of evolution witnessed instantly the moment you look into their eyes. As you explore the world of the beast, it is inevitable that at some point you will come face to face with yourself. The journey into the wilderness reveals, through its complicated web, the innate sense we are all connected and that is simply **THE NATURE OF THE BEAST."**

John Banovich
Artist / Conservationist



BANOVICH

NATURE OF THE BEAST

Works by John Banovich



The Wildlife Experience May 22–July 25, 2010

“Nature of the Beast” is a compelling exhibition that captures the spirit of wildlife and the serenity of the environments in which those animals live. Artist John Banovich masterfully introduces viewers to unique habitats and offers a glimpse into the secrets of creatures from around the world.

Banovich has rescued moments from the passing of time that inspire thought and foster respect for wild places. Through “Nature of the Beast,” Banovich whisks his audience from everyday life and into an exploration of the natural world. From Africa’s savannas, to North America’s mountains, to Southeast Asia’s forests, the images, brimming with activity, immediately captivate viewers and then engage their imaginations, heightening their awareness of wildlife for years to come.

I have enjoyed John’s work for many years, and am always compelled by the passion that lives within his images. Each piece seems to tell a story, without seeming to “try” to tell a story. As I stand before one of my favorite works, “The Pod,” I can’t help but hear the immense noise of the beasts before me, brought to life in my mind and therefore in my heart. That kind of connection makes “Nature of the Beast” unforgettable.

Gino Greco
President & CEO
The Wildlife Experience



MUSEUM OF THE SOUTHWEST

The Museum of the Southwest August 19–October 19, 2010

John Banovich joins the ranks of artists who, through their desire to understand the fascinating world of animals, have been compelled to capture their likeness through personal artistic expression. From the earliest simple, yet powerful, cave paintings of horses from Lascaux, France, to the highly detailed watercolor of a young hare by Renaissance master Albrecht Durer—from John James Audubon’s “Nine-banded Armadillo” to the shocking “Tiger Shark” sculpted by contemporary artist Damien Hirst—animals continue to serve as worthy subjects for creative departure.

Largely ignored as a subject throughout most of art history, wildlife art began to reemerge as society began the scientific study and cataloguing of nature in the late-17th century to the mid-19th century. Audubon captured wild birds and mammals of North America and usually sketched from dead specimens reanimated on forms. In France, Maria Rosa Bonheur quickly gained popularity and fame for her romantic, painterly style of animal realism which was less rigid than Audubon. Significantly, both Audubon and Bonheur are represented in the collection of the Museum of the Southwest.

Among today’s genre of wildlife artists, John Banovich is regarded as one of the best. Following in the tradition of the late-19th and early-20th century conservationist and wildlife artist Carl Rungius, Banovich was similarly raised as a sportsman and wildlife enthusiast. Like Rungius, his experiences of hunting and exploration gave him direct access to wildlife and an intimate understanding of animal anatomy which found full expression in his art. To view a painting by John Banovich is to view the rich history of “animals in art” thoroughly assimilated and reapplied through his personal lens. His style and approach are well-grounded in the realist tradition, demonstrating great technical skill and creative vision, compelling the viewer to see the beauty, uniqueness, and power of wildlife together with the elements of compassion and respect. “Nature of the Beast” provides the public with the rare opportunity to view a selection of Banovich’s paintings from mostly private collections assembled together for the first time. As such, they provide insight into the depth and breadth of the artist’s prolific oeuvre.

Thomas W. Jones
Executive Director
Museum of the Southwest



PEACEABLE KINGDOM

2005

26 x 42, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Texas

East Africa possesses one of the last great wildlife concentrations on earth. In the Serengeti region, over one-and-a-half million wildebeest migrate north to the Masai Mara in Kenya and back again—in pursuit of rich nutritious grass following the rains. Predators, especially lions, benefit during this time as the number of prey increases ten-fold. Wildebeest can tell if the lions are in hunting mode and behave accordingly, often venturing very close during the day. But when the sun sets, the lions use the cloak of darkness to resume stalking the great herds.



EXPLOSION

2001

44 x 62, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Texas

If lions and crocodiles considered you part of the lunch menu, you would be skittish approaching a waterhole. The slightest movement can trigger chaos. The dust that a big zebra herd produces when charging to and from the water's edge looms like the after-haze of a distant explosion. Although I love creating works with many animals in them, I had never painted a more complicated piece. Stripes tended to jump from one zebra to another—keeping them on the right animal took all my focus. For weeks, zebra stripes covered everything in my dreams.



FLEEING RAWANDA

2002

35 x 53, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Virginia

Africa has two distinct types of gorillas—eastern and western—with each containing several subspecies. The Mountain is a type of eastern gorilla and is the largest of the subspecies. Found in the war-torn region of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Rwanda, its numbers hover around 700 and none are found in captivity. One dominant silverback led this troupe of several adult females, some immature young males and females, and three babies. I painted them as they crossed a river, choosing their steps carefully to avoid the deeper water. Notice that they are going from a dark area on the right to the lighter side of the river. This signified leaving the darkness of war for a new territory—and the hope of a brighter tomorrow.

EXHIBITION

Society of Animal Artists: "Art and the Animal Tour," 2003, The Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum, Oradell, NJ. National Tour: The Wildlife Experience, Parker, CO; West Valley Art Museum, Surprise, AZ; Vero Beach Museum of Art, Vero Beach, FL; New Visions Gallery, Marshfield, WI; Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Cleveland, OH.

The Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum: "One Man Exhibition," 2001, Oradell, NJ.



BUFFALO SOLDIERS

2008

44 x 66, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Arizona

During the expansion of the American West, one group stood out for their bravery and patriotism—The Buffalo Soldiers. During the Indian wars, Native Americans used the name to describe the uncompromising spirit and courage of these black warriors. African Americans have fought in all of our military engagements, but their greatest contribution came during the Civil War. Nearly 200,000 Buffalo Soldiers served the Union side. Their sacrifices and bravery were unparalleled. The African buffalo shares this vigilant reputation. Their stoic resolve and unwavering constitution mirror these brave and honorable men.



GATHERING OF THE HERD

2003

10 x 32, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Texas

One of my favorite places is the Kwai River in Botswana's Okavango Delta. It is one of Africa's best locations to experience large concentrations of African elephants interacting the same way they have for millions of years. Excitement rises palpably as closely related family units gather at the cool water's edge. Although elephants are the largest land mammals on earth, a sizeable herd can move silently through a forest thanks to the large fatty pads on the soles of their feet.

EXHIBITION

Society of Animal Artists: "Art and the Animal Tour," 2004, The Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum, Oradell, NJ.



WATCHING YOU, WATCHING ME

2001

22 x 25, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Tennessee

We share 98% of our DNA with the Mountain gorilla and when we look deep into their eyes, we may very well come face to face with ourselves. As this female intently watched me, watching her, I realized her eyes were the windows to our past and the prophecy of our future.



HUNTER BY THE MOON

2007

11 x 18, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Texas

Artists capture light. Using archaic tools, values and hues, we try to trick the eye into seeing three dimensions in two. When painting a night sky, all the colors and values are condensed, challenging the painter to crunch everything into a very narrow depth of field, giving the sense that you can reach into the painting. This work was my first attempt to capture a night scene. Though I did not see a leopard in the large acacia that night, a spotted cat must have used that perfect perch at some point to survey the African night below.



NARROW CROSSING

2008

12 x 46, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Texas

I have visited Kenya's Masai Mara game reserve many times. My friend, Alex Walker, runs one of East Africa's finest camps. He named it, "Serian," which means "peaceful place" in the local Maa language. Alex could not have picked a more fitting name. This actual crossing point is close to his camp on the Mara River. Even though the wildebeest chose this shallow and narrow crossing, they leapt from the bank as if they believed it was 30-feet deep. The Egyptian geese on the shore hardly gave them a glance. Apparently, they were not impressed



UNITED WE STAND

2005

20 x 75, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Texas

I carried this title in my mind for over ten years before finding this herd poised under a solitary tree filled with buffalo-weaver nests. The collective will of individuals bound together creates an unbreakable force. I enjoyed the challenge of capturing each buffalo's unique personality as it stood shoulder-to-shoulder to form a defensive wall that seems to go on forever. This moment symbolized the magic of Africa and is one that I will never forget.



MANEATERS OF TSAVO

2002

50 x 80, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Indiana

It seems hard to believe that these two lions killed and devoured, in a most demonic manner, nearly one hundred and forty people in East Africa, bringing a complete halt to the construction of the British railway. For nearly a year the pair terrorized Tsavo and become a major concern for the British Prime Minister. These infamous lions achieved legendary status and caused President Theodore Roosevelt to comment, "I think that the incident of the Uganda man-eating lions... is the most remarkable account of which we have any record."

EXHIBITION

The Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum: "One Man Exhibition," 2001, Oradell, N.J.



A GIANT AMONG GIANTS

2007

64 x 84, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Texas

With a circumference of 157 feet, this giant baobab on the Mokore Ranch in Zimbabwe's Save Conservancy is arguably Africa's largest tree. The "upside-down tree" gets its nickname from an Arabian legend claiming that after God placed it on earth, the Devil pulled it out and planted it upside down.

EXHIBITION

Society of Animal Artists: "Art and the Animal Tour," 2007, The Wildlife Experience, Parker, CO.



PARTNERS

2007

32 x 50, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Arizona

There is no greater bond in the big cat world than between pride males. Male lions often start their lives as littermates. These two brothers will grow up together and leave the family pride together. If they successfully conquer all the threats facing a lion in the wild, the day will finally come when they will rule over a territory and have a pride of their own. Like all brothers, they will fight over the small stuff, but reconcile their differences fairly quickly. One day, as new heirs defending their own pride, they will face enormous challenges, but because of their deep connection, they will go to war for each other—defining what the word “partners” truly means.



WAITING FOR NIGHTFALL II
2009

39 x 62, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

When the great horned owl's hoot pierces the early morning outside my window in Montana, the anticipation of the new day's possibilities is at its peak. I always search the Rocky Mountain Douglas fir trees for this large owl on the hike up to my studio—hoping for a glimpse of its wise and dignified face. During the day, I listen for magpies as they harass owls, screaming at them with their raucous calls as if they are having a bitter one-sided argument. This large fir tree, standing tall upon a slope with a winter frost below, made for a complicated, but compelling blend of branches and snow.

EXHIBITION

National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum: "Prix de West," 2009, Oklahoma City, OK.



MOUNTAIN NYALA AND BAMBOO

2007

16 x 20, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Colorado

Ascending by horseback to our high-mountain camp in Ethiopia's Bale Mountains, we found this kosso and bamboo forest—perfect cover for the shy mountain nyala. Often a painting is inspired by light, and the desire to capture its pure essence. When you see one of these spiral-horned bulls ghost through the shefflera, it is like a dream.



RIVER HORSE

2007

20 x 22, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Colorado

Hippos are among the largest herbivores on earth, with large bulls reaching over three tons. It is ironic that one of the most dangerous animals in Africa lives most of its life in water, or close to shore eating only grass and plants. Hippos love water, which gives rise to the Greek nickname, "River Horse." Usually this is how you see them, only the head peering above the water, concealing the massive but buoyant torso below the water's surface, safe from the harsh rays of the African sun. Though graceful swimmers, these behemoths often just stand or simply walk on river bottoms or lake beds. Their eyes and nostrils are high on top of their heads, which allows them to see and breath when nearly submersed.



THE POD

2003

30 x 40, Oil on Linen
The Wildlife Experience
Colorado

Often, ideas come to me in the field after watching a particular animal. But sometimes my best works are inspired by a compelling composition, regardless of the subject. Such is the case with “The Pod.” This work uses what I call “simple complexity”—large, wet, textured bodies adorned with small yellow-billed woodpeckers, juxtaposed with smooth, subtle ripples created by the shifting and submersing bodies in the river.



BAHATI KWA UWINDA

2005

48 x 74, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Nevada

“Bahati Kwa Uwinda” is Swahili for “lucky hunting.” Even though this warthog was small prey for two adult lions and three cubs, it was probably an important hunting lesson for the cubs. Before long, they will be capable of capturing small prey on their own. As with most kills in East Africa, it does not take long for scavengers to show up, hoping to steal a tidbit for themselves. Regardless of the setting, I love painting lions. I have always said that if I had one day left, there would most likely be a lion on my easel.



WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAM

2007

100 x 64, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
South Dakota

Though buffalo remain numerous in much of Africa, it is rare to see so many that they reach beyond vision. Such herds used to be common, but today with nearly one billion people on the continent, animals have fewer places to live. When a herd in the thousands rumbles by, everything notices. I often use trees as a focal point. So much happens around trees. In the branches above, on the ground below—trees provide so much for so many. Each one is an original. They are God's sculptures.



SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER US

2005

48 x 48, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Colorado

Late in the fall, pregnant polar bears leave the ice to dig maternity dens in the snow. Mothers give birth between late November and early January and they do not return to the ice with their offspring until March or April. Two cubs are most common, but occasionally three are born. The cubs emerge from the den when temperatures start to warm—although it may still be well below zero. They stay near the den for approximately two weeks before they start to travel with mom and learn from her on the ice for the next two-and-a-half years.



RIVER DANCE

2001

8 x 10, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Texas

When the rains from the hills in Angola finally arrive in the Kalahari Desert in Botswana, it is as if the whole animal kingdom celebrates. This breeding herd of elephants stomped their way upstream drinking, splashing and vocalizing to one another as if celebrating something big. With what seemed to be a choreographed step, they reminded me of the Irish dance group and their famous performance of “River Dance.”

EXHIBITION

Society of Animal Artists: “Art and the Animal Tour,” 2001, West Valley Art Museum, Surprise, AZ. National Tour: The William S. Fairfield Public Gallery, Sturgeon Bay, WI; Washington Pavilion of Arts and Science Visual Arts Center, Sioux Falls, SD; Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, Norman, OK; Louisiana Arts and Science Center, Baton Rouge, LA.



END OF DAYS

2007

42 x 60, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

Elephants live nearly as long as humans and old bulls often spend their twilight years alone, usually close to water. I painted this old guy small and insignificant in front of a glorious sunset. During his life, he has seen darkest Africa and he has seen an Africa bright with hope.



INSIDE THE RED ZONE

2005

40 x 50, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

Five-hundred pounds of raging dynamite! When a male lion explodes from the bush in a fiery rage straight at you—every cell in your body seems to shudder in fear. I experienced this adrenaline rush in Botswana as a large male was not pleased with my interest in watching his courtship ritual. After five fierce charges where the beast halted just a few feet from my vehicle door, I finally got the hint that if I continued to spy on him and his gal, it would not turn out well for me.



THREE BULLS

1997

18 x 11, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

Watching wildlife from the edge of a waterhole in Namibia inspired this painting. During different times of the day, many species would arrive to taste the nourishing water. My favorite was always the kudu. Tension gripped the air as they approached the water's edge, cautiously looking for possible predators lurking nearby. In a perfect moment, two of the three bulls lowered their mighty heads, crowned with the trophy spirals of kudu in their prime. An instant later, they vanished like apparitions into the Mopani forest.



SEPARATED AND SURROUNDED

2007

30 x 50, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

Attacking a herd of Cape buffalo in broad daylight demands caution. Skilled opportunists, the lions singled out this old bull because his gait exposed an injured rear right leg. Once they separate and surround him, he has little chance to survive. Each lion has the strength to topple this frenzied bull, but they just keep at him, slowly wearing him down, until they can more easily knock him off his feet. Then they will clamp their teeth into his throat and administer the Kiss of Death to cut off his airway and starve his body of oxygen. I placed this dramatic scene at the base of a large baobab tree to represent the dichotomy of survival—the huge, healthy “tree of life” watching over another life ending below.



SLENDER MONGOOSE

2008

9 x 12, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

This yellow mongoose found himself a perfect den in the base of an old fig tree stump. I featured him as if he was part of the background—silent, passive, and gazing into the distance, contemplating something I wish I could see. The challenge of recreating the soft light and shadows bouncing off the long grass and dead wood attracted me to this scene like a salmon to its spawning gravel.



STANDOFF BENEATH THE BOSCIA

2008

24 x 36, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

Do you feel lucky? This “dagga boy”—an old bull past his breeding prime that has been cast from the herd—was limping when he ran into a pride of twenty-three lions. Though they had killed a buffalo a few days before, these five could not resist the wounded bull. When they surrounded him, his fellow Cape crusaders bailed—every “m’bogo” for himself. The lions darted in, targeting his hindquarters. If they could knock him down, he would be done for. Several jumped on his back, digging their claws and teeth into his flesh. But this old warrior refused to give up. He kept his feet under him and lived to fight another day.



“Let’s go in,” Mike said.
In the water?
With the elephants?
What a crazy idea.
Why not?
*How many people get to
swim with elephants?*

SWIMMING WITH ELEPHANTS

2008

40 x 48, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

In September 2008, while researching elephant families for a special commission, I had the privilege of seeing elephants from a totally unique viewpoint. My guide and friend, Mike Penman, from Animal Planet’s *Mad Mike and Mark* show, suggested we go right in the hippo- and croc-infested water to get close to the bulls. Every year when the floods arrive from the mountains of Angola to the heart of the Kalahari, the Kwai River becomes an oasis filled with elephant herds. Now we were among them and a dozen patriarchs milled about, drinking and wading right next to us, perfectly relaxed. Swirling water with their trunks, they swung these unique nasal appendages to their mouths and sprayed it in. Looking into the mouths of wild elephants, I realized we were no longer intruders. They had accepted these two long-haired dudes as harmless—or they thought we were small, white hippos. Either way, it was fantastic moment as we swam with wild elephants.



LORDS OF THE ARCTIC

2005

11 x 14, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

Polar bears are the largest members of the bear family—males weigh between 500 to 900 pounds, nearly double the weight of females. The heaviest polar bear on record was a 2200-pound brute. Polar bears and brown bears are closely related, having diverged less than 300,000 years ago. In fact, a number of zoos have records of interbreeding between the two species and a hunter harvested a wild hybrid in 2006.

EXHIBITIONS

Society of Animal Artists: "Art and the Animal Tour," 2005, Nevada State Museum, Carson City, NV. National Tour: The Wildlife Experience, Parker, CO; West Valley Art Museum, Surprise, AZ; Muscarelle Museum of Art, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA; Stifel Fine Arts Center, Oglebay Institute, Wheeling, WV; Neville Public Museum, Green Bay, WI.



STORM WATCHERS

2007

44 x 66, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

Over the course of several days in Kenya's Masai Mara, we watched these two cubs hone their skills chasing and tackling each other. Within two years, they will hunt on their own. If they have not learned enough to make a kill, they will not survive. Their mother uses high ground to watch for prey or danger—or simply to admire the coming storm. On several occasions, she leapt onto the hood and roof of our vehicle in a single step to better survey the plain. What a view!



THE AGONY OF DEFEAT

2007

24 x 36, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

The lion kingdom is filled with profound victories and agonizing defeats. This old, black-maned lion has fought viciously with a challenger. Lying, mortally wounded, in a fresh pool of blood, life will soon fade from his body. Carrying his own battle wounds, the victor limps away, having won the right to his territory once again.



VULTURE'S VIEW

2005

20 x 48, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

I often wondered how a bird saw the earth's creatures. While filming a television show for WPBS, I had the opportunity to find out. Flying over the Serengeti in a leopard-painted Twin Star helicopter, we came upon a herd of Cape buffalo thundering across the savanna. With the lead animals in clear view, the trailing herd began to disappear in a rising dust cloud. A vulture, anticipating the outcome of a lion hunt, would see these massive beasts in the same way.

EXHIBITION

Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum: "Birds in Art," 2006, Wausau, WI.



ROOF OF THE WORLD

2009

24 x 36, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

A snow leopard emerges from the shadows and uses the setting sun to conceal his movements. He prefers to hunt from above and, if successful, he will stay near his kill for three or four days until the carcass is bare. Snow leopards live in some of the most inhospitable terrain on the planet. Short powerful limbs, long, heavy tails for balance, and thick, warm coats enable them to navigate this rugged environment where they live at elevations as high as eighteen-thousand feet. Only active from dusk until dawn, these shy, solitary creatures sport spotted gray fur that blends perfectly with their surroundings. They mark their territory with scrapes and by urinating against rock walls and overhangs. Like all the great cats, snow leopards are impressive hunters, preying on markhor, ibex, blue sheep, marmots, hares, game birds and occasionally livestock. With a population estimated between three and seven thousand, they are one of the rarest cats on earth.



PALINDABA
2003

30 x 52, Oil on Linen
The Wildlife Experience
Colorado

“Palindaba” is a Swahili word meaning “a place of great gathering.” This scene took place in Ngorongoro Crater at Lake Magadi. Many times during the year, the soda lake attracts thousands of flamingos and the fresh-water inlet attracts big herds of wildebeest, zebra, and sometimes hippos, making it a popular drinking area. The kaleidoscope of white and pink flamingos made for a perfect backdrop for the interaction of dark wildebeests and the striped torsos of zebras.

EXHIBITION

Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum: “Birds In Art,” 2004. Tour Venues: James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, MN; Sonora Desert Museum, Tucson, AZ; Wendall Gilley Museum, Southwest Harbor, ME.



COOL DREAMS

2003

28 x 42, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Texas

You can't get much more deceptively peaceful than a sleeping Amur tiger. On the prowl, the world's largest cat is one of the earth's most ferocious hunters. Scientists with the Wildlife Conservation Society documented a large male fitted with a radio collar as he systematically stalked, killed and ate five sow grizzly bears. One of the sows even had two cubs, making her even more wary and protective—but she was no match for the tiger. The Amur's power, strength and ferocity are unparalleled among land predators.



WALKING THE EDGE

2007

28 x 42, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Texas

Hudson Bay's polar bears spend winter on the ice. In spring and summer, when the ice melts, they travel along the western coast, moving north past Churchill. Not nearly as comfortable hunting on land as grizzlies are, polar bears depend on fat stores to get them through the summer until the ice returns in October. In recent years, the ice has been taking longer to form and breaking up earlier, limiting their ability to store fat properly. If this continues, it will spell disaster for their future.



MONTANA GOLD

2007

30 x 48, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

During high school, we spent each fall roaming the hills and valleys hunting for big whitetails. Most days we dragged ourselves home with an unfilled tag and the satisfying knowledge we'd been beaten, once again, by a creature so in tune with its surroundings that it can seemingly melt into the landscape. When you do catch sight of a Montana buck in autumn's soft colors, it is pure gold.



TRACKING THE SIKA

2010

18 x 24, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

Pelage colors differ for tigers depending on their geographic location. A tiger living in the boreal forests of Eastern Russia—where snow blankets the earth—will have a lighter-colored coat than a tiger living in the dense, tropical forests of south India. Unlike domestic house cats, tigers will seek out lakes, ponds, a beach on the sea or, in this case, a riverbed. These large cats hunt near bodies of water where prey animals like the sika deer congregate to forage and drink. I first visited these ancient forests in 2002 and had the good fortune to see four tigers in the wild. The *Banovich Wildscapes Foundation* collaborated with the *Wildlife Conservation Society* to launch the “Khunta Mi Initiative—Conserving the Amur” to bring economic incentives to local communities so they can better live side-by-side with the Siberian (Amur) tiger.



ODU BULU

2007

44 x 66, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Montana

Ethiopia has fostered the survival of many species no longer found elsewhere in Africa. It has more endemic species of flora and fauna than any other country in Africa's mainland. During our honeymoon, my wife, Amy, and I traveled into the Bale Mountains in Ethiopia to search for one of the most elusive antelope in Africa. One day while riding horses, we climbed high into the mountains to a secretive place called "Odu Bulu." Unique kosso trees lined the mountains, their yellow and red flower pods coloring beautiful forested slopes. Then, on the second day, as we topped a ridge, there it was: the magnificent mountain nyala. I painted this bull and his two cows at the base of a large kosso tree filled with dark, round, honey traps placed there by Oromo beekeepers.



HEADING FOR DEEP WATER

1996

24 x 12, Oil on Linen
Private Collection
Texas

Because of their elongated hooves, red lechwe love the reeds and soft ground of the marshes. When alarmed, they glide through unstable shallows toward deep water—toward freedom. To research lechwe, I waded into the thick, mucky swamps of Zambia’s Kafuwe flats, trying not to think about snakes or crocodiles or whatever else might be lurking beneath the surface. One herd ran by just the way I hoped they would. The splashing water and blacksmith plovers—arranged like musical notes rising to a dramatic crescendo—together with the position of each lechwe give the painting a harmonious sense of motion.

EXHIBITION

Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum: “Birds in Art,” 1997, Wausau, WI. Tour Venues: Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences, Peoria, IL; Michelson Museum of Art, Marshall, TX.

The Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum: “One Man Exhibition,” 2001, Oradell, NJ.



ABOUT JOHN BANOVIK

JOHN BANOVIK is among the world's most renowned wildlife artists. His original paintings are owned and exhibited by noteworthy organizations and museums across the globe. He serves on the boards of the Society of Animal Artists and the Craighead Environmental Research Institute. His life and work have been featured in countless international publications, including Africa Geographic, Wildlife Art, Big Sky Journal, Western Art & Architecture, the Artist's Magazine, and many others, as well as on various television programs aired on the Outdoor Channel, Entertainment Tonight, Versus and PBS. Through his art and the Banovich Wildscapes Foundation, he has raised millions of dollars for conservation and humanitarian causes. At 46 years of age, Banovich continues to explore and evolve as an artist, pursuing a deep-seated desire to preserve wild species around the world and, through his paintings, freeze them forever in time. When not in India following the tracks of tigers or in Africa searching for the next wildlife encounter, he can be found painting in his studios in Livingston, Montana, and Carnation, Washington, where he lives with his wife, Amy.

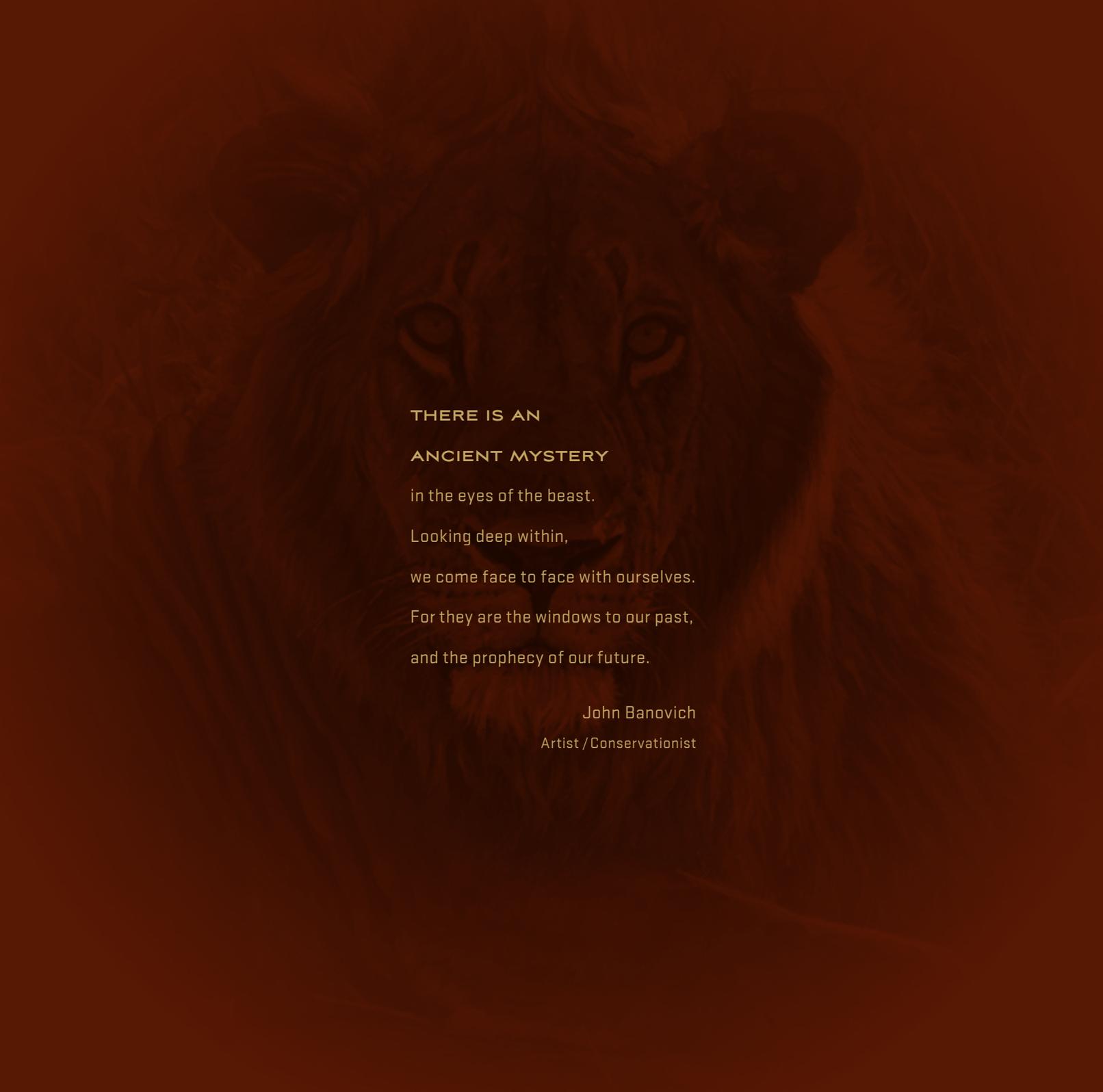


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in the eyes of the beast.

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