

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 7, 2024

**THE WELLIN MUSEUM OF ART AT HAMILTON COLLEGE  
WILL PRESENT THE SURVEY EXHIBITION *MENAGERIE: ANIMALS IN ART FROM THE  
WELLIN MUSEUM* FROM SEPTEMBER 7, 2024 THROUGH JUNE 8, 2025**



Julie Buffalohead. *Fly Catcher*, 2023. Oil on canvas, 32 × 64 × 3 in. (81.3 × 162.6 × 7.6 cm). Courtesy of the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College, Clinton, NY. Photo by Rik Sferra.

**Clinton, NY**—The Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College will present the exhibition [\*Menagerie: Animals in Art from the Wellin Museum\*](#) from September 7, 2024, through June 8, 2025. A large survey showcasing hundreds of artworks and artifacts drawn from the museum’s collection, *Menagerie* explores how humans have employed animal iconography across all areas of cultural production, from the ancient world to the present day. The exhibition includes works that engage with animal imagery for symbolic, cultural, ceremonial, and religious purposes; as decorative motifs; and to comment—often satirically—upon human relations and events.

Images of insects, fish, birds, and mammals operate as symbols and subjects—from their use as signifiers in cultural and religious contexts, to the documentation of creatures for study or entertainment. Representations of animals have been used to project a sense of power, embody certain virtues or vices, and for decoration, among other purposes. In the exhibition, as in nature, some animals may be difficult to spot, while others exist only in myth and legend.

Explains the Wellin Museum’s Collections Curator Elizabeth Shannon, PhD, “The persistent presence of creatures in art throughout time and across cultures reflects the diverse roles that wild and domesticated animals play in our lives. A dog might be a dangerous threat, a symbol of protection, or a beloved family member, while an insect in its natural habitat may be perceived as a pest if humans encroach on its environment.”

The exhibition also draws attention to the scope of the Wellin’s collection. Selections include objects from ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome; Mesoamerican and Andean artifacts; artworks from Medieval, Renaissance, and 19th century Europe; prints, drawings, and textiles from East Asia; Persian illuminated manuscripts; and global modern and contemporary art.

Works by such contemporary artists as **Julie Buffalohead, Asad Faulwell, Diego Romero, Ibrahim Said, Shahzia Sikander, and Celia Vasquez Yui**, and such 18th- and 19th-century artists as **Francisco de Goya and Eadweard Muybridge** are presented in the exhibition as ways to explore and question how animals have been seen and depicted by humans throughout time.

Other artists featured in the exhibition include **Heinrich Aldegrever, Karel Appel, Thomas Hart Benton, Félix Bracquemond, William Brice, Flora Winegar Brigham, Honoré Daumier, Dorothy Dehner, Thornton Dial, Albrecht Dürer, Stefano della Bella, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Giorgio Ghisi, Henry Horenstein, Walter Iooss, Yun-Fei Ji, George Luks, Danny Lyon, Édouard Manet, Thomas Nast, William Nicholson, Sénèque Obin, Ohara Koson, William C. Palmer, Georg Pencz, Patricia Potter, Dorothy Shakespear, Calista M. Sherman, Otto Soglow, Toyen, Utagawa Kuniyoshi, Walter Williams, and Craig Zammiello.**

*Menagerie* encourages us to consider the scope, meaning, and value of our interactions with animals, and, most importantly, to recognize our implicit interdependence. While the exhibition primarily focuses on nonhuman creatures, every object on view is the result of human creative effort and the depiction of each animal is filtered through its maker’s consciousness.

The objects in *Menagerie* reveal the complex, and sometimes volatile, interconnection between animals and humans. Moreover, some of these artworks illustrate the considerable stress humans have placed on our shared ecosystem. In examining the enduring bond between people and animals, *Menagerie* not only provides an avenue for imagining a sustainable future, but one in which humans and the natural world might find balance.

### **Organization**

*Menagerie: Animals in Art from the Wellin Museum* is curated by the Wellin Museum’s Collections Curator Elizabeth Shannon, PhD.

### **WellinWorks**

WellinWorks is an interactive environment designed to inspire creativity within the museum. This iteration of WellinWorks was prompted by an aspirational question that emerged during the development of the *Menagerie* exhibition: When you leave the museum, will you look at the world in a different way than when you entered?

Designed by Hamilton students and Wellin staff to consider the many ways that humans, animals, and the natural world interact, the space provides opportunities for hands-on artmaking and tools to foster contemplation. A wildlife display board tracks local sightings of animals that live in our region. Areas for reflection on the cultural and symbolic meanings of animals spark dialogue around human relationships with animals. The adaptable design of WellinWorks allows for planned or impromptu engagements in the

space. Also on view is a video illuminating how Hamilton faculty engage with and enrich our knowledge of objects in the museum's collection.

A nontraditional space for engagement, discussion, and learning, WellinWorks serves as a platform for educational and imaginative activities and aims to expand upon the community potential within the museum. WellinWorks was designed in collaboration with Dana Goettler '24, Nana Hayrumyan '27, Bella Nadeau '25, Kazi Nawar '27, Greg Parizhsky '26, Jacob Piazza '24, Sydney Piccoli '26, Zoe Reinert '24, Lily Watts '26, and Chenyue Yang '25.

## **Programming**

### **Friday, September 6, 1:00 p.m.**

Virtual Tour of *Menagerie: Animals in Art from the Wellin Museum*

Exhibition Curator Elizabeth Shannon will lead a virtual preview of the exhibition on Facebook Live. More information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/732832665704810/?ref=newsfeed>

### **Saturday, September 7, 4:00–6:00 p.m.**

Opening Reception for *Menagerie: Animals in Art from the Wellin Museum*

Join us for an in-person celebration at the Wellin Museum.

### **Wednesday, September 18, 4:30 p.m.**

Artists in Conversation: Alexa Hatanaka

For this in-person gallery talk, artist Alexa Hatanaka will discuss her work on view in the exhibition *Menagerie: Animals in Art from the Wellin Museum*.

## **Support**

The Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art's programs are made possible, in part, with support from the Daniel W. Dietrich '64 Arts Museum Programming Fund; the Johnson-Pote Museum Director Fund; the John B. Root '44 Exhibition Fund; the Edward W. and Grace C. Root Endowment Fund; and the William G. Roehrick '34 Lecture Fund.

## **About the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art**

A teaching museum on the campus of Hamilton College in Clinton, NY, the Wellin invites visitors to discover the arts and form unexpected connections through groundbreaking exhibitions, a globally representative collection, and engaging programming. The Wellin Museum opened in 2012 with Tracy L. Adler as its founding director. Its 30,537-square-foot building was designed by Machado Silvetti and features a 27-foot-high visible archive, over 5,000 square feet of exhibition space, and other amenities that foster common exchange and learning. The Museum collection includes over 8,000 objects representing a broad range of cultures, historical periods, artistic practices, and movements. Through its exhibitions, public programs, and educational outreach, the Museum promotes interdisciplinary approaches that are vital to a liberal arts education. <https://www.hamilton.edu/wellin>

## **Social Media**

Join the conversation on social media! Tag @wellinmuseum and #WellinMuseum and #MenagerieWellin when posting.

## **Media Contact**

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