

# The Taxonomy of Peggy Macnamara

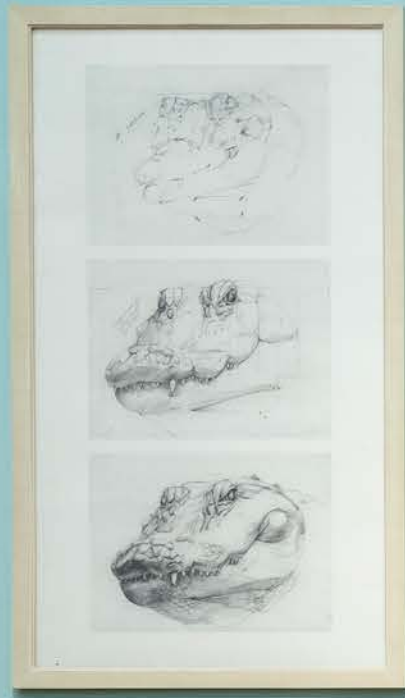


March 9–April 28, 2023









## The Taxonomy of Peggy Macnamara

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*The Taxonomy of Peggy Macnamara* features an immense array of artwork that has been created during Macnamara's tenure as the only artist in residence at the Field Museum. This exhibition focuses on her relationship to observing and working among the collections over decades where her practice as an artist, teacher, and collaborator has developed a process of long looking that has created a taxonomy of its own.

Macnamara has traveled across the world, geared with her pencils and watercolors, investigating the fascinating intricacies of nature alongside scientists and peers from the Field Museum. Although her work uses the academic approach of illustrating, her savvy is evident in her loose handling of her art materials.

The gallery is laid out to present a speculative taxonomy. On this wall, Macnamara's material process is laid bare, exposing her structure for making, looking, and realizing her work. Birds, nests, insects, and botanicals inhabit the adjacent walls flowing into the adjoining gallery where a selection of works used to support conservation efforts is presented. In the very back room, images created in the collections of the Field Museum provide a glimpse of the jars, specimens, and artifacts that are housed behind the scenes and out of view from the general public.

As in nature, and in life, the taxonomy of this show is imperfect, and categories overlap. Ever present is Macnamara's hand. Her attention to detail and analytic ability to capture her subjects is exquisite while her mastery is revealed through works that leave their stages of artistic development visible. Engaging with her work is for the love of looking; inevitably discussions about nature, extinction, classification, conservation, and collections permeate the surface.

This project is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.



### The Taxonomy of Peggy Macnamara

March 9 - April 28, 2023

The Taxonomy of Peggy Macnamara is a collection of 40 framed watercolor illustrations of birds and animals, including a variety of species from the East African savanna, the Amazon rainforest, and the Himalayas. The illustrations are arranged in a grid-like pattern on the wall, with some larger pieces and some smaller ones. The artwork is displayed in a gallery space with light blue walls and a wooden floor. The ceiling features exposed ductwork and track lighting.

Macnamara has worked in various roles for the past 20 years, including as a conservation biologist, a field researcher, and a science communicator. She has worked in the field in East Africa, the Amazon, and the Himalayas, and has been instrumental in the development of several conservation programs. Her work has been featured in a variety of media, including books, magazines, and television. She is currently a senior advisor at the World Wildlife Fund, where she continues to work on conservation issues.

The gallery is part of a larger exhibition space, and the artwork is displayed in a grid-like pattern on the wall. The illustrations are arranged in a grid-like pattern on the wall, with some larger pieces and some smaller ones. The artwork is displayed in a gallery space with light blue walls and a wooden floor. The ceiling features exposed ductwork and track lighting.

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**The Taxonomy of PREGY Macanabara**  
March 9 - April 28, 2013

Macanabara is a traditional Japanese festival held in the town of PREGY, located in the island of Hokkaido. The festival is a celebration of the local culture and the community's spirit. It is a time when the people of PREGY come together to enjoy the festival and the local products. The festival is held in the town square and is a very popular event. It is a time when the people of PREGY come together to enjoy the festival and the local products. The festival is held in the town square and is a very popular event. It is a time when the people of PREGY come together to enjoy the festival and the local products.

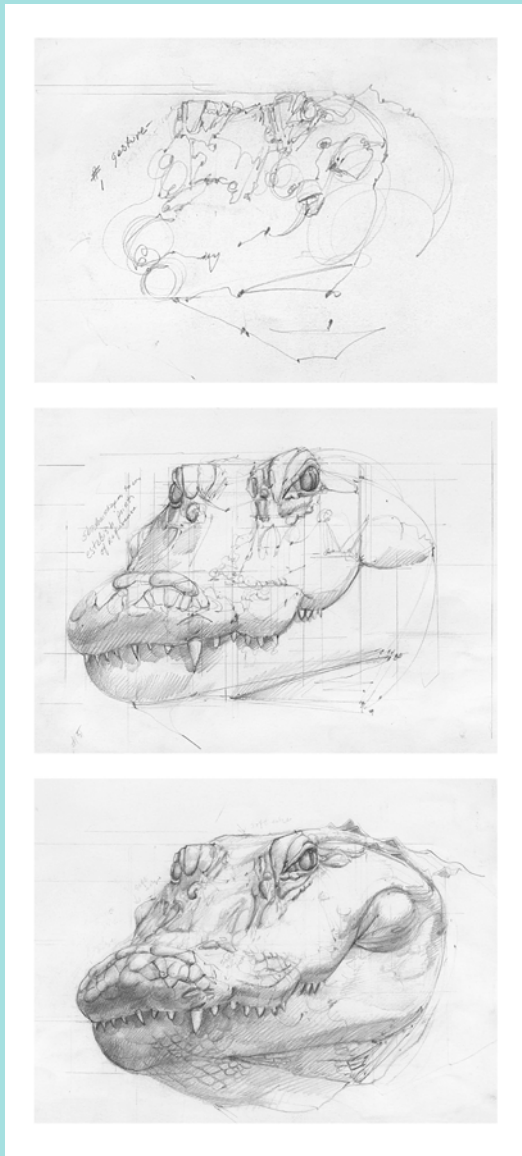




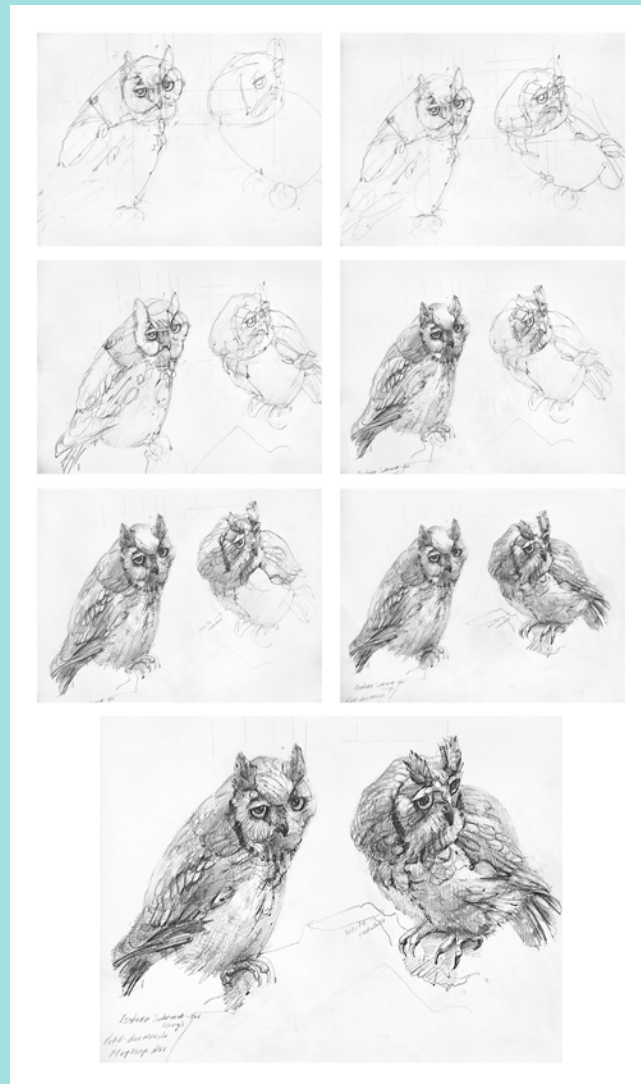




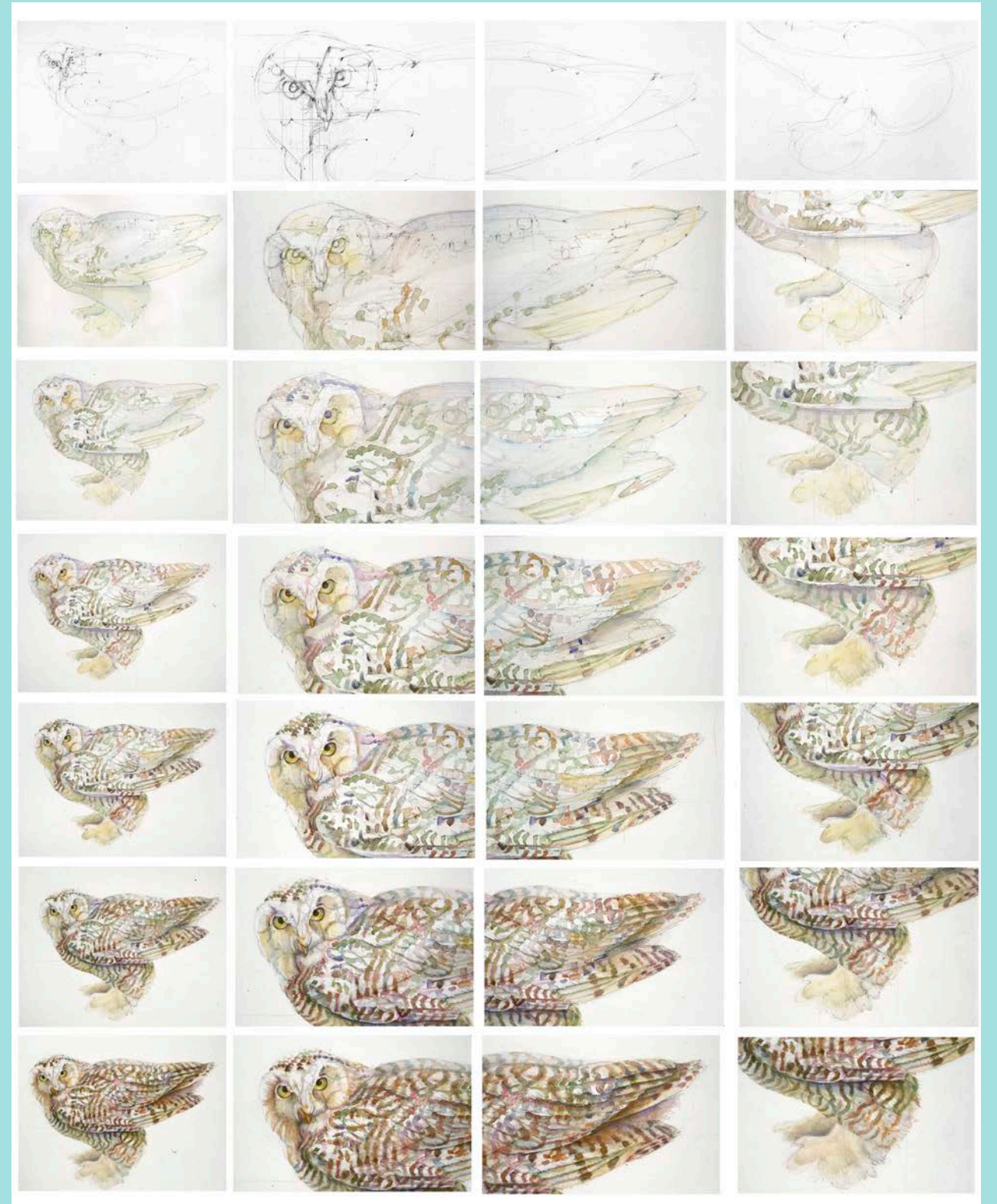
# PROCESS WORKS



Alligator Drawing Progression, 2015, print



Two Owls Drawing Progression, 2015, print



Snowy Owl Progression, 2002, print



Law of Harmony, 2010, watercolor



Flock Curve 2, 2010, watercolor



Law of Repetition, 2011, watercolor



Flock Left, 2011, watercolor

# BIRDS



Two Cranes Together, 2012, watercolor



Two Cranes Meet, 2012, watercolor



Starling, 2010, watercolor



Painted Stork, 1996, watercolor



Spoonbills Mating, 2022, watercolor



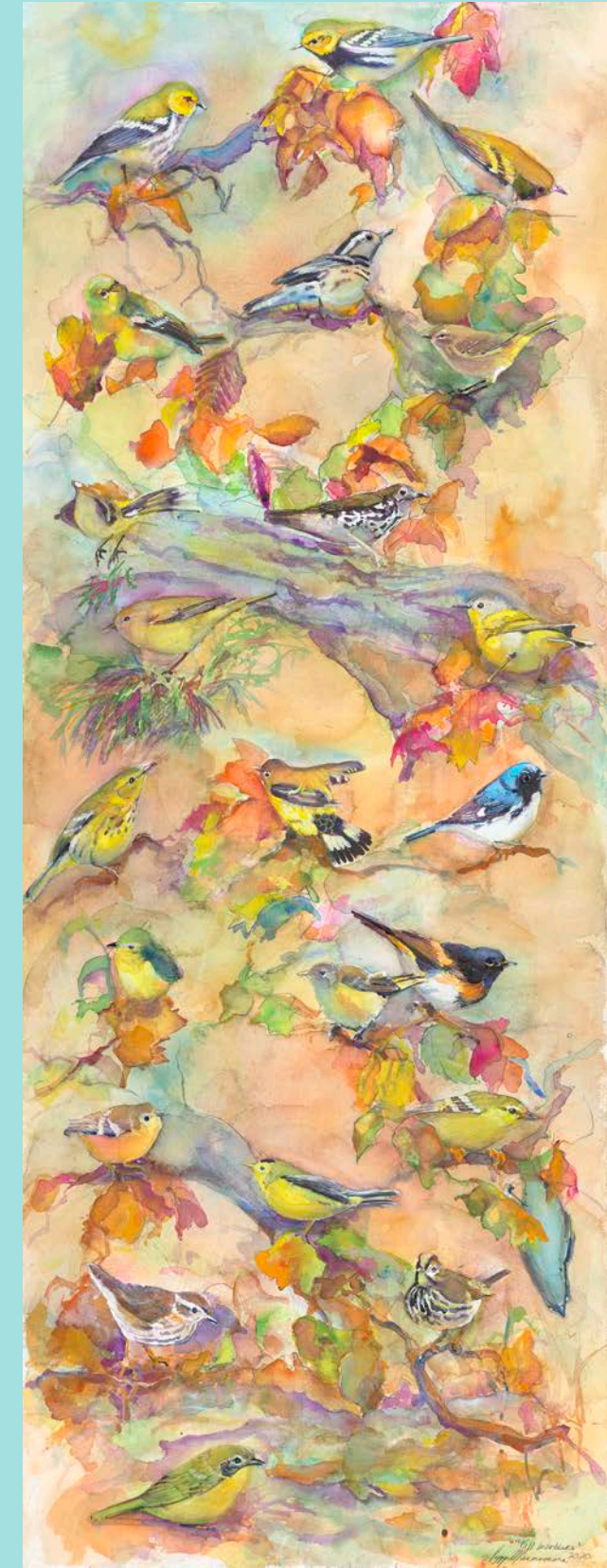
Three Owls, 2018, watercolor



Field Museum Prairie from the North Entrance, 2017, watercolor



Spring Warblers, 2020, print from original watercolor



Fall Warblers, 2020, watercolor



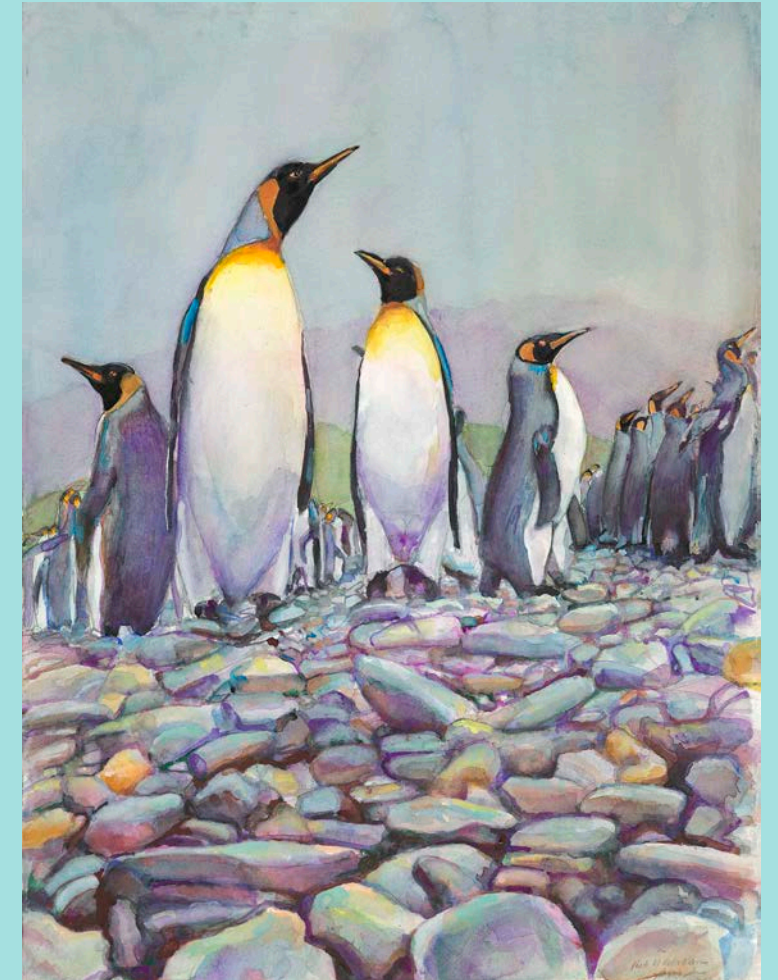
Bird Beaks, 2010, print



Birth of the Mallard Chicks, 2009, watercolor



Nesting Birds, 2010, watercolor



Penguins, 2022, watercolor

# NESTS



Bird Nests, 2008, watercolor



Love Nest: Great Bowerbird, 2004, watercolor



Bagworm Nest of Rods, 2007, watercolor



Oropendola and Insect Nest, 2008, watercolor



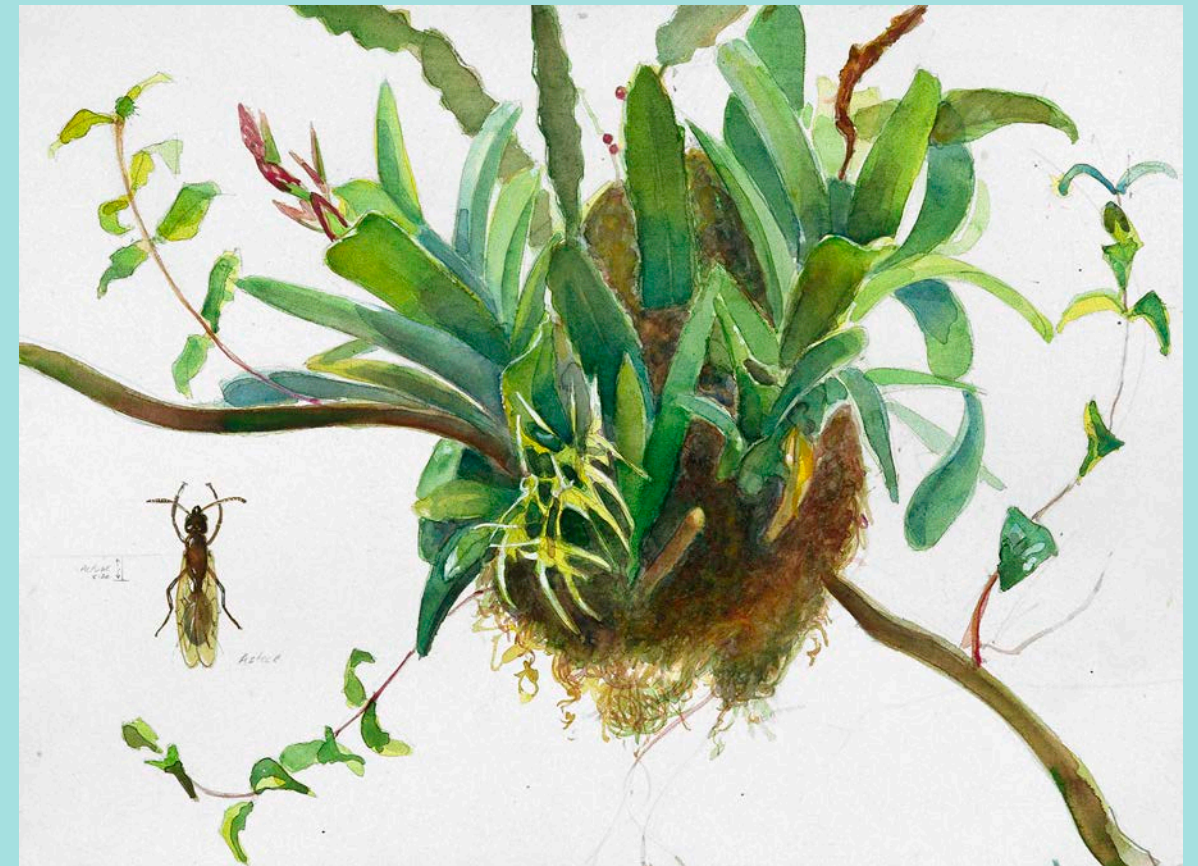
Nest Wrapped, 2007, watercolor



Caddisfly Nest of Shells, 2007, watercolor



Carpenter Ant in Aspen Stumps, 2007, watercolor



Ant Garden, 2004, watercolor



# INSECTS



Ant Nest preserved, 2003, watercolor



Ant *Lioetopum Apiculatum*, 2007, watercolor



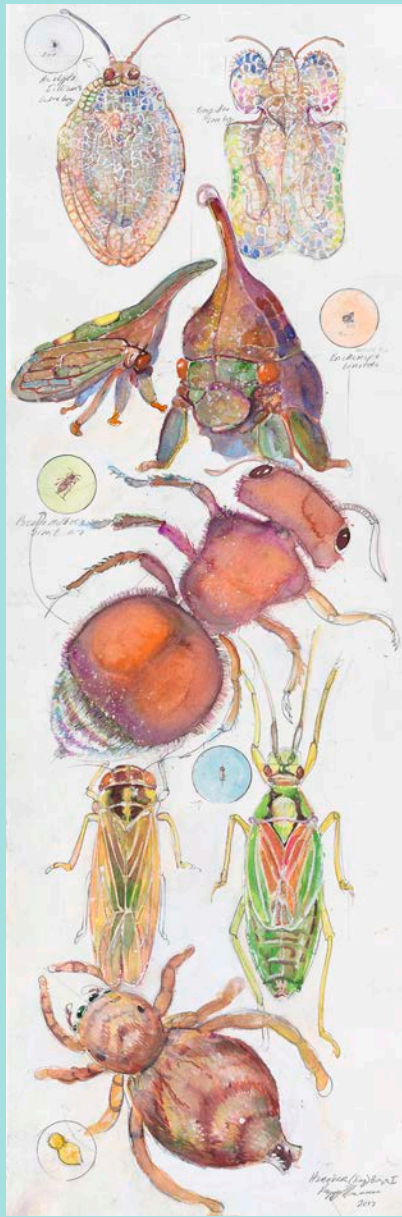
Cover illustration for *Architecture by Birds and Insects*, 2007, watercolor



Whip Scorpion, 2005, watercolor



Field Museum Garden Bee Habitat 2, 2022, watercolor



Hanover Bugs 2, 2017, watercolor



Butterfly Eggs, 2021, watercolor



Metamorphosis, 2016, watercolor



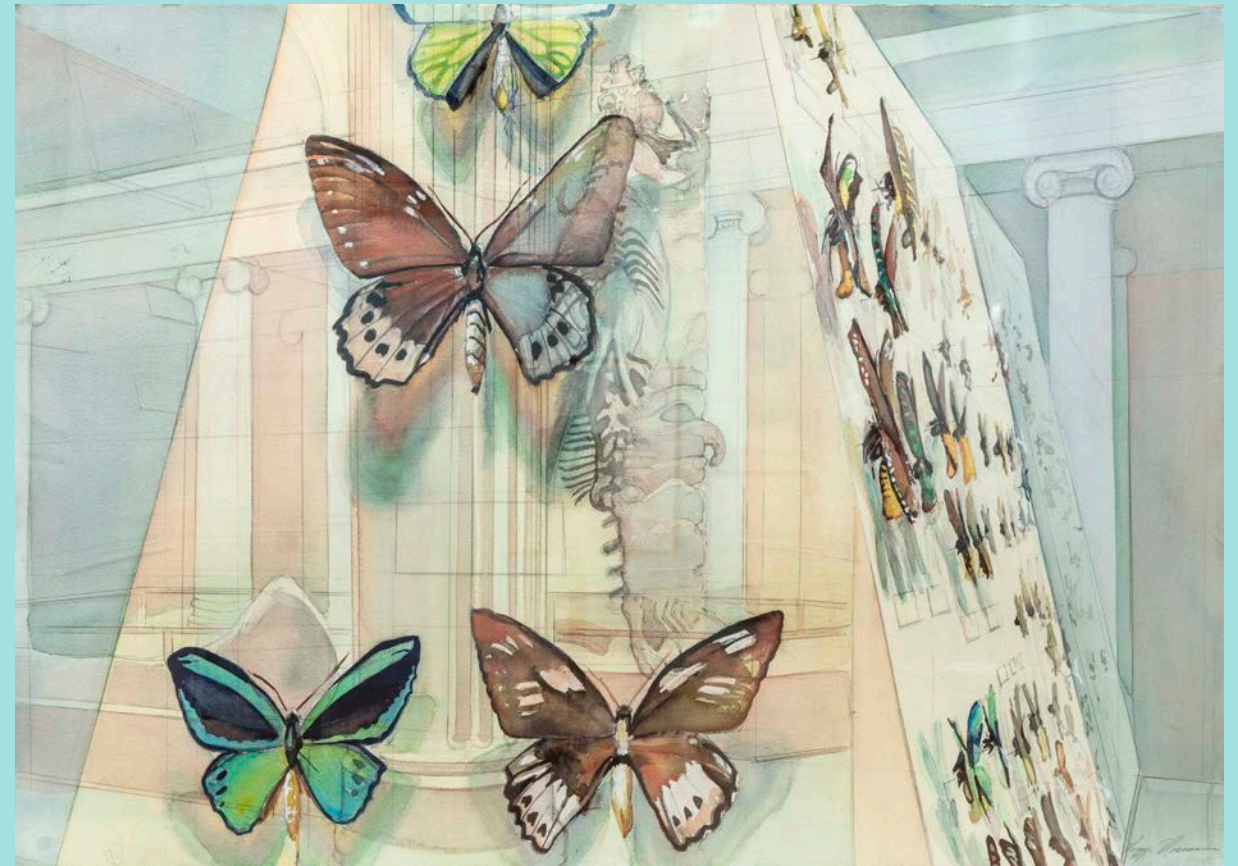
Hanover Bugs 1, 2017, watercolor



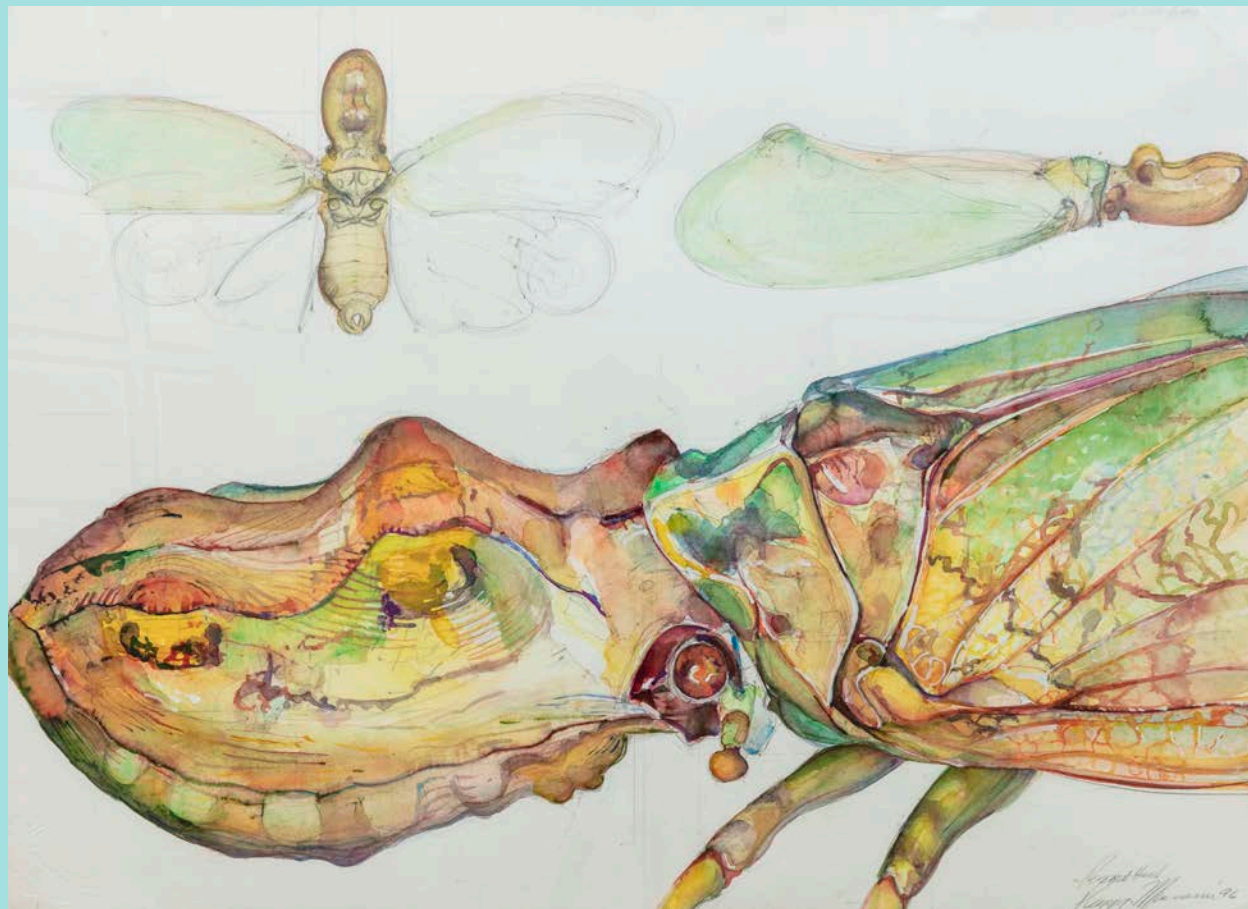
Green Beetle: Scacher Calosama, 1998, watercolor



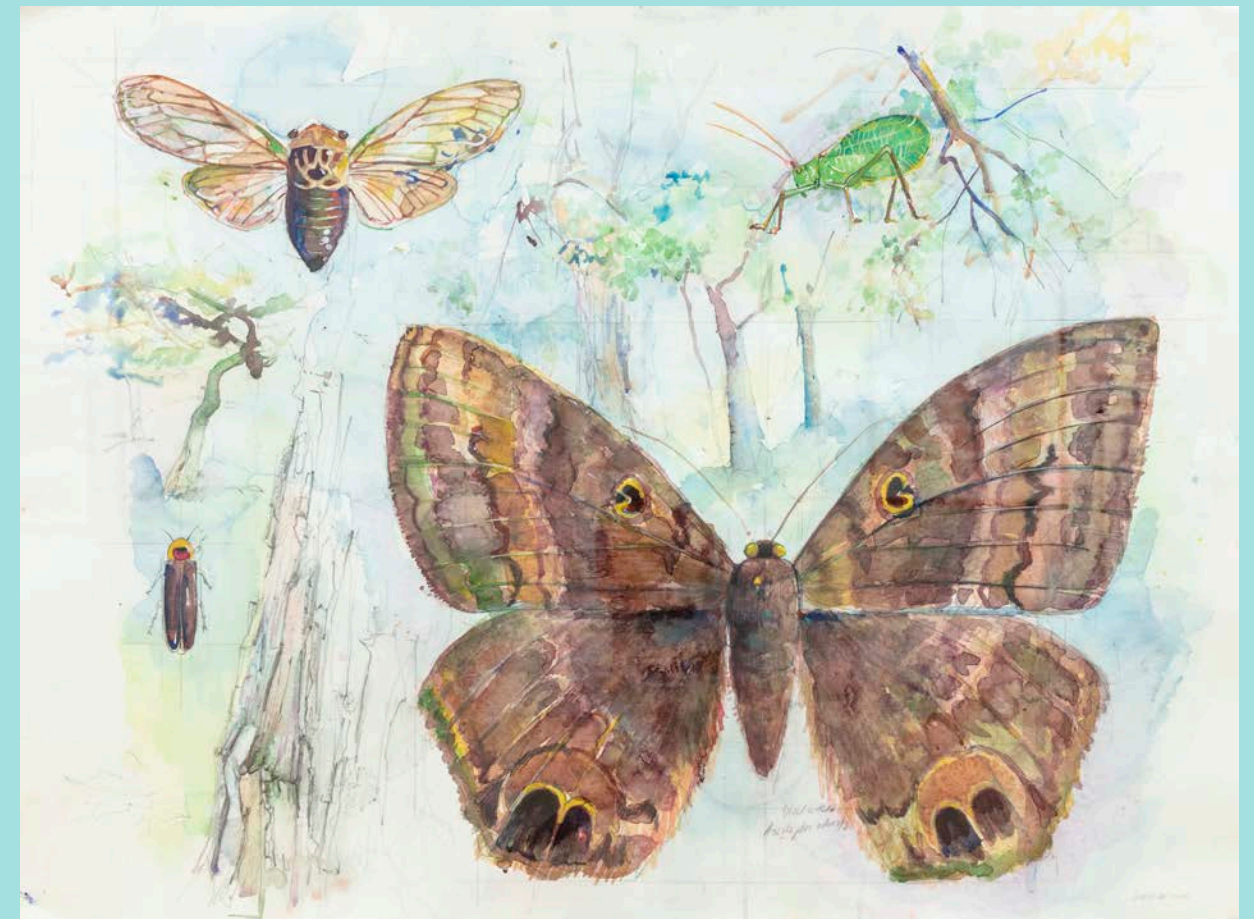
Bury Beetle, 1998, watercolor



Butterfly Case, 2005, watercolor



Peanut Head, 1996, watercolor



Black Witen with Katydid, 2007, watercolor

# BOTANICALS



*Magnolia Right*, 2010, watercolor



*Magnolia Left*, 2010, watercolor



*Hydrangea*, 2009, watercolor



*Milkweed 2, 2022, watercolor*



*Milkweed 3, 2022, watercolor*



*Coal Forest, 2018, watercolor*



Costa Rica, 2015, watercolor



Peru Plants, 1, 2001, watercolor



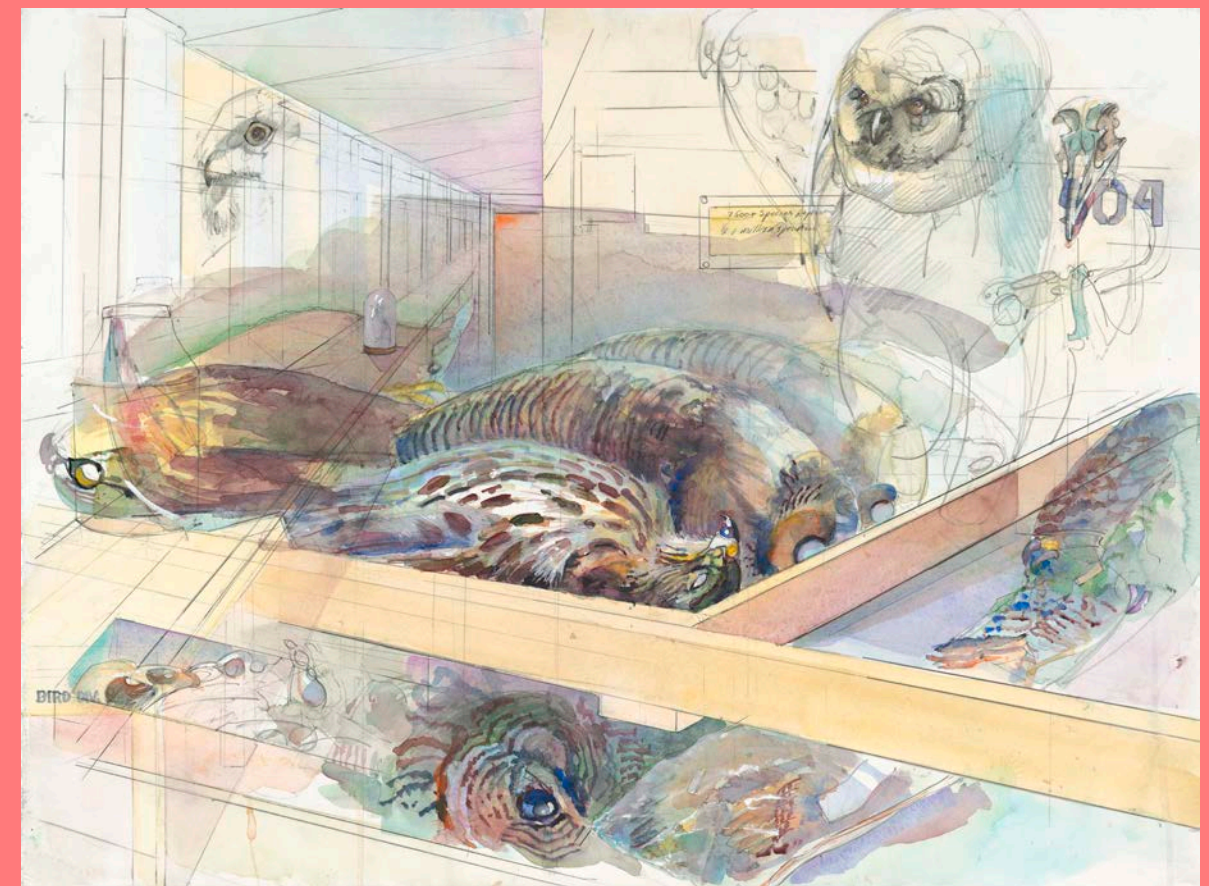
Peru Plants, 2, 2001, watercolor

# IN SUPPORT OF CONSERVATION



*Bird Monitors*, 2015, watercolor

*Bird Monitors* emphasizes the importance of collaboration in the pursuit of wildlife conservation. The Chicago Bird Collision Monitors, a group of volunteers dedicated to the protection of migratory birds, have been collecting and delivering expired birds to Field Museum scientist Dave Willard for many years. Willard, tags, preserves, and adds them into the Field Museum's bird collection to aid in learning more about bird populations, migration patterns, breeding behavior, physiology, bird health, and ultimately the health of the environment. Over 250 species of migratory birds (totaling 8 million annually) travel through Chicago however many of them die from fatal collisions with skyscraper windows. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Chicago Bird Collision Monitors, the Field Museum, the Chicago Audubon Society, the downtown Building Owners and Managers Association, and the City of Chicago, the Lights Out program was created. This program encourages buildings to shut off or dim their lights during bird migration to help ease bird strikes, with over 90% of Chicago's high-rise buildings participating, more migrating birds are able to pass through the city safely.



*Bird Collections*, 2013, watercolor

*Bird Collections* is a view behind the scenes at the Field Museum showing us a storage system utilized by museum scientists in the bird collections department. The collection is an internationally prized resource, and this image appears in Mary Hennen's book *The Peregrine Returns, The Art and Architecture of an Urban Raptor Recovery*. This book, illustrated by Macnamara, tells the story of the scientific research conducted with the Field's egg collection resulting in a national ban of the vicious pesticide DDT which was responsible for thinning Peregrine Falcon eggshells. Thanks to the banning and repopulation efforts, the falcons have been brought back from the brink of extinction.



*Peregrine Jewelers*, 2016, watercolor



*Peregrine Falcon at St Michaels*, 2016, watercolor

*Peregrine Falcon at St. Michaels* and *Peregrine Jewelers* were created for Mary Hennen's book *The Peregrine Returns, The Art and Architecture of an Urban Raptor Recovery*.



*Sea Otter*, 2020, watercolor

*Sea Otter* was created for the publication *From the Seashore to the Seafloor* which focuses on the amazing ecosystem beneath the waves. Sea otters, an endangered species, help maintain the delicate balance of the ocean's ecosystem by living amongst vast giant kelp forests. Atmospheric carbon dioxide, a prevalent greenhouse gas known to contribute to the increase of global temperatures is naturally absorbed and sequestered by Giant Kelp. Due to a decline of the sea otter population and their regular consumption of sea urchins, the giant kelp forests are being rapidly destroyed by an explosion in the sea urchin population.





*Coelacanth*, 2010, print from watercolor



*Arapaima*, 2017, watercolor

*Coelacanth* is a depiction of a prehistoric fish once believed to have disappeared more than 60 million years ago. The oldest known fossils of the fish are 420 million years old, and it was believed to be extinct until its re-discovery in South Africa in 1938 by Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer, a curator whose job included visiting the docks to document fish coming from fishing boats. Today, the coelacanth is known to live in only two areas of the world, growing to an average length of 6', a maximum weight of 200 pounds and living as long as 60 years old at 2,300' below the surface of the ocean. This amazing discovery not only gave scientists an important piece of evolutionary history but serves as a reminder of how much research is still to be done in the earth's oceans.

*Arapaima* captures details of the largest freshwater fish in the world. Due to overfishing, the arapaima is a critically endangered species found in the Peruvian section of the Amazon River. Thanks to the efforts of indigenous communities of Peru and Field Museum scientist Alvaro del Campo, the Arapaima is making a slow yet steady recovery.

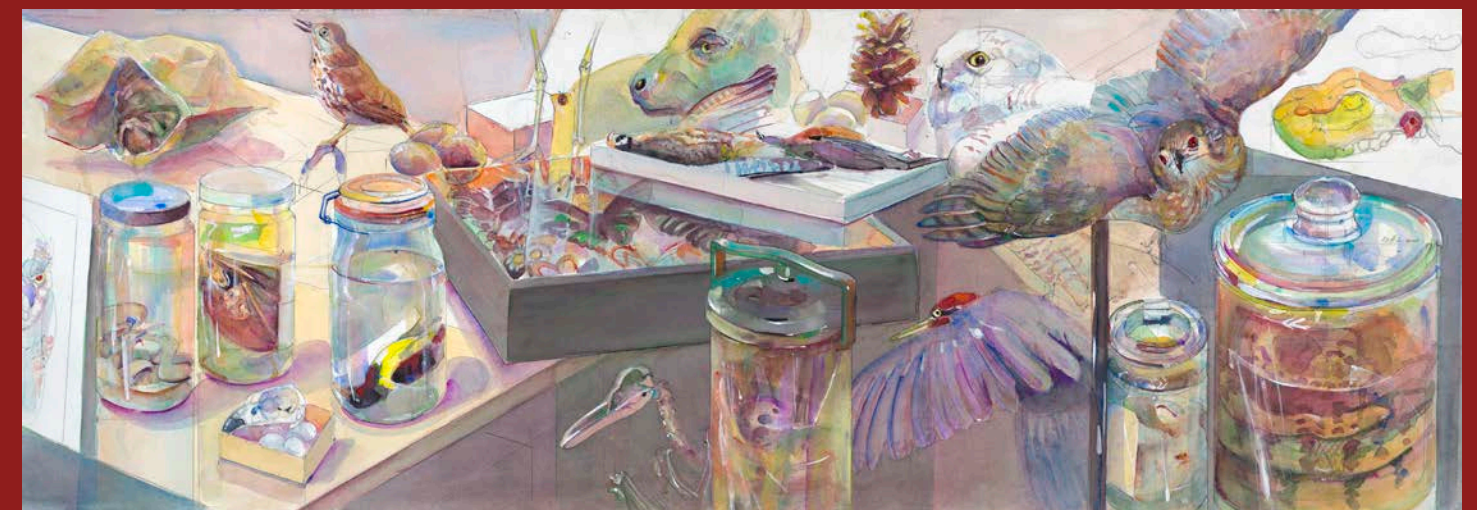
# BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE FIELD



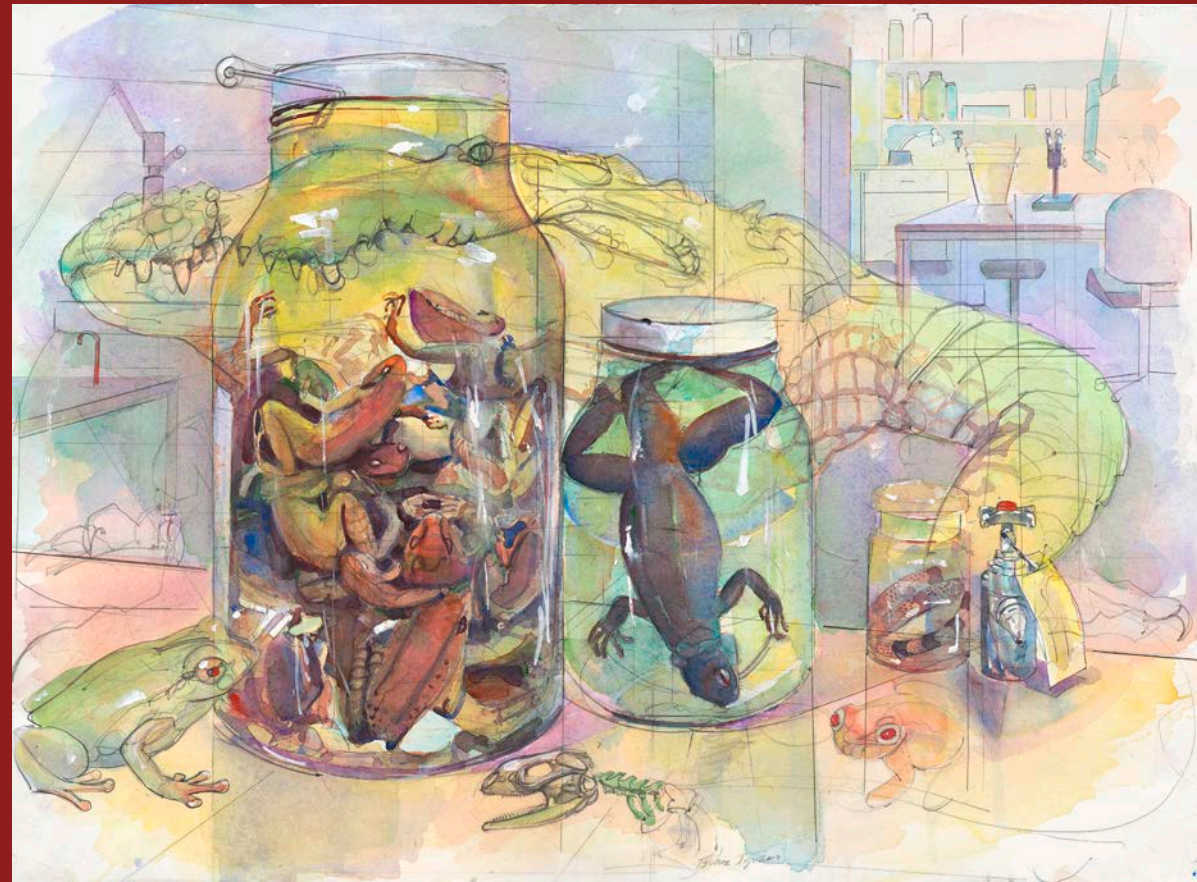
Geology Case, 2013, watercolor



Plant Collection, 2013, print from watercolor



Specimens; Field Museum, 2018, watercolor



Frogs in a Jar in Collections, 2012, watercolor



Capybara, 2014, watercolor



Eggs with Prep Lab, 2017, watercolor



Cabinet with Skulls, 2014, watercolor



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