

FEATURED

## Wickford Art Association's latest exhibition isn't just for the birds

By Rachel Philipson Special to the Independent  
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For perhaps the final time, Wickford Art Association is currently hosting its animal-themed "Fur, Feathers, Fins" exhibit. This exhibition, which opened last week and runs through October 1, explores various wildlife, sea life and domestic animals as subject matter. One piece local animal lovers will see on display in the gallery this month is artist Ann Webb's oil painting titled "The Morning After," pictured above.

Photo: Michael Derr

NORTH KINGSTOWN, R.I. — To paraphrase the exclamation Dorothy, Scarecrow and the Tin Man screamed in "The Wizard of Oz," fur, feathers, and fins — oh my! The latest Wickford Art Association exhibition features artwork that explores various artists' interpretation of mammals — such as wildlife, sea life, birds, insects and domestic animals — as subject matter through a variety of media.

Maria Masse, Wickford Art Association executive director, said the exhibition, appropriately entitled "Fur, Feather, Fins," has artwork that will speak to every animal lover. She said she is amazed at the diversity of artistic interpretations.

“People interested in viewing a wide range of wildlife subject matter and domestic friends from birdwatchers to those who are inspired by native and foreign wildlife alike [should see ‘Fur, Feathers, Fins],” Masse said. “There is something for everyone.”

“Fur, Feather, Fins” opened last week and runs through October 1. All of the work featured in the exhibition – including the winning pieces - are priced and available for purchase.

This is the final year the exhibition will be in this particular incarnation. Masse said Wickford Art Association is frequently adapting its exhibition schedule to encourage local artists to create new and original art pieces (especially in keeping with their exhibition registration guidelines that artwork must be current fine art less than three years old.) It also helps keep patrons intrigued to what they may see – or even buy – next.

“As a creative organization, we work very hard at keeping our state of exhibits fresh and vibrant and challenge talented artists to produce their best work,” Masse said.

The exhibition was open to all mediums and all artists, Masse said. The only exclusions were no crafts, mass produced items, giclées (high-quality ink jet prints) or other digitally scanned multiples.

Ultimately, 48 artists submitted artwork to the exhibition. After the registration period, all submitted works were reviewed by the exhibit juror, Susan Sward. Sward is a member of Wickford Art Association as a juried artist member.

Sward is an artist and teacher living in Wakefield, Rhode Island and has been teaching art and design since 1993. She has a fine art degree in textiles and a master’s degree in teaching. She has taught workshops at the Slater Mill Museum, RISD, Rhode Island College, the Wickford Art Association, and the RI Art Education Association.

Masse said Sward presents subject matters in a hyper-realistic manner, often choosing to present unique objects such as insects – making her an ideal choice as juror for “Fur, Feather, Fins.”

Masse said “Fur, Feather, Fins” is a unique exhibition and she urges patrons to come to Wickford Art Association and see the exhibition in its last year.

“New England has a wide array of artists interested in this subject matter,” Masse said. “Looking at this subject matter from various viewpoints: photography, painting, drawing, [and] sculpture shows a wide array of interpretations and presents an interesting breadth of work. This is also of interest not just to the artists but to people who come in our doors.”

Wickford Art Association is located at 36 Beach Street, North Kingston, Rhode Island.

The current gallery hours are Wednesday to Saturday (12pm - 4pm) and Sunday (12pm - 3pm.)

For more information on Wickford Art Association and the “Fur, Feather, Fins” exhibition, visit <https://wickfordart.org/>