



Images Available Upon Request

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RECAPTURING THE SCENIC WILDS IN GLYNDOR GALLERY

September 6–December 7, 2014

Opening Reception Saturday, September 6, 2–4:30PM

Bronx, NY, July 30, 2014—Inspired by the naturalist legacy of Theodore Roosevelt, a former resident of Wave Hill House and lifelong proponent of specimen discovery and collection, *Recapturing the Scenic Wilds* investigates and complicates the notion of the natural history display. Comprising the work of nine innovative artists, each of whom attempts to transform the experience of the natural world into a tightly controlled scene, tableau or source of information, the exhibition unearths what this type of artificially “organic” display reveals about our relationship to nature. Works from **Mark Dion’s** *Provisions and Equipment – Clark Expedition* series cheekily present expeditions and naturalists as specimens. **Alexa Hoyer** and **Liselot van der Heijden** exhibit voyeuristic photographs from their ongoing projects in the American Museum of Natural History, whether of artificial flora or gazing spectators. **Dana Levy** releases live animals among dead specimens, capturing the eerie results on video. **Richard Barnes’** camera catches the diorama in tenderly off-guard moments, with renovation underway and parts in storage. **Lori Nix’s** photographs of her own dioramas introduce offbeat narratives by injecting humor into the museum display. The knitted pelts of **Ruth Marshall**, exact replicas of actual specimens, raise awareness of the plight of wildcats. **Jessica Segall** focuses on three common birds of New York and installs taxidermy specimens accompanied by specially written songs. Using real feathers and braided fur in his work, **Hugh Hayden** suggests that nature is the ultimate luxury product.



Liselot van der Heijden,
Natural History XIII, 2007.

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Richard Barnes’ photographic practice unites compositional control with a theatrical eye in order to produce compelling, self-conscious images. The works shown here, taken from the series *Animal Logic*, highlight the macabre tenderness of the diorama. Taken in museums that were undergoing renovation, these images fixate on the intensive labor behind the impulse to render killed animals utterly lifelike. The series has also been published in monograph form.

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Mark Dion appropriates archaeological and scientific methods of collecting, ordering and exhibiting objects in order to question distinctions between scientific knowledge and aesthetic experience. In the process, his work is often inspired by the “cabinets of curiosities” of the early modern era, mixing invention with research and challenging viewers to reconsider how and by whom history is produced. For this exhibition, Dion presents a tableau from his project *Provisions and Equipment – Clark Expedition*, which explores a famous 1909 expedition into Northern China to gather naturalist specimens. Dion’s reinterpretation of the expedition focuses on white, bone-like replicas of ephemera from the trip, such as binoculars, boots and provisions.

Hugh Hayden’s practice juxtaposes disparate materials to produce sensuous sculptures. In doing so, he provocatively points to the luxury status of natural artifacts, wryly reinserting them into a social context. In the three works shown at Wave Hill, Hayden repurposes existing objects in order to aestheticize them. He reproduces the bark of a tree trunk with peacock feathers, transforms a taxidermied bear by hiring a hairstylist to braid its fur, and updates an Audubon poster with real plumage.

Liselot van der Heijden examines museum displays with an eye to how they reflect cultural conditions, rather than depict the natural world. In her photographic series *Natural History*, van der Heijden focuses on the silhouettes of museum visitors standing in front of natural history dioramas. The artist investigates how we capture, control and display nature, while drawing attention to the human gaze that frames the wilderness.

Alexa Hoyer’s work magnifies the strangeness of the everyday. Through photography, video, installation and performance, she finds or stages moments that waver between escapist fantasies and meaningful connections. Hoyer’s recent series *Natural History*, documents the minutiae of natural history dioramas to produce uncannily serene landscape images. By focusing on their painted backdrops and plastic foliage, and casting doubt on the boundary between natural and artificial, she encourages viewers to pay closer attention to the details of daily life.

Dana Levy delves into cultural memories by focusing on the instinct to control, classify and domesticate nature. Through video and installation, she traces the many ways that we uproot, strip bare and isolate the natural world, whether in museum displays, storefronts or private homes. In the videos shown in this exhibition, Levy juxtaposes the motion of live animals with the static nature of boxed specimens in natural history museums, setting live birds or butterflies free to fly through the spaces in which the specimens are normally contained. These suggestive vignettes prompt viewers to reconsider our relationship to the lives of other beings, even across species.

Ruth Marshall knits sculptures inspired by the message of wildlife conservation and, more specifically, the range of expression in the spots and stripes on the coats of wildcats. Drawing on her experience working at the Bronx Zoo, Marshall treats each pelt as an individual, replicating it down to the bullet holes, thus calling

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attention to the plight of endangered species. Notably, in the context of *Recapturing the Scenic Wilds*, the specimen cats she uses as models are from the collection of the American Museum of Natural History.

Lori Nix has pursued a decades-long practice of photographing self-built dioramas. Rather than using existing images, she constructs sublime scenes that mark the time immediately before or after disaster. For this exhibition, Nix shows works from her series *Unnatural History*. These black-and-white photographs of miniature dioramas present fictive museums of natural history in disarray, as if abandoned or unfinished. These images, often referencing the monumental through minutia, tease the viewer's sense of space. In the process, they provoke the viewer into wondering whether the spaces are real or simulated, and the specimens living or dead.

Jessica Segall's practice spans video, performance, sculpture and drawing. Combining ecological concerns and art historical savvy, Segall presents viewers with acts of endurance and tools for survival in a precarious time. Approaching somber topics with humor, her artistic interventions have included concrete bunkers designed to look like pillows, home cinemas built into emergency rowing boats and small floating offices to help Florida swimmers. For *Recapturing the Scenic Wilds*, Segall documents invasive bird species in and around Central Park. She created a new piece focused on three unprotected bird species: the pigeon, starling and house sparrow. It includes songs written for the installation by three songwriters.

Exhibition-Related Public Events

Unless stated otherwise, all public programs listed here are free with admission to the grounds and do not require pre-registration.

Exhibition Reception: Saturday, September 6, 2–4:30PM

Guided Gallery Tours: Saturdays and Tuesdays, 2PM. Tours are led by Wave Hill's Curatorial Fellow.

Family Art Project: Become a Palisades Protector: Saturday and Sunday, September 6 and 7, 10AM-1PM
Learn about Theodore Roosevelt's role in preserving the cliffs and beautiful vista of the Palisades. Connect to your inner preservationist! Consider what piece of nature you'd like to preserve for future generations to enjoy, and add your painted and collaged image to a group panorama installation.

Art Workshop: Knitting from Wildlife: Saturday, September 13, 1–4PM
Learn how to knit with multiple yarns and colors in this workshop with *Recapturing the Scenic Wilds* artist **Ruth Marshall**. Using animal photographs from Marshall's own research as inspiration, learn how to design and knit a four-inch swatch. Participants should know how to knit and purl. Bring a friend! Drop-ins accommodated as space permits.

Registration required. \$30/\$20 Wave Hill Member

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Artists' Talk: Saturday, October 18, 2PM

Artists in *Recapturing the Scenic Wilds* speak with a curator in the gallery to discuss the concepts behind their work.

The Power of Natural History: Talk with Lukas Rieppel : Saturday, November 15, 2PM

Lukas Rieppel, Assistant Professor of History at Brown University, will briefly present his research on dinosaur displays in natural history museums as a kind of “mixed media sculpture,” before leading a discussion with artists in *Recapturing the Scenic Wilds* about the aesthetic considerations behind natural history display and the social criteria underlying them.

Space is limited; RSVP recommended through visualarts@wavehill.org.

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The Arts at Wave Hill are supported by the Milton & Sally Avery Arts Foundation, The New York Community Trust, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and by the Cathy and Stephen Weinroth Commissioning Fund for the Arts. The Family Art Project is generously sponsored by Target, with additional support provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. Sustaining support is provided by the Sally and Gilbert Kerlin Endowment for Environmental Science and Nature Education. The Institution’s operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.



A 28-acre public garden and cultural center overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades, Wave Hill’s mission is to celebrate the artistry and legacy of its gardens and landscapes, to preserve its magnificent views, and to explore human connections to the natural world through programs in horticulture, education and the arts.

HOURS Open all year, Tuesday–Saturday & many major holidays: 9AM–4:30PM. Closes 5:30PM, Mar 15–Oct 31
GALLERY HOURS Tuesday – Sunday, 10AM–4:30PM.

ADMISSION \$8 adults, \$4 students and seniors 65+, \$2 children 6-18. Free Tuesdays and Saturdays until noon.
Free to Wave Hill Members, children under 6.

DIRECTIONS Getting here is easy! Located only 30 minutes from midtown Manhattan, Wave Hill’s free shuttle van transports you to and from our front gate and Metro-North’s Riverdale station, the 242 Street stop on the #1 subway line, and to and from our free offsite parking lot. Limited onsite parking is available for \$8 per vehicle. Complete directions and shuttle van schedule at wavehill.org.

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