

# University of North Carolina - Greensboro, NC, Offers Exhibition of Beasts & Works by Mary Ellen Bute

The University of North Carolina - Greensboro, NC, is presenting *Bestiary: Animals as Symbols and Metaphors*, on view in the The Gregory D. Ivy and Weatherspoon Guild Galleries of the Weatherspoon Art Museum, through Dec. 3, 2022.

The Guild and Ivy galleries will be awash with an array of beasts this summer. No cause for concern, however, as this menagerie consists solely of two- and three-dimensional representations of familiar animals, many of which are quite benign and intriguing. Drawn from the museum's collection and arranged by species, the exhibition is a contemporary look at the old bestiary tradition. Both a literary and illustrative genre that originated in the ancient world, bestiaries served as a kind of natural history, cataloging known and mythological animals as well as providing moralizing allegories.

The tradition continues in artwork by modern and contemporary artists who likewise use the appearance and habits of animals to comment on human behavior. This exhibition enlarges the concept of animals as symbols by also including depictions of beasts that evoke figurative expressions. A few of the artworks portray the animal kingdom in general, but most focus on a single beast: horses, lambs, apes, snakes, birds of prey and other fowl, whales, cows, and insects, as well as domesticated cats and dogs. Artworks range from Peter Agostini's mythological wonder to Tom Rankin's and Kiki Smith's sacrificial lambs, and from Ai Weiwei's nod to social media platforms to Anne Arnold's anthropomorphic cats. This "zoo" is definitely worth a visit!

*Bestiary: Animals as Symbols and Metaphors* was organized by Elaine D. Gustafson, curator and head of collections and facilities.



Mary Ellen Bute. Photo by Ted Nemeth. Courtesy of the Center for Visual Music, Los Angeles

The exhibition, *The Eye and the Ear: Animations by Mary Ellen Bute*, is on view in Gallery 6 at the Weatherspoon Art Museum, through Sept. 10, 2022.

From the mid 1930s to mid 1950s, artist Mary Ellen Bute produced more than a dozen pioneering animations that sought to allow viewers to see sound. Born and raised in Texas, Bute left home at sixteen to study painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Frustrated by the limitations of working on canvas, she went on to train in stage lighting at Yale University before moving to New York where she forged collaborative relationships with innovators across professional fields and disciplines in the pursuit of presenting music through moving images.

Among Bute's formative creative partners were Leon Theremin, inventor of one of the first electronic musical instruments, and Joseph Schillinger, the music theorist famed for his work with mathematical



Ernst Barlach, "Riding Urian (the Devil)," 1922-23, from *Walpurgisnacht* (Walpurgis Night). Woodcut on paper, edition of 120, 11 1/2 x 9 3/8 in. Weatherspoon Art Museum, UNC Greensboro. Museum purchase with funds from the Benefactors Fund, 1976.2362

expressions. Bute's longest-standing collaborator (and eventually husband), was her cinematographer Ted Nemeth. Making her first films in the midst of the Great Depression, she and Nemeth frequently built their own equipment and generated effects from such inexpensive objects as mirrors, ping pong balls, colanders, cellophane, and even cream floating in coffee. From these ordinary objects Bute created dynamic, abstract images sequenced to iconic classical scores from composers such as Dimitri Shostakovich and Aaron Copeland.

Unlike many abstract filmmakers of her time, Bute sought an audience beyond art houses and galleries, and she rented her films to venues such as New York's Radio City Music Hall and Trans Lux Theater to screen before their feature films. Although dismissed by many in the art world for this embrace of popular appeal, she was undeterred from her pursuits. Likewise, friends recount that Walt Disney invited the artist to join his commercial studio, but she declined—committed to her experimentations. By the 1950s, Bute was consulting with Ralph Potter from Bell Telephone Laboratories in order to use an oscilloscope—an instrument for testing radar equipment—to draw her images with light. In writing about this work, her indelible commitment to both joy and learning rang clear, "I venture to predict that the forms and compositions artists can create on the oscilloscope, and organize and preserve on motion picture film, will not only give aesthetic pleasure to all kinds of men and women . . . but will help theoretical physicists and mathematicians to uncover more secrets of the inanimate world."

The Weatherspoon's presentation of Bute's ground-breaking animations celebrates the launch this fall of a new Bachelors of Fine Arts Concentration in Animation offered by UNCG's School of Art.

This exhibition was organized by Dr. Emily Stamey, curator and head of exhibitions.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Museum at 336/334-5770 or visit (<http://weatherspoon.uncg.edu/>).

# Artworks Gallery in Winston-Salem, NC, Offers Works by Seth Moskowitz and Mona Wu

Artworks Gallery in Winston-Salem, NC, is presenting *Organic Impressions*, featuring works by Seth Moskowitz and Mona Wu, on view through July 30, 2022. Receptions will be held on July 1, from 7-9pm and July 10, from 2-4pm.

Seth Moskowitz is a Winston-Salem

based artist who creates and combines photographic images into artworks that rarely resemble photography or the images that they incorporate. He describes the creation of his work as "an escape from the verbal cacophony of the workaday world - a way

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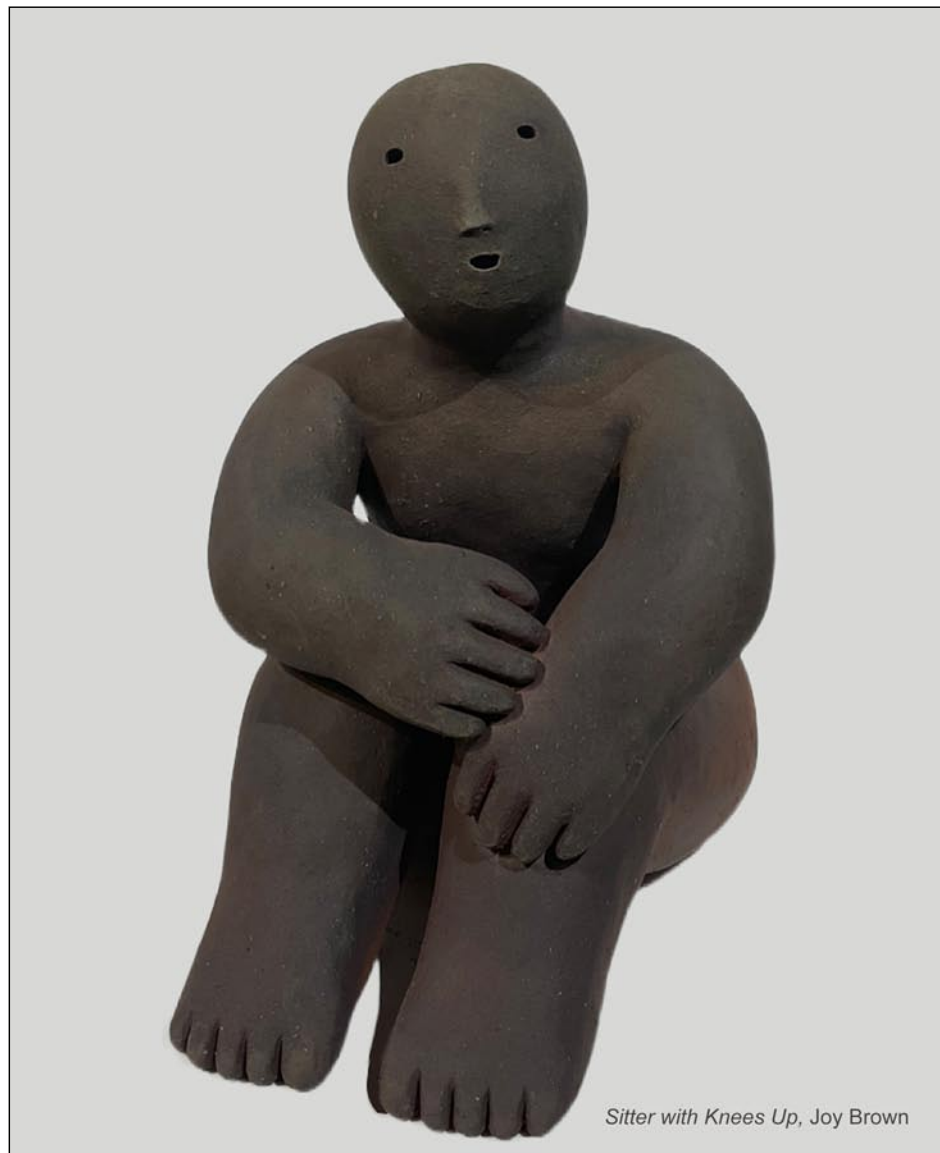
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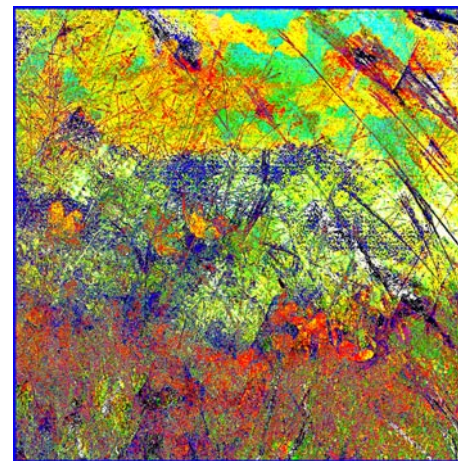


Work by Mona Wu

to enter a peaceful, magical place that is literally, beyond words." His artwork focuses on nature and nudes, with a combination of both.

Moskowitz has been a member of Artworks Gallery since 2017, and a member of Associated Artists of Winston-Salem since 2005. His work is aimed at sharing experiences in an emotionally engaging form that causes others to stop, ponder and reconsider what it is that they think they see.

A native of China, Mona Wu immigrated to the US in 1970. She studied Chinese painting and calligraphy in Hong Kong then



Work by Seth Moskowitz

received her BA in Art History from Salem College in 1996. She also studied Printmaking at WFU from 1997-2014. Wu has taught classes and workshops in Chinese art and Printmaking at Salem Community courses, Reynolda House of American Art, and Sawtooth School of Visual Art. In 2003 Wu was awarded as Sawtooth School of Visual

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