

Robert Bateman

Dislikes wildlife artist label, it limits him as illustrator

by Kelly Frank
Robert Bateman is
labelled a wildlife artist
and he doesn't like it—by

looking at his work, one
wonders why. From a
lion on a mountain to
soaring eagles, Bateman

shows himself to be the
true wildlife artist and in
this milieu, he truly
excels. Yet, he doesn't

like the label.

This is because Bateman is a painter with a statement that comes from his years of experience in the field. Bateman feels that by being portrayed as a wildlife artist, he is known merely as an illustrator and not as a true artist. He is sensitive about that, because as a child, he began his artistic endeavors as an illustrator.

Bateman is a former Rockwood area resident and now lives in north Nassagaweya.

Bateman, 50, feels he has come a long way and wants this recognized. He says it's not easy.

"I want to be known as an artist with a capital 'A', but there is a plot against those who do wildlife. They're labelled as illustrators, a lower form of artist," he says.

Bateman claims that wildlife artists rarely achieve the honor of having their work hung in a gallery, a claim to which he will personally attest. The reaction of a Swedish gallery about the impressions his wildlife creations evoked struck Bateman.

"I visited a state museum there and they loved my work," he told his audience. "Unfortunately they said they didn't have it in their budget to include my work in their museum of



Artist Robert Bateman

natural history. "Museum?" I said, "why not use my work in your art gallery?" That's the kind of thing I have to put up with."

When asked to be a guest speaker, Bateman is more often invited by a naturalists group than artists.

Outside influences shaped Bateman's personal approach to art. It started when he was a child, drawing pictures of animals.

"I had a log on which I drew pictures of owls—I had a picture of every kind of owl in North America!" he laughed. The critical opinion of a

friend encouraged him to take a closer look at his work as a teenager. Bateman realized that he was in fact drawing, not creating. This is where the outside influences took effect, and his art began to lean towards the abstract. Impressionism became his style. At this point in his career, Bateman has become opposed to detail in his work, and instead

tries to get an impression on canvas as quickly as possible, capturing the essence of his subject easily, in a few seconds. The result is a vibrant, rhythmic creation, distorted yet discernable.

Though Bateman's style has changed completely over the years, his subject content is still the same. He is a wildlife artist, with a capital 'A'.

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4-H Sheep Club

By Jamie Richardson

The February meeting of the Halton 4-H Sheep Club was held in conjunction with the Zone 3 Sheep Information Meeting at the Agricultural office, Feb. 12.

Dr. Curtis of O.V.C., University of Guelph, headed a panel of guests who talked on the topic of flock health and the disease, "scrapie".

The election of officers took place and they are as follows: President, Richard Stanley; Vice-President, Gerhard Treviranus; Secretary, Amanda Kunica; Press Reporter, Jamie Richardson.

The Club Leaders for 1981 are Doug Gardhouse, Don Harris, Joe Weeden, Jr., and Holly McGiffin.

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