



**Katonah Museum of Art**  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **Katonah Museum of Art Presents** *The Nest, an exhibition of art in nature*

**March 6 - June 19, 2016**

**Katonah, NY:** In a provocative display that incorporates contemporary art, relics from the natural world, and items of material culture, the forthcoming exhibition *The Nest, an exhibition of art in nature*, examines the exquisite beauty and profound symbolism of the nest in art and culture. Organized by the Katonah Museum of Art, the exhibition opens March 6 and remains on view through June 19, 2016 in the Beitzel and Righter Galleries. It continues the KMA's two-season thematic cycle of environmentally focused work.

## THE EXHIBITION

Drawing its inspiration from the extraordinary form of the bird's nest, the exhibition examines how the fundamental drive to gather, assemble, and create is a function of both nature and the artistic process. Whether it be a finely executed sculpture formed out of an intricate web of design or a fantastical nest that was in fact created by a bird, the exhibition offers a rare opportunity to consider the creative impulse from multiple vantage points. For many visitors, nest means "home," a place to find rest and protection. For others, it is a testament to the exceptional agility and speed of the smallest creatures who create individual habitats that are truly awe-inspiring. By incorporating works that exist within disparate realms—from art to outdoors—the exhibition prompts deep questions about the relationship between all living things, and the objects they produce for both pleasure and survival.



**Judy Pfaff**, *Time is Another River*, 2012, Honeycomb, cardboard, expanded foam, plastics, and fluorescent light, 94 x 72 x 20 inches, © Judy Pfaff, Courtesy of the artist

*The Nest* includes a stunning blend of authentic nests and over twenty works by eighteen artists from the United States, to Germany, to South Africa. In work that ranges from sculpture, painting, collage, photography, to video, these artists underscore the universality of this theme as a metaphor of home, creation, and the life of birds. Throughout the galleries, visitors encounter an exhibition rich in visual texture: sumptuously-colored feathers, shimmering gold leaf, organic twigs, neon plastic, minimalist black-and-white graphics, and more.

Some works invoke notions of protection, birth, and the physical human body, while others explore the nest in more symbolic terms.

Real birds' nests from the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History collection also populate the galleries, selections from one of the most extensive and significant collections in North America. Nests on loan to the KMA include those as diverse as the hornero bird's, made of mud and resembling a wood-fired oven, to that of the weaver bird, whose complex woven structures count among the most elaborate of birds' nests. The nests' presentation in the galleries, integrated amongst the works of art, suggest the many resonances between the human and natural worlds. In addition to these remarkable pieces, bird cams appear on monitors installed throughout the galleries, introducing a view of live birds into the context of natural materials and art objects.

## THE ARTISTS



**James Prosek**, *What once was is no more: Passing like a thought, flight into memory* (detail), 2014, Acrylic and vinyl paint on sheet rock, Site-specific installation for the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Courtesy of the artist and Schwartz-Wajahat, New York



**Björn Braun**, *Untitled* (zebra finch's nest), 2015, Coconut fiber, plastic bag, silver tinsel, golden tinsel, and artificial plastic plants, 4 ½ x 7 x 6 inches, Courtesy of the artist and Marianne Boesky Gallery

Artist and naturalist **James Prosek** will create a new site-specific installation in the Museum's Atrium. Prosek's past wall murals—featuring black and white images of numbered, silhouetted birds and other animals—have contemplated the ways in which humans attempt to order and classify the natural world. His work for the Katonah Museum of Art will incorporate wall-bound sculptural elements into the painted graphic imagery, representing a new evolution of the artist's practice.

Investigating the ways in which birds themselves act as makers, German artist **Björn Braun** collaborates with a pair of zebra finches he has raised to create nest sculptures from re-purposed materials, such as aluminum foil and colored string. **Judy Pfaff's** work, *Time is Another River*, integrates varied materials such as honeycomb, plastic, cardboard, and foam in a human-scale, nest-like form that evokes the making methods of both organic and architectural construction.

**Dove Bradshaw** weaves together honey locust thorns in an accumulative strategy akin to that used by birds when making their nests. Titled *Home*, the work suggests the animal and human need for dwelling, and the effort to create a structure of protection. In another work, Bradshaw casts a goose eggshell in 18 karat gold, invoking the Aesop's fable *The Goose That Laid the Golden Egg*—a warning against greed and the desire for immediacy.

Rather than considering tales related to the nest and its occupants, **Paul Villinski** explores the relationship between the nest and the physical human body. His life-size, sculptural self-portrait includes a bird's nest settled in the figure's belly. Additional artists (including **Sharon Beals**, **Sanford Biggers**, **John Burtles**, **Walton Ford**, **Shiela Hale**, **Fiona Hall**, **Porky Hefer**, **Nina Katchadourian**, **Louise Lawler**, **Hunt Slonem**, **Kiki Smith**, **Andreas Sterzing**, and **David Wojnarowicz** among others) continue such lines of investigation into the aesthetic forms and metaphorical themes of the nest.

*The Nest, an exhibition of art in nature* provides an unexpected lens through which to observe the fascinating parallels between human and animal behavior, raising timely questions about the survival of the birds and their habitats in our increasingly fragile ecological world.

## **OPENING RECEPTION:**

### **I<sup>st</sup> LOOK**

Saturday, March 5, 4 - 6PM

Curator's talk and walkthrough at 5PM

Curator's Circle level members and above

Preview the exhibition before it opens. Associate Curator Elizabeth Rooklidge leads a walkthrough of the exhibition at 5PM.

### **Members' Preview**

Saturday, March 5, 6 - 8PM

Docent tour at 6:30PM

All levels of membership

KMA members receive first-access to exhibitions. Join a docent tour of *The Nest, an exhibition of art and nature* at 6:30PM.

## **SUPPORT:**

*The Nest, an exhibition of art in nature* is made possible by support from Victoria and Stephen Morris, Judy and Michael Steinhardt, The Durst Organization, and George Bianco. The Katonah Museum of Art is supported in part by Arts Westchester with support by the Westchester County Government, The New York State Council on the Arts with support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

## **ABOUT THE KATONAH MUSEUM OF ART:**

The Katonah Museum of Art, through innovative exhibition and education programs, promotes the understanding and enjoyment of the visual arts for diverse audiences. The Museum presents exhibitions that explore ideas about art, culture, and society – past and present.

## **CURRENT AND UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS:**

Aaron Curry, *UGLY MESS*

through June 19, 2016

Young Artists

February 7 - 21, 2016

*The Nest, an exhibition of art and nature*

March 6 - June 19, 2016

*Matisse Drawings: Curated by Ellsworth Kelly*

Fall 2016

**The Katonah Museum of Art** is located at 134 Jay Street, Katonah, NY 10536. Museum hours are: Tuesday through Saturday from 10am - 5pm, Sunday from 12pm - 5pm, closed Monday. General admission: \$10 adults, \$5 seniors & students. Members & children under the age of 12 always enter free. For more information, please call (914) 232-9555 or visit [www.katonahmuseum.org](http://www.katonahmuseum.org).

Stay connected with the Katonah Museum of Art on Facebook ([facebook.com/KatonahMuseum](https://facebook.com/KatonahMuseum)), Instagram (@KatonahMuseum) and Twitter (@KatonahMuseum.)

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