

THE PERTSHIRE GALLERY

Martin Ridley

Martin has worked as a professional wildlife artist since 1989 and his home and studio are now located in Pitlochry. When asked what inspires him, Martin simply answers "the natural world". An enthusiastic observer of nature he thoroughly enjoys the creative challenge of capturing his experiences.

Graduating in 1988 from the Carmarthenshire College of Technology and Art with the highest awards ever given to a student completing the wildlife illustration course, he was not only awarded a distinction but was nominated course, faculty and college student of the year.

In 1999 a painting was selected for the prestigious Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Birds in Art exhibition in the USA. The painting was further selected from the show to go on tour. Works are exhibited annually at The Society of Wildlife Artists of which he has been elected an associate member.

Spring 2019 was his ninth Artist in Residency at The Society of Wildlife Art of The Nations at Nature in Art, Gloucestershire. April 2000 saw his second successful exhibition at The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge. Martin's work appeared on regional television and he has diversified into giving talks about his work.

A painter of both mammals and birds Martin Ridley has spent much time developing a knowledge of the field, which is clearly reflected in his work. Combined with conceptual composition his attention to animal behaviour, habitat detail and lighting creates an amazingly accurate and artistic record of his nature encounters. Particular attention is given to integrating his subjects into their natural habitat. Any featured rocks and branches are likely to be given as much attention as the animal content. He prefers to depict the wildlife in a setting that records the "whole" experience of an encounter and the "whole" may be more about the moody landscape than the focal point of a deer placed carefully to offer scale.

Patterns found within nature hold a particular attraction and are often a key feature within his work. Martin derives much of his satisfaction in the studio by exploring the possibilities of composition. The rendering of weather conditions to create atmospheric situations then enhances this compositional creativity.

Inspirations are principally collected during extensive periods of fieldwork when Martin tends to concentrate his observations on one species at a time enabling him to attain an in-depth understanding of behaviour. This has involved activities such as going out in the snow at 4.30am to watch displaying black grouse from a portable hide and nightly visits to badgers and foxes resulting in their eventual habituation to his presence.

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Awards:

At The Wildlife Art Society's 1995 Exhibition at the Westminster Galleries in London, Martin was awarded Best Painting in Show, Best Oil Painting and Best Newcomer. In 1997 he was a finalist in the Laing sponsored seascape and landscape painting competition and in the following year two works were finalists in the touring Nature in Art exhibition.

Publications:

A plethora of Martin's images have gone into printed circulation including illustrations for books, magazines, prints, cards, stamps and calendar designs.

He has the cover and a chapter in the book *Deer: Artists' Impressions* by Quiller Press (Foreword by Prince Charles)

In 2018 one of Martin's designs was licenced by the fashion brand "Stella McCartney". His image of red deer was used to create a shirt worn by Justin Timberlake. He wore it whilst he performed the halftime show at the Superbowl. It was then used again for his "Man of the Woods World Tour. An amazing 100 million people watched the performance and Martin spent the best part of a week doing interviews after the story went viral! There is plenty of coverage on the internet.

Artworks have been utilized as covers for the following publications; 1999 autumn issue of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust magazine, the WeBs Wetland Bird Survey 1994-95 and 1997-98. Published images include; several twelve-piece calendars, which were sold in aid of The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the cover image for The Birdwatchers Yearbook and Diary.

Exhibition Venues:

Nature in Art, Twigworth, Gloucestershire

Tryon Gallery, 7 Bury Street, St. James's, London

The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge and The Wetlands Centre, London

The House of Bruar, Perthshire

Strathearn Gallery, Crieff

RSPB Vane Farm, Loch Leven, Kinross, Scotland

John Noott Galleries, Broadway, Worcestershire

Nigel Stacy-Marks Gallery, Perth