

Westword DENVER Blogs News Music Calendar Restaurants Search Westword Arts Movies The Ads Classifieds

Westword DENVER WEB AWARDS +1

SHOW AND TELL ARTS CULTURE

TOP blog STORIES Lists Our most memorable Muppet cameos Q&A A Movember update from the American Mustache By Jeff Oite Books One Book, One Denver: May the best dog win Roller Derby Roller Derby girls...will be girls By Melaine Asmar

Art John Bonath on A Strange Beauty at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science

By Susan Froyd Tue., Oct. 25 2011 at 12:20 PM Comments (1)

Share Like +1 Submit 1 retweet 0 Digg



"Medusa Bones," by John Bonath. Denver Museum of Nature & Science.

Photographer John Bonath's spectacular three-level show, A Strange Beauty, which opened at the end of September at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, encourages visitors to explore a massive, hidden-away portion of the museum collection in an unusual and contemporary way.

Bonath and DMNS zoology collections manager Jeff Stephenson will offer some insight into the show's art/science crossover during a lecture tonight at 7 p.m. at the museum.

"It's more than a show," Bonath says of the mammoth exhibit, which encompasses 62 large-scale works. "It's more like three huge solo shows on three floors. There's been nothing like that ever before there. They've never, ever used the third floor of that space for anything, but it's such a great space."



"Rhino Pupa," John Bonath.

"They've been so supportive," Bonath explains. "I've worked with so many people in different departments and programs -- all these managers and curators in the collections, the productions team -- that I felt like I needed to clone myself just to try and keep up with them."

It also helps that Bonath had nearly complete freedom in his use of the vast collection. "I could look through 1,500 things, going through drawer after drawer," he remembers. "It was such an adrenaline rush. I would take little snapshots to remember what I think I might want to review, maybe 150 of them, and then I'd spend hours going over them to edit them down and come up with ideas. So I would eventually edit my list down to ten, and then I'd e-mail the manager and say, 'I would like to work with these things. What is their status?'"

Though he doesn't admit it, in conversation Bonath reveals himself to be something of a scientist, too, ever concerned with things that most of us don't think about, like the way light can affect how we see a work of art.

Some of the pieces in the show, which are built up with pigments, have a dimensional quality and an iridescence that are enhanced by the glare from the museum atrium's three-story wall of windows. "It brings out little things you might see only in certain instances," Bonath notes. "That glare adds a thing that no one's ever seen in them before, and it changes at different times of day."



"Artemis and Actaeon," John Bonath.

Now that the exhibit is up, Bonath is also finding that a show at an institution like the DMNS offers a better way to connect people to the art experience. "The more I work in art, the more I get tired of things being so inaccessible to people," he says.

"After the public wandered in and saw it, a seventy-year-old lady called the museum," he adds. "At length, she went on, reprimanding then for not promoting the show better. She said, 'I'm seventy years old, and I don't know much about art, but this kid is a genius. Seeing this show is like hearing a Mozart sonata for first time. I get choked up thinking about that.'"

A Strange Beauty remains on view at the DMNS, 2001 Colorado Boulevard, through next February. For more information, call 303-322-7009.

And to keep up with the Froyd's-eye-view of arts and culture in Denver, "like" my fan page on Facebook.

Follow us on Twitter! Like us on Facebook!

Location Info Denver Museum of Nature and Science 2001 Colorado Blvd., Denver, CO Category: General

Tags: A Strange Beauty, Denver Museum of Nature and Science, John Bonath

Related Content The Inner Lives Of Things October 20, 2011 Photos: "Strange Beauty" by John Bonath September 30, 2011 Just Whistle a Happy Tune September 29, 2011 The ten dumbest dinosaur movie taglines September 15, 2011 T. rex, O.G. September 29, 2011

More Links from Around the Web Cosplay Girls Look Prettier Than In Comics! Alternative Superman Story (With Girls!) Which Tattoos Look Best On Body? You'll Never Regret If You See The Full Picture!

Add New Comment Optional: Login below.

Connect Twitter OpenID Yahoo! DISQUS

Showing 1 comment Sort by Oldest first

Real-time updating is enabled. (Pause) Kat 2 weeks ago I went to the gallery show and I must say that the show was amazing! And John is such an amazing guy to talk to.

Flag Like Reply

Most Popular Stories

- Hobo nickels: Colorado artist Adam Leech needs help to highlight the lost folk-art form
The 10 best David Sedaris quotes from last night's lecture, presented free of context
Photos: Roller derby super-fans spotted at the WFTDA championships
10 things to do for \$10 this weekend, November 11-13, 2011
How to survive the H&M opening at Denver Pavilions (with bonus photos of the interior!)

TODAY'S DEAL IN DENVER SAVE 50% ROBUST ROOM \$15 for \$30 of food and drinks at the Robusto Room GET IT NOW

Santa Dash for Cash Frisco Main Street December 3rd

Westword Show and Tell on Facebook 356 people like Westword Show and Tell.

signup Sign up for free stuff, news info & more! enter email

Denver Classifieds buy, sell, trade (5,555) musician (568) rentals (832) jobs (655) personals (462) adult entertainment (8,682)

Slideshows WFTDA Roller Derby After-Party Lumberjack party at the Gin Mill Denver Arts Week Kicks Off

Tools Search Show and Tell Follow us on: send us your tips Categories... Archives...

Make TIME Make MEMORIES DENVER MILE HIGH HOLIDAYS

Find A Coupon Search by Category Zip Code Keywords Search Popular Coupons Buy 2 Treatments, Get the 3rd 1/2 Off!

Twitter Feed Follow westwordculture on Twitter westwordculture RT @hughgraham: Nice writeup by Michael Paglia @westword.

VVM on Digg Upcoming Popular All Time 1 diggs Australian Electronic Artist Pogo On Being Jailed And Banned from the USA: 'It Was Proper Incarceration, Courtesy of The Agency Group'

Links Send story tips, photos and video to showandtell@westword.com, and follow us on Twitter. Denver Fashion Denver Fashion Beat Denver Post Fashion 303 Magazine Denver a la Mode Denver Galleries Museum of Contemporary Art Denver Space Gallery Pirate Contemporary Art Edge Gallery Great Western Art Gallery William Havu Gallery Pop Culture Defamer dlisted The Peck Perez Hilton Pop Candy (USA Today) Pop Watch (EW.com) Topless Robot The Daily What Ostrow Off The Record Men's Fashion A Continuous Lean Street Etiquette Women's Fashion What I Wore Style Rookie Video Games Joystick Division Kotaku VVM Arts Blogs Cultist (Miami) Dressing Room (Minneapolis) Jackalope Ranch (Phoenix) Style Council (Los Angeles)

FOLLOW WESTWOOD ON foursquare TO DISCOVER THE BEST SPOTS IN DENVER FOLLOW NOW