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‘James Prosek: Un-Natural History’ Opens October 21 At Bellarmine Museum Of Art

FAIRFIELD, CONN. — Fairfield University’s Bellarmine Museum of Art’s newest exhibition, “James Prosek: Un-Natural History,” opens October 21 and remains on view to December 21. This visually exciting, intellectually stimulating show opens to the public with a free reception on October 21 at 5 pm.

The majority of the artist’s nearly 20 paintings on view are watercolors. One of Prosek’s dramatic tondos (or round painting) painted in oil on panel is also included. Complementing these paintings are several taxidermied specimens, mediated by the artist, that “speak” to their two-dimensional counterparts, installed in close proximity. The exhibition features many new works by Prosek, including some he executed specifically for this exhibition.

A native of Easton, Conn., Prosek’s prowess as an artist and an intellectual is matched by his talent as an author and wordsmith. His first book, *Trout: an Illustrated History* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), features 70 of his own watercolor paintings of the trout of North America and established his reputation as a naturalist and a remarkably gifted artist.

The exhibition features a number of works never before displayed publicly, such as the artist’s monumental watercolor of a sailfish, painted to scale at more than 8 feet in



James Prosek, “Sailfish,” 2010, watercolor, gouache, colored pencil and graphite on tea-stained paper. Image courtesy of the artist and Waqas Wahat, New York City.

length. The exhibition also debuts several new pieces Prosek created specifically for this show, including a taxidermied fox, complete with bird wings and custom-made wax flowers, and a meticulously rendered cockatiel, whose extravagant rose-hued plumage is replaced in areas with tools from a Swiss Army knife.

“Parakeets,” 2006, also on view, is a testament to the artist’s facility in oil. This excellent example of a tondo anchors the show and provides a dramatic focal point for visitors to the Bellarmine’s main gallery. In this and other works Prosek maintains a

careful tension between the art of illustration and natural history and the realm of the fantastic achieved through a minute attention to detail and carefully counter-balanced with a deft painterly touch and inspired composition sensibilities. The net effect for the viewer is a visceral experience, as visually captivating as it is intellectually compelling.

The Bellarmine Museum of Art is in Bellarmine Hall on the campus of Fairfield University at 1073 North Benson Road. Admission is free. Visit www.fairfield.edu/museum or call 203-254-4000, ext 4046 for information.

www.AntiquesandTheArts.com

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