

It's a Wildlife

Humans have always used art to express themselves and interpret the world around them through ritual, observation and even play. Since animals have also been such an important part of human history, its not surprising the people who created early cave paintings in Europe and petroglyphs in North America often featured wildlife as subject matter for their art. Flash forward to the current day and artists are still fascinated by animals. Local artists April Howland, Maria Mahar and Thomas Strich are among those artists inspired by animals and have a sincere respect for the natural world. Interestingly, these artists all have different art making styles and techniques, but each of them go out into nature to find their subjects. Howland is a painter but often uses her own photographs of her subjects as starting points for the painting process in her studio. Mahar and Strich are both photographers and incorporate their camera work into fine art photography, documentary videos, educational ebooks and most recently, coloring book pages.



Sidekick, April Howland

April Howland, Phoenix

When Howland was four years old, her mother bought her books that taught her how to draw cats and dogs. Since then, she has spent many years studying and painting animals. After receiving a degree in graphic design, Howland continued her fine art studies at Scottsdale Artists School to further her artistic talents. She has traveled from Alaska to Africa searching for inspiration for her wildlife series and animal portrait business. Howland now operates an open studio with ARTlink and “First and Third Fridays” in Phoenix. She enjoys participating in art festivals in Arizona and also creates custom pet portraits for collectors throughout the country. While Howland paints in a realistic style, she emphasizes bright colors to give her works a modern touch.



Photo by Thomas Strich and Maria Mahar.

Maria Mahar and Thomas Strich, Tempe

Mahar has a degree in biology while Strich has degrees in art theory and sculpture. This married couple enjoy exploring the connections between art and science together by observing and documenting animals. Mahar took an interest in nature from a young age which led her to study Biology in college. As a young student, Strich birdwatched and spent a lot of time drawing new creatures he invented. Recently, they became fascinated with hummingbirds that built a nest in their own backyard. Today, this collaboration has lead to the development of several projects including the interactive ebook, *Hover: Hummingbirds in the United States* which is also on display at the computer tablet station and coloring book pages which you can explore at the coloring page station.