





WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

Animals aren't Marina
Cano's job; they're her life

BY STEPHANIE BOOZER

Stories abound about the creative symbiosis between artists and their surroundings. Beautiful places and things inspire us to create. The things we create add to life's richness and enhance the human experience.

Wildlife photographer Marina Cano is well attuned to this fluid partnership. She grew up and still lives in Cantabria, a jewel of wild, natural landscapes on the northern coast of Spain. As a child, Cano often accompanied her amateur photographer father on his early morning treks to photograph the storms that rumbled along the coast. His love of nature and photography found a ready protégé in his young daughter.

"I live in one of the most beautiful places on earth, with dream landscapes, wild coast, deep forests, and extraordinary mountains," Cano says. "It would be impossible not to fall in love with nature and take pictures of that beauty."

LYRICAL

Cano's artistic sensibilities were also nurtured by a musical muse, and for a time she pursued a serious course of study with her flute. Though photography won out as a career, the triumvirate of music, landscape, and photography created an artistic synergy in her.

"For me there is a strong connection with music and photography since my skills are all oriented toward art," she explains. "I love music and find it as a great way to express, but photography is beyond that. It is all about aesthetic, rhythm, harmony, and sensibility."

That makes perfect sense when you look at Cano's body of work. Her images have a lyrical quality. Humor, compassion, and a sense of human expression (even if it's purely in the imagination of the viewer) seem to weave the beginnings of an intricate story.

"My work is fine art photography as opposed to documentary photography, which tends not to be common amongst most wildlife photographers," she says. "Most lovers of wildlife photography seem to love the way I capture intimate moments in my work. I never thought myself to be finding a style. I just do what I feel at any moment. I follow my instinct. I like to break rules."

WORLD TRAVELER

Cano's home is only 20 minutes away from the Cabárceno Wildlife Park, home to 100

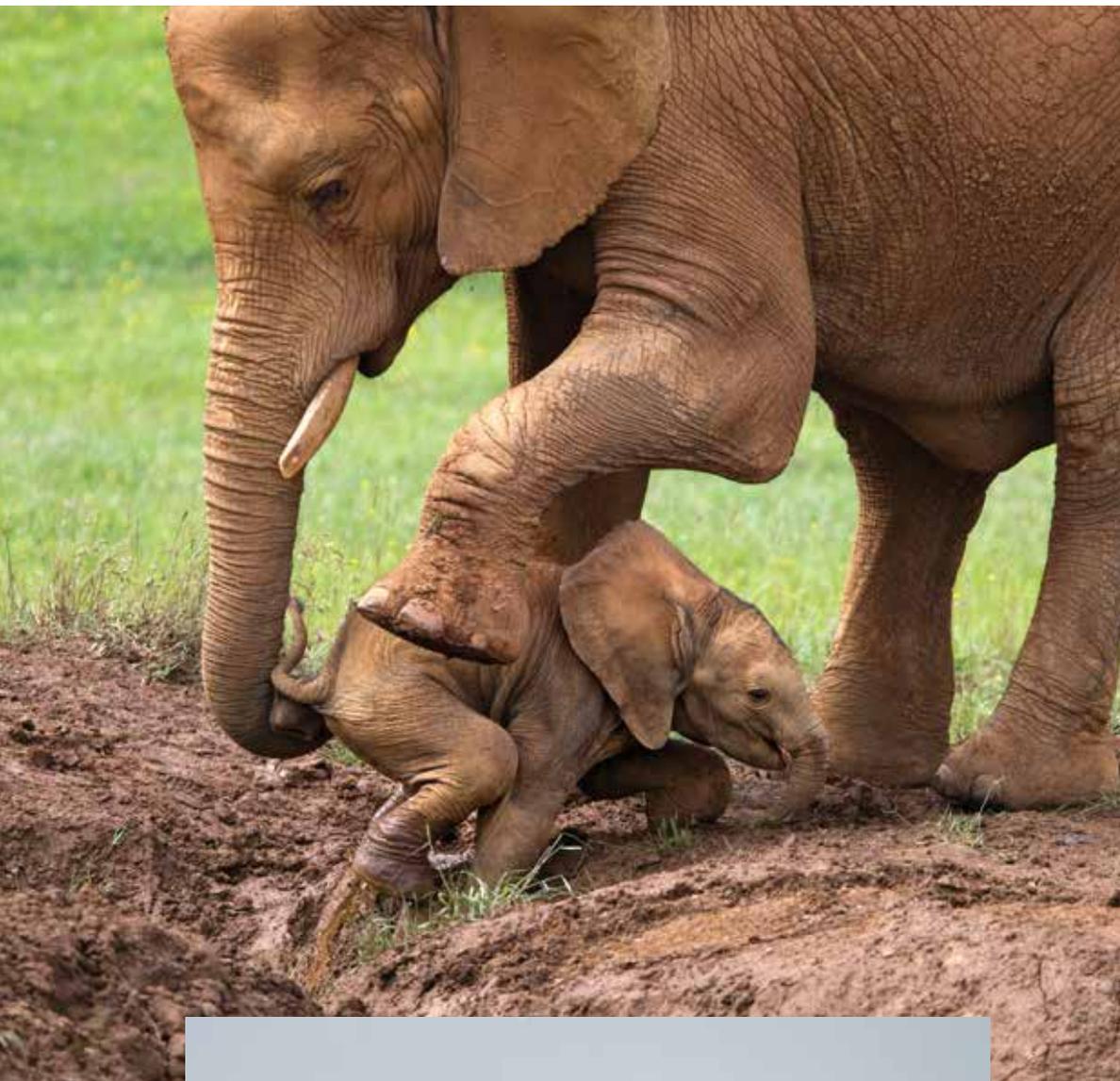


IN THE BAG

On any given day, Marina Cano might be waiting quietly to record a perfect primate-to-primate nuzzle in the field or traversing the dramatic landscape of her coastal town. Her Lowepro gear bag is for trusted essentials only, she says, to keep her light on her feet.

- Canon EOS-1D Mark IV camera
- Canon 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS USM EF lens
- Canon 300mm f/2.8L IS II USM EF lens
- Tripod
- Canon 16-35mm f/2.8L II USM EF lens
- Cotton Carrier Camera Vest

On her most recent trip to Namibia, Canon loaned Cano a Canon EOS-1D X camera and Canon 600mm f/4L IS II USM EF lens.



species of animals hailing from five continents, all naturally contained on land that was once nearly wasted as an opencast mine. Animals include tigers, elephants, jaguars, ostriches, wallabies, and wolves. Cano has been photographing animals in the park for the past 10 years, going there nearly every day she's home. In 2009 she published a coffee table book of her best from the park, titled "Cabárceno." In 2012, she published a second book, "Drama and Intimacy," a careful selection of special animal moments culled from her adventures in South Africa, Kenya, England, and Carbárceno. A third title, "Babies of the Wild" was released as an ebook in January.

While Cano's photography is most frequently sold as fine art prints, her work also appears worldwide in magazines, on websites, and on posters and postcards. She's a busy traveler for her workshops, exhibitions, and speaking engagements, where she takes full advantage of the native flora and fauna. Her recent designation as a Canon Explorer is apt. As an example, Cano started 2014 by giving a talk in Israel, where she then ventured out to photograph the flocks of nearly 250,000 cranes that live in the Hula Valley, then to capture the pods of dolphins that frolic off the

coast of the resort town Eilat. She went on to Cuba, then Spain (Malaga and Barcelona), then was invited to Namibia's Erindi private game reserve and Etosha National Park. She made a stop in Finland before returning home to Cantabria.

"I travel as often as I can, and I love it," she says. "I have to make plans about certain things, like trips, safaris, or books, but with regard to pictures, I go where I want to go. If there is a big storm, then I go and take pictures. And after some years, I know I have a good series on the sea. With animals, it's the same. I wait with pleasure for something spontaneous to happen."

PART OF NATURE

Cano says it's often a misconception that being a wildlife photographer means mas-





tering the art of patience.

“To be patient means that you want to finish or go to another place because you are not having fun,” she says. “While I wait for something I’m enjoying it very much. To be in nature watching animals or to spend time with them is nothing you have to be patient about. It’s something to enjoy.”

For her, this isn’t work at all. It’s spending time in the landscapes that inspire her, watching the animals that she adores. And though she didn’t initially intend to convey an agenda through her work, she’s mindful that images are important banners amidst the increasingly grim predictions for natural habitats across the planet.

“I know my images tell something, express feelings, capture special moments,” she says. “I started taking wildlife pictures for the pleasure of taking pictures. Nowadays, because I fell in love with [wildlife], I want my pictures to make people love them and to get involved in nature conservation.”

Ten percent of the proceeds from her second book went to the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, an organization working primarily with orphan elephants in Nairobi.

“The more time I spend with animals, the more deeply I love them,” Cano says. “I feel very lucky.” •

marinacano.com

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