Our Feathered Friends Showcases Local Birds at the Wildling Museum of Art & Nature

- Artworks from George Lockwood, Jim Hodgson, and René C. Reyes
- On view March 17 – July 30, 2018
- Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Luis Obispo county bird species represented

(Solvang, CA, March 7, 2018) – The Valley Oak Gallery at the Wildling Museum of Art & Nature has gone to the birds. Our Feathered Friends: Birds of the Tri-Counties features the paintings of three artists, Jim Hodgson, René C. Reyes and George Lockwood, who share their unique artistic perspectives of bird species that can be found in the tri-county region (Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo).

Santa Barbara County and the overall region is renowned for bird species diversity and is a hotspot for birders with the central coast a stop along the migratory Pacific Flyway.

Also in the gallery, a monitor will be showing the short film by Michael Love, The Snowy Plover and You. Featured in the NatureTrack Film Festival, this film documents the decline in population of the snowy plover and how it can be reversed.

During the exhibition enjoy birding lectures and excursions to expand your knowledge of local birds. On Saturday, March 24, the Wildling will charter a tour of Lake Cachuma, where guests are sure to spot some of our local feathered species with the help of a naturalist. Tickets for the boat tour are available at www.wildlingmuseum.org or by calling 805-686-8315.

About Jim Hodgson:

James F. Hodgson was born in Alberta, Canada in 1956 and grew up in Santa Barbara. Jim began his love of bird watching at age eleven when he went on his first Audubon bird watching trip. He later began sketching and painting birds and wildlife as part his lifelong study of birds, reptiles and mammals.

Jim’s successful career as a mechanical designer in the engineering field has honed his illustrative technique. His precision and attention to detail is reflected in his unique painting style, which combines accurate detail with muted abstract backgrounds.
He spends countless hours in the field drawing inspiration from actual experiences and encounters with his subjects. Jim uses field notes, sketches and his own photography to compose his pieces in the studio. Careful attention is given to the authenticity of habitat and anatomy of his subjects.

Jim believes it’s imperative that we protect our remaining wild lands and habitats to ensure rich biodiversity and ecological health of the planet. “It would be such a loss for future generations to not know the beauty of these creatures.” He hopes his paintings will help the viewer appreciate how much is at stake and motivate them to protect our environment.

Jim is a self-taught painter and works primarily in oil on hand-stretched linen canvas and custom frames each piece. He never compromises on the quality of materials to ensure his paintings will be around for hundreds of years. Jim’s paintings hang in private homes and collections throughout the Western United States and Canada.

**About George Lockwood:**
George developed a passion for wildlife and the outdoors while camping, hunting and fishing in the western United States and Mexico as a boy. While earning his Agricultural Business Management Degree at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, he spent the summer months packing mules in Yosemite National Park. Experience with livestock and the outdoors took him to Alaska where he obtained his guide license. George has guided clients to some of the most remote and beautiful corners of Alaska. Art had been a hobby until he was commissioned to paint specific animals and places for people he had guided. Thus he began to paint professionally during the winter months specializing in wildlife and landscape.

In 1989 he moved to Prescott, Arizona to broaden his range of subject matter and devote more attention to art. Here he studied and painted the great variety of wildlife and landscape for four years. George continued to guide in Alaska for 19 years.

George’s art is inspired by first-hand knowledge. His paintings are a record of experiences and they can be found in private and corporate collections throughout the United States and around the world.

**About René C. Reyes**
Growing up in the Philippines, René’s first sketch was of a photo of two birds his grandfather had hanging on the wall. Today, hundreds of art pieces later, he remains fascinated and appreciative of this opportunity to share the beauty of our natural world. His compositions are widely varied,
though a common thread is Rene’s gift of capturing the essence of each subject. René’s goal is to paint the more than 600 species of bird species found in California. René lives in Northern California, with his wife and two daughters.

René Reyes’ *Snowy Plover* was part of the Wildling’s *Animals: A-Z* exhibition in 2017, which inspired Executive Director, Stacey Otte-Demangate to reach out to Reyes for this show.

**Image Credits:**
Page 1: Jim Hodgson, *Bullock’s Oriole*, oil on linen
Page 2 middle: George Lockwood, *The Settlers*, acrylic
Page 2 bottom: René C. Reyes, *Hermit Thrush*, watercolor

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*The Wildling Museum of Art & Nature*, where art and nature meet, offers visitors a unique perspective on the importance of preserving our natural heritage. Through the eyes of artists, education and field experiences, guests can renew their relationship with the wilderness and understand its fragile nature – hopefully leaving more committed toward ensuring those spaces remain for future generations.

*The Museum is open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and on weekends from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (closed on Tuesdays). For more information, to volunteer and/or join as a member to support this important local arts and nature institution, please visit* [www.wildlingmuseum.org](http://www.wildlingmuseum.org).