

**UPCOMING SHOW**  
Up to 20 works  
September 1-20, 2010  
Altamira Fine Art  
172 Center Street  
Jackson, WY 83001  
(307) 739-4700

**SHOW LOCATION JACKSON, WY**



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**MARY ROBERSON**



## *Celebrating the surreal*

Like many artists, Mary Roberson of Idaho finds painting extremely cathartic. Having struggled with depression throughout her life, she discovered years ago that painting was the path to self-love.

"That led me to quit drinking and my depression was lifted. It's like I'm new compared to the early 1990s," recalls Roberson.

The artist paints out of extreme love and respect for wildlife and the environment, and each painting is a result of that. Wildlife and nature are her sources of both inspiration and reaffirmation.

"My inspiration is as I look at my world and listen to the news, we as humans dislike each other, but the least we can do is care for our animals. It's my way to counterbalance that sadness," she notes. "When I struggle, I watch the critters who teach me the greatest value of all—simplicity and joy."

Roberson is the featured painter at this

year's *Western Visions* show at the National Museum of Wildlife Art. In July 2005, her painting, *The Mystic Forest*, was purchased by the museum and was accepted into the *Artists for a New Century II* exhibit. It will remain part of the museum's permanent collection.

Roberson's representational style against abstract backgrounds conveys a sense of understatement—opaquely visible to the viewer. She begins each work without any preconceived ideas but rather lets it develop one brushstroke at a time. If the finished canvas is something she would buy, then she signs it.

"When intellect enters the picture creativity exits. I'm always seeing things in new ways as my consciousness expands. Everything is fresh," says Roberson. "When I approach a painting, rather than having a theme or idea, I think of a title and that dictates where the piece goes. My titles are usually about respect or humor."

Roberson considers herself "a lover of

nature. I don't call myself a wildlife artist." This affinity for nature—and noticing the unnoticed—translates to her painting and is among the elements that sets her work apart.

"I think the collector notices that it's set apart from typical 'wildlife,'" she says. "It's not intended to be a wildlife painting; it's an expression of my story about wildlife."

Using muted colors of nature—amber, earth tones, and subtle greens—Roberson believes layers and texture are extremely important when creating a painting because they give the piece movement.

"I use a lot of abstract elements, and I look at every square inch of my painting," she adds. "I don't want color to get in the way of composition. These are the colors in nature. How can I improve on that?"

Roberson's imagery isn't based on true reality.

"I like viewers to see that perhaps reality isn't as serious as we perceive," she says.



*The Rest of Giants*, oil on canvas, 48 x 96"



*Little Visitor*, oil on canvas, 78 x 48"



*From the Noble Forest*, oil on canvas, 78 x 48"



*Redwing Debate*, oil on wood and canvas, 9 x 12"



*A Yellow Headed Blackbird For You*, oil on canvas with wood, 7¼ x 5¼"

The artist gains technical reference material by visiting Yellowstone and Glacier national parks, the Tetons, or even zoos. Using a good spotting scope, she does blind sketches while observing the wildlife.

"When I do a painting I think that 80 percent of it comes from observation," she explains. "My paintings also come from years studying human anatomy, so I have a solid foundation for sketching and I feel confident taking liberties and let creativity guide the piece."


The monochromatic effect seen in *Little Visitor* carries through in Roberson's other work as well, such as *The Rest of Giants*, which was heavily influenced by petroglyphs and those who painted them.

"They painted them for the same reason I paint," says Roberson. "I'm also influenced by the textures of the petroglyphs."

*Little Visitor* is also among Roberson's all-time favorites, she says, "because of the abstract elements and the composition."

She continues, "I've seen cubs climbing trees and I put together 20 or 30 things I've seen. They're looking at this owl and think it's going to get them. It intermingles black bear and ravens with grizzlies and everyone is having fun; it's like the baby animals don't notice boundaries. And I love dominant and dead trees because of the hidden significance for wildlife and the abstract and lack of color."

Altamira Fine Art will host a solo show of Roberson's new work titled *Celebrating the Surreal* September 1 through 20. An artist reception will be held Wednesday, September 15, 5 to 7 p.m. 🐾

For a direct link to the exhibiting gallery go to  [www.westernartcollector.com](http://www.westernartcollector.com)

### Price Range Indicator

Our at-a-glance Price Range Indicator shows what you can expect to pay for this artist's work.

	Small	Medium	Large
2001	\$300-\$475	\$800-\$2,000	\$4,000-\$6,000
2004	\$500-\$1,200	\$1,500-\$3,000	\$8,000-\$16,000
2010	\$1,000-\$2,400	\$3,200-\$4,000	\$16,000-\$38,000