

KING OF BEASTS

A STUDY OF THE AFRICAN LION BY JOHN BANOVICH





The Nevada Museum of Art has organized an exhibition titled *King of Beasts: A Study of the African Lion*, featuring paintings by esteemed wildlife painter John Banovich, alongside historical artworks dating from the 15th through 20th centuries by internationally renowned artists such as Delacroix, Dürer, Friese, Kuhnert, Rembrandt and Stubbs, all focused on depicting the extraordinary African Lion. An internationally recognized artist who has studied lions for decades, Banovich has created a body of work that is also an homage to these animals. *King of Beasts* features artworks as well as three-dimensional displays that explore questions about mankind's deep fear, love, and admiration for these creatures. The exhibition spans nearly twenty-five years of work and assembles his body of work focused on African Lions for the very first time.

In Africa, the lion has served as a symbol of strength, bravery, and physical prowess among many cultures. However, today nearly all wild lions are found within small regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, and a tiny population exists in India. Outside of protected areas, the African Lion is disappearing at an alarming rate. Conservationists agree that the remaining population must be protected if these magnificent creatures are to survive.

King of Beasts will travel from the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno, Nevada to the Witte Museum in San Antonio, Texas.

King, 2013
Oil on Belgian linen, 36 x 24



KING OF BEASTS

A STUDY OF THE AFRICAN LION BY JOHN BANOVICH

NEVADA MUSEUM OF ART

Reno, Nevada

November 9, 2019 – February 16, 2020

THE WITTE MUSEUM

San Antonio, Texas

April 4, 2020 – September 27, 2020

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ABOUT THE ARTWORK – PAST MASTERS:

Historical artworks dating from the 15th through 20th centuries by internationally renowned artists such as Delacroix, Dürer, Friese, Kuhnert, Kuhn, Rembrandt, Stubbs and others are on display and express man's depiction of the lion throughout history.

Works by artists such as Wilhelm Kuhnert were the inspiration for successive generations of animal painters. His first trip to Africa in 1891-92 provided him with the opportunity to study the animals of the Serengeti and Masai for the first time in their natural habitat and capturing the essence of what it is to be a lion. Following in the Kuhnert's footsteps, Bob Kuhn's study of the lions further divulged their world and their vulnerability. During Kuhn's time the population started to decline and now, during John Banovich's time we all must discover how to save them.

Clockwise from left:

Bob Kuhn, *Ladies in Waiting*, 1975. Acrylic on board. 21 x 29 inches. Alan & Nancy Maiss Collection

Auguste Andre Lancon (French, 1836 – 1887), *Lion on Back*, 1876. Ink on paper. 16 1/2 x 21 1/2 inches. JKM Collection®, National Museum of Wildlife Art.

George Stubbs (British, 1724 – 1806), *A Horse Attacked by a Lion*, 1788. Etching on paper. 10 7/8 x 14 inches. Gift of the 1999 Collectors Circle, National Museum of Wildlife Art.





Clockwise from right:

Wilhelm Kuhnert, *A Lion and a Lioness Stalking Zebra in the Ngorongoro Crater*
Oil on canvas. 35 1/2 x 48 1/2 inches, Anne Brokinton Lee Collection

Richard Friese (German, 1854 – 1918), *Lion Stalking Prey*, 1909. Mixed media.
8 1/2 x 12 inches. JKM Collection®, National Museum of Wildlife Art.

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (Dutch, 1606 – 1669),
The Small Lion Hunt, c. 1629. Etching on laid paper. 6 1/4 x 4 5/8 inches.
Gift of the 1999 Collectors Circle, National Museum of Wildlife Art.

PREFACE **BY LAURENCE FRANK PH.D.**

John Banovich's superb lion paintings bring the matchless beauty, sinewy power and lethal grace of the world's most iconic animal to life with an intimate immediacy that photographs can never match. His deep love for wildlife shines through each piece, not only in the lions themselves—which seem to breathe, move and smell like living cats—but also in the fine detail of their habitat, the endless skies and the lesser creatures that share the lion's world, reflecting the African savanna in all its rich detail and infinite complexity.

John's personal explorations of the lion, and those of earlier artists, introduce us to wild Africa in a way that even natural history films cannot achieve. We look into the eyes of his lions and feel the same awe, fear and respect that stood our distant ancestors' hair on end and sent the lucky ones scurrying up the nearest thorn tree.

After watching lions for thousands of hours and capturing hundreds to fit radio collars for research, I still look to John's paintings to feel their presence as a living emotion, somehow transcending even the breathing flesh and blood lions I know so well. Perhaps most importantly, this exhibit and accompanying book introduce the public to the reality of modern Africa, and the very real probability that our grandchildren will know its wildness only in film and art.

John Banovich is internationally acclaimed as a master of wildlife art, but also as a highly effective conservationist. The Banovich Wildscapes Foundation directly supports critical science-based conservation projects around the world, carefully chosen for empirical effectiveness and as successful models that can be adapted in other areas and to other species.

Leveraging his influence in both art and conservation circles, John has organized several symposia on lion and tiger conservation, with particular focus on bringing conservation biologists together with the hunting fraternity, who have a common interest in bridging the tragically counterproductive divide between nature lovers who carry a camera and those who carry a rifle. Both want to reverse the worldwide decline in wildlife; both should work together for that common cause. John Banovich has done more than anyone to bring them together.

John's most ambitious initiative to date has been the creation of the biannual Award for Conservation Excellence (ACE), created in collaboration with Cabela's Outdoor Fund, the Cabela Family Foundation and Bass Pro Shops. The award recognizes the contributions made by leading international conservationists.

The first award competition and ceremony was held in 2018, showcasing a field of exceptional nominees representing the world's most accomplished conservationist biologists and practitioners from five continents. The ACE program aims to become the most significant award in conservation, with the central goal of educating the international public on the global conservation crisis and the most effective ways of reversing it.



In the Presence of a Mighty King, 2012
Oil on Belgian linen, 32 x 45

KING OF BEASTS
November 9, 2019 – February 16, 2020

Paleolithic cave paintings found in Southern France and dating back 30,000 years provide our earliest glimpses of lion ancestry. Through the ages, carved lions have guarded ancient cities and sacred sites as well as symbolizing the majesty and nobility of nearly every civilization. Mesopotamian culture, Judaism, and Roman civilization contained numerous references, symbols, and countless artifacts glorifying *Panthera leo*. Carved figures of lions stand guard at London's Trafalgar Square and in front of the New York Public Library. Their images appear on flags, automobiles, altars, coins, gondolas, sports teams, and as children's toys. Clearly, lions have permeated our consciousness since the dawn of humankind. In Africa, the lion has served as a symbol of strength, bravery, and physical prowess among many cultures. However, today nearly all the wild lions are found within small regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, and a tiny population exists in India. Outside of protected areas, the African Lion is disappearing at an alarming rate.

In a continent of one billion people, the population of lions is estimated to be as few as 20,000 today. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species has classified *Panthera leo* as a vulnerable species, and conservationists agree that the remaining population must be protected if these magnificent creatures are to survive.

Considering these facts, this exhibition presents paintings by esteemed wildlife painter John Banovich, an internationally recognized artist who has studied lions for decades, and the Founder of the Lion P.R.I.D.E. Initiative, as well as paintings by past masters, displays and artifacts.

King of Beasts presents a beautiful yet, profound display that serves as an homage to the lion and explores questions about mankind's deep fear, love, and admiration for these creatures as well as what the future holds for "Big Things with Big Teeth" and those that must share the landscape with them.

As the plight of the African Lion has been prominently featured across media platforms recently, the cultural significance of *Panthera leo* could not be timelier.

– David B. Walker, CEO, Nevada Museum of Art



Donald W. Reynolds Center for the Visual Arts | E. L. Wiegand Gallery

KING OF BEASTS
APRIL 4 – SEPTEMBER 27, 2020

The Witte Museum sits in the heart of south-central Texas. Visitors are amazed by the biodiversity of Texas with eight ecological zones, from thornbrush and desert regions to grassland and piney woods. The Witte's galleries immerse visitors in the land, sky and water of Texas, with dioramas packed with dozens of species, from mountain lions roaming West Texas to black bears of East Texas, and all the songbirds along the way. Infused in the immersive experiences are themes of conservation and land stewardship.

Half a world away, artist John Banovich speaks through his breathtaking artwork to communicate the same messages. His large, dramatic depictions of the iconic African lion awe and inspire. With striking realism, Banovich's body of work illustrates the grandeur, tension, power and fragility of the "king of beasts" and the species' imperiled existence. Over the span of just a few decades, the population of African lions has plummeted, now numbering around only 20,000. The cause? Human activity such as land development, logging, farming, war and pollution.

The Witte's work on animal habitat awareness and land stewardship is a microcosm of similar global concerns. The population of the mountain lions of Texas are growing, while the African lion population is plummeting. It is the place of museums to ponder the ways of the world; King of Beasts offers a window to the animal world of Africa.

The key question is the same no matter where on Earth you are: how can we coexist with the "wild" world around us?

– Marise McDermott, President & CEO, The Witte Museum

King of Beasts is presented at the Witte Museum by Susan Naylor.







Too Good to Resist, 2010
Oil on Belgian linen, 48 x 60

Heart of a Lion, 2016
Oil on Belgian linen, 30 x 42

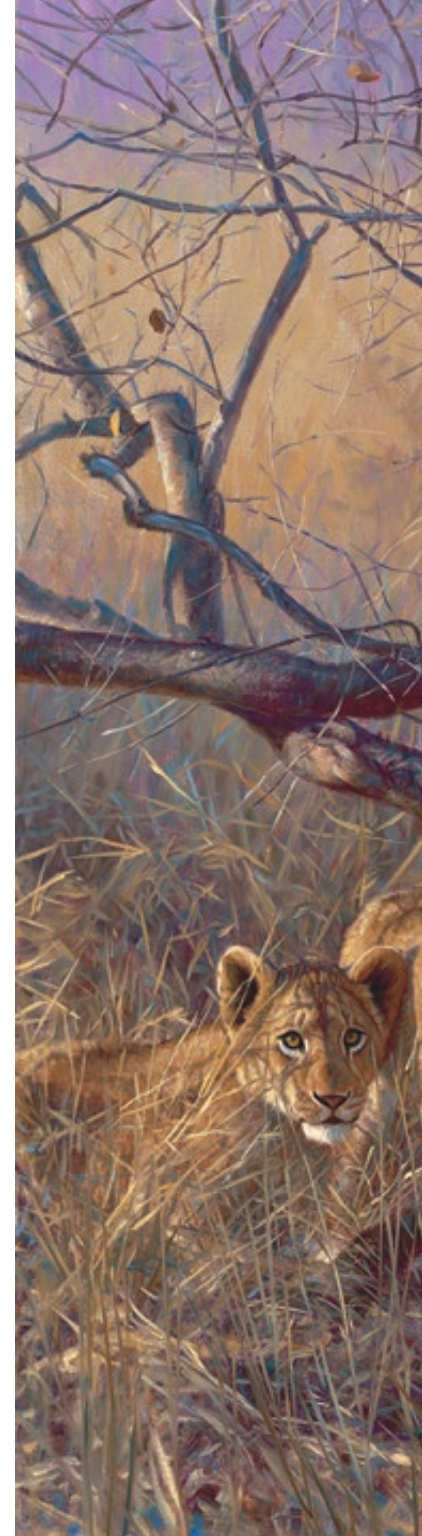
Bahati Ya Kawinda, 2005
Oil on Belgian linen, 48 x 74

Bahati Ya Kawinda is Swahili for “lucky hunting.” This piece features a family of lions on a warthog kill. Even though this is small prey for the two adults, it probably was an important hunting lesson for the cubs that, before long, will be capable of capturing their own prey.

I have seen lions and warthogs interact many times. One day, we found two adults and four yearling lions perched over some sort of den. The opportunity to witness a kill presents itself about as often as a total eclipse, so we waited for the action. A lion’s greatest offensive asset is its patience. After several hours, the sun forced them to move 50 feet into a patch of long, cool grass. That’s when we lost our patience and drove off to find an old dagga boy buffalo. When we returned, we found the lions still lazing in the tall grass. We decided to drive up and peer into the den’s entrance. Two crouching warthogs appeared to be staring back at us. They were easily within reach of a hungry lion.

Apparently, lions are as smart as they are patient. They had no interest in confronting two pairs of long, sharp tusks waiting like loaded crossbows. As we started to drive away, the warthogs exploded from the den with a loud grunt. The lions leaped to their feet, but the warthogs’ speedy scamper put 100 feet of space between them before the big cats could mount a charge. The lead lioness watched them sputter away and then sauntered to the hole and crawled in. After a moment, her hindquarters tightened and she backed out with a two-week-old piglet in her mouth. Two more piglets ran out screaming. One ran right into the waiting jaws of a cub—the other never looked back as it raced to freedom.

Cheering erupted from our vehicle—nobody likes to watch the death of a cute baby—especially if your curiosity may have provoked the situation. But the circle must turn and life has no possibility without death. This is how it has always been—and how it will always be.









The Reprimand, 2014
Oil on Belgian linen, 12 x 18

All mothers will concur that raising a child will be one of the most challenging, yet rewarding of life's experiences. Lions are no different. The lioness is not concerned about teaching her cub obedience, but that it learns to govern itself.

New Father, 2005
Oil on Belgian linen, 28 x 42

It's a proud moment when a male lion sires his first litter because his lineage is being carried on. Sadly, only one or two of his new cubs may get the chance to do the same. After a kill, the strongest members of the pride eat first. If nothing remains for cubs, they may starve. New male lions are also in constant competition to take over a pride. When successful, the new leader murders every cub to bring the females into estrous. Though though it's a proud moment, it rarely lasts long.



Offensive Line, 1997
Oil on Belgian linen, 30 x 90

The concept behind *The Defensive Line* and *The Offensive Line* originated in the titles, which goes back to my days of playing football. I remember the feeling of facing a lineman that outweighed me by 75 pounds. African buffalo seemed to be the best candidate for that role, given their bad attitude and helmet-shaped horns. On safari in 1994, I came across a pride of lions and a herd of buffalo engaged in such a test of wills. Positioned 30 yards apart, they began to size up each other for what would be a deadly confrontation.

These nomadic lions in *The Offensive Line* are not yet mature enough to be pride males. Most are probably brothers or closely related. They possess a cocky attitude, feeling indestructible in their group of seven. As immature cats, they do not yet possess the wisdom to clearly understand that there is easier prey elsewhere.



The lions were waiting for a moment when the buffalo would make themselves vulnerable, exposing one of their young or showing signs of injury. Watching with intense interest, it was as if the lions were actually plotting a strategy. The buffalo in *The Defensive Line* make for a very formidable opponent. The biggest bulls face the cats with an overwhelming sense of power. African buffalo weigh in at roughly 2,000 pounds. The lions weigh from 400 to 450 pounds, but they compensate for their smaller size with their ferociousness and determined attitude. Thirteen yellow-billed oxpeckers can be found among the branches. They remind me of the fans in the stands, hustling about, readying themselves for the incredible showdown.



Defensive Line, 1997
Oil on Belgian linen, 30 x 90









Enthronement of a King, 2019
Oil on Belgian linen, 96 x 96

I have always said the day I leave this earth, there will be a lion on my easel, and Enthronement of a King is a painting that I thought might be my last. It tested me in every way—physically, emotionally and creatively. It is a work I had wanted to do for nearly 15 years. Watching wild lions over the last several decades has stirred within me an overwhelming fascination and wonder.

How can we be living in this modern world and still share it with giant, free-roaming cats? They are magnificent in every way, and there is no doubt I was put on this earth to tell their story—the raw, truthful and unfiltered side.

The power of lions forever draws me near. They are neither cruel nor compassionate, express neither joy or sorrow. Lions know who and what they are and never apologize for it. Lions simply are the King of Beasts.







Upon birth, every lion cub is gifted with the potential for a rich and full life and a chance to become king. To survive, he must overcome many obstacles and learn from his mother how to survive in the animal kingdom.



Childhood is all about fun. Everything is a game and playtime is each day's top priority. Games sharpen his abilities and teach him the skills he will rely on one day.



He has become sexually mature and his father aggressively tells him "it's time to go; run away and never return." Alone and leaving behind all he has known, he enters a world filled with new dangers around every corner, but one day everything the light touches will become his kingdom.



Now he must be brave. Out of his banishment he will rise to greet the dawn of a new era, becoming a tender killer existing in a beautiful but brutal land. He will face hostile enemies alone and his most dangerous encounters will always be with man.



Now in his prime, he has beaten the odds. Over the years, he has not fallen to disease, poison or predation by a hyena. He has not been bitten by a snake, wounded, trampled by a buffalo, killed by a sibling, outside male or his own father. Not speared by a Masai or shot by a hunter. He has arrived at this moment, his moment, a glorious and celebrated moment and, through his own grit and determination, he has realized his ordained destiny to become a "King."



He is now grown and battle hardened. He has found another male to join forces with and, as a coalition, they possess the strength, speed and refined skills to take not only the largest of prey, but to claim their own territory. He is mature enough to understand his fears and to overcome them. He believes in himself and there will come a day soon when others will too.



He has taken fancy to a beautiful lioness that has welcomed his advances. She will bear his children and they will become part of his pride. For several days, these two will be together sowing the seeds of a pride of their own.



He now has a territory and pride to call his own where all of his needs are met and everything he sees has become his. These are his days of "Camelot."



A king's time as ruler rises and falls like the sun and now the sun is setting on his time. Three strong outside invaders arrive, more powerful and more driven to overthrow his reign and claim his kingdom.



Again a nomad, he is forced to live in "marginal areas" as he no longer has a kingdom of his own. Life on the edge is hard and leads to a serious decline in strength and condition. Prey that he once had dominion over, he now must walk humbly past and settle for smaller scraps.



He has triumphantly reached the end of his journey and, as he takes his last breath, we celebrate the fact that he has lived a rich and full life. His legendary character and spirit will live on in the many generations of his children. As he slips away, he will eventually become one with the earth and like all of us, become part of the great circle of life. "Long Live the King."





It's the Nature of the Beasts, 2017
Oil on Belgian linen, 57 x 98

My *raison d'être* often finds me capturing the wild and raw sides of nature, where just surviving the night is a landmark event. The tallest animal to walk the planet today is an old bull giraffe. Often standing 19 feet tall and weighing more than 3,000 pounds, these colossal giants have few enemies—unless they reside in one of the very few areas in Africa where lions specialize in killing and eating giraffes. Spectacularly powerful, a giraffe can deliver a kick that will kill a lion outright. The lion's undertaking of such a formidable and large prey is one of great risk requiring finely honed skills, a great degree of patience and teamwork, along with a bit of luck.

I first came across this phenomenon over a decade ago in Botswana's Okavango Delta. Seeing this display of skill and fortitude, I was absolutely captivated and knew I had to find a way to study and subsequently paint this truly awe-inspiring story. I resolved to find a place where I could witness firsthand this rare and little observed behavior.

Through my searches, I found my way to the Buby Valley Conservancy, an area of almost a million acres that only 30 years ago was one of the largest cattle ranches in Africa. The Buby Valley Conservancy, through their exceptional wildlife management and planning strategies, have returned the area to its former wild glory and is now home to one of the most stable lion populations in Africa.

On my journey, I was fortunate to locate a group of exceptionally large males and, over the course of several days, I observed their activities on the freshly killed giraffe.



Undertakers II, 2007
Oil on Belgian linen, 60 x 103

When we heard a pride had killed an eland bull by the river, we didn't waste time. We found the carcass, but not the lions. Alayne Mathieson, a biologist for the Laikipia Predator Project, suggested we wait for dark. It would be too dangerous to try collaring a lion at night, but we might get a look at them. We sat quietly until it was so dark it felt as if we were staring at black water. Then a twig snapped. Turning on the spotlight, we found ourselves surrounded by five lions, which quickly disappeared into the night.

The next morning, as soon as the sun rose, the cleanup crew dropped from the sky. In between tearing at flesh, the vultures snapped and chased each other, squabbling over every scrap ripped from the carcass. There was plenty to go around—the bull eland, the largest ungulate in the world, can weigh over 2000 pounds. Maybe vultures just don't care about such facts.



Trophy Hunter, 2002
Oil on Belgian linen, 19 x 31

The King of the Jungle had just taken down a large kudu bull. In a moment of respite to recover his stamina, he seems to relish his moment of victory with pride in the fact that his strength and skill enabled him to collect such an impressive specimen. Lions are amazingly adept killers. A big male lion can unleash enough strength and ferocity to take down a Cape buffalo single-handedly.



It's a Jungle Out There, 2011
Oil on Belgian linen, 24 x 36

In Their Prime II, 1998
Oil on Belgian linen, 16 x 21



Game of Lions, 2014
Oil on Belgian linen, 50 x 75

Deep in the heart of every lion lives an ancient hatred for hyenas, never missing an opportunity to beguile their nemesis. For millennia, this turmoil has reached far beyond the competition for food. It is a war between eternal enemies.

The composition is what makes this painting work. The concept was to create a bull's-eye effect, centered on the male lions running into the pack and sparking a centrifuge of energy erupting all around them, while the vultures, marabou storks, hyenas and jackal escape the lions' wrath. This has always been one of my favorite lion paintings.







King in Residence, 2014
Oil on belgian linen, 32 x 50

This is a painting that had no story attached, no seductive sky or background and no other animals or lions in the scene which is what made it so challenging. The simplest compositions are sometimes the hardest to paint. The entire face and muscular torso in repose must carry the success of the painting. The detail in the lion's face, the lighting and the posture of a cat are things that resonate with all of us.



A Mother's Wish—Long May He Reign, 2013
Oil on Belgian linen, 30 x 50

This quiet narrative demonstrates the everlasting bond between a child and its mother, who shares what we all wish for our own children—a long and vibrant life. For this lioness' newly born cubs to survive in the kingdom of beasts, they will have to overcome many challenges along the way. Their mother will need to pass along all the lessons she learned from her mother and, with the right amount of luck, these little cubs will one day join their mother, siblings and cousins to become the next generation and the heart of the pride.



Waiting for Sunset, 2004
Oil on Belgian linen, 28 x 42

Someone to Watch Over Me, 2003
Oil on Belgian linen, 28 x 42

The Bible references the lion's seeming ability to sleep with its eyes open in the same way our Lord's Divine Nature watched over His sleeping body when He was taken down from the cross and buried. Someone to Watch Over Me symbolizes loyalty, and the comfort and security we feel when someone who loves us keeps us safe.





Emorah
2014





Man Eaters of Tsavo, 2002
Oil on Belgian linen, 50 x 80

“Banovich, you’ve taken it to a whole new low.” That was the first reaction to *Man Eaters of Tsavo*. The other comments I heard before the exhibition opened weren’t much better. I was in trouble. After exhausting so much time, money and effort on this painting, I wondered if I made a mistake.

The predator and prey relationship fascinates me more than anything else in nature. It’s a relationship stained with blood—a relationship I never tire of painting. When commissioned to paint a dramatic lion scene, I centered in on the lions of Tsavo. How often does a chance to paint a unique natural-history story come along? It’s rare. They often turn out contrived.

Committing myself, I re-read Colonel J.H. Patterson’s first-hand account; I read Phillip Caputo’s *Ghosts of Tsavo*; I watched the hit movie, *Ghost and the Darkness*; and I saw the mounted lions at the Field Museum in Chicago. After all that, the difficulty of painting lions dead for more than 100 years felt as if I stood at the base of Mount Everest with a 75-pound backpack. Scant pieces of visual evidence existed. I found a few photos of the dead lions and the specimens at the museum. Patterson had cut their hides into rugs years before and though the taxidermists did a great job with what they had, the lions were little more than vermin-infested swatches of leather when Fields purchased them for \$10,000.

In 1898, these two beasts murdered and devoured 135 people. It took Colonel Patterson nine months of intense pursuit before he killed them. I needed to bring them back from the dead. But how?

During my research, two traits kept emerging. One was the aggressive, bold manner in which they attacked. These lions charged into a crowded hospital and ripped patients from their beds in the middle of the day. The other trait was the indifferent arrogance with which they ate their victims—often within sight of horrified laborers. If I could capture those traits, I would accomplish something that, to my knowledge, no artist had ever done—paint the most infamous man-eaters in history.



Mark of a King, 2002
Oil on Belgian linen, 48 x 69



Nomadic Buffalo Hunters, 2010
Oil on Belgian linen, 14 x 18



Brothers in Arms, 2008
Oil on Belgian linen, 24 x 36

A coalition of two fully grown male lions is just too much for any creature to mess with. They will defend their territory and pride with a viciousness that is nearly unstoppable. Here, I only revealed their faces as this places the viewer's focus on their eyes and raises the question: What are they looking at?



Somewhere Between Cubs and Killers, 2014
Oil on Belgian linen, 25 x 36

Partners, 2007
Oil on Belgian linen, 32 x 50

There is no greater bond in the big cat world than between pride males. Male lions often start out their lives as litter mates, and these two brothers will grow up together and leave the family pride together. If they successfully conquer all of the threats facing a lion in the wild, they will finally arrive at the day when they rule over a territory and have a pride of their own. Like all brothers, they will fight over the small stuff, but reconcile their differences fairly quickly. One day, as new heirs defending their own pride, they will face an enormous amount of challenges, but because of their deep connection, they will go to war for each other, defining what the word “partners” truly means.







ABOUT THE ARTIST

John Banovich is known internationally for his large, dramatic portrayals of iconic wildlife, his deep passion, knowledge and unwavering commitment to conservation. Banovich's art is in prominent museum, corporate and private collections and has been exhibited in numerous prestigious venues around the globe. Banovich has been showcased on CBS Entertainment Tonight, The Outdoor Channel, The Great American Country Channel, Orion Entertainment, PBS and NBC has written about his dedication to his conservation work and named him an NBC Cause Celebrity.

In 2007 John Banovich founded the Banovich Wildscapes Foundation. It is the culmination of tireless conservation efforts over the past two decades. Through his career as an artist, Banovich has inspired a deeper understanding of the world and its wildlife, encouraging successful conservation efforts and awareness of endangered species and their habitats.

Under the umbrella of his Banovich Wildscapes Foundation, money generated through artwork sales has been channeled back into support efforts that promote habitat protection, science-based wildlife management and sustainable tourism.

"I started the Banovich Wildscapes Foundation as a way to give something back to the world that has given so much to me. The name WILDSCAPES refers to large abundant landscapes...wild, balanced and intact ecosystems. There is nothing more important to future generations than wildlife and wild lands. Special places that lift our minds, replenish our spirits and renew our passion for living."

– John Banovich, Artist/Conservationist



Reigning King, 1998
Oil on Belgian linen, 11 x 14

THIS EXHIBITION IS DEDICATED TO THOSE WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE:

To my mother, Cass, and to my late father, John, who gave me unlimited love and support and were always, always, always there for me, even when I couldn't see them.

To those collectors, galleries and dealers that have supported my work in the past, and continue to support my art today. It is because of you that I can create my best works. You have enriched my life, and allowed me to enrich others. You are the wind beneath my wings, and I am and always will be forever grateful.

To the many safari companies, safari camps, professional guides, biologists and scientists that dedicate their lives to conservation. You are the people that keep the wild in the wild kingdom.

Thank you to all the collectors of my work for loaning their paintings to the museum tour and helping to be part of our conservation message. Your generosity and kindness knows no bounds. I would also like to express my gratitude to the National Museum of Wildlife Art, Anne Brokinton Lee for the loan of the historical artworks by past masters.

Lastly to the Lions. Your fortitude to survive in a human-dominated landscape inspires me at my core. A world without wild lions is a world I want no part of. "LONG LIVE THE BEASTS"

– John Banovich, November 2019

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