

# The Drew Acorn



STUDENT LIFE & ARTS

## Walk on the wild side: alum's show features rare species

The Forest is home not only to Drewids, but to a variety of plant and animal species as well. From the eco-reps to the Drew Environmental Action League (DEAL) to the Environmental Studies & Sustainability program (ESS), there are various on-campus initiatives focused on keeping the Forest green and equipping Drewids to lead environmental efforts. However, alum **James Fiorentino** (<http://www.jamesfiorentino.com/>) (C'99) has a new multi-year art exhibition that is commenting on local environmental issues outside of the Forest.

Well-known for his watercolor paintings of baseball stars and the youngest artist to ever show artwork at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, Fiorentino also makes work depicting wildlife and is involved in several environmental efforts including The Raptor Trust of New Jersey. His new traveling show, **"Rare Wildlife Revealed: The James Fiorentino Traveling Art Exhibition"** (<http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/getinvolved/wildlifeart/>) features watercolor depictions of rare species that live in the state and are threatened with extinction.

The project grew out of Fiorentino's interest in the environment and a partnership with the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey (CWF). He said, "I met CWF at D & R Greenway Land Trust in Princeton about four years ago when I had a few of my originals in a show they were having. A year later I judged their Species on

the Edge art-essay contest for fifth graders throughout the State of New Jersey.” He added, “That project inspired me to create this tour to help raise money and educate people on what CWF does and the species in our state that are threatened.”

About the process of choosing the species to show in the exhibit, Fiorentino said, “I consulted with David Wheeler and Liz Silvernail of CWF who also involved biologists from CWF for accurate images and also in choosing the species.” He added, “We wanted to make sure it was diverse collection of species that ranged all over the state from humpback whales to fishers to bald eagles to a little brown bat.”

All of the paintings in the show are done with watercolor, Fiorentino’s medium of expertise. About the medium of the works, Fiorentino said, “My unique style of painting the medium as if it were oil or acrylic is what makes it stand out but it also is the same as if I painted anything. So the sports, portraits, etc. that I am nationally recognized for looks the same as my nature art.”

Discussing the challenge of painting the works for the show, Fiorentino said, “Even as a signature member of watercolor societies and I have been painting over twenty years professional I was painting species like the eastern box turtle, sea horse, tiger salamander, all for example that I have never done before. It presents a challenge in watercolor that I loved and I am very proud of the twenty five originals in the tour.”

Fiorentino’s time in the Forest was influential. About this, he said, “I came into Drew already as a professional artist at age 18 but I learned so much from professors like Michael Peglau.” He added, “I expanded painting into oils and plein air projects and learned art history. I was painting at Drew large abstract (neo expression) paintings which I loved doing and maybe will one day get back to creating those. Traveling to NYC for Arts Semester was the best and learned so much through that program.”

And as an alum, Fiorentino also offered some advice for artistic and creative Drewids. He said, “I would say work very hard at it as like in anything you want to get good in life at you must craft it every day and also have a goals as to what you want to do with your artwork whether it’s in educating others or creating for companies or becoming a professional painter.”

Fiorentino’s exhibit will be on display over the next two years and will be featured in seven venues around the region. The show is currently on display at the D&R Greenway Land Trust until Oct. 16. Then the show will be shown at the Studio 7

Fine Art Gallery in Bernardsville, the Mayo Performing Arts Center (MPAC) in Morristown, the Patrons Gallery at the Salmagundi Club in New York City, the Hiram Blauvelt Museum in Oradell and Duke Farms in Hillsborough.

The last stop for Fiorentino's exhibit will be the Korn Gallery on campus in the late spring to summer of 2018. Check [here](#) (<http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/getinvolved/wildlifeart/>) for dates at each location and more information about the exhibit.

**OCTOBER 6, 2016****OCTOBER 6, 2016****# ALUM, # ART, # ART SHOW, # TAYLOR TRACY**

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