

MORGAN LEHMAN

535 West 22nd Street, New York, New York 10011

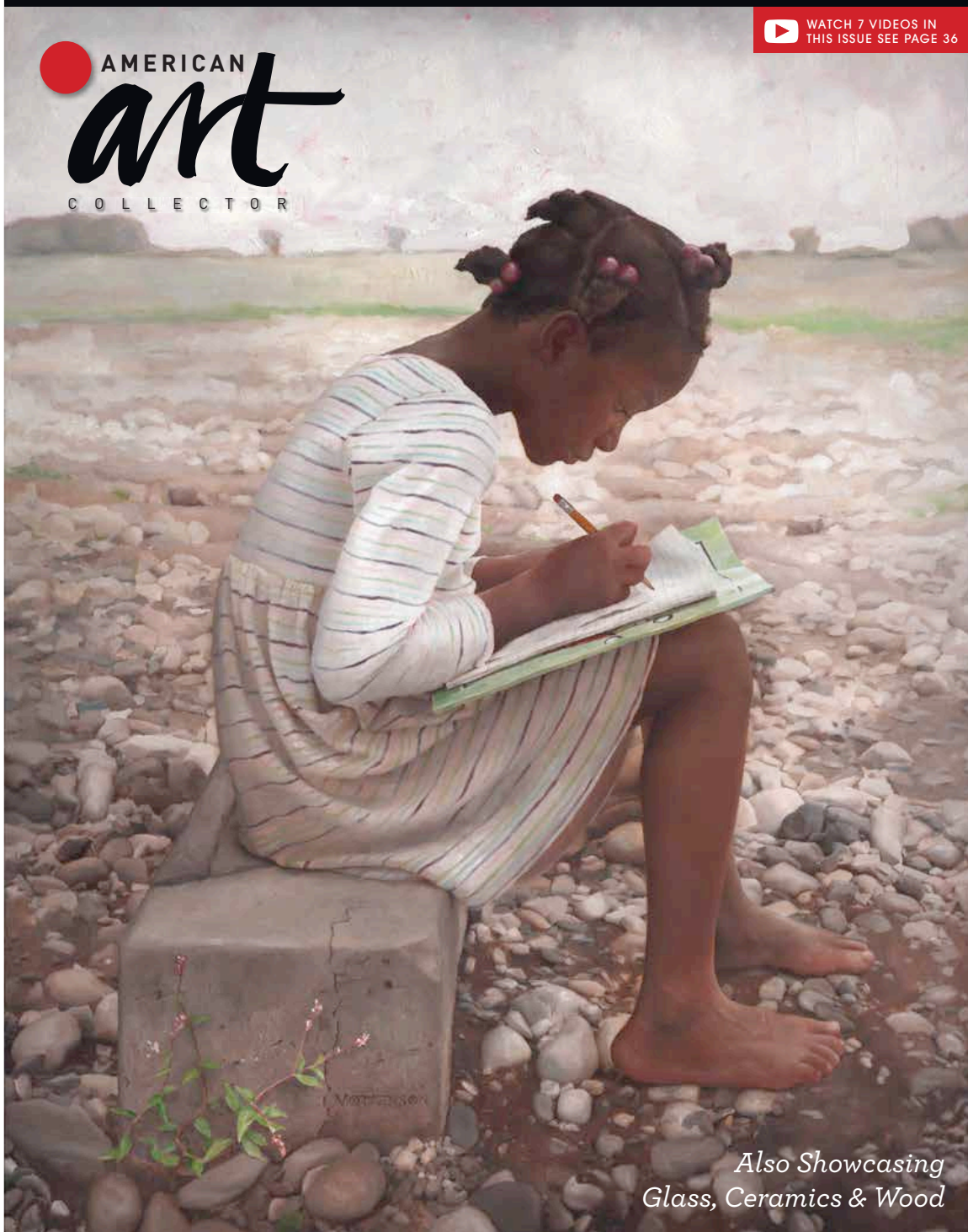
PREVIEWS OF WORKS FOR SALE AT UPCOMING SHOWS COAST TO COAST

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UPCOMING SHOW PREVIEW / DENVER, CO
Through November 14, 2015

David B. Smith Gallery

1543 A Wazee Street | Denver, CO 80202
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LAURA BALL

Keep

Laura Ball's new exhibition at David B. Smith Gallery in Denver is titled *Keep*, which functions as both a verb and a noun. The collection of about a dozen watercolor and graphite works on paper features images of endangered and extinct animals and plants, and the San Diego-based artist says she wanted to create a sanctuary or preserve where the creatures could go when they become extinct, a place where they could live forever. In this "keep," this area of protection, the animals could stay kept in a place where myth functions, in the collective unconscious.

"I use animals to represent the human urges that dwell in the shadow of the psyche," says Ball. "The move to include primarily endangered, extinct or 'endlings'—last in species—animals was a way to give me something to study and research while I was creating my work. It is a topic I feel very strongly about, so I have more invested in the actual work. The research is often completely heartbreaking, and I hope to convey some of that depth in the images."

The diptych *Crossing Over* (*Angalifu* and *Nola*) features northern white rhinos, a species that had only seven living animals when Ball began the work. The animals featured in the work were inspired by two of the rhinos living at the San Diego Zoo



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Safari Park—only Nola is living now.

"I made this diptych as a sad but hopeful memorial piece, that there could be a safe place for them to go, an underworld, or an afterlife, where they could live as mythic creatures," Ball says. "Obviously, it would be amazing if even one person could be moved to make different choices by reading about the extinction of these amazing animals, but it is an uphill battle."

Ball turned the endangered subspecies of giraffe, Rothschild's giraffes, of which there are only a few hundred living in the wild, and "threatened" animals Indian pythons into the mythic beast the hydra in *Guardian of the Gateway*. The hydra is covered by a shield of giant tortoises, based on the last of the Pinta Island tortoises, which most likely went extinct in 2012.

Rebirth is based on another mythic beast, the phoenix, which symbolizes the hope of a rebirth of extinct animals. Ball says she hope humans learn to view animals as sentient beings who share the planet—not only the humans' planet—with important contributions of their own, and not as objects to be used and dominated.

"I am every hopeful more people will see the importance of maintaining the biodiversity of the planet and that they can contribute with small donations or by making better choices with their purchasing decisions or by conserving resources," Ball says.

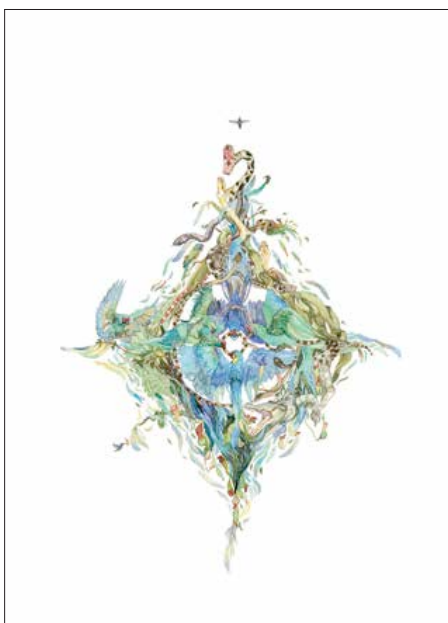
Besides the strong messages Ball's works convey, David B. Smith Gallery director Whitney Carter says the gallery, which has represented Ball since 2011, is thrilled to show her latest work because of her technical ability, as well.

"Ball's highly rendered watercolor and graphite works demand close inspection in order to grasp the extraordinary detail," says Carter. Ball's collector Helen Haris, who owns two of Ball's works, says Ball's art helped begin her collection with her husband Lex and continues to influence the couple today.

"We love having Laura's work in our collection because her paintings tell stories," says Haris. "They are all action. They are passionate. They breathe. Whenever we find a new artist, Lex says, 'I agree, she's good, but is she Laura Ball good?'"

Ball says working in watercolor is "like a second language" and says depending on the pigment or brand, it has moods and personalities. While the medium is usually displayed on a relatively small scale, some works in this collection span more 4 feet tall.

"With the detail I use, these large pieces take a long time to make and are physically demanding for a couple of months," Ball says. "So, that alone will make the work interesting to view in person. I think even though some of the subject matter can be sad, I tried to present it in a hopeful and beautiful light, that there is a way they can live forever." ●



1 *Rebirth*, watercolor and graphite on paper, 50½ x 45"

2 *Crossing Over (Angalifu and Nola)*, watercolor and graphite on paper, 32¾ x 103"

3 *Guardian of the Gateway*, watercolor and graphite on paper, 50 x 45"

4 *Macaw Mandala*, watercolor and graphite on paper, 30 x 22"

Headshot above courtesy the artist and David B. Smith Gallery. Photo by Ingrid Nelson.



PREVIEW

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