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***Images Available Upon Request**

First Full-Scale Exhibition of Works by Charley Harper at Cincinnati Art Museum Opens this Fall

See prints, paintings, posters and more from the beloved artist, nature advocate and Cincinnati icon, including paintings commissioned for the U.S. National Park Service

CINCINNATI — May 6, 2026— The Cincinnati Art Museum (CAM) is organizing its first full-scale, scholarly exhibition of works by Cincinnati art icon Charley Harper. [*The Art of Charley Harper: Creatures Wild and Tame*](#), on view from October 16, 2026–March 7, 2027, will feature approximately 150 works by the beloved mid-century modern artist, designer, illustrator and nature advocate. The exhibition is presented in partnership with the [Charley Harper Art Studio](#).

“It’s hard to believe, but this is Charley’s first museum retrospective. Exhibition-goers can look forward to a special, historic treat,” according to studio director Brett Harper. “They will have the privilege to be able to see the 10 large paintings Charley completed on commission for the Interior Department’s U.S. National Park Service, which were only on public display in Washington, D.C., for a short time in the 1990s. They have been stored in archives—jewel-like acrylic masterpieces by an artist at the peak of his powers.”

“As Charley’s son, I’m thrilled to see him honored by his hometown art museum,” Brett Harper continued. “He asked me to ensure that future generations remember his art and conservation ethos. He makes you smile, whether you’re 3 or 103.”

Harper’s “minimal realism,” as he called his style, is deceptively simple, reducing nature to essential forms in elegant, witty, vividly colored imagery that breathes with life and personality. Harper studied and taught at the Art Academy of Cincinnati and worked here through a long and storied career. Harper was deeply committed to wildlife conservation and created many works in support of conservation efforts and organizations.

“This exhibition celebrates everything we love about Charley Harper, providing fresh insight into his joyful artistry,” says Julie Aronson, PhD, curator of American paintings, sculpture, and drawings at CAM, “A student of nature whose unique work expresses a deep sense of wonder and discovery, Harper used his art for the protection of wild spaces and creatures threatened by human development.”

Although CAM has shown Harper’s work before—in *Minimal Realism: Charley and Edie Harper, 1940-1960*, August 18–October 21, 2007, and *Big Country: Charley Harper Draws America*, June

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12–September 5, 2010–these were small shows and only included work Harper made prior to 1960. *The Art of Charley Harper: Creatures Wild and Tame* covers his entire career.

The exhibition will feature a variety of Harper's works, including original paintings for now-iconic National Park Service posters returning to Cincinnati for the first time since completion. In addition, three paintings will be on loan from the Everglades National Park's collection featuring diverse flora and fauna from the complex Florida ecosystem. There will also be maquettes and drawings offering behind-the-scenes looks at Harper's working processes, as well as screen prints, acrylic paintings, watercolors and more on view.

In conjunction, the Taft Museum of Art will present the first solo museum exhibition devoted to innovative artist Edie McKee Harper, Charley Harper's lifelong creative partner. [*Edie McKee Harper: Modernist at Play*](#) will be on view October 17, 2026, through January 24, 2027. The Taft and the Cincinnati Art Museum will collaborate on a public panel discussion examining both artists' practices. Details to come.

The works featured in *The Art of Charley Harper: Creatures Wild and Tame* appear courtesy of Harper's studio as well as private and public collections, including contributions from the CAM collection. The exhibition is organized by the Cincinnati Art Museum and presented in partnership with the Charley Harper Art Studio, the artist's extensive archive directed by Brett Harper.

The Art of Charley Harper: Creatures Wild and Tame is presented by P&G. Additional support provided by Cintas, Fund Evaluation Group (FEG) and PNC. The exhibition is funded in part by the Wyeth Foundation for American Art, the America 250-Ohio Commission, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed do not necessarily represent those of the America 250-Ohio Commission.

The exhibition will be on view from Friday, October 16, 2026, through Sunday, March 7, 2027. Tickets are \$17, with discounted rates for students, children, and seniors. Save \$2 when purchasing tickets online. Admission is free for museum members. The exhibition will be free for members and nonmembers every Thursday evening from 5–8 p.m. and on Friday, October 30, 2026, January 29, 2027, and February 26, 2027, during Art After Dark. Photography is permitted, but no flash. On social media, use #HarperWildandTame.

Upcoming, related events to be announced. Visit cincinnatiartmuseum.org for the latest information.

Catalog

The Art of Charley Harper, Creatures Wild and Tame is accompanied by a fully illustrated, scholarly, multi-author catalog. Co-published with D Giles, Ltd., the approximately 250-page book will demonstrate how Harper advanced nature conservation through his art. In addition to a foreword by the Cincinnati Art Museum's Louis and Louise Dieterle Nippert Director Cameron Kitchin and an essay by the museum's Curator of American Paintings, Sculpture, and Drawings Julie Aronson, PhD, authors Michael Bierut, Julie Zickefoose, Sarah Archer, and Brett Harper all bring unique perspectives to the catalog. The publication will also feature more than 200 illustrations, many with quotes from Charley Harper's writings.

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About the Cincinnati Art Museum

The Cincinnati Art Museum features a diverse, encyclopedic art collection of more than 73,000 works spanning 6,000 years. In addition to displaying its own broad collection, the museum conducts extensive research and creates and organizes several exhibitions each year. It also hosts national and international traveling exhibitions. Through these critical projects and art-related programs, activities and special events, the museum contributes to a more vibrant Cincinnati by inspiring its people and connecting its communities.

Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the tens of thousands of people who give generously to the annual ArtsWave Campaign, the region's primary source for arts funding. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence, and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as its members. Free general admission to the Cincinnati Art Museum is made possible by a gift from the Rosenthal Family Foundation. Generous support for the museum's extended Thursday hours is provided by Art Bridges Foundation's Access for All program. Exhibition pricing may vary. Parking at the Cincinnati Art Museum is free. Accessibility accommodations are available.

Visit cincinnatiartmuseum.org.

About the Charley Harper Art Studio

Charley Harper Art Studio represents the work of artists Charley, Edie and Brett Harper, the art family that made Cincinnati its home. Owned and directed by son Brett Harper, the studio continues to exhibit and sell their art. It maintains the original 1958 Harper residence and physical studio space while collaborating with licensees around the world.

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