

WALTER MATIA

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Texas: A Sense of Place



Collectors Covey • Dallas, Texas • March 14, 2008

Meredith Long & Company • Houston, Texas • April 3, 2008



I am a hunter, a fisherman, a bird watcher, a book collector, a lover of natural history curiosities, an undisciplined dog trainer, and some say, a good game cook. I enjoy these passions—which have their own rewards; but they also provide the narratives of my art. I am not searching for more facts, they can be had in abundance from secondary sources; I am trying to understand the whole sense of a place.

I am a representational artist. I am not documenting or illustrating specific events; I am re-presenting them. I see things in the wild. I then select shapes and organize the masses, lines and negative spaces into sculpture. I balance well known narratives with my personal compositional interpretations. My goal is to edit the details down to the artistic essentials.

The sculptures in this show represent my work of the last five years. The broader themes will be familiar to many of you; game birds, bird dogs and the occasional natural history oddity. They are what I have edited from the hours of following good dogs, sitting patiently in turkey woods, freezing through January marsh sunrises, and just drinking in the wonders of the natural world. They are my sense of place.

Walter Matia is a Fellow of the National Sculpture Society, a winner of their Gold and Bronze Medals at their Annual Exhibitions; a recipient of the Red Smith Award from the National Museum of Wildlife Art, the Fraser and Pittman Awards from the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Center and most recently the Norris Foundation Award for sculpture from the Autry National Center. He lives in Maryland with his wife Pam, children, Helen and Charlie and two sort of trained duck dogs.

Cover: *“Covey Rise , A Texas Treasure”* Bobwhite Quail 20”h x 31”l x 8”d



"Deuces Are Wild"

Wild Turkeys 42"h x 48"l x 24"d

*Major General & Mrs. Don D. Pittman Wildlife Award
2002 Prix de West Invitational Exhibition*

Animal Portraiture

James McNeil Whistler said that the goal of the portraitist is not to capture the face of the man on that day, but to paint the man. Without trivializing that eloquent statement, my goal is not solely to sculpt an individual pointer, but to capture “Pointerness”. Yes, I do try to find the warts, head shapes and eye sets that define the individual, but I do so in the context of placing that animal within a set of gestures and situations which speak of the breed.



“The Sweet Smell of Success”

Life Size English Pointer

Brave Companions

A great bird dog results from the unusual marriage of a magic set of genes, the dogs, and an owner with an understanding spouse and bottomless resources devoted to getting the dog into wild birds.



"Missing the Master"

Life Size English Springer Spaniel



"Sometimes A Great Notion"

Life Size English Pointer



"Green-wing Teal"
4"h x 12"l x 4"d



Waterfowl

Duck hunters are basically piratical and duck hunting is about stolen treasure. You scout the marsh, you build the blind, you set the decoys, but there is no guarantee yesterdays birds will show up. An invitation to a duck hunt is accepted with appreciation and optimism, but guarded expectations. Perhaps that is why dogs and shooting partners with good personalities and passable blind manners are such a big part of the endeavor; they are often your sole reward for the day.

"Molly is a Working Girl"
Labrador Retriever
23"h x 17"l x 13"d

Leonard J. Meiselman Award
2006 Society of Animal Artists



"High Water"
Mallard Ducks
80"h x 45"l x 27"d

Movement in Sculpture

The gestures of many of my sculptures are the reactions of the subjects to an external presence. In some cases the hunter is the unseen presence, in others it is hidden prey or an approaching predator. The silent participants, expand the visual area the sculptures occupy, they are integral parts of the implied motion. My wild turkeys are moving away from one contact, perhaps to a safer place-perhaps not. The birds, the hunter, the terrain are all part of the story.



"He Who Hesitates "

Wild Turkeys 14"h x 22"l x 6"d

A Fool for Love

A classic admonition in Physics is “not to confuse activity for work” the same can be said for surface treatments in sculpture. The details of the surface should lead the eye to specific points of importance. A piece of art is not an illustration of how much you know; it is a statement of what you wish to say.



“Promise of Spring”

Wild Turkeys
34”h x 42”l x 36”d

James Earle Fraser Sculpture Award
2006 Prix de West Invitational Exhibition

Kenneth T. & Eileen L. Norris Foundation Award
2007 Masters of the American West



“A Fool for Love”

Wild Turkey
45”h x 32”l x 28”d

Pietro & Alfiedo
Montana Memorial
Award
2005 National
Sculpture Society



“High Plains Drifters”
Long-billed Curlews
12”h x 17”l x 8”d



“Legend of the Fall”
Great Blue Heron
57”h x 24”l x 24”d



“Rising Pintails”
Northern Pintail Ducks
78”h x 60”l x 24”d

Rising Pintails

When sculpting flying birds, what the eye can see and what the mind can know are in a delicate balance. Too much detail and the mystery of flight is reduced to a frozen photograph; too little attention to design and the escape from gravity is lost in ponderous engineering. If it works, the only impressions should be movement, grace and wonder.



“Covey Rise, A Texas Treasure”
Bobwhite Quail
Detail

Ruffed Grouse Fire Screen

The first great sculptural moment of my life was seeing the Paul J. Rainey Memorial Gateway, modeled by Paul Manship for the Bronx Zoo. It was 1964, I was eleven years old and in truth, I doubt I thought “Eureka”; I know my mission in life. But, I have revisited the gateway and I still find it inspiring.

The Ruffed Grouse Fire Screen is part gathered story, part modeling and part engineering. There is reference in this piece to; A. Lassell Ripley's pen and ink drawings; John James Audubon's, painting of Pileated Woodpeckers; and a memory of a fabled September 1988, multiple grouse flush from a grapevine covered apple tree in Rupert, Vermont. Eureka!



“Ruffed Grouse Fire Screen”

44”w x 40”h x 4”d as shown



The Ruffed Grouse Fire Screen can be customized to fit most fire places. For very large fire boxes, side panels with bronze grapevine or bean trellis designs can be added to extend the width of the screen. Not shown, but included in the bronze screen is a center spreading, hanging wire mesh spark protector.

The bronze Ruffed Grouse sculptures can also be incorporated in garden features and architectural room dividers.



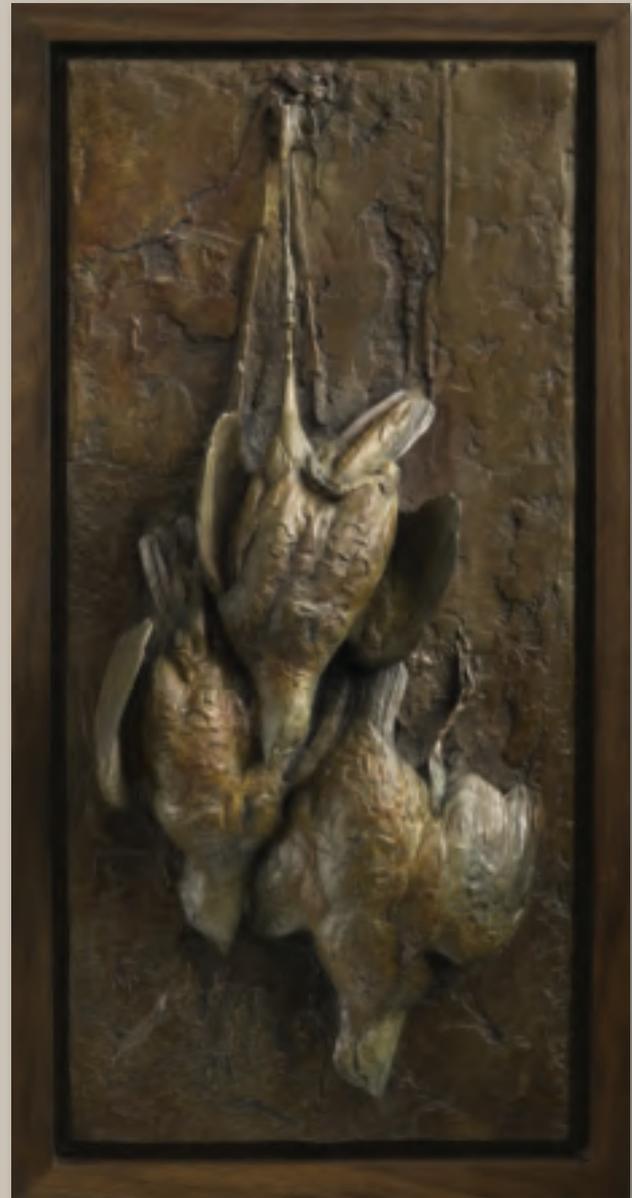
Recovered Chestnut Garden Gates

Quail Hunting

A quail hunting invitation is an offer to spend your hosts capitol. The birds that made it through the last winter and nursed through the spring and summer are all that are going to be on that land. No cold front is going to send in replacements. The birds are there, because your host worked at it. You may not find them, but there is little question of the generosity and selectivity of the invitation.

“Late Season”

Bobwhite Quail
9”h x 13”l x 9”d



“Quail Still Life”

Bobwhite Quail
23”h x 12”w x 4”d
Wall Bronze

“I have always been attracted to Walter Matia’s art. Dogs, upland birds, waterfowl... what’s not to like? His unequaled ability to translate a way of life into art validates our passion for all things sporting. He sees what we feel, and unquestionably he shares the same love of its traditions. Texas: A Sense of Place is an artists journey recorded with a hunters eye. There is no artist we are more proud to represent.”

Martin F. Wood, Collectors Covey

“Walter’s sculpture, while always an accurate representation of the subject, is more; it conveys the energy of the bird or animal, whether alert and ready to run, flying or in calm repose, the posture and attitude tell a story.”

Meredith J. Long, Meredith Long & Company

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A one man exhibition



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