

# C R O C K E T T

## S abra L

*"My artistic practice explores humanity's complex relationship with nature. I paint iconographic portraits of birds and other animals in realistic detail against richly patterned backgrounds. I primarily work in acrylics, using gold leaf to elevate the importance of my subjects. The scale of my work ranges from five-inch squares to several feet. While many wildlife artists focus primarily on technical acuity and portraying animals in their natural habitats, my work invites a conversation with the viewer about their connection to nature. My goal is to bridge the gap between humanity and wildlife, investigating conflicts and celebrating commonalities."*

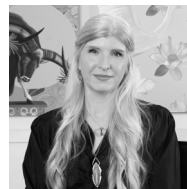
Sabra Crockett is an unconventional wildlife painter who focuses on our relationship to the natural world and the value we place upon it. After receiving her BFA from Rochester Institute of Technology, she became an accomplished muralist, scenic, and decorative artist, whose work can be seen throughout Louisville, Kentucky, on public walls, in boutique hotels, and in nationally award-winning restaurants and bars.

She has exhibited in New York City, San Francisco, and the Netherlands, including galleries and museums throughout the Southeastern United States.

Her work is in numerous private collections nationally and internationally. She is represented by Wheelhouse Gallery in Louisville, Kentucky.

She is part of a group of mother-artists where the monthly meetings help educate, support, and foster a strong community.

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SABRA L CROCKETT  
The Emperor (detail)  
Acrylic and gold leaf on canvas, 36 x 36 in

**HOW HAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR OWN WORK CHANGED OVER TIME—AND WHAT DOES THAT EVOLUTION REVEAL ABOUT WHO YOU ARE AS AN ARTIST TODAY?**

My decorative painting background gave way to my use of pattern in my paintings, especially damask patterns. I used them extensively in my work to elevate my subject's importance. I imagine my subjects as royalty set up on a stage. Then I shifted to creating constructed spaces by painting the patterns in forced perspective, because I feel that human beings construct living spaces for animals and birds while extracting resources from their wild habitats.

My most recent body of work takes national flowers and creates surreal spaces for my subjects to live in. I've always been interested in creating the illusion of space. With this more recent work, however, everything in the painting is symbolic: from the rotated flowers, to the placement of them turning in or out. It's all a secret code that I don't really give an answer to. The viewer has to ask questions.

**MANY ARTISTS DESCRIBE A MOMENT WHEN THEIR PROCESS "CLICKED" OR TOOK ON NEW MEANING—CAN YOU RECALL AN EXPERIENCE THAT RESHAPED HOW YOU APPROACH CREATING?**

When I did my first 8 x 10 in painting of a cardinal in 2008, it was the first time I knew I wanted to expand upon this idea of painting songbirds with richly patterned backgrounds. It's when I fell in love with songbirds and did extensive research on them. I also became aware of their decline and wanted to use these paintings to highlight, record, and preserve their essence. This one painting led to sixty more paintings of that size. It also led me to create larger paintings of larger birds. I try to paint most of my subjects at life size. It's important that the viewer feels a connection with them and understands who and what they are. I attempt to recreate that.

**WHEN YOUR ART MEETS ITS AUDIENCE, WHAT DO YOU HOPE HAPPENS IN THAT QUIET SPACE BETWEEN THE VIEWER'S PERCEPTION AND YOUR INTENTION?**

I want the viewer to slow down and observe the complete picture. My work can be taken at face value for its aesthetic beauty. However, the type of bird or animal, the backgrounds, and what is around them all lead to a more interesting story. For instance, in "Cambodia," I chose to paint the National animal instead of the bird, which is a Kouprey, or Forest Ox.



They are presumed to no longer exist in Cambodia. The last sighting of one was in 1969, which was also during the Vietnam War. Are these events related? One reason conservationists believe so is because of habitat loss due to war and conflict. People aren't the only ones who suffer from wars. I'm subtly telling a story with those details.

**IF YOUR FUTURE SELF COULD LOOK BACK ON THIS CHAPTER OF YOUR ARTISTIC LIFE, WHAT DO YOU HOPE SHE WOULD RECOGNIZE AS YOUR MOST MEANINGFUL GROWTH?**

I'm getting comfortable with rejection. I'm letting go of tying my worth to my accomplishments. I may not do all I set out to do, and that's ok. I'm a middle-aged woman with two grown children, and it feels like I'm starting my life over in many ways, but now I have the wisdom and experience to understand what matters. I'm taking more risks and approaching opportunities and obstacles with curiosity instead of anxiety. I still get a bit nervous trying new things, but it's more excitement instead of dread. When I was a younger artist, I didn't know what I wanted to focus on. I didn't know life, and I felt like I had to prove my worth. Now that I have lived more than half a century, I have so much to share, and I know my worth.

TOP  
*Saint of the Disrupters (Common Yellowthroat)*  
Acrylic and plaster on cradled board, 5 x 5 in



TOP  
*Cambodia*  
Acrylic and gold leaf on canvas, 24 x 36 in

ABOVE  
*Iraq*  
Acrylic on canvas, 12 x 16 in

RIGHT  
*Mexico*  
Acrylic on canvas, 24 x 18 in

