



**MUSEUM ON WHEELS**

# **NATURE IN 🐾 ART**

**featured onboard the new**



**SUSQUEHANNA ART MUSEUM**  
AT THE MARTY AND TOM PHILIPS FAMILY ART CENTER

**Ross Tyger**

Director of the  
**VanGo! Museum on Wheels**

To schedule a visit, email [Rtyger@SusquehannaArtMuseum.org](mailto:Rtyger@SusquehannaArtMuseum.org)

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a fund of the Greater Harrisburg Foundation,  
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## Exhibition Information

**"The word nature can refer to just about anything in our world: plants, animals, weather, land. Humans study nature. Humans mimic nature. Humans tame nature. Sometimes, they even worship it. An artist named Victoria Fuller makes art about nature."**

*Nature in Art*, onboard the brand new VanGo! #4, features the work of Victoria Fuller. Her work explores the interconnectedness of human and natural systems. Fuller purposefully constructs sculptures that resemble instructional museum displays so that their concepts are accessible, playful, and instructive.

The work is created in a variety of media. There are mixed media sculptures, wall-hanging relief pieces, a realistic watercolor painting, and acrylic painting. Victoria's experimental use of materials will inspire visitors to think outside the box when creating artwork.

The overarching theme of the exhibition is closely tied to the title of one of the pieces: "Everything is Connected". Victoria's work examines the connections between humanity and nature. Each piece illuminates a different aspect of the relationship between those two forces, which Victoria describes as, "a delicate balance". The pieces connects particularly well to topics like ecosystems and conservation.

Fuller is a Pennsylvania-born, Chicago-based painter, sculptor, and natural science illustrator. Her educational background includes studies at the San Francisco Art Institute, Parson's Paris Program in Paris, France, and a graduate degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Fuller has been honored with fellowships from the Colorado Council for the Arts and Humanities and the Illinois Arts Council with appearances in galleries, museums, and public spaces Internationally. She has been awarded commissioned projects from private and community organizations such as Disney's ESPN Zone, St. Louis' Arts in Transit, and Seattle's Sound Transit where she recently completed her 35' bronze sculpture, Global Garden Shovel. Fuller is best known for Shoe of Shoes, a large-scale shoe-shaped sculpture comprised of thousands of aluminum high-heels in front of Brown Shoe Company, and for her large-scale sculpture, Canoe Fan, made from canoes forming a fan shape.

## Artwork Information

**Victoria Fuller**

### **ROPE TRICK** (2014)

Resin, epoxy clay, acrylic paint

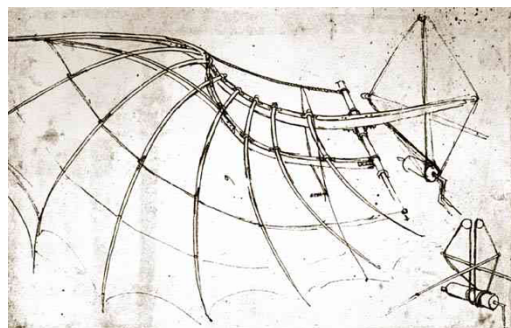
**“Human creations reflect nature.”  
-Victoria**

**This sculpture combines two things that look alike: a rope and a snake. The rope represents man-made technology and the snake represents nature.**



This piece compares the appearance of a coiled rope to a coiled snake. At a glance, the sculpture could be mistaken for a typical length of rope. The *Rope Trick*, as it is titled, is a test of our observation skills. That is why it is important to look at 3D works of art carefully from all angles possible (and read the wall labels).

Many human inventions, practical and impractical, share a common ancestor: nature. Victoria's intention with this piece was to show how humans look to nature for inspiration. Perhaps the most famous example is the airplane. Drawings by Leonardo Da Vinci show how he looked to birds to design a flying machine.



*In Victoria's words:*

“A hybrid of the man-made and nature. This work relates to allusion, but also similarity. Human creations reflect nature. The coiled rope is like a coiled snake, but also it is about fooling the eye, second guessing perception, and about the clash of culture and nature, of one replacing the other. This work is influenced by Surrealism, where like something in a dream, a rope transforms into a snake.”

Victoria Fuller

## **OCTOPUS SUN** (2019)

Cast resin, African woven basket, aluminum and acrylic paint

Energy from the sun is central to life on earth. Many cultures worship the sun. This is one of many sculptures which Victoria made to honor the sun, which she calls, "the giver of life".



Victoria created this wall-hanging sculpture as part of a series of works honoring the sun. The sun is one of the most common symbols in artwork, although the way it has been depicted are totally varied. The octopus arms are an unusual "twist". Perhaps this is how a seafaring culture would choose to represent the sun. Other pieces from that series are pictured below. Note the use of unconventional materials.



*In Victoria's words:*

Over centuries cultures have depicted the sun with radiating arms reaching out from a sphere. Some cultures worshiped the sun. Octopus Sun is one, from a series of radiating suns, that I created in honor of the sun, which is the giver of life. Without the sun all life on earth would cease to exist.

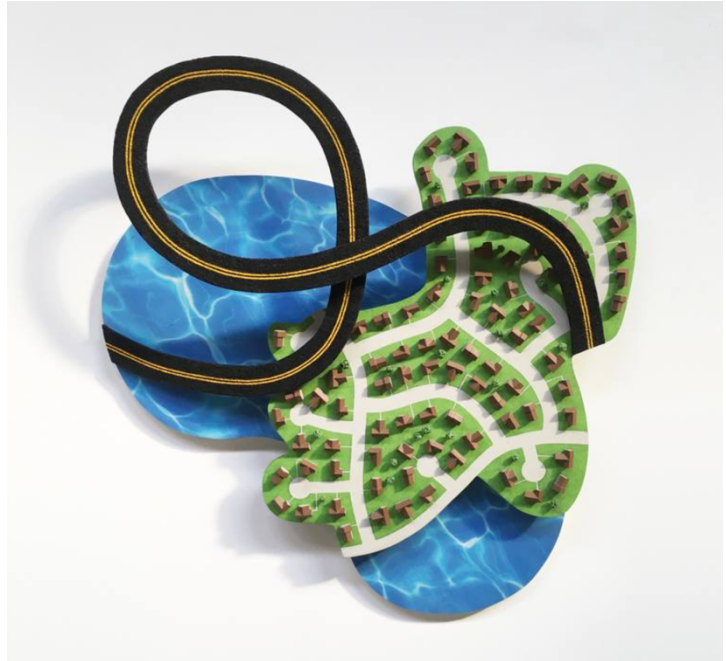


**Victoria Fuller**

## **EXIT TO SUBURBIA (2017)**

**Birch plywood, vinyl flooring, cast resin and acrylic paint**

**Images taken from satellites and planes are a great source of inspiration for artists, like Victoria. She sees human structures as a mosaic of roads, buildings, and waterways.**



*Exit to Suburbia* is a wall-hanging sculpture which focuses on the design of human civilization. It places us in a birds-eye view perspective, so that we can peer down on a suburban housing development.. The exaggerated curves of the roadway and the play of the light on the water suggest that this is at least partly an imagined landscape rather than a realistic one. Despite our technological advances, the neighborhood appears similar to other settlements in nature, like an ant colony.

Often times, when we use the word nature, it refers to anything in the world, except humans and man-made objects. From a birds-eye perspective it sometimes becomes more difficult to distinguish man-made things from the rest of nature.

*In Victoria's words:*

"I focus not only on patterns of nature, but also on human-made patterns and systems. As humans have advanced technology we can now see human structures and designs from the air. "Exit to Suburbia" shows an aerial view of a housing development, a highway, and swimming pool shape – man made things seen from planes, satellites, or in the Google Earth app. Like patterns in nature, human-made patterns create a mosaic of designs seen from the air. Our constructions cover the earth creating patterns in the same way that colonies of insect, nests of birds, herds of animals, plants, fungus, moss, trees, rivers, mountains, glaciers and lakes all make patterns on the earth. Patterns of man and nature exist in both micro and macro worlds."

Victoria Fuller

## **NORTHERN WHITE RHINOCEROS** (2021)

Watercolor on paper

**Victoria created this watercolor as a tribute to the Northern White Rhinoceros. Only two remain in the entire world, due to poaching for rhinoceros horns. The horns are believed to have powerful medicinal properties. They are also a status symbol.**

One of Victoria's professional skills is natural science illustration. This form of imagery is more utilitarian than expressive. It is used to educate the viewer about the natural world. These illustrators are tasked not only with illustrating individual subjects, but complex concepts and systems as well.

The subject of this illustration has played a vital, if tragic, role in current conversations around conservation. Once abundant in East and Central Africa, the Northern White Rhinoceros' population has dwindled to two – both female. Animal lovers and conservationists have watched in horror as efforts to protect this subspecies from poaching and habitat loss have failed.

*In Victoria's words:*

Thousands of animals are endangered and on the brink of extinction or are extinct. The Northern White Rhino is now extinct. The last male northern white rhino was named Sudan. Humans made this magnificent animal go extinct in 2018. Rhinoceroses are killed, illegally by poachers, for their horns which are used in the Chinese medicine trade. This watercolor is my loving tribute to the species. They have saved the sperm and egg from that species, in hopes of bringing it back, but if it is not successful, this animal will be gone forever. We all must become aware of the fragility of life on earth, and do what we can to protect all species.

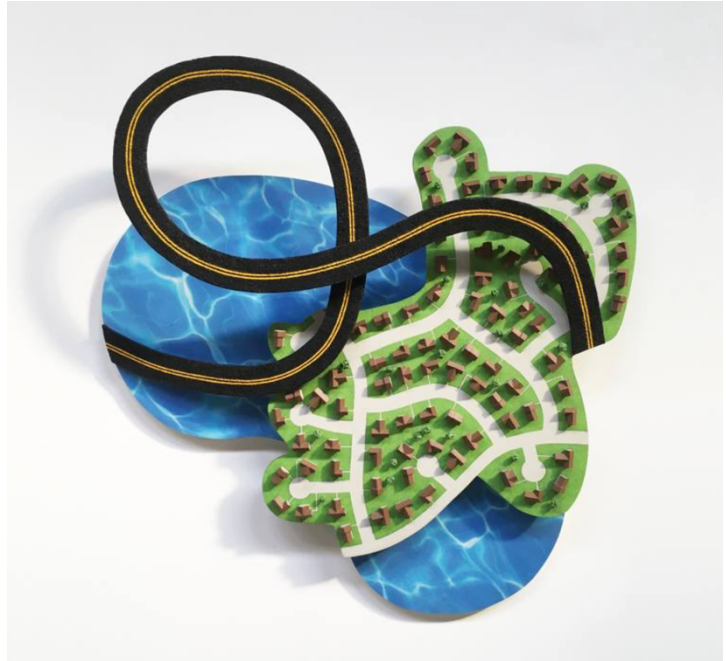


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Victoria Fuller

## **EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED** (2014)

Wood, epoxy clay, artificial plants, chain, acrylic paint

Gas pipes connect the different parts of this sculpture. Like the title suggests, everything is connected. What do you think Victoria means with the title of this piece?

This wall-hanging sculpture combines several non-traditional materials and also draws upon Victoria's broad skillset as an artist and natural science illustrator. The different painted facets and sculptural elements are meant to mimic a natural science museum display.

The gas pipes are serving as connections, both literally and figuratively, between different systems. Each portion contains references to the complex relationship between man-made and natural systems. The grass on top of the piece, for example, is a seemingly natural plant species, but grass lawns are also a human intervention on natural ecosystems. Dandelions are viewed as intruders, yet grass is also an intruder.

*In Victoria's words:*

*"Everything is Connected is a synthesis of images from nature and man, about global warming and the effects of man on nature. There is a delicate balance on planet earth. Can systems of man and nature coexist? How we treat the land and animals on earth affects all life on earth, including ours. It is in our hands. We need to be good stewards of earth and take care of it."*





Victoria Fuller

## **SUNFLOWER POLLEN** (2019)

Epoxy clay, styrofoam, wire screen,  
and acrylic paint

**Pollen is a grain-like substance that  
causes plants to form seeds.**

**This gigantic pollen is meant to  
appear as it would under a  
microscope, or from an insect's point  
of view.**



*Sunflower Pollen* is another excellent example of Victoria's skill as a natural science illustrator. It is also another example of her interest in utilizing the aesthetic of natural science museum displays. The purpose of such an artwork is to open our eyes to the complexity of the world around us. What may appear to the naked eye as a waxy mess, may be an army of spined orbs when viewed under a microscope. Victoria hopes that by viewing artwork like this, viewers will be inspired to look closer at the world around them.

*In Victoria's words:*

"This giant reproduction of sunflower pollen resembles the sun. Microscopes have allowed the study of nature to get a glimpse of life on a micro level, where we can see plant pollen from an insect's viewpoint."

**Victoria Fuller**

## **DEEP DOWN** (2014)

**Carved wood, mixed media**

**This detailed cube looks like a display from a natural history museum. If you look closely from all angles, you will spot a variety of creatures living next to one another peacefully. Victoria has created an entire ecosystem for us to investigate.**

This cross-section of earth is abundant with life. It's a peek into subterranean living spaces we rarely see with our own eyes. Victoria is interested in showing us the variety of organisms coexisting. She is also continuing to draw inspiration from museum displays.

*In Victoria's words:*

"My interest in natural organisms lead to the development of a body of work influenced by dioramas and displays in natural history museums. In *Deep Down*, I have created a cutaway in a cube that shows a chipmunk living underground along with a worm, rock, and plant roots. A second side of the cube shows a snake, above and underground. The third side reveals an anthill above ground, and the colony tunnels underground. And the fourth side has a plant, cicada, plant roots, and a worm underground. This viewpoint lets the viewer into the world of these animals and their lives above and underground, as we view a small section of earth in which many organisms are part of a larger ecosystem. All of these organisms are connected and their interactions and activities keep the environment healthy and thriving."

