

CHRIS MAYNARD

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Chris Maynard
Artist Statement

word count: 392

I carve feathers into intricate art by cutting them into detailed shapes and arranging the cutouts into scenes that celebrate the life and flight of birds and the meaning that birds and flight have for us.

Feathers appear fragile but they are actually made of keratin—the same material that forms our fingernails. They need to be tough, considering the work they do: Feathers keep a bird clothed, sheltered, and in flight for a full year before they are shed.

Once a feather has finished its life as part of a bird, I believe it still has much to offer. The essence of a bird is inherent in each of its feathers. In carving and arranging a feather into a thought-provoking scene, I use an individual feather's unique qualities in order to celebrate the bird that gave us the feather.

I consider a feather's patterns, shapes, and sometimes its colors when I'm creating a new work of art. The subjects of my work are drawn from my own experiences as a naturalist and artist, observing and thinking about wildlife.

Developing this new art form was the path to combine the scientific knowledge of birds that I gained during my career with my lifelong fascination with and love for the natural world.

Conservation is inherent in my life as well as my art, so I use only feathers that are legal to have and to sell. I do not alter feather colors in any way. Because of this, my color palette is limited, which challenges me as an artist to allow a feather's form to guide my work.

I mount the feather cutouts using stainless entomology pins so their curves and shapes are set in relief against the backdrop. This allows me to incorporate shadows—which change depending on the intensity, quality, and direction of light.

My art has been received with appreciation and enthusiasm by many people from many walks of life. I'm honored to be able to help foster appreciation and understanding of the natural world through something as simple and wonderful as feathers.

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Short Bio

[word count: 246](#)

Chris Maynard carves feathers into intricate art

Birds were always a part of Chris Maynard's childhood. As a young person, he took refuge in the woods around his home in Washington State where, his head nestled in moss, he watched the birds up in the tall trees. He began working with feathers at age 12

Today, Maynard carves feathers into intricate art in order to make their natural beauty more noticeable. His work highlights the patterns and colors of the feathers themselves, inviting the viewer to look and look again. For him, feathers represent flight, transformation, and a bridge between our present lives and our dreams.

He displays his work in shadow boxes, a signature art form he developed that enchants people around the world.

Maynard works with feathers from turkeys, parrots, peacocks, and other birds and crafts them into scenes that are displayed in his world-renowned shadow boxes. A conservationist at heart, Maynard's feathers are legally obtained. Many of the feathers are naturally shed which means that the birds they came from may still be alive today.

Since feathers are universal symbols of flight, transformation, achievement, and hope, Maynard's art speaks to many people who long for these qualities as well as people who revere birds.

Maynard's work is included in private collections and featured in publications in North America, Asia, Europe, and Australia. His 2014 book, *Feathers, Form & Function*, highlights his work and tells stories about what feathers are, what roles they fill for birds, and why people find them alluring.

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Long Bio

word count: 644

Chris Maynard carves feathers into intricate art

Birds were always a part of Chris Maynard's childhood. As a young person, he took refuge in the woods around his home in Washington State where, his head nestled in moss, he watched the birds up in the tall trees.

Walking through those same woods to get to school, he was captivated by the abundant life he observed in the smallest things and most intricate natural systems.

"I really don't need to travel," he thought as a young adult. "It's all right here."

He began working with feathers when he was twelve years old. But it would be many years before he would sculpt feathers into intricate scenes and display them in shadow boxes, the signature art form he developed that enchants people around the world.

Maynard's love of the living world led him to a degree and a career in biology. For many years he worked with tribal, state, and federal governments negotiating the flow of water through the dams of the Columbia River basin trying to balance needs of salmon with the use of water for irrigation and electricity.

Maynard is part of a line of visual creators. His mother, Priscilla Maynard, was an art professor and later a professional artist. Her father was a painter. As a child, Maynard and his siblings worked in their mother's studio to draw, paint, and make things out of paper and fabric, like their old used diapers (laundered of course).

"I believe creating art is something you can learn," he says. "But, just like math, it can be squelched out of you pretty quickly. By lucky circumstance, that didn't happen to me. Mom promoted my creative impulses."

When Maynard began working as a full-time professional artist, he combined this lifelong learning and the practice of making things with his hands with his deep knowledge of the natural world. He also decided to fully express who he is, an artist who feels most at ease when he's observing, pondering, and creating.

"Art is a meditation. It feels like a walk in the woods. It's an escape from busyness."

Though we see the natural world, we usually see it in our own abstract way. Maynard's art challenges this tendency by calling attention to one of the most common and complex natural objects: the feather.

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and look again. For him, feathers represent flight, transformation, and a bridge between our present lives and our dreams.

“We want to fly but cannot.” he says. “But birds can, so their feathers become symbols of this yearning. Feathers are perfect by themselves. Presenting them in slightly altered but still retaining their featherness, he encourages people to see feathers in new ways, promoting beauty and new connections.”

And because people find feathers fascinating, his work brings different kinds of people together.

He works with feathers from turkeys, parrots, peacocks, and other birds. A conservationist at heart, Maynard’s feathers are legally obtained. Many of the feathers are naturally shed which means that the birds they came from may still be alive today.

Shadows are integral to each piece, so lighting changes the way each piece appears. This means that there are endless ways each piece can be seen, depending upon the intensity and angle of the light source.

Since feathers are universal symbols of flight, transformation, achievement and hope, Maynard’s art speaks to many people who long for these qualities as well as people who revere birds.

Maynard’s work is included in private collections and featured in publications in North America, Asia, Europe, and Australia. His 2014 book, *Feathers, Form & Function*, highlights his work and tells stories about what feathers are, what roles they fill for birds, and why people find them alluring.

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Résumé

Select Solo Shows

- 2019, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Tuscon, AZ. 40 pieces & 5 wall installations
- 2018, WRJ Design, Jackson, WY
- 2016-2018, Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
- 2017, Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, WA, 40 pieces and 3 wall installations
- 2017 Visions West Contemporary Art, Bozeman, MT
- 2016, 2014, IFC Mall Gallery, Shanghai, China
- 2015, Lieutenant Governor's Art Council, Washington State Capitol, Olympia, WA
- 2013, Washington Center for the Performing Arts Gallery, Olympia, WA

Select Group Shows

2019

- Into the Woods, Gerald Peters Gallery, 4-person show

2018

- Art Seattle, Seattle, WA
- Birds in Art, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI
- Seattle Art Fair, Seattle, WA
- Childhood's End Gallery, Olympia, WA
- Plantation Arts Festival, featured artist, Thomasville, GA

2017

- Southeast Arts Expo, Charleston, SC
- Coors Western Art Show, Denver, CO

2016

- Art Aspen, Aspen, CO
- Plantation Arts Festival, Thomasville, GA
- Art and the Animal, Houston Museum of Natural Science,
- Birds in Art, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI
- Western Visions, National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson Hole, WY
- Bodies + Beings, Abmeyer & Wood, Seattle, WA
- Vashon Center for the Arts, Vashon Island, WA
- Southeast Art Expo, Charleston, SC
- Coors Western Art Show, Golden, CO (People's Choice Award)

2015

- Art Miami, Miami, FL
- Birds in Art, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI
- Art and the Animal, Roger Tory Peterson Institute, Jamestown, NY
- Adaptations, Patricia Rovzar Gallery, Seattle, WA
- Artists for Conservation, Annual Exhibit, Vancouver, B.C., Canada
- Compositions, Radius Gallery, Missoula, MT

2014

- Artists for Conservation, Annual Exhibit, Grouse Mountain Resort, Vancouver, B.C., Canada
- Animals in Art, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA (Honorable Mention)
- Crow/Raven: Magic and Mystery, artEAST, Issaquah, WA

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Selected Commissions

- 2018 Crowne Plaza Hotel, North Augusta, SC
- 2017: Zhejian Natural History Museum, Hangzhou, China
- 2017: Philips Arena, Atlanta, GA
- 2013–2018: White Bird Dance Awards, Portland OR
- 2013: City of Olympia, WA
- Private commissions throughout the USA and Europe, Australia, New Zealand

Awards

- 2018: Ann Marie Sculpture Garden show: judge's award
- 2016: People's Choice Award, Coors Western Art Show, Denver, CO
- 2015: Merit Award, Society of Animal Artists, NY
- 2015: Conservation Artist Award, Artists for Conservation, Vancouver, BC, Canada
- 2014: Honorable Mention, Animals in Art, Baton Rouge, LA

Appearances

- "Reimagining Feathers," [PINC Talk](#), Zeist, Netherlands, 2018
- "Feathers and Art," Bellevue Art Museum, Bellevue, WA, 2017
- "The World in a Feather," [TEDx Talk](#), Washington Center for Performing Arts, Olympia, WA, 2015
- "Olympia man transforms feathers into art," New Day Northwest, KING-5 TV, December 8, 2015
- "Feathers in Art", Tacoma Art Museum, 2014
- Keynote, Audubon Annual, 2013
- REI, Adventure & Conservation Speaker Series, 2013

Select Publications

- *Feathers, Form and Function: what feathers are, how they work, and why we find them alluring.* Art and text by Chris Maynard. Aviva Publishing, NY, November 2014
- *Feathers*, Western Art Collector, April-May 2019
- *Between Here & the Heavens*, Southwest Art Magazine March-April 2018
- *Jump into Video Marketing* (front cover), Profession Artist Magazine, January 2018
- *Birds from a Feather*, Garden and Gun Magazine, Feb-March 2017
- *Ascension*, American Artist Magazine, June 2017
- *Rendering Feathers*, Covey Rise Magazine, February-March 2017
- *On a Wing*, Western Art and Architecture, February-March 2017
- *The Art and Craft of Illustration*, Sandu Cultural Media, Alchemy—, Gingko Press, 2016

Collections

- Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI
- Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, Winslow, WA
- Zhejiang Natural History Museum, Hangzhou, China
- Group Health Orthopedics, Olympia, WA
- Marriott Park Lane Hotel, London, UK
- Crowne Plaza Hotel, North Augusta, SC
- Park Hyatt Hotel, Mallorca, Spain
- City of Olympia
- University of Washington Medical Center

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- Private collections throughout the USA; and Europe, China; Japan; Australia, Brazil, New Zealand

Select Press

- "Birds Lend Plumage to Feathered Artwork", Seattle Times, May 14, 2017
- "Something Worth Tweeting About" Real Change, April 26-May 2, 2017
- "The Man Who Reincarnates Feathers," Audubon, July 29, 2016
- "Bohemian Rhapsody: Olympia, Washington," American Craft, July 15, 2016
- "Artist Finds Inspiration in a Light-as-Air Material," Seattle Times, December 20, 2015
- "A Comforting Gentleness—Interview with Feather Artist Chris Maynard!" Seattle Post-Intelligencer, December 11, 2015
- "Plume Perfection: Chris Maynard's Feather Art," American Lifestyle, November 2014
- "Beautiful Artwork Cut Out of Feathers," Smithsonian, January 10, 2013

Videos

- ["Chris Maynard, Feather Artist"](#), Garden and Gun Magazine, 2017
- ["Featherfolio with Chris Maynard"](#), Bainbridge Island Art Museum, 2017
- ["Meet Chris Maynard"](#), Artist's video, 2015

Gallery Representation

- Ric Michel Fine Art, New York, NY
- Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
- Galerie Bettina, Paris, France

Education

- 2012, EDGE Professional Development Program, Artist Trust, Seattle, WA
- 1987, B.A., The Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA

Other Experience

- 2018: National Duck Stamp Contest, Las Vegas, NV, judge
- 2017: Curi Cancha Artist Residency, Costa Rica

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What people are saying about Chris Maynard's art...

When I saw his work, I was completely blown away. They are meticulous, exquisite pieces. They have so much movement and life. I had never seen anything like them. —Greg Robinson, Chief Curator, Bainbridge Museum of Art

Each [of his shadowboxes] teaches us something about bird behavior. They are, as one naturalist put it, a union of science and art. —Isabelle Walker, Western Art and Architecture

Maynard has most definitely found his secure bridge between earth and heaven. —Norman Koplas, Southwest Art

By picking apart something so small, he's able to form grand ideas that speak to the whole. —Becca Cudmore, Audubon

I just wanted to tell you that I just visited your exhibit at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum and I was blown away. Your art is amazing and unique. I've never seen anything like it... I just wanted to thank you for bringing such beauty to AZ. —Art Lover

We just saw your exhibit at the Tucson Desert Museum. We were overwhelmed by the beauty you created. On par with some of the best exhibitions at the Phoenix Heard Museum. Thank you for this experience. — Art Lover

Your work is extraordinary and I am so proud to have one gorgeous piece at home, which we cherish every day. —Art Lover, Netherlands

I am writing to express my gratitude for your wonderful artistry. My day is so much better for seeing your creations. —Art Lover

I can spend hours on your website looking at your pieces. One is more beautiful than the next! I call it the best eye candy. Your work is mesmerizing. You are extremely gifted! —Art Lover

I happily stumbled across your creations and as an avid natural history lover I was simply blown away. I cannot describe how inspirational they are and having now looked at the images countless times I am quite simply amazed. —Art Lover

I just wanted to let you know that Owltercation was delivered last night. Everything is perfect—I can't tell you how much I love this piece. I just bought a new home and having Owltercation here makes me feel like everything is coming together, finally! —Art Lover

I can't thank you enough for the fine Feathers, Form & Function book. Now I actually know a living artist whose creations I appreciate in the way I appreciate those of M.C. Escher and Bev Dolittle. Your book fills me with a sense of anticipation of the joy of learning, too; it's special to me when artistic creation does more than entertain or even evoke feelings; I think you are truly sharing your naturalist's insight, which is admirable. —Art Lover, New Zealand

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I have been sitting going through your artwork and blog for the last hour. Your thoughts on birds, feathers and flying are so interesting and thoughtful. I feel the need to soar from the high trees in my back yard over the lake and into the woods. Thank you for making me smile again and again. —Art Lover

Whilst waiting in the lobby for an appointment, and not feeling very optimistic about this meeting, I came across some of your art displayed on the wall... my whole day changed because I had stumbled on something so stunning it took my breath away! —Art Lover, London

I can't even express how much I loved your art. It blew me away. —Art Lover

My eyes and brain are still full of images of your amazing glorious work. It is the first I have been tempted to buy in a long time. —Art Lover

I can't thank you enough for sharing your love and art with the world!! I will treasure the two pictures I was able to purchase and feel a special bond with my airborne friends. I want to wish you only the best as you are soaring to new heights with your wonderful art. You are a special gift and I'm pleased to have been graced by your art. —Art Lover

I attended your artist talk this evening at Bainbridge Island Museum of Art and thoroughly enjoyed myself. One of my favorite things about your work is that it's incredibly intentional and thoughtful. Your passion and commitment to birds and feathers are center stage in your work and it's inspiring. I love that you use natural materials in a mostly unaltered state to share your vision. —Art Lover

I had the very good fortune of getting to see your exhibition at the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art and was thrilled, both with what I saw with my own eyes, as well as what I heard others saying as they viewed your work. Needless to say, everyone is astounded. And not only that, but obviously inspired and deeply moved by your artistic vision, your impeccable craftsmanship, and your deep love for, and commitment to, your medium. I do believe that for many, your show is going to stand as a pinnacle in the museum's list of exhibitions. —Art Lover