

Printmaker highlights city's wildlife

Louisa Austin

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Local artist, Annastasia Copeland-Rynders, uses her passion for art to explore the effects of wild animals living among us in Salt Lake City. This petite, soft-spoken and friendly artist uses printmaking to bring awareness to the fact that Salt Lake is home to many species of wild animals that normally live in the mountains and desert away from humans.

A recent graduate from the U in environmental studies and printmaking, Copeland-Rynders' first foray into creating art came from her relationship with her outside environment.

"I grew up loving the outdoors, and I could always be found in a garden or by a stream creating some sort of earthwork," Copeland-Rynders said. "My first memories of creating art are of making small sculptures from found objects."

As Copeland-Rynders developed as an artist, she became interested in printmaking's tactile nature.

"I have always been interested in sculpture because I like to work with my hands, and I found that printmaking — due to its focus on technique and process — satisfied that interest," she said.

Copeland-Rynders uses her passion for creating prints to present the issue of urban wildlife in the city. Finding her inspiration through observation of the environment, she developed a unique perspective on the "tensions, interconnections and balance between urban growth and nature" in Salt Lake City.

She noticed deer and other wildlife entering and passing through Salt Lake City and on campus, which got her interested in studying migratory patterns of animals and where they choose to live within cities or neighboring areas.

In her research, Copeland-Rynders discovered the Chicago metropolitan area had a large population of urban-dwelling coyotes. This discovery caused her to look closer to home, where she found just as much inspiration and material for her prints.

"Currently I am looking at [Utah's] local connection with the coyote, and how we as individuals and a community interact with such wildlife politically and geographically," Copeland-Rynders said.

Through a photographic series where Copeland-Rynders tracks wildlife within urban boundaries, she was amazed at how many animals she found migrating and living in the foothills and the city. She was surprised to find more animals closer to the city than in the canyons and Utah's less-populated areas.

"I have found a variety of animals from deer, coyotes, badgers and even a lynx," she said. "All within walking



'Night' by local artist Annastasia Copeland-Rynders. Copeland-Rynders uses her passion for art to explore the effects of wild animals found in Salt Lake City.
Photo Courtesy Annastasia Copeland-Rynders

distance of local Salt Lake Valley residences.”

Copeland-Rynders’ art skills have transferred over into her current career as an exhibit and graphic designer for a museum. She gave advice for students within the arts who might be discouraged about not being able to use their skills once they graduate.

“Just keep creating — work with what you have,” she said. “It is important to keep up with the activities and passions you had while in school.”

For Copeland-Rynders, it appears she is following her own advice.

Contact Louisa Austin at l.austin@chronicle.utah.edu

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