



Morning Mists, 26 x 47 inches, oil on canvas



LANGMEAD'S
Wild Vision

David Langmead, Houston Safari Club's Wildlife Artist of the Year
Paints Both to Inspire Us and Ignite a Call to Action for Africa

BY TODD WILKINSON

Artist David Langmead doesn't merely paint astounding scenes of African wildlife and landscapes. Flowing from his palette are the colors of hope.

One of Langmead's reference points for optimism, making him believe that things can get better on his own troubled continent, is the 19th century American frontier. Bison, pronghorn, elk, deer, moose, beaver, trumpeter swans, grizzlies, wolves, cougars and other creatures were nearly wiped from the map of the West.

Romantic painters ranging from Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran to Frederic Remington, Charles M. Russell, John M. Stanley and W.R. Leigh, among others, showed how powerful art can be as a force in elevating public awareness.

Fine art fueled conservation and development of the North American Model of big game management championed by the likes of Republican President Theodore Roosevelt. As a result, in many corners of the West today landscapes have been "rewilded" with the species above, not only to profound ecological and economic benefit but in playing a crucial role in restoring human connections to nature.

Langmead isn't interested in celebrating a long-last past that may never be again and has no relevance in the lives of young people. He wants to give those who love Africa a reason to rally in its defense as elephants, rhinos, lions, cheetah and other iconic animals confront the biggest threats to their survival ever.

It is appropriate that Langmead is Houston Safari Club's wildlife artist of the year, given the passion of its members for supporting conservation.

"It should go without saying that this is a great honor," Langmead says. "Sportsmen and women were crucial in improving the fates of North American wildlife. I believe their voices will be deciding factors again in convincing the world to make wildlife conservation a priority for Africa because frankly there is no more time to waste."

From Langmead's studio window in Nieu Bethesda, a haven for artisans in South Africa's magical Great Karoo, the crushing blows being inflicted upon wildlife populations by poaching and habitat loss are never far away.

"I don't think anyone can refute the premise that given two artists of equal talent, the artist that lives, breathes and experiences his natural environment every day will re-create it better, in paintings, than the one who doesn't," says Ross Parker, co-founder of Call of Africa's Native Visions Galleries, which will have a booth at Houston



The Apprenticeship, oil on canvas

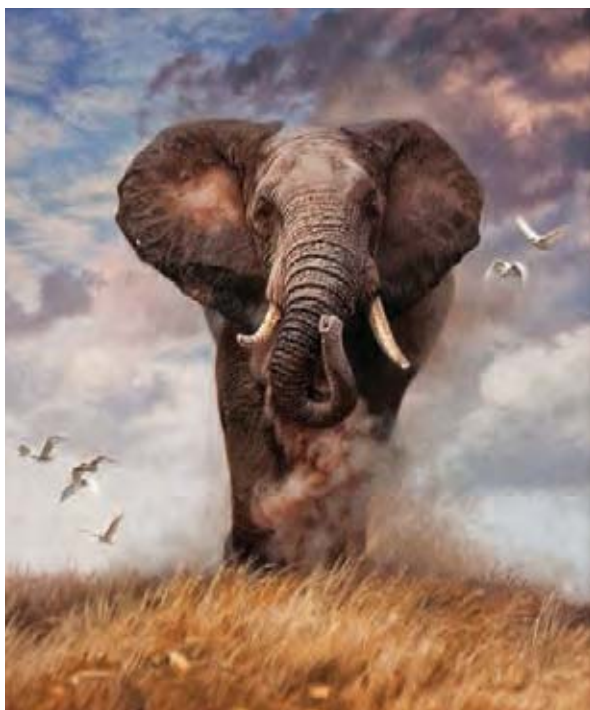




Above: *Ivory Tower*, 27½ x 23 inches,
oil on canvas

Top Right: *Moment Of Reflection*,
18½ x 32¼ inches, oil on canvas

Lower Right: *Morning Moves*,
18 x 25½ inches, oil on canvas



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Top: *Seat of Power*, oil on canvas

Above: *Close to the Heart*, oil on canvas

Right: *Golden Glow*, 12½ x 24 inches, oil on canvas

Next Page: *King of a Thousand Hills*, 10¾ x 15½ inches, oil on canvas



Safari Club's Annual Convention. "David Langmead's vision is an outgrowth of him growing up in African bush and his cravings for it as an adult."

When Langmead was a teenager, he lived in the eastern highlands of what was then Rhodesia. The bush war that brought an end to colonial white rule and the creation of Zimbabwe had devastating consequences for nature in the wider region.

Gorongosa National Park in neighboring Mozambique, once one of the premier wildland preserves in Africa, suffered devastating losses. Some thought the park could never recover. But today Gorongosa is undergoing a slow rebirth.

When Langmead paints, he says, he does it as an act of faith to remind Americans and Europeans "not to turn their backs on Africa but to engage because it needs our attention more than ever." And that's why he gets his greatest satisfaction knowing that his artworks have become topics of conversation for grandparents, parents and children about the ethics involved in giving a voice to wildlife.

In works such as "Ivory Tower" and "Delta Traffic" portraying elephants, "Morning Moves," a moody portrait of leopard, "In the Spotlight" celebrating an egret, and "Golden Glow," an homage to lion, you get a sense of his range. (Note: all of these works can be viewed online at www.nativevisions.com where you can also get preview of Langmead's works that he'll debut at Houston Safari Club in 2016).

Langmead's portfolio reads like an adventure travelogue. He's painted in the Kalahari Desert and Okavango Delta of Botswana, Kruger in South Africa, Matobo and Hwange national parks in Zimbabwe; he's observed elephants and lions up close in Zimbabwe's Mana Pools up along the Zambezi River and he's made explorations with Parker into Malawi and Zambia.

"I started collecting his work because authenticity pours out of it," says Shawn DeRosa, a medical instruments entrepreneur from Florida, who owns two dozen Langmeads.

"The first ones I purchased were little ten-by-ten-inch studies but size didn't matter because they were very striking. David's work has a way of getting inside you and becoming the kinds of scenes you



want to view every day in your home,” DeRosa says. “Eventually, I purchased larger works and their presence can fill up a room in the best possible of ways.”

In recent years, Langmead and Parker have donated a percentage of sales from original artworks to wildlife rehabilitation centers aiding animals left orphaned by poachers and to preserves such as North Luangwa National Park, where game guards are engaged in a bloody battle to hold the line against daily poaching incursions.

Langmead’s depictions of birds, bathed in evanescent light, have been judged into the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum’s prestigious Birds in Art Show in Wausau, Wisconsin, and some of those works have gone on a national museum tour. Meanwhile, his celebrations of the Big Five are coveted by collectors of sporting art.

“We are now losing a thousand rhino a year to poaching,” Langmead says. “The populations are soon going to be unviable and extinction will be inevitable. Americans need to use whatever influence they have. We cannot exploit our planet, as we are doing, at the cost of our children’s future.”

During a recent trip to Mana Pools, a park under siege, Langmead, Parker and friends still managed to enjoy its tranquility. They partook in several long distance walks and had close encounters with lions,

elephants, Cape buffalo, crocodile and hippo. Mana Pools is not only one of the wildest preserves in southern Africa, it is among the most dangerous and rewarding for an artist who dares leave the safe confines of a vehicle.

Upon leaving, Langmead and Parker were fired up, refusing to be passive in allowing Mana Pools to suffer the same fate as Gorongosa. “A place shouldn’t have to be destroyed before you appreciate it. That’s why David’s art is important.”

Fired up, Langmead emailed Parker the following note once they returned home: “I am back in the studio feeling really inspired after one of the best weeks I can remember,” he penned. “The bush was an absolute balm for the soul and I could just keep walking and never stop. As a lifestyle profession, this is like no other. It can be magical. I am truly blessed to have your friendship. Good mates are rare.”

So, too, for that matter, is great wildlife art that speaks to our time on Earth—decoration that proclaims our values, leaves us inspired and compels us to want to make a positive difference. That’s what David Langmead’s paintings do.

Todd Wilkinson has been a hunter and angler his entire life. He is author of the new critically-acclaimed book “Grizzlies of Pilgrim Creek, An Intimate Portrait of 399, the Most Famous Bear of Greater Yellowstone” available at: www.mangelsen.com/grizzly

“Not every corner of the planet has succumbed to human dominance or ruin. Fortunately, some animals are too fierce, too strong to have gone away completely. My paintings are for them.”

—David Langmead

