

# Call of the Wild!

## Sedona Arts Center celebrates wildlife in a one-man photography exhibition

Sedona Arts Center is presenting fine art photography in a one-man show featuring the work of Willis Peterson.

The exhibition will be from June 25 to Aug. 30.

An opening reception will be in the SAC gallery from 5 to 7 p.m., Wednesday, June 25.

From the Brownie camera he received on his 14th birthday to art museums in London, New York, Boston, Colorado and Scottsdale, Peterson's creative journey as a fine art photographer has more than 50 years long and rewarding.

Peterson has captured spectacular images of wildlife and majestic scenery from the Alaskan Wilderness, Canadian Rockies, Pacific Northwest, Central Plains, Southwest deserts, Baja Mexico, Southeast swamplands and Central American jungles. He has traveled 200,000 miles on the American continent alone documenting his subjects.

Working as a photojournalist for the *Arizona Republic* for 15 years, he was greatly admired and respected within the newsroom walls. Going beyond, his spectacular and meaningful photography lit up such publications as *Arizona Highways*, *National Geographic*, *Audubon Magazine*, *Pacific Discovery*, *Natural History* and many other national magazines.

An artistic statement made by Peterson sets the stage, "All lovely in their own way,

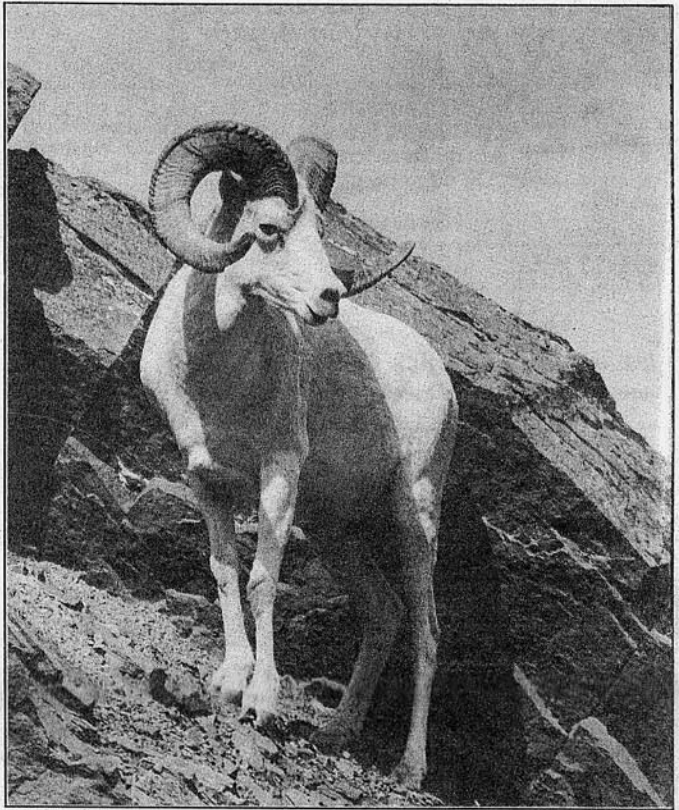
plants and wild creatures create a living world of infinite color, mood and design.

"The shyness of a fawn, the indescribable hue of a flower, the points of light refracting from droplets of dew are but ramifications of a far greater experience, the seeing of nature through a camera. To register on film such subjective nuances is an exhilarating spiritual experience for me. I think that a man should know more about his environment. If I can create a bit more harmony between man and nature, then I will have done well indeed."

For most of us, picture taking is simply a mechanical recording of an image through a lens. For Peterson, it is, in fact, a sophisticated technical skill stemming from an innate desire to make photographs under any condition combined with a sense of knowing when to portray the mood and essence behind the image.

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Peterson received his master's degree in audio visual technology from Arizona State University. In 1968, Peterson was asked to develop a photography program for Glendale Community College. He remained there until his retirement in 1986.



**THE WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY** of Willis Peterson will be on exhibit at the Sedona Arts Center from June 25 through August 30. Shown here is *Dall Sheep*, and on the cover is *Ocelot*.

One of his students reminisced fondly, "Mr. Peterson taught me how to look at things in a whole new manner. Suddenly I saw beauty where I had never looked before, and I learned to capture that beauty for a lifetime on film.

"Even today I enjoy a photo of a lily pad and frog that I took in 1978 while in his class. It's all mine because he taught me how to develop film, too."

Viewers exclaim how uniquely he bestows vibrant life to his images. This is how he communicates a statement, i.e. this is spring, this is love, this is youth, etc. His nature pictures show this mood and the subject is the star performer.

Considered to be one of the country's most skilled nature photographers, Peterson shares his feelings by saying, "My goal as a nature photographer is to portray physical traits as a living spirit. Then the subject assumes that magical, spiritual essence of life.

"Combined with the mood of the photograph, we then see past the likeness into something more significant."

Collector of top awards, the artist was named Arizona Journalism Teacher of the Year, Outstanding Senior Photographer for Eastman Kodak, Distinguished Service, Maricopa Community Colleges, and Outstanding Phoenix College Alumni.

Many of his nature articles have been excerpted and adapted to children's books. In fact, 113 exquisite color images and inspirational text comprise a large format coffee-

table-sized volume titled *The Glory of Nature's Form*.

His current traveling show, *African Visions*, portrays wildlife, majestic scenics and portraits of the Maasai tribes. Also in progress are exhibits on Egypt and Sri Lanka.

Join gifted photographer Peterson and enjoy his work at the reception June 25. Refreshments will be served.

Sedona Arts Center is at Hwy. 89A and Art Barn Road in Uptown Sedona.

### Coming up in the Sedona Arts Center exhibition gallery

**Sept. 5-27:** Sedona Arts Center's Annual Member Artist Artists & Craftsmen's exhibition. An artists' reception is scheduled for 5 to 7 p.m., Sept. 5.

**Oct. 1-31:** October brings *The Paintings of Jack Roberts and Part 2, The Chair in Art*. This unusual show will feature contemporary paintings and 12 fine art unique and (nearly) one-of-a-kind chairs. A reception will be held 5-7 p.m., Oct. 1.

**Nov. 5-22:** Each November, Sedona Art Center presents their *Annual Miniature Show*. This year it will be from Nov. 5 to 22, with a Silent Auction from 5-7 p.m., Nov. 22. This show is the perfect place to find fine art holiday gifts at reasonable prices.



*Ice Berg and Great Horned Owl Family* by Willis Peterson