



MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contacts:

Julia McHugh 805 569-3303 or jmchugh@sbzoo.org

Dean Noble 805 962-5339 or dnoble@sbzoo.org

NEW ART EXHIBIT: "ANIMAL AMBASSADORS"
MULTIMEDIA PRINTS BY JOHN BARAN HIGHLIGHT
ANIMALS FROM THE ZOO FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 22

Artist Reception and Conservation Expo Held
Thursday, July 1, 3:30 – 7 P.M.

Santa Barbara, CA, June 23, 2015 – Buttercup, the Santa Barbara Zoo's Masai giraffe calf born last November, is just one of several Zoo animals who are depicted in a new art show by local artist John Baran. "Animal Ambassadors" features more than 20 multimedia prints by this Santa Barbara-based artist, including other members of the giraffe herd, lion Chadwick, gorillas Goma and Kivu, snow leopards Zoe and Everett, Asian elephants Little Mac and Sujatha, Chilean flamingos, Asian small-clawed otters, and Humboldt penguins, among others. The works are for sale and half the proceeds benefit the Zoo. "Animal Ambassadors" is on view in the Volentine Family Gallery, located in the Discovery Pavilion, from July 1 to September 22, 2015. It is free to view with Zoo admission from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. For more information, visit www.sbzoo.org.



On Thursday, July 1 from 3:30 to 7 p.m., "Animal Ambassadors" opens with an Artist Reception combined with a Conservation Expo featuring organizations working to help save local endangered species. This event is free with Zoo admission until 5 p.m., and free of charge after 5 p.m. Drinks and snacks are available for purchase, as are the art prints. There is the opportunity to meet the artist and enjoy the Expo which features several Zoo conservation partners (see below).

About the Artist & the Paintings

The multi-media prints are a playful, colorful fusion of abstract art and animals. Sizes range from 4 feet square (for the Zoo's largest residents, Asian elephants), to 16 inches by 20 inches. Printed on wood panels, these works combine acrylic, photography, ink, and watercolors. Several

acrylic and ink original drawings are also on view, as are smaller mixed media prints on both paper and on wood. Prices begin at just \$35 and go up to \$4,000 for the larger prints.

In 2013, Baran created four animal-themed prints to give to his then 10-year-old daughter for Christmas. After he shared the prints on his John Baran Art Facebook page, he instantly received inquiries from his followers. He knew he had struck a chord, and decided to explore animal art in more depth.

Trained as both a landscape architect and an artist, Baran is also well known for his abstract works that depict landforms, vegetation and bodies of water, which often include elements such as soil, sand, or grass from the location that the painting represents. Visit www.johnbaranart.com.

He has donated works to Fight for Rhinos and Art 4 Apes, and one of his images is featured in the June/July issue of *Nature Conservancy* magazine.

His animal prints can be found in stores and galleries in California, Texas and Hawaii, and are featured on the television show, "Hawaii Five-O." His original abstract paintings are represented by galleries and shops in California, Colorado, Texas, Florida, New York, Brussels, and Belgium.

About the Conservation Expo

Organizations attending the Conservation Expo work with the Zoo on various conservation projects. Representatives will have information and exhibits about their work in the field.

- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) California Condor Recovery Program and Friends of the California Condor Wild and Free are focused on California condor conservation
- The Los Padres National Forest's Santa Barbara Ranger District is monitoring and assessing red legged frog and arroyo toad populations, aided by the Zoo
- The Channel Islands Naturalist Corps are among the groups the Zoo works with to help save the Channel Island Fox
- For biofuel research, the Ecological Services department at O'Malley Lab at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has utilized "raw materials" from the Zoo, in the form of elephant, sheep, goat, and giraffe manure

###

*Known as one of the world's most beautiful zoos, the **Santa Barbara Zoo** is located on 30 acres of botanic gardens and is home to nearly 500 individual animals in open, naturalistic habitats. It is accredited by the [Association of Zoos & Aquariums](http://www.aazoo.org) (AZA), representing the highest level of animal care, and participates in AZA endangered species programs for Asian elephant, California condor, Channel Island fox, and Western lowland gorilla, among others. A private nonprofit corporation, the Santa Barbara Zoo depends on community support, not tax dollars, for operations and improvements.*

The Zoo is open daily from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; general admission is \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors aged 65+, \$10 for children 2-12, and children under 2 are free. Parking is \$6.

Visit www.sbzoo.org.