

# Paws & Reflect: Art of Canines

Produced by David J. Wagner, L.L.C.

David J. Wagner, Ph.D., Curator/Tour Director

## Canidae

Canines are carnivorous mammals that include domestic dogs, wolves (the ancestors of dogs), wild dogs (e.g., the African wild dog or dingo), coyotes, foxes, and jackals. Together these animals constitute the family Canidae. A species within that family is called a “*canid*.” The word “canine” is usually used as an adjective in formal, technical language. Informally, it is used as a synonym for “*canid*.” The word “breed” is intended to designate varieties of animals or plants within a species engineered by man (as opposed to the word “species,” which designates natural varieties). In scientific nomenclature (naming), the first and capitalized name is the genus name. The second un-capitalized name is the species; then comes the subspecies if any. Some authorities, including the American Society of Mammalogists, classify domestic dogs as a subspecies of gray wolf, giving it the scientific name *Canis lupus familiaris*.

Dogs are distinguished from wild canines by their worldwide distribution in close association with humans and by their enormous genetic variability and physical variation. All *canids* possess similar potential for such genetic variability. However, human intervention in the form of guided selection has allowed this to be expressed to its fullest potential in dogs. By picking the most friendly and trainable wolves, humans created the dog. Some of the most beloved physical traits we associate with dogs are puppy features such as floppy ears, large eyes, and soft fur. It is probable that the dog was the first animal to be domesticated. Archeologists have discovered strong evidence that domestication began in the form of cooperative association between wolves and humans approximately 15,000 years ago, and that the earliest dogs resembled something like the dingo (found in Australia) or perhaps the Asian wolf, though it is entirely possible that domestication could have arisen independently in other parts of the world.

During the centuries that ensued, dogs were selectively bred for submissiveness and trainability, and used in any number of ways: draft animals, guard dogs, attack dogs, rescue dogs, shepherds, retrievers, guide dogs, and companions. Today, the American Kennel Club recognizes more than 150 of the more than 2,000 known breeds of dogs. The AKC has grouped these into eight classes: Sporting, Non-sporting, Hound, Terrier, Working, Herding, Toy, and Miscellaneous. Purebreds conform to the standards of the respective breed the pedigree of which has been recorded for a certain period of time. Dogs of mixed origin are called mongrels. Domestic dogs vary in size from the tiny Chihuahua, the tiniest of which, according to the Guinness Book of World Records, has been recorded at less than 6” long, to the enormous English mastiff, which has been recorded as large as 282 pounds. Dogs have a variety of body types, hair lengths, colors and patterns, not to mention attitudes, behaviors and activities, that make them wonderful subjects for art.

Wolves were formerly the most widely distributed terrestrial mammal in the world. There are many wolf subspecies, the two main ones being the gray wolf and the red wolf. Similar in appearance and sometimes called the prairie wolf, the coyote (*Canis latrans*) is considered by many experts a separate species altogether, even though coyotes, wolves, and dogs can all produce fertile offspring when crossed with each other. Among the factors considered for that choice are dental patterns and gene frequencies. Still, other experts consider coyotes to be a wolf subspecies. The problem stems from the fact that taxonomy (the classification of organisms) is an abstraction of nature for science rather than nature itself, and as such, doesn’t match nature perfectly. The gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), also called the timber wolf in North America, resembles a long-legged cross somewhat between a German shepherd, malamute or husky, with a shaggy coat, erect ears, and a bushy tail. Ruthless hunting exacerbated by bounties nearly exterminated the gray wolf in the lower 48 United States. Today, its very existence is a hot point of contention even in sparsely populated areas such as Wyoming.

The coyote is found in deserts, prairies, open woodlands, wetlands, and brush country. Resembling a medium-sized dog with a pointed face, thick fur, and a black-tipped, bushy tail, the coyote is common throughout most of Alaska and Canada, the entire lower forty-eight United States, and Central America. Though reduced in number in New England before conservation, coyotes have re-emerged there in recent time. Ironically, coyotes there tend to be larger than in the West. Some researchers theorize that those coyotes have crossed with dogs and wolves, and that this accounts for their size; others theorize this is a result of greater food availability. Considered dangerous to livestock, coyotes have been and continue to be killed by the thousands each year. Among Native Peoples of North America, coyotes hold special status as “tricksters.”

Foxes are found worldwide, except Antarctica and the Australasian region. Most belong to the red fox group, though other species also exist as shown in this exhibition. These include the true foxes of the genus *Vulpes*, which are distributed throughout the Northern Hemisphere, as well several unrelated groups of small canines, including the American gray foxes.



*High Four (Great Dane)*, © 2004 Louise Peterson  
Bronze, 54 x 45 x 27 inches

**Paws And Reflect: Art Of Canines** is a traveling museum exhibition intended to recognize and promote excellence in art, and heighten public attention and awareness about the family Canidae. **Paws And Reflect: Art Of Canines** consists of flatworks in acrylic, gouache, mixed media, oil, pencil, scratchboard, and watercolor, and sculptures in bronze by artists who have produced a thematically-related body of work of consistent quality over time. Artists and artworks were chosen for their diverse subject matter and for their creative combinations of elements and principles of composition and design, extraordinary technique and resulting style. Each artist is represented by several works to demonstrate her/his versatility and range of artistic treatment. Artists include:

ARTIST	RESIDENCE
Robert K. Abbett	Bridgewater, Connecticut
Joy Kroeger Beckner	Chesterfield, Missouri
Eric Berg	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Sally M. Berner	Green Bay, Wisconsin
Carel P. Brest van Kempen	Salt Lake City, Utah
Chapel	San Leandro, California
Patricia Davis	Ignacio, Colorado
Lindsey Foggett	Forest Falls, California
Kathleen M. Friedenber	Ardmore, Pennsylvania
Peter Gray	Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
Joyce Hall	Huger, South Carolina
Eldridge Hardie	Denver, Colorado
Janet N. Heaton	West Palm Beach, Florida
Liz Lesperance	Sutter Creek, California
Walter Matia	Dickerson, Maryland
Dan Metz	Delano, Minnesota
Rob Mullen	West Bolton, Vermont
Louise Peterson	Guffey, Colorado
Linda Relis	Port St. Lucie, Florida
Maureen S. Riley	Lakeland, Michigan
George Rodrigue	Lafayette, Louisiana
Sueellen Ross	Seattle, Washington
Sherry Salari Sander	Kalispell, Montana
Tim Shinabarger	Billings, Montana
Rachelle Siegrist	Townsend, Tennessee
Wes Siegrist	Townsend, Tennessee
Diane Versteeg	Palm Desert, California
Paula G. Waterman	Eldersburg, Maryland
Kay Williams	Dayton, Tennessee
Nicholas Wilson	Tubac, Arizona

Introductory essay edited by Carel P. Brest van Kempen and Rob Mullen;  
title panel designed by Steve Biel Design and Illustration, Milwaukee, Wisconsin,  
for David J. Wagner, L.L.C., PAWS AND REFLECT: ART OF CANINES Tour Office  
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Member,  AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

# PAWS & REFLECT | ART OF CANINES

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## CANIDAE

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Joyce Hall	Huger, South Carolina
Eldridge Hardie	Denver, Colorado
Janet N. Heaton	West Palm Beach, Florida
Liz Lesperance	Sutter Creek, California
Walter Matia	Dickerson, Maryland
Dan Metz	Delano, Minnesota
Rob Mullen	West Bolton, Vermont
Louise Peterson	Guffey, Colorado
Linda Relis	Port St. Lucie, Florida
Maureen S. Riley	Lakeland, Michigan
George Rodrigue	Lafayette, Louisiana
Sueellen Ross	Seattle, Washington
Sherry Salari Sander	Kalispell, Montana
Tim Shinabarger	Billings, Montana
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Introductory essay edited by Carel P. Brest van Kempen and Rob Mullen; title panel designed by Steve Biel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for David J. Wagner, L.L.C., *Paws And Reflect: Art Of Canines* Tour Office 414-221-6878, davidjwagnerllc@aol.com or davidjwagnerllc@yahoo.com