

***Dr. Roberta Bondar's latest photography exhibit
capturing at-risk birds and their migratory pathways from land, air and space
launches July 13 at the Art Gallery of Algoma***

SAULT STE. MARIE, Ont., July 12, 2023 — The public is invited to experience celebrated Canadian astronaut Dr. Roberta Bondar's latest photography exhibit featuring ground-breaking new perspectives on at-risk birds when it launches a Canada-wide tour July 13 at the Art Gallery of Algoma.

Patterns & Parallels: The Great Imperative to Survive stops first in the Sault, Dr. Bondar's hometown, before travelling to other galleries, museums and science centres across Canada after October.

Dr. Bondar, who was Canada's first woman astronaut in space, is an internationally acclaimed photographer whose foundation is dedicated to environmental education. Her latest photography exhibit combines images from land, air and space through a partnership with NASA to tell the story of the migratory patterns of the Whooping Crane, Lesser Flamingo and Piping Plover species, which are all threatened or at risk of extinction.

"The diversity and numbers of birds are declining as our changing planet tests their fragility and resilience," said Dr. Bondar, who is an advocate for the protection of migratory birds and their habitats. *"People want to understand more, to reverse this alarming trend, and they need stories to bolster their commitment to the critical conservation of birds."*

A staggering three billion birds have disappeared from Canada and the United States since 1970. The exhibition is a key part of the [Roberta Bondar Foundation's Space For Birds](#) project, which uses photography as a tool to understand the biodiversity of nature and the impact of human actions and climate change on bird migration and habitat loss.

Dr. Bondar travelled to Piping Plover and Whooping Crane habitats across North America, including Texas, Oklahoma, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories. To photograph Lesser Flamingos, she travelled to Kenya and Tanzania in the East African Rift Valley. Taking up-close photos on the ground and aerial photos from helicopters, Dr. Bondar captured the three species from multiple perspectives. As a principal investigator with NASA's Earth Observation group, Dr. Bondar also partnered with astronauts aboard the International Space Station to photograph the vast distances of migratory corridors from space.

"Through these images, we enter the world of bird migration, from the Western to the Eastern Hemisphere. Their flight corridors are so large that we cannot capture them in one image from space, whereas the aerial photographs expose secret patterns of land and water, frequented by birds. Given that many bird behaviours mimic our own, we understand that the value of life is shared, and we want to minimize our impact on their needed habitats to allow them to survive," said Dr. Bondar.

The exhibition features large, dramatic colour images taken by Dr. Bondar and selected NASA space images, as well as video installations. QR codes at the exhibition create an interactive learning experience, allowing visitors access to digital learning opportunities including animations, audio from Dr. Bondar, and additional videos taken in the field.

“Dr. Bondar brilliantly and masterfully intertwines her passion for art, science and our planet in this exhibition. These esthetically incredible photographs are very detailed regardless of how they are taken – from the land or flying in a helicopter. Some look like abstract paintings or surreal images coming from imagination and capturing magic. The artist is inviting us to enter the world of birds and learn about their journey for survival. The amazing beauty of nature, the birds themselves and their habitats, the main subjects of the photographs, are captured with astonishing precision and love, asking the viewer to pause and consider the effects of environmental issues for all life on our planet,” said Jasmina Jovanovic, Executive Director of the Art Gallery of Algoma.

Dr. Bondar's photography has been exhibited in galleries across Canada and internationally. A signature piece from the *Patterns and Parallels* exhibition is currently on display in the Senate of Canada. Through the environmental education and research programs of the Roberta Bondar Foundation, photography brings people closer to the natural world building hope for the future.

About the Roberta Bondar Foundation

The Roberta Bondar Foundation is a not-for-profit charitable organization that takes an inspiring approach to understanding our growing environmental challenges. The Foundation fuses environmental science and visual art through nature photography to bring people closer to nature. The Foundation's programs are designed to promote curiosity, respect for and protection of the environment while building healthier lives.

www.therobertabondarfoundation.org

About the Art Gallery of Algoma (AGA)

The AGA was incorporated as a non-profit public gallery in 1975 by a group of dedicated volunteers and arts enthusiasts, and is based on the ideals of celebrating culture, educating visitors, and enriching lives through the visual arts.

www.artgalleryofalgoma.com

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Additional Quotes:

“Whether five feet tall or five inches long, from pink to white to grey and brown, the three avian species in Patterns & Parallels share with us the common bond of surviving on a planet. Birds inspire us with their resilience in the face of climate change and human impact, and we are in awe of their flight skills, especially during migration to far off lands that most human beings will never see, even from space. They explore where we cannot. Patterns & Parallels is the avian world of energy, colour, ability, family and behaviour. We recognize their absolute dependence on habitat integrity.”

Roberta L Bondar C.C. O.Ont. M.D. Ph.D. FRCP FRSC FRCGS

“The visual voices of artists are critically important as we move forward in understanding issues related to climate change. This important exhibition, with its rich textures of high-resolution photography, sheds light on the health of our planet and environmental consequences. It highlights the effects of climate change on landscapes and endangered species and plays an important role in sparking discussion and learning about issues of national importance. These pieces reflect the debates that are going on across Canada and around the world with regard to our environment, the protection of the planet and the issues of climate change. These photographs present visual realities and call us all to action to preserve our planet to sustain life.”

The Honourable Patricia Bovey LL.D FRSA FCMA, Canadian art historian and former Senator for Manitoba



"Protected"

An endangered Whooping Crane adult stretches its wing as it stands with its young colt on the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, along the edge of the Texas shoreline of the Gulf of Mexico in the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway



Dr. Roberta Bondar photographs at-risk Whooping Cranes along their North American migration route in Wood Buffalo National Park, Northwest Territories and Alberta, Canada