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OH MY! LIONS, TIGERS, & BEARS EXHIBIT COMING TO THE SCHIELE

By Brandy Beard, January 26, 2018



A lion, a tiger, and a bear are walk into the Schiele. It might sound like a setup for a really bad joke, but it's a hint of what's underway at the Schiele Museum of Natural history.

The staff at the museum are putting the finishing touches on their newest exhibit, "Lions & Tigers & Bears: Through the Lens with National Geographic," which is set to open on Saturday, Feb. 3.

The exhibit is made up of 50 photographs, taken by National Geographic photographers Michael Nichols, Steve Winter and Paul Nicklen. Museums around the world have hosted this traveling exhibit over the years.

"The 'Lions, Tigers, & Bears' exhibit is very popular; it was a natural fit," said Tony Pasour, head of interpretation at the Schiele.

The Schiele and National Geographic have worked together before, and are both members of the Association of Science-Technology Centers. This will be the second photography exhibit of National Geographic's the Schiele has used.

"The last exhibit was well-received. Visitors really loved the visual experience," said Pasour.

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In addition to the gallery, Schiele staff have been working on a display of a mounted lion, tiger and bear, adding a 3-D element to the exhibit.

“It will look very realistic, even though these three animals wouldn’t usually be together. We’re trying to capture the power and the awe from them. I’m looking forward to that and seeing how visitors react,” said Pasour.

Each of the photographers have spent years in their field, studying and advocating for animals. All three have their own unique way of capturing their subjects on film, from living among the animals to creating special rigs for up-close views.

As part of the Serengeti Lion Project, Nichols and his team spent two years following lions. Nichols used technology to his advantage when shooting his photos, including using a remote-control camera car and a camera micro-copter. Lions are the only big cats who live in communities, and his images show the complex relationships within them.

Steve Winter has traveled to five countries over 10 years to photograph tigers. He sets up camera traps along trails that big cats roam, waiting for the perfect shot. His photos are not only beautiful, but show the good, the bad, and the ugly of tigers as well as the complexity of conservation efforts.

As with trying to photograph any animal, Winter has run into his fair share of danger, having been trapped in quicksand and attacked by rhinos.

Paul Nicklen’s fascination with bears goes back at least 30 years. He’s been known throughout the world for both his advocacy and photography. Four species and subspecies of bears, the American black bear, the spirit bear, the polar bear and the grizzly bear, will be featured. Photographing these creatures not only required plenty of patience, but in Nicklen’s case, it meant living among them.

“National Geographic is a powerful brand, and we like to share powerful stories,” said Pasour.

“Lions & Tigers & Bears: Through the Lens with National Geographic” will run through Sunday, May 6 at the museum, 1500 E. Garrison Blvd., Gastonia. For more information, visit www.schielemuseum.org.