

"William Burt is a perfectionist whose photographs of rails and other shy and elusive birds of the wetlands are unquestionably the finest ever taken. He has set a new standard." **Roger Tory Peterson** Aug. 1989

## Exhibition Description:

### **Rare & Elusive Birds Of North America**

**by William Burt**

Late on a June night, in the middle of a vast *Spartina* marsh in eastern Maryland, William Burt achieved his long-time goal: to photograph the Black Rail, a mythic red-eyed bird so rare and secretive, so deftly elusive in the fine grass of its meadow home, that few ornithologists had ever even seen it.

But this was just the first of many picture quests, and the first phase of a mission that would occupy him for some 16 years in the marshes, swamps and bogs and other wild lands all over North America. His mission: to photograph all 20 of the most elusive 'ghost birds' on the continent – and to photograph them well, as never before, close up and undisturbed in the fastness of their secret haunts.

The fruition of those 16 years was featured in his book, *Rare & Elusive Birds of North America*, published by Rizzoli/Universe in 2001. This book combined Burt's photographs with his stories of the searches, the places and the secret birds themselves, and the old-time naturalists who searched before.

Now, in a beautiful new exhibition, we can see these secret birds writ large: in a selection of 21 fine prints, with accompanying text quotes also from the book. Like Burt's earlier exhibition, *Shadowbirds* – which rented to 26 museums across the US and Canada – *Rare & Elusive* features museum-quality prints of extraordinary detail, framed and glazed with Cyro "OP3 AR" museum acrylic, ready to hang. Text and title panels, shipping crates, unpacking and hanging instructions, press materials – all are included.

Viewers are enthralled by these close views of creatures that still lurk unseen out there beyond the hum and buzz and sameness of the man-made world. They ogle, and they pause to ponder; and they pause again to read, and shift their seeing from the microcosm of the picture to the bigger scene, the place where the bird lives, and hides. Your visitors will never see the living birds themselves, almost certainly; but they will know them, and remember them.

For details, please see the accompanying "Exhibition Information," or contact William Burt by phone or email (see below).

---