

## **Birdsong Books**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 29, 2009

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### **Middletown illustrator featured in exhibition of state award winners**

The Biggs Museum of American Art in Dover will host Award Winners IX, an exhibition featuring the artists who won the Delaware Division of the Arts (DDOA) 2009 distinguished fellowship prizes. Middletown illustrator and author, Nancy Carol Willis, is one of 10 featured artists, painters, photographers, writers, musicians and craft artisans.

An opening reception, "First Look pARTy," will be held at the Biggs Museum this Friday, July 3, from 4 – 7 p.m. and is free and open to the public. The exhibition runs from July 3 through October 25, 2009.

The Artist Fellows are chosen by a committee from hundreds of entrees. Willis won an Established Professional grant for her children's book illustrations. The exhibition will feature eight illustrations from four of Willis's children's nature books. Her autographed books will also be available.

A lifelong artist and nature-lover, Willis draws inspiration for her book projects from first-hand experiences. Over the years she has served as a volunteer wildlife rehabilitator for Tri-State Bird Rescue in Newark, rescued orphaned raccoon cubs, and helped band migratory shorebirds.

In 1998 she formed Birdsong Books and wrote, illustrated, and published the award-winning picture books: *The Robins In Your Backyard*, *Raccoon Moon*, and *Red Knot: A Shorebird's Incredible Journey*. In 2008 Willis partnered with longtime friend and nature author, Lynda Graham-Barber, to produce *The Animals' Winter Sleep*.

Willis says the creativity required for nonfiction children's book illustration involves understanding how to present kid-friendly science with the drama, humor, and charm needed to excite a child's caring and understanding for wild animals and the trials they go through to survive.

The Biggs Museum, in a partnership with the Delaware Division of the Arts (DDOA), invites the Award Winners to the only group exhibition honoring their combined accomplishment. This time-honored exhibition is among one of the best opportunities to experience the Delaware art scene. For further information, or to RSVP to this free program for all ages, please call the Biggs Museum at 302-674-2111.

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