



**Bird Movement** (watercolor on paper, 00x00)

/ MAKING A SPLASH /

# Peggy Macnamara

Sometimes words just aren't enough when you're trying to convince a government to protect 2 million acres of natural terrain from the temptations of economic profit. That's where Peggy Macnamara ([peggyacnamara.com](http://peggyacnamara.com)) comes in. The artist, who has been the artist-in-residence at the Field Museum of Natural History, in Chicago, for years, works with the Museum's Action Center. She was recruited by one of the founders of the museum's conservation arm, Debby Moskovits. Macnamara's paintings of local fauna helped in the fight to create Yaguas National Park, in Peru.

Macnamara says she didn't always have her sights set on being an artist. She thought she didn't have enough talent, choosing instead to go the path of art history. In her twenties she had the revelation that it was more about work ethic than innate ability. She ended up honing her skills nearly every day inside the Field Museum, gravitating toward the bird exhibits, and later, the other natural history sections. "Once I drifted into the bird exhibits on the first floor of the museum [...] I was hooked," she says. "I wasn't necessarily passionate about wildlife as

subject matter but, rather, what observing nature could teach me as an artist. I was drawing perfectly made things. Each skeleton was a jewel of design. Every bird or bug was a masterful composition. This experience honed my sensibilities, helping me to develop instincts for balance, beauty, as well as surprise."

The artist has since lent her talents to many of the Museum's published books on animals and wildlife in the United States, and several of her paintings are now on permanent display in the Hall of Art at the Museum.