



**RTPI Call For Artists
April 12, 2021**

Overview:

The Roger Tory Peterson Institute seeks to commission an artist to create an indoor mural depicting the life and legacy of Roger Tory Peterson.

About Roger Tory Peterson

Roger Tory Peterson was born and raised in Jamestown. From an early age, he was enthralled with the nature surrounding him. At a time when children were not allowed outside after dark, he convinced the local police chief to write him a permission slip to collect moths until 11 pm. At the age of 11, he discovered a clump of feathers on a tree. A bird. Sleeping? Dead? He crept up to the bird and touched it. Startled and very much alive, the northern flicker flew away in a burst of golden wingbeats. From that point on, he was “hooked” on birds. As a young man, he left Jamestown for New York City to study art and went on to become the father of the modern field guide. He travelled to every continent on earth in search and celebration of the birds he loved. Among the many awards and accolades he received was the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He was loved and admired throughout the world as an international ambassador for nature.

About the Roger Tory Peterson Institute

The Roger Tory Peterson Institute is a living embodiment of the Peterson Field Guide. Home to the largest collection of Roger Tory Peterson’s work, RTPI is a leader for the study, exhibition and nurturing of art that matters to the planet. Through world class exhibitions and programs, RTPI illuminates the beauty of nature; challenges us to confront environmental issues of regional, national and global concern; and inspires us to preserve the earth’s biodiversity – with a particular emphasis on the natural area wonders of Western New York.

The Art & Nature Lab

RTPI wants everyone to have their own flicker moment, their own “Roger” experience. So, we are converting an under-utilized multi-purpose room into an Art & Nature Lab – a dedicated creative space for children and families. The new Art Lab will be designed and programmed to provide everyone an opportunity to channel their nature experience into a creative work of art – and to use art to forge a deeper awareness, appreciation and love of nature. The mural is a key component of the Art & Nature Lab – to inform, inspire and illuminate.

The Mural

The mural is to be sited on the back wall of the Art & Nature Lab; a wall measuring 20' wide by 10' tall for a total of 200 square feet.

RTPI will commission an artist to design and execute a mural based the following criteria:

- A design that best exemplifies the life and legacy of Roger Tory Peterson; options include:
 - Focusing on Roger's youthful promise as a budding artist-naturalist in Jamestown
 - Focusing on the entirety of Roger's storied career
 - Focusing on Roger's travels – from Jamestown to NYC to every continent on earth
 - Focusing on...surprise us with how best to share the essence of Roger's legacy
- A design that tells a compelling, inspiring visual story calibrated toward youth, but engaging for adults, as well.
- A portfolio of work that reveals an eye for celebrating nature
- A track record of success in completing commissions on time and on budget
- We would prefer to commission an artist living in Western, New York, who finds their own inspiration in the natural area wonder of our region

Schedule

- Call for artists: April 12
- Concept proposals due to RTPI: April 30
- RTPI requests full proposal from finalist artists: May 15
- Full proposals due to RTPI: May 30
- Ribbon cutting for Art & Nature Trail: June 12
- RTPI announces Artist June 15
- Mural completed July 15
- Ribbon cutting for Art & Nature Lab: TBD

Fees

There is no fee to submit a concept proposal to RTPI – any and all artists are welcome to apply.

RTPI will pay each of three selected finalists \$250 to design and submit a drawing of their proposed mural.

RTPI will pay the selected Artist \$3,000 to finalize the design and execute the mural, payable \$1,500 upon execution of an agreement, \$1,500 upon successful completion of the mural. Additionally, RTPI will reimburse the Artist up to \$500 for supplies.

How to Submit a Proposal

Submission of proposals is a two-step process:

Step one

Please submit the following:

- Resume
- Portfolio, including, if applicable, other murals or commissioned works
- A maximum one-page description of your idea for the mural – what it might include, how it best exemplifies Roger’s story
- Artists may include a sketch if they wish, but it is not required

Step One Proposals must be submitted electronically – no later than the close of business on Friday, April 30. Proposals may be emailed to:

Jane Johnson, Assistant Curator
jjohnson@rtpi.org

Step Two

Upon invitation by RTPI, up to three finalists will be paid \$250 to submit a design drawing of their proposed mural – no later than Friday, May 28. Finalists may submit their design drawings electronically, by mail or in person to:

Jane Johnson, Assistant Curator
Roger Tory Peterson Institute
311 Curtis Street
Jamestown, NY 14701
jjohnson@rtpi.org

Questions?

Please contact:

Jane Johnson, Assistant Curator
jjohnson@rtpi.org

Information Resources

Unfortunately, while RTPI's website is being rebuilt, our temporary website has limited information about Roger Tory Peterson and RTPI. However, the following resources are available to learn more:

Internet:

<https://www.nytimes.com/1996/07/30/us/roger-peterson-87-the-nation-s-guide-to-the-birds-is-dead.html>

<https://connecticuthistory.org/artist-roger-tory-peterson-champions-for-the-natural-world/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Tory_Peterson

Books:

For the Birds: the Life of Roger Tory Peterson, Peggy Thomas, Houghton-Mifflin, 2008

Birdwatcher: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson by Elizabeth J. Rosenthal, Lyons Press, 2008

Roger Tory Peterson: A Biography by Douglas Carlson, University of Texas Press, 2007

What follows is a brief, partial timeline of the seminal moments in Roger's storied life and career:

- Born and raised in Jamestown, NY
- Convinced the local police chief to let him collect moths after curfew
- Age 11: flicker moment
- Junior Audubon membership
- Bought his first camera to take photographs of birds
- First Prize, Buffalo News, for drawing a purple banded butterfly
- Worked as an artist in local furniture factories, painting designs on furniture
- Art school student – Art Students League, National Academy of Design
- 1934 – first field guide published: Field Guide to Eastern Birds
- Art Editor, Audubon Magazine
- 1941: Field Guide to Western Birds
- WWII – how to ID planes (like he ID'd birds) and study DDT
- 1955: 100,000-mile Journey: Wild America
- 1960: Field Guide to the Birds of Texas and Adjacent States
- Testified before Congress re: DDT and population crashes in osprey, bald eagles, etc.
- 1965: Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe
- 1968: Field Guide to Wildflowers
- 1973: Field Guide to Mexican Birds
- 1979: Penguins
- Nature excursions to Galapagos, Britain, Africa, Antarctica, to name a few
- Linnaeus Gold Medal from the Swedish Academy of Science
- Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Jimmy Carter

If you're an artist but you haven't done mural work before, here's one of several YouTube videos that serves as a general primer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSOSAntL1Vk&t=709s>