

2009

EDWARD SPERA

NEWSLETTER

Highlights:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Openhouse | 1 |
| Gallery #2 | 1 |
| Africa 2008 | 3 |
| India 2009 | 4 |
| Next Adventures | 5 |
| A New Concept | 6 |
| Openhouse!!! | 6 |

The Journey of a Wildlife Artist

Openhouse! Openhouzen! Openhouski! Opentent!

Please join us **Saturday Dec. 5th** from **10am to 9pm** at our Niagara Falls Gallery for our annual openhouse. Art, jewellery, wine, cheese & more. Gift ideas galore!
10% off everything!

Greetings

Hello everyone. Hope you are all well. It has been a little while since our last newsletter, but quite frankly things have been quite hectic around here in a very good way. We've been around the world and back a few times and the inspirations

and reference we've built up are head spinning to say the least. All our travels have been great. For those who don't know, we've opened a second gallery in Niagara Falls, which is another exciting development. And

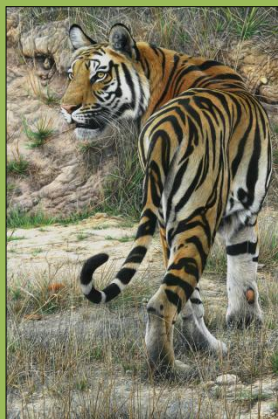
creatively I've been producing some striking pieces I am truly proud of. Please enjoy this newsletter with a few of our travel tales and visit our website or stop by one of our galleries to see my latest works.

Our Second Gallery

Some of you have visited our first gallery in Niagara-On-The-Lake. Well, we would like to invite you to come and visit our second gallery in Niagara Falls. Last summer we were approached by a development group who are currently revitalizing the downtown core of this international tourist destination. They were amazed at what they saw at our location in NOTL and invited us to be one of the cornerstones for this development. When we heard of the art district they wished to create we didn't need to think too hard and here we are. We have created a really dynamic atmosphere in this new location. It has a

great open concept feel about it that offers more than just the wildlife art. During our travels we acquire and have acquired numerous artifacts, antique furniture and jewellery. We've included this selection in our new location. Literally, each of the pieces has been handpicked and shipped or, on quite a few occasions, carried back by

us during our travels. I'll be creating at this gallery location as well and I don't mind you looking over my shoulder, so please stop in to see what I'm up too. Presently, I am working on a very large mother Tiger and her cubs piece. It is nearing completion and is turning into a very dramatic and exciting creation.





Ying & Yang



The Fox Den



Dreamcatcher



Tender Moment



Spirit of Little Bear

Africa 2008

Our journeys last October and November took us to Kenya for 6 weeks. For the first 3 weeks we concentrated our time in the Masai Mara and our main focus was on Leopards and Cheetahs. We have travelled overland through Kenya before on our way to Uganda or Tanzania, but have never explored its parks. Additionally, our success with Leopard and Cheetah sightings on previous trips across Africa has been very poor. Needless to say we were well over due.

Having hired a 4x4 in Nairobi we made our way to the Mara, which took approx. 4 hours. We immediately dove right in with cameras in hand and started winding our way along the park boundary trails in hopes of a sighting. We were pleasantly rewarded with a sunset viewing of 4 Lioness and their 3 cubs giving us a great introduction to the park in our first few hours. We then proceeded to Talek gate where we set up our camp just outside the park... our home base for the next 3 weeks. On a nightly basis we were stirred from our sleep by the chilling laughter of Hyenas or the sound of something roaming through the camp and on one occasion the sound of a herd of Zebra eating all the grasses around our tent. Literally, in a single evening they munched

one foot high grasses down to dirt, leaving the only tall grass patch in the camp under our tent. But such is life in Africa.

Daybreak could not have come fast enough as we were very excited about our first full day in the park. After a quick coffee we grabbed our gear and hit the trails. Sunrise on the Masai Mara is an incredible sight as the grasses burst into a golden glow. We made a beeline for the area of yesterday's lion sighting and to our pleasant surprise there they were walking along. The young cubs were full of energy jumping and pouncing on one another and then with young purpose they ambushed one of the mature females. She playfully put them back in their place. The pride was on the move and on the lookout for a potential meal. This was not the time for play... this was serious business. We followed them from a distance until they disappeared into a vast expanse of dense acacia bush. Leaving them behind we ventured on to see what else would come out and play.

It wasn't long after this encounter that we came across a mother Cheetah and her 5 cubs at a kill. She had taken down a Thompson Gazelle earlier in the morning. She was just finishing up and very quickly vultures began

swooping in and harassing her and her young. With one sudden burst she bolted towards a large vulture and leapt up while taking a swipe and narrowly missed the birds back tail. We followed her for a period of time, from termite mound to termite mound, until she moved into some low lying acacia bushes for a well deserved rest. It was time to give her some peace and give her family some down time.

With these great sightings after only a few hours we wondered if the day could get any better. Well, yes... how about a leopard. The remainder of our day was spent under a big old acacia tree watching a beautiful female leopard reposition herself from one branch to the next. We patiently waited and watched her as a small herd of elephants grazed under the tree and right past our Land Rover. Then a quick burst of rain blew through and eased the heat enough to get the Leopard moving around for a few more photos. As the afternoon drew to an end and the sun began to set, we were treated to this beautiful cat climbing down into the grasses and slowly stroll right past us. After 900+ photos and a few hours of video, our first day came to a close and we drove back to camp having seen what amounted to be just the tip of the iceberg on this

Africa 2008 continued

African adventure.

We had hired a local Masai tribesman as a guide. He asked us to call him John, because quite frankly we could not pronounce his real name... we tried and yes we failed on numerous occasions, so John it was. His knowledge of the animals and phenomenal eyesight were invaluable. On one occasion as we set out from camp he asked if he could try driving the Land Rover. We thought it couldn't hurt as we looked around the open space in front of us and seeing it had only one small acacia tree a distance away so what could happen. Not having ever driven a vehicle, much less a standard vehicle, we gave him a crash course. Well, John got behind the wheel,

started the vehicle, shifted it into gear, spun the tires on the damp grass and drove the 4x4 at slow speed straight into the only tree he could have possibly hit. Apparently, as we yelled "hit the brake" he continued to hit the gas. His imbedded tire tracks in the grass were called the Masai highway as we left camp every morning and for the remainder of our time together we referred to every acacia tree as a Masai brake... oh look, a leopard in a Masai brake. Good times.

The next few weeks was saturated with Leopards, exciting Cheetah chases, Elephants, Lions, Rhinos, Cape Buffalo, Giraffe and more, including some amazing viewings of the great Wildebeest river crossings... literally,

thousands swimming across the Mara River in a few minutes. The later part of the adventure took us through Nakuru and Samburu Nat. Park where we rounded out the trip with a few more Rhinos and Elephants galore.

Our Kenyan safari was truly an incredible trip and we've returned home with some mesmerizing reference and inspiration for future paintings. As always our open mindedness towards what we are pursuing and what chooses to let us pursue it lead us through a fantastic adventure. Our knowledge of the African wild and its people was expanded and our friendships with locals and their culture further enriching our lives. Until next time Africa... thank you.

India 2009

For the last 2 years we have travelled to India in the April time period. Our purpose has been to track down a particular Tigress and now a Tigress with cubs. Two years ago she, Jujura, was pregnant and last year we found out she had three cubs. Both years we came away with some incredible shots and last year's family photo was amazing. So this

April/May we needed to continue to follow the family and see how they have progressed. Upon arrival to Delhi we settled in, shook off the long flights and headed to Bandhavgarh Nat. Park. This beautiful park is one of the few remaining strongholds for Tigers in the wild and has provided many great photo opportunities for us. This

year was no exception. We hired a jeep, hooked up with our favourite driver and a reliable guide and away we went. After a couple hours we came across 2 male Tigers. We had the pleasure of seeing these two quite a bit last year with their mother, but now they were on their own. They were big and they were handsome, even with porcupine quills

New Print Releases



Acacia Shade



Blackwater Heron



Young Bandhavgarh



Orangutan Mother & Young



Downtime



Follow the Leader



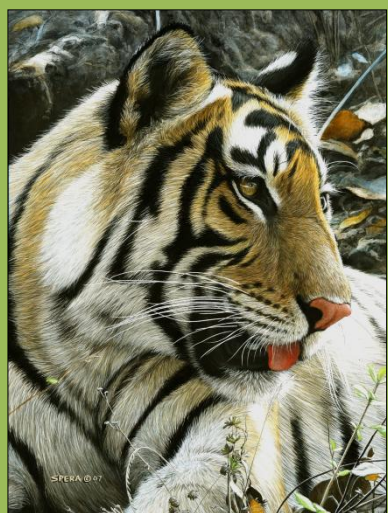
Little Rascal



The Chase



Chippy



Age of Curiosity

India 2009 continued

sticking out of the chin of the one... ouch. After a little while they slowly strolled by our jeep and disappeared. If these beautiful cats didn't want to be seen they could easily do so at any time as these two brothers did.

Our goal every day was to spend quality time in Jujura's territory looking for her and the cubs. On our second morning we caught a glimpse of one of her cubs on top of a rocky hill surrounded by trees. This hill looked right down onto the watering hole where we've had great success in Jujura sightings in the past. This was her territory and she was around. We drove to the edge of the water and patiently waited as the heat of the morning continued to climb...38, 40, 42 degrees Celsius. At this time of year with this heat all animals need to drink on a regular basis. Within an hour the cub was on the move making her way down to the water's edge to quench its thirst. Click,click,click... photos galore. She was gorgeous and after the refreshing drink she was intrigued by our presence and posed on rocks and moved about the trees for some great sequences. As quietly as she arrived she moved off into the forest and joined her sibling as we watched their silhouettes bump heads. Our morning was done, but the day was not

over.

With their presence by the watering hole our ranger and driver suggested we book a blind for the afternoon by the water. The blind was a crude stick and grass structure that sat on the rock hill overlooking the surrounding area. Our cub from the morning walked right past it on her way to the water. If these cats were hot they would surely come down and even lay in the water for the afternoon... this would be a perfect scenario. We quickly organized hiring the blind at the main Ranger headquarters. We returned, grabbed the camera gear and our Ranger lead us up to the blind and away went our driver. No one is allowed in the park at mid day hours without special permission, drivers included. So we waited. And waited. Then there was a waiting period. I checked the cameras and lenses... all good. And we waited. I woke Lisa (my wife) and the ranger up. We waited for a bit longer. Oh, a bird... and there it goes. And we waited. By the way it was forty six degrees in the shade of the blind. Oh, did I mention there was a bird. Four hours went by and our Ranger gets up, shrugs his shoulders and climbs out of the blind. With his hands on his hips he stands a little further up

the embankment on a boulder and looks down the other side of the hill. After a couple minutes he comes back in the blind and profoundly states, "No Tiger"... fantastic. Well, the jeep returns, we grab the cameras and hike back down to the water. As we drive around the hill, we look up and low and behold up pops a tiger head, and another, and another. All three cubs were sleeping on the other side of the hill from our blind approx. 40 ft away and our ranger was standing within 30 ft as he looked down the hill. It was so silent all afternoon you could hear a pin drop, but heaven forbid we hear three tigers snoring. For the next day we passed by other rangers and drivers who always asked with a big smile, "How was the blind?". Our answer was always, "The bird was spectacular"... Good times.

Over the next couple days we had a few sightings of a famous mature tiger named B2. At 13 years old he is the dominant male in the park and big, like Arnold big, flexing his thick build with every step. But our most unique sighting of our India journey was of a Sloth bear. Similiar in size and colouring to a Black bear, just a little fuzzier around the head, we spotted it early one morning around Jujura's watering hole.

More from India 2009

After pictures and video a plenty, he crossed our path and disappeared up a hill into the forest. Our Ranger and driver of 25 years experience have only seen 3 other Sloth bears, so the extreme uniqueness of this potentially once in a lifetime sighting was "wow". They are very shy and extremely nocturnal, so we sat back in the jeep and began enjoying the moment until we looked over our shoulder and noticed perched 30 ft away on the rocky hill was a tiger. It was one of Jujura's cubs and she didn't care about us at all, but had her attention completely focused on the Sloth bear scampering in the distance. She posed for some great shots and eventually crossed the trail behind us and pursued the bear. At one and half years old she is learning to stalk and hunt,

utilizing everything Jujura has taught her.

A few more tiger sightings and our time in Bandhavgarh was coming to an end. We still hadn't seen Jujura yet, missing her here and there as she moved around. Our last afternoon we spent waiting in her territory, but with no alarm calls from other animals letting us know of a predators presence it was quiet. We slowly started back for the lodge. The sun was setting and it was time to say goodbye to Bandhavgarh for another year, until we heard the amazing sound of a Sambar deer barking out a great call, notifying everything around that a Tiger was on the move and our guide and driver immediately new the location. As we arrived at Jujura's watering hole we positioned our jeep for the

best camera angle and sat silently. Within minutes and with enough light to get a few shots, Jujura came walking out from the forest across the water. She didn't hesitate in crouching down for a drink and giving us some grand finale poses. As we were leaving she walked along the water with us and turned her attention to a herd of spotted deer in the distance. Goodbye Jujura... see you next year.

We'll be travelling back to India next spring and completing the life cycle of this tiger family, eager to see the start of a new generation of tigers in the wild. As always, we look forward to every privileged moment watching these incredible creatures and welcome the opportunity to possibly hear them snoring... it was a pretty bird though.

Our Next Adventure... Snow Leopards

Our next big journey will take us to the Himalayas to track snow leopards in February and March 2010. This is the middle of winter on this incredible mountain range and snow leopards follow their prey, Mountain sheep, down from the thick snowy peaks into the valleys, which are at an elevation of 3800 to 4000 meters or 13 000 to 14

000 feet. Needless to say we'll be packing a bit of warm gear and a little bit of oxygen.

Snow leopards also use this time as a mating season as they are closer to one another than any other time of the year. If we see one, this is the time and the place. Of course, seeing a snow

leopard in the wild will be like winning a mini lottery, but as we always say, "we won't see one sitting on the couch". Therefore, we are prepared to put the time in this year, next year and years after to make it happen. Call it the Holy Grail of what I wish to see and create in my career. Having said that, our training has already begun

New Print Releases



Red Fox



Nakuru Leopard



First Snow

And many more to come...

Please visit our website for full colour images & details.

"We each have the ability to make a difference in this world. The creatures of this planet depend on us now more than ever. Their place on earth is in our hands."

**EDWARD SPERA
GALLERIES**

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Snow Leopards continued...

our worst fear would be a sighting of a leopard at a kill across the valley and we fail to make it there in time, because we've collapsed. So at the very least I'll look good at the end of the trip in my

speedo... Ok, ok, let's not get crazy, I don't wear a speedo, but if it helps in attracting a snow leopardess... hmmm.

All right, enough of that, please keep in touch

through the website or directly and we'll keep you up to date on our progress... about snow leopards, not speedos. Brrrrrr...

A New Concept..

We have been throwing around the idea of creating a TV series related to our adventures. The premise would be seeing what we do in the field, literally getting the shots, and then the development of the pieces of art when we return. Our focus would be hooking up with a conservation group in the specific area, working with them to track and gain knowledge of the subject and then create a

piece of art that would directly reflect that animal in the wild. The proceeds from the sale of the original and giclee prints would go dollar for dollar directly to the conservation group in question. At the end of each show viewers will be informed of how to purchase these very limited number of giclees to support this cause. In general, this avenue would provide us with

vehicle to directly support grass roots programs with funding they desperately need. This would allow me to continue to portray the beauty of these creatures in the wild for which I am so passionate and give the viewers and collectors a first hand look at the creative process from start to finish.

It is in the works... Please give us your feedback via our website.

Did we mention...

Openhouse! Openhouzen! Openhouski! Opentent!

**Saturday December 5th 10am to 9pm
Niagara Falls Gallery 4559 Queen St.**

"Be there or be round! ... huh... oh, be square!"

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