

Dog Days at Artexpo New York

Artists feature dogs in sculptures, cartoons and more at the annual event in Manhattan.

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Although not the intended celebrities of the March 1 to 5 Artexpo New York at Manhattan's Javits Convention Center, dogs made their presence known in the form of bronze sculptures, cartoonish prints, enamel freestanding statues and a colorful children's book series, among other works of art.

Brazilian artist Romero Britto's "Blue Dog," an enamel on aluminum pop art statue, attracted attention in the café area not far from the Britto Central (www.britto.com) booth where more of his animal renderings were displayed, and Chuck Wimmer, owner of four Hungarian Pulik that he refers to as "kids that never grow up," used his skills as a commercial advertising designer to whip up cartoonish dog illustrations with Flash from his home computer in Ohio (www.loftprints.com).

Lisa Grubb, a self-taught N.Y. artist, was inspired by a friendly pack of homeless dogs she encountered while living in Key West, Fla., to create her "Happy Dog" and "Blues Dog" acrylic on canvas paintings that were recently turned into a children's book series by Penguin Putnam. "I used to say 'Hi happy dogs,' to them every day," Grubb related. Her new gallery (www.lisagrubb.com) for the Happy Dog series and other paintings recently opened in Piermont, N.Y., a half hour north of the city.

Another animal-inspired booth was Roark's Studio Gallery (www.coolsville.com) of art-centric Laguna Beach, Calif., which featured Roark Gourley's "Best of Show," a mounted colorful, bronze and resin collection of dog portraits – breeds were unclear, nor as important as the pups' silly grins – as well as a collection of individual dog portraits. Gourley prefers to focus on the humorous side of life, according to his gallery literature.

Next year's Artexpo New York is scheduled for Feb. 28 to March 3, 2008 at the Javits Center. For more information, visit www.artexpos.com/ME2/Audiences.