

# ‘ENDANGERED’ AT MCQ FINE ART IS A HAUNTING EXHIBIT



*Clint Jenkins' 'African Elephant,' 2013*

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Type “endangered species” into an image search and it will produce an excess of exotic-animal-in-colorful-habitat photos so commonplace that the emotional impact has been diluted, and they fall into a distant but familiar background design. But Clint Jenkins’ *Endangered* exhibit at MCQ Fine Art presents the idea of extinction through a more compelling and graceful seduction: gorgeous, haunting, large-scale, black-and-white portraits of animal skulls, appearing three-dimensional and suspended in dark backgrounds.



*Clint Jenkins' "Siberian Tiger," 2013*

Photographed using a medium-format camera and multiple light sources, Jenkins creates portraits that are immediate but keep you lingering. The small hairs on the horn of the eastern black rhino are illuminated, its textured skull made dramatic through high contrast, providing a glimpse of every detail. The snow leopard and Siberian tiger skulls exhibit the action of live animals, and none of the skulls in *Endangered* seem entirely vacant, placing them in a space that balances life and extinction. For all the obvious symbolism (blackness and skulls equal death) that could easily drift into cliché, Jenkins' placement, nuance and attention to detail create a depth and a more personal connection.

The Australian-born photographer, who lives in Las Vegas, says he'd long wanted to work in fine art. But it wasn't until he was snorkeling in Panama last year and spotted a turtle dying while caught in a commercial fishing "longline" that he found his jumping off point. He'd already been fascinated by a turtle skull at a marine preserve, so the connection came naturally.

After contacting several natural history museums, he set up a studio at the Museum of Osteology in Oklahoma and began photographing the skulls of endangered animals, including an elephant, pig, turtle, primates and exotic cats. "I wanted to make them as personable as I could, to portray the beauty of the animals and get people to think about power and [the] majestic."

***Endangered***, through October 18, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. MCQ Fine Art, 620 S. Seventh St., 366-9339.