

SPRING/SUMMER 2014

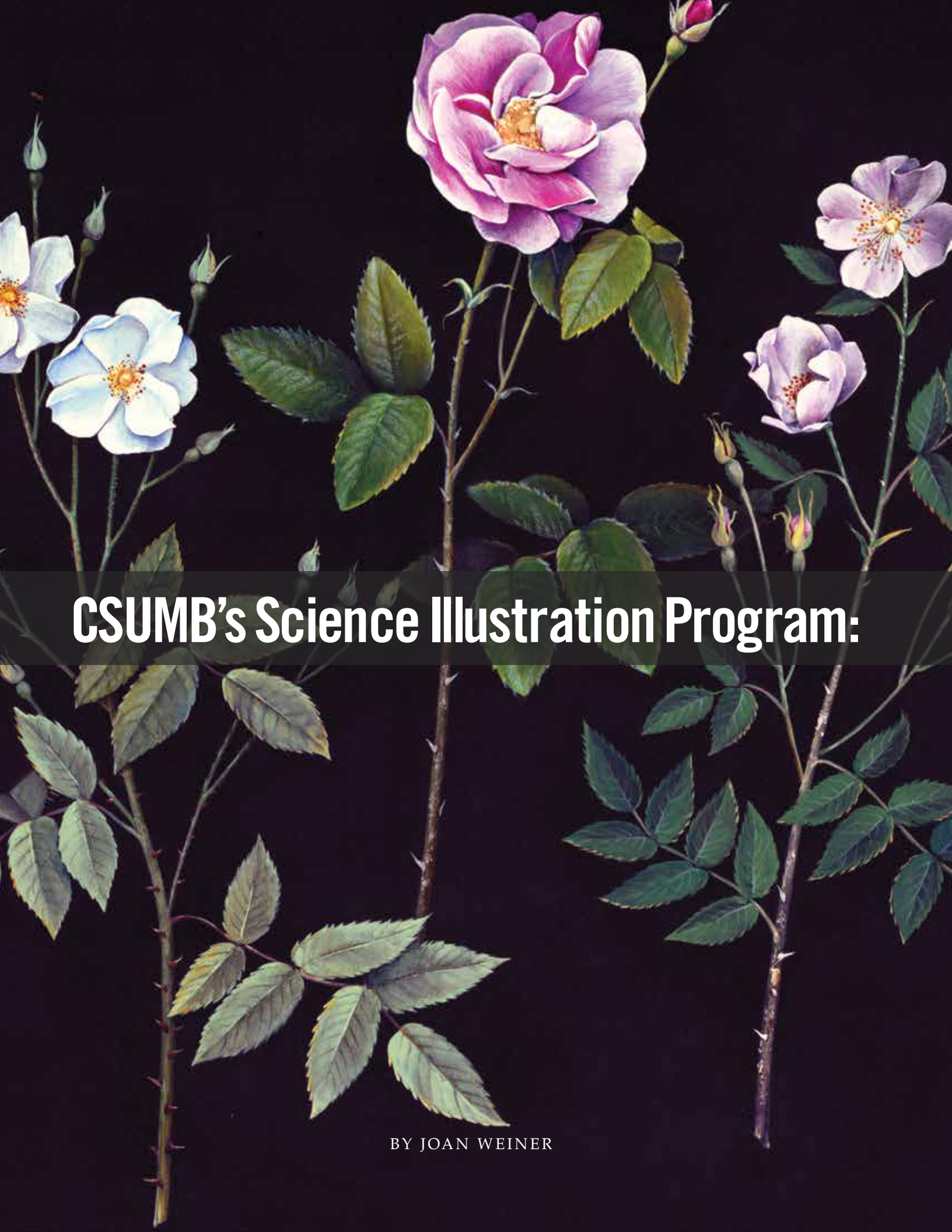
MONTEREY BAY

THE MAGAZINE OF CSU MONTEREY BAY



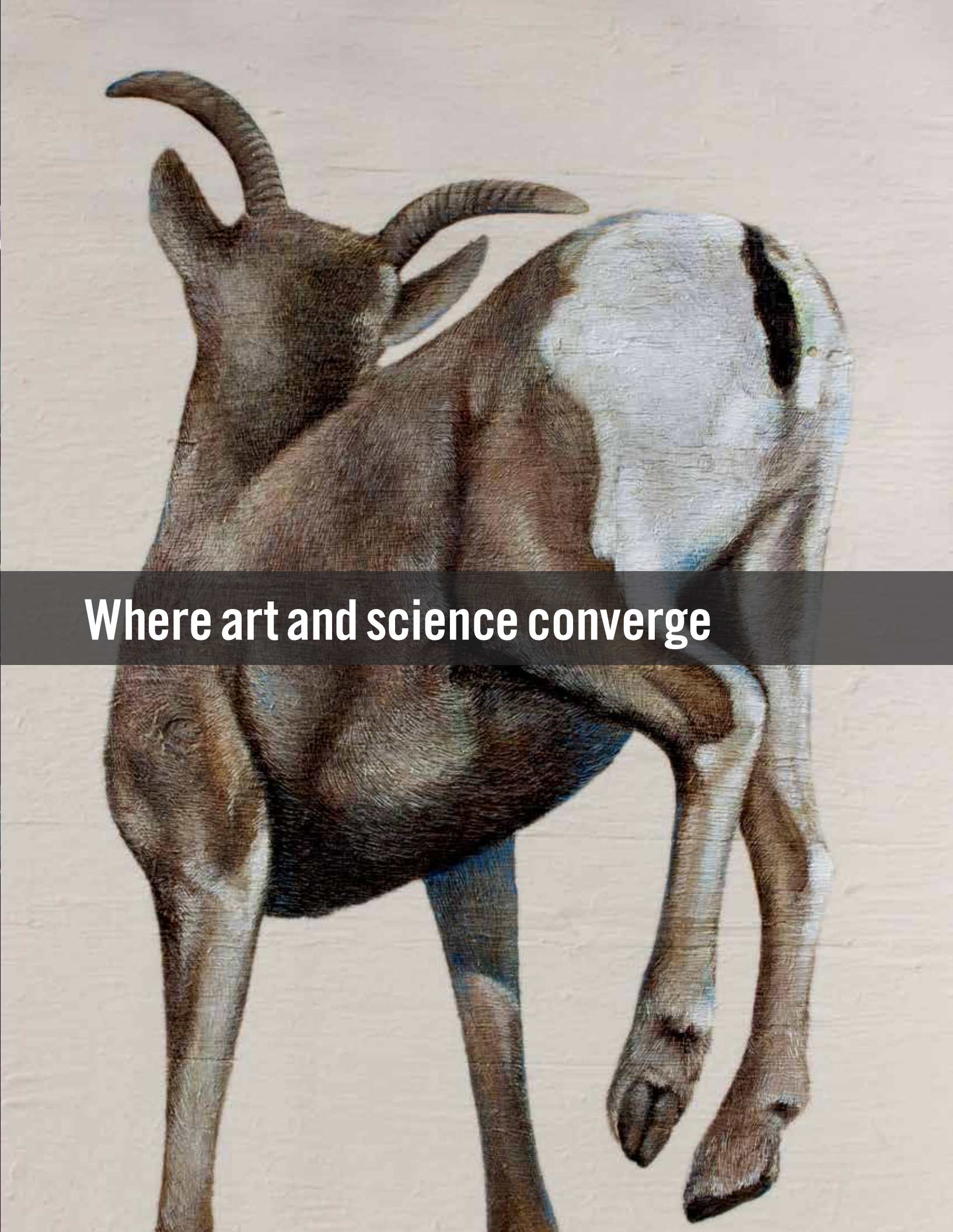
Where art
and science
converge





CSUMB's Science Illustration Program:

BY JOAN WEINER



Where art and science converge



“Honeycreepers”

Previous pages: “Wild Roses;” Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, detail of a mural at the Bishop Gun Club in Bishop, CA. (Photo Cody Tuttle)

ALL ILLUSTRATIONS BY JANE KIM. PHOTO KELLY HSIAO



Jane Kim

A four-month residency at the San Francisco dump changed the direction of Jane Kim’s work.

There, the graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design used construction scrap to investigate how walls – and the way we decorate them – can have damaging environmental impacts.

That gave her a purpose, she said, “beyond art for art’s sake.” Inspired by science and the natural world, Kim decided to pursue a certificate from CSU Monterey Bay’s graduate-level science illustration program.

Today, Kim is working on a series called “Migrating Mural,” a collection of images painted along migration corridors of endangered species. Through the murals, she said, the transient life of these animals can easily be seen, and more importantly, appreciated.

“Jane has found ways to take what she loves and do some magnificent work,” said Ann Caudle, director of the science illustration program. “She has found her own niche.”

So have many of the program’s graduates, who work for publications such as Scientific American and National Geographic; museums, such as the Smithsonian and the American Museum of Natural History; and at zoos, botanical gardens and aquariums.

Science illustration has been around a very long time. Roman coins – with their representations of plants that still exist – are early examples. Leonardo’s human anatomy stud-

ies and Galileo’s drawings of the moon’s cratered surface are other examples. Illustrators accompanied Captain Cook and Charles Darwin on their expeditions.

Even the binomial classification system created by Linnaeus – and still in use – was introduced to the world through the work of a science illustrator.

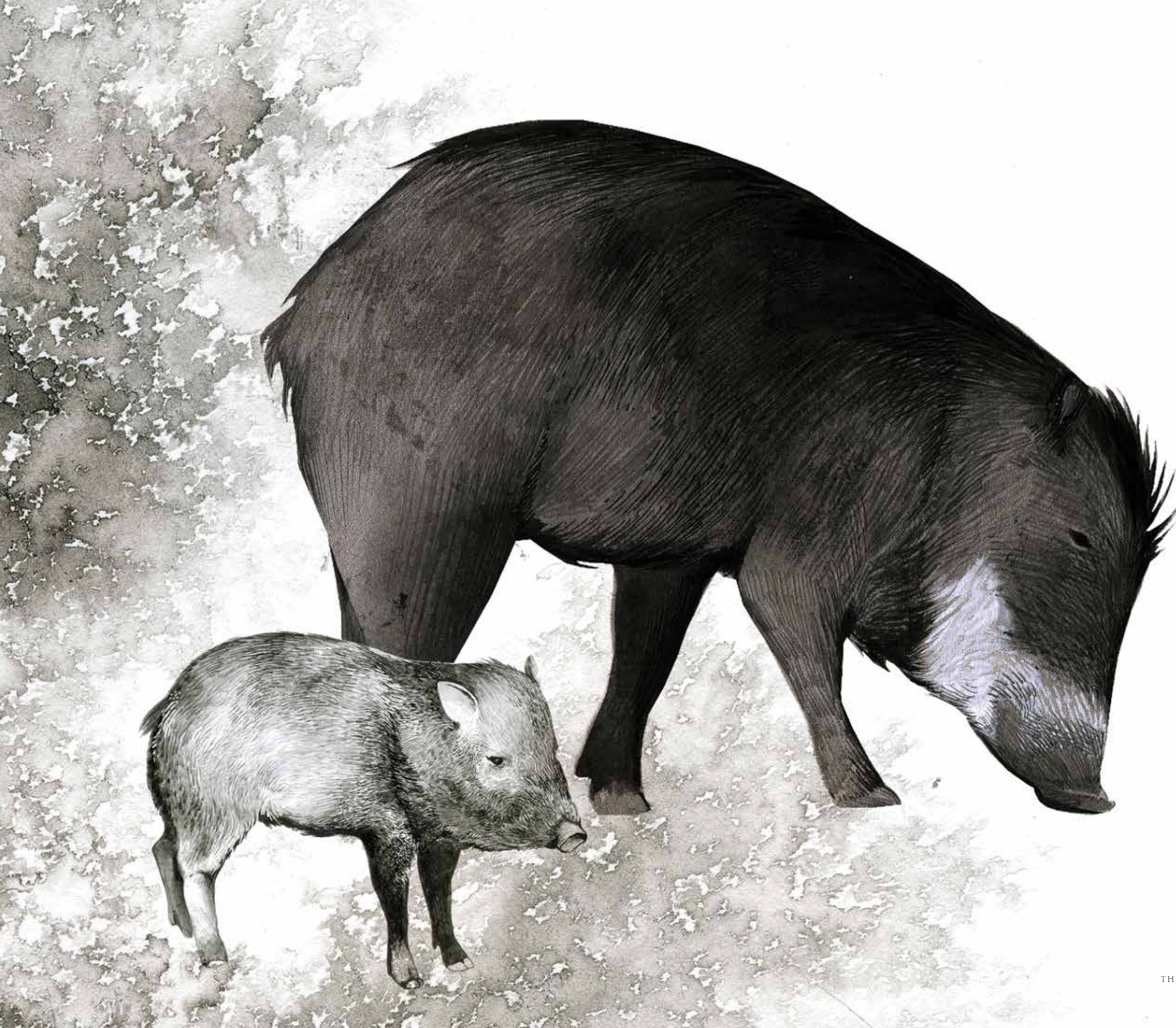
Ask Caudle why the discipline is still relevant – given that everyone has a camera-equipped cell phone – and the answer comes quickly.

“Illustrations can show us the inside of a tornado,” she said by way of example. “And photos won’t allow us to go back in time to see species that existed in the past.”

Jenny Keller, an instructor in the program, added that illustrations and animations explain new technologies and advancements in science to the scientific community, as well as to the curious public.

The work is all around us, if we just look – in books and field guides; adorning the walls of natural history museums; gracing exhibit labels to help aquarium visitors tell the difference between a sea lion and an otter; on interpretive signs in parks and nature preserves.

The program started at UC Santa Cruz in the 1980s and moved to CSUMB in 2009. It accepts 15 students a year among the 50 or so who apply; they complete an academic



year of classes and a 10-week internship. They learn to sketch in the field and to design information graphics and interactive displays.

Complementing the skills-based courses are instruction in copyright, contract law and other real-world topics. Students produce business cards and build portfolios while learning how to pitch clients and publishers – since many of them will work as freelancers.

“Because of the broad range of skills and their versatility and flexibility, our graduates have quite an edge out there,” Caudle said.

Applicants include art students and people with a background in science. That’s not an odd combination. Both art and science are about close observation, Caudle said, and the mix is beneficial for both groups.

“Artists look at things in a different way than scientists,” Caudle said. “They look at color composition. That’s fabulous for the science students.

“The learning, the training, a lot of it is the rich mix of people in the program.”

Corlis Schneider, who earned a certificate from the program in 2011, combined interests in both science and art.

“When you’re younger, you don’t think there is a way to reconcile a love for art and science,” she said. “So you grow up focusing on science, like I did, or art.”

While earning a bachelor’s degree in marine biology from UC Santa Cruz, she realized that her favorite classes were the labs where students had to illustrate their specimens.

That led her to CSUMB’s program. “It was clearly the right decision for me,” she said. She’s now a Los Angeles-based freelance illustrator.


Julie Naylor Selan, a 2011 graduate of the program, is another L.A.-based freelancer. She specializes in wildlife and paleontological illustration in traditional and digital media.

“Growing up, my weekends were spent in aquariums, museums, at the zoo or out on hikes,” she said. At 15, she was certified as a scuba diver and “that opened up a whole new world.” She, too, found her way to the science illustration program. “It was life-changing for me.”

Kim shares the view. “The science illustration program was one of the most important decisions of my life,” Kim said. “Through the program, I was able to define what sort of purpose art had for me.

“I learned new techniques, refined old ones and left the program feeling very prepared,” she said. **MB**

More information: scienceillustration.org | ink-dwell.com

 Watch video of Jane Kim talking about her inspiration for the Migrating Mural series at csumb.edu/multimedia

“White-lipped peccary,” a hog-like animal native to Central and South America.