

Adapted line drawing of *Canis* | Tom Baumgartner

TOM BAUMGARTNER

Canix

offset lithograph

Available for sale in the La Galleria gift shop

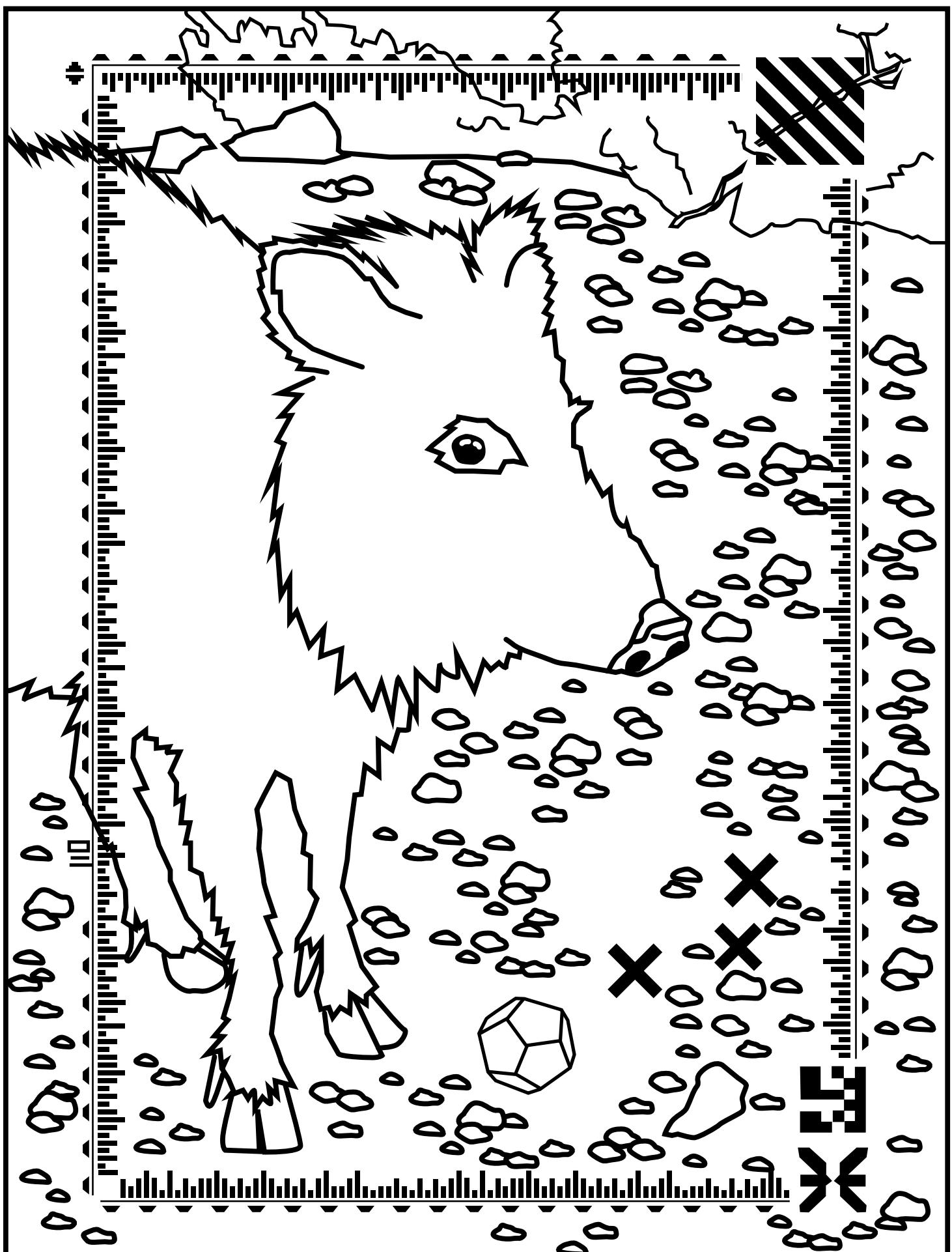
"Coyote is cunning. Coyote is opportunistic. Coyote is curious. Coyote is a hardy survivor like the desert itself. This is why the coyote is feared and hated. Coyote is the brother of the wolf, and both are the oldest branches of the canine genetic tree.

I cannot help seeing 'dog' when I encounter them. My reaction to them is always awe mixed with a little caution. A pack of three moved into an abandoned area near my house. Walking my dog Scout there one day, the coyotes approached. Scout played with one of them like they were puppies. I was amazed how they immediately turned to play. I swiveled around to see the other two carefully moving into a position to circle us. It might have been a defensive strategy but being out-numbered, I tossed rocks to break up their plan. Another time I was hiking down a wash with Scout when a group of eight came toward us. I called Scout next to me as the coyotes fanned out, slowing and sniffing as they passed, and went on their way.

The eyes and ears of the desert, they want to know whose coming and going. My piece has a coyote at dusk keeping an eye on the horizon, ears focused and nose scanning for changes in the air."

Tom has painted in oil and drawn with ink for 30 years with a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He has lived in Tucson for 20 years and has been actively involved with local arts organizations as well as founder of Wee Gallery. A life-long nature lover, his art has a focus on the desert landscape, automatic writing, and aesthetics of science. Tom is currently Creative Director for AlphaGraphics in Tucson.

To learn more about Tom and his work, visit <http://patterntology.com/>



Adapted line drawing of Javelinix | Tom Baumgartner

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Javelinix

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"The first time I heard of the javelina was during a horseback ride when the trail guide started describing a vicious black pig of the desert that would attack cattle and horses. The first time I saw a javelina; he saw me and ran away. The second time I saw a javelina was in a parking lot. He was wandering around the cars and sniffing around trashcans.

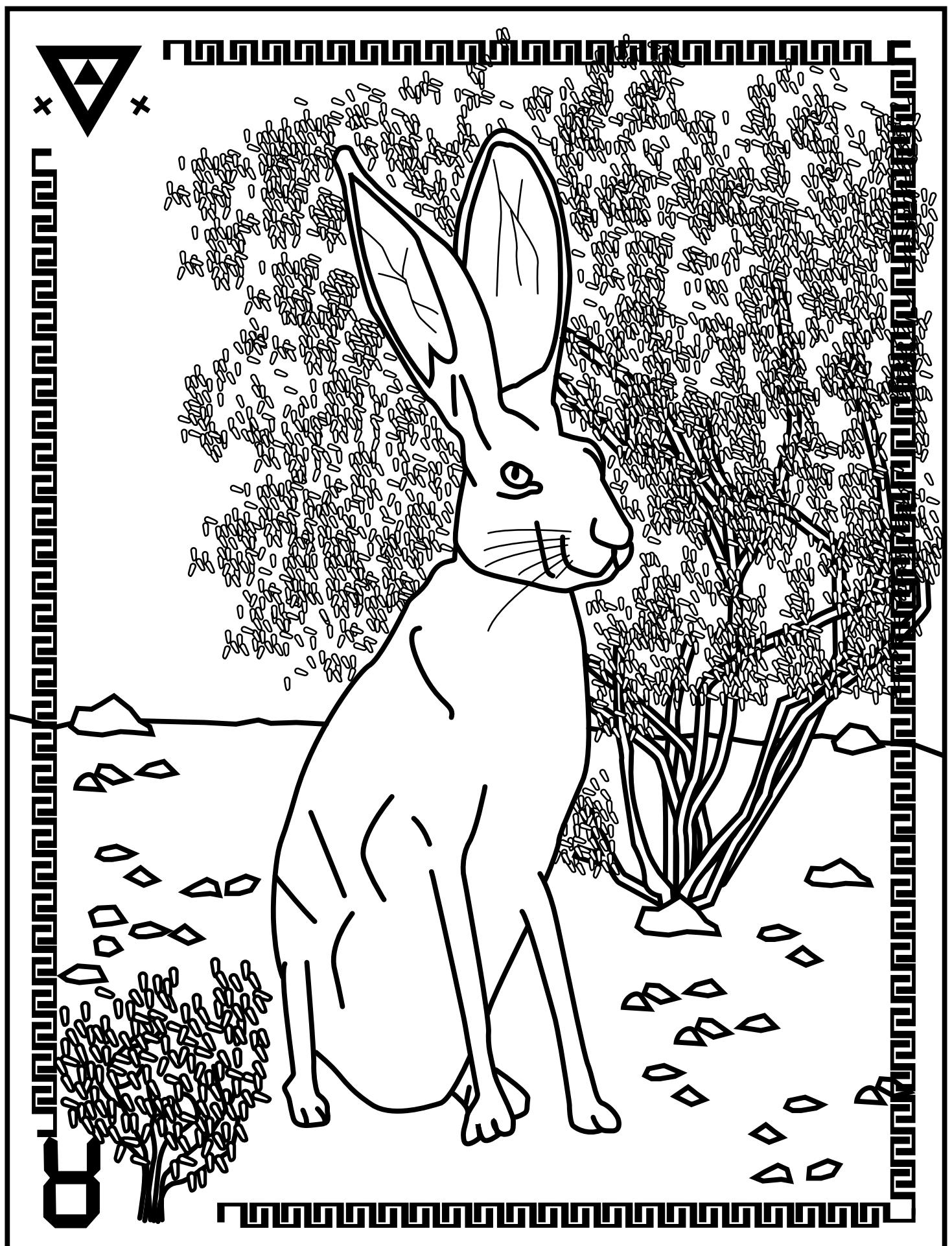
Since those encounters, I happen upon them as a common occurrence on trails and try to keep my distance. Once during a dry spell, three large ones walked down my street like a gang of tough guys unafraid of the urban environment around them.

Most of the time I am amazed the Sonoran Desert can support mammals this big and then remember this is a pretty green desert, as far as deserts go. As a regional character, the javelina is pretty famous; adorning postcards, lawn ornaments and mailboxes. As a wild animal, it is tough, crafty and fearless.

I was thinking about their sense of smell that is way better than their eyesight. That sense of smell helps them root out seeds, meats, fruits grasses and roots. A scent gland on the rear of their back help them communicate with each other. So yeah, I was thinking about navigating by smell in this piece."

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Adapted line drawing of *Lepus Allenix* | Tom Baumgartner

TOM BAUMGARTNER

Lepus Allenix

offset lithograph

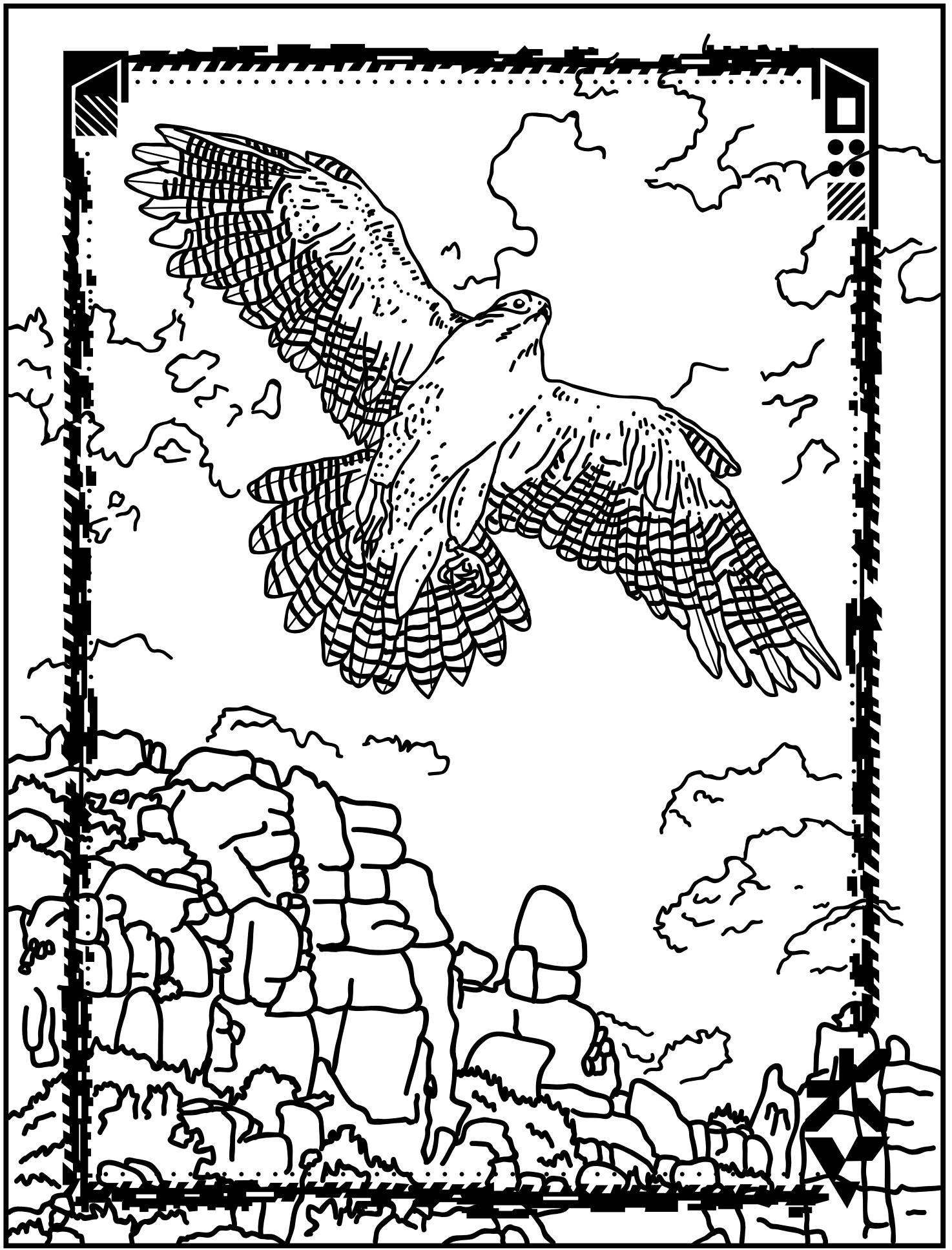
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"Meeting an antelope hare is like meeting a humble ambassador of the desert. A tall, slender running machine with long, alert ears always scanning. Their unusually large size has startled me more than once as I think there is a dog sitting there perfectly still. Maybe some type of greyhound. Creosote bushes are their perfectly-to-scale forest with plenty of room between bushes for multiple getaways. Heavily predated, they run, hide and breed with great proficiency.

There is something mysterious about the rabbits and hares. Not as much a sense of distrust but an inner alert and meditative wisdom. I was thinking about this stately way of being near the bottom of the food chain, its strategy of multiple escape plans and its zig-zag getaway move to throw predators off the trail."

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Adapted line drawing of Peregrix | Tom Baumgartner

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Peregrix

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"The Peregrine Falcon is a wide-ranging species and a seasonal migrator, but the Sonoran Desert is one place it breeds and calls home all year round. I have some nesting near my office, and at break time in the back when the wind is flowing over the Tucson Mountains, one of them might kite slow and low over me to take a look. Then there is that sound effect Hollywood is so fond of.

Out in the desert, circling in long slow arcs among rock towers and dodging dust devils, birds have a different spatial reality than we do – especially the strong fliers of the predatory world. Looking up at them, we are like the bottom feeders of the sky sea.

In this piece, I was thinking about the layers of air being like floors in a multistory building. I see birds cruising for prey, but sometimes I see them way up there on the top floor, far beyond hunting zones, watching the curvature of the earth and soaring smoothly on thermals."

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