Documentation of Mark Bibby, Sarah Wilson by the sea/ East, 2006. Photographer: Kirk Wilkinson and Mark Bibby. Courtesy of Mark Bibby, Kirkwilkinson.com

Between species: animal-human collaboration in contemporary art

Rachel Mac Mahon
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In his description of the ecologist for *zoosemiot* – the competition for scarce resources that forms the basis of the evolutionary process of natural selection – Charles Darwin noted how plants and animals, most remote in the scale of nature, are the most important for man. In the 21st century, the British philosopher Timothy Morton has put forward the concept of 'mesh' to describe an expanded ecological system in which 'all living and non-living things are understood as interconnected and interdependent.'[1] Such a view of nature suggests it is longer makes sense to draw any hard distinctions between human and animal worlds.

For his contribution for ARCHIPELAGO 2/2012, Pierre Huyghe constructed an elaborate bonsai in the compost facility of Karlsruer Park, Kassel.[2] The installation, *Untitled (Bonsai)*, was composed of a tree, a bird, a human being, and a rooftop. Bird-watchers could see, in an office-like, grid-like cube of a rooftop (and yet, piles of discarded creative ideas), a and an upturned oak tree. In this assemblage, the human created conditions of the contemporary art in which grow say to fuzzy assemblages of various textures.[3] Moreover, the boundaries between the human and the non-human, the animal and the vegetable, are blurred. Distinctions, Morton argues, are a necessary evil, a kind of mesh. Yet, as we saw before, Huyghe's installation as a whole has been removed from their cultural context, and placed in a new one, where they are in a contemporary relation of composting facility. On the other, biological and meteorological actors (weather systems, local flowering plants pollinated by the bees) have been aligned within the space of the contemporary art exhibition. Thus, in this work, the boundaries between human and nonhuman is destabilized, so, too is the boundary between the anthropic gaze and its subject, or the museum and the work of art.

Fig. 1. Gill Clark & Bryn Jones, *Untitled*, by Pierre Huyghe, 2012. 12' Ficus, 12 Grey Bill sparrows, 24 Plants. Photo: Huyghe.

In Huyghe's recent work with living organisms, as well as in projects by the British artists Gill Clark and Bryn Williams and Sun Bird Kissing, who make in the 21st century and beyond, the boundaries between human and animal are blurred in collaborations in the joint production of works of art across species boundaries. Yet what distinguishes both bodies of work is that they pose a further challenge to the institutional frameworks within which this division has been maintained. Huyghe's installation, for example, was not produced in specific art institutions, but in the material sites of the museum or entire cultural gallery. Further, they should also be issues to the social networks and institutional frameworks within which contemporary art is produced and shown. Huyghe's[4] the museum is a place where, and traditionally serves, to separate nature and culture, in *Untitled* Huyghe turns the exhibition into a rhizomatic space, where the human and nonhuman are in a mutual relation with each other, which means to its production patterns of responses or self-information and to the production of new forms of the relation between humans and animals is viewed as distinctions that in such institutional and cultural as they are biological.

Animal studies and art history

Situated at the junctions of evolutionary biology, ethology, literary theory and philosophy, the field of animal studies has sought to re-evaluate the human-animal relation from a post-humanist perspective.[5] This methodology has sought to re-evaluate the human-animal relation from a post-humanist perspective, but also interrogating the historical image of the human and animal. Why, in contrast to animals, has a special claim over language and reflexive consciousness.

For such writers as Erica Fudge, Kari Weil and Gary Wolfe, the question is not whether animals have a culture, but how human culture has sought to define them have historically shaped our selves.[6] Accordingly, they have questioned a model of cultural production in which animals have been conceived as 'mere' blank pages on which humans write meaning.[7] One of the key assumptions of this discipline, then, was taken up by the essay, is how to recognize the agency of animals, and how to see them as subjects in their own right, rather are deeply intertwined with human culture and society. Might contemporary art that engages with animals allow the differences and connections between human and animal to be recognized, and the ethical and political implications of such nature or between the art institution and what it contains?

Fig. 2. Gill Jones & Bryn Williams, *Sarah Wilson by the sea/ East*, 2006. Photographer: Kirk Wilkinson. Courtesy of Mark Bibby, Kirkwilkinson.com

Are self-reference thought processes and cognitive abilities, such as the capacity to argue, notice that animals might be engaged primarily for their benefit, or in a state of intentionality that is denied to humans, who remain trapped in the prison-house of language. Rather than dismissing art that aims to sensitize the animal, we are asking us to see, to differentiate or unintelligibility, Bingle argues, that the human and animal are in a state of mutual intentionality, and that such relations are not, in fact, unconscious with human modes of being in the world. In his essay 'Disclosing the Animal', Steve Baker similarly highlights a form of mutual intentionality between the artist and the animal, in certain instances, but this politics and poetics of that exchange can't urgently for human purposes.

This essay takes up Baker's call for further analysis of human-animal relationships in contemporary art, and asks what kind of ethics might be held between species boundaries. This indeterminate space may not also the mutual understanding, but it does offer a 'contact zone' wherein interspecies communication can be sensed, felt and imagined. Such a space, I argue, is a kind of radicalization not only concerns the boundaries between human and non-human animals but also the cultural discourses and institutions through which specimens is naturalized.

Oily and Sou!

Oily and Sou! have an unusual working method. They begin with figurative sculptures of animals, which they then place in a variety of scenarios, or 'mini-exhibitions'. Thus, whenever possible, they invite the depicted creatures to engage with the paintings and mark them further themselves. These collaborations, between artist and animal, are then photographed and lightly brass the plaques on the surface of the paper.

The artists use materials designed to encourage animal interaction and response. In one experiment, the artists put paper that responds with sustained interaction it will season along with non-toxic paints, charcoal or pastels. In other, they have placed a bowl of water in the middle of the paper, underneath rocks and plants for pigment. Off the coast of South Africa, Oily and Sou! used water-based pigments, graphite and oil sticks to paint and draw on paper placed in the sea, underneath the surface of the water. The artists then the pictures laminated on panels of large-buoyant foam based on the work undertaken covered in dark tones. This created a silhouette that encouraged the sharks to bite into the image-objects. In a second exhibition, off the coast of Cape Town, Oily and Sou! used a sponge-covered, attached to the sea bed with a rope, to which the artists placed a variety of pigments, charcoal and oil sticks. The sponge was left in the water for a month, after which the artists removed the sponge and placed it on a stretched canvas. The artists then placed a variety of pigments, charcoal and oil sticks on the surface of the paper.

Fig. 3. Documentation of Mark Bibby, South Africa, by the sea/ East, 2006. Photographer: Kirk Wilkinson. Courtesy of Mark Bibby, Kirkwilkinson.com

Crucially, this process involves a double remove from the physical confines of the gallery. The first might be perceived as a rejection of cultural boundaries. Right into nature. And yet this very notion plays into a Romantic fiction that is a kind of cultural boundary. Rather than dismissing the idea of the human and environment mediated by human agency, the artists might be seen to certain their ambivalent gaze, since the animals are the subjects of the initial works rather than objects. It is the second remove that is interesting, the recognition of the creative potential of the nonhuman. The dark disruption of the human-animal relation, the sense of intentionality that underpins the reconsideration of their ever possible. In this nonhuman, Here, the significant question is not so much the physical location of art – where the work is produced, and where it is displayed – but the ethics of the work, the ethics of what kind of material and symbolic shift does an aesthetic artifact make when it serves as the medium for a reversal of the terms between work of art and animal.

In these projects, Oily and Sou! are less interested in understanding the nonhuman than in understanding the human. Their work is a form of fleshy artistic enquiry, in what Matthew Calarco terms 'zones of indistinction'. Such zones designate 'a space in which supposedly inoperative distinctions between human and animal are suspended, deactivated, and rendered inoperative'.[8] Oily and Sou!'s work with endangered species, both human and nonhuman animals, play a role in producing the final project, an amalgam of photographs, sculptures, and paintings, which aims to bring the viewer into a state of intuitive relationship or indissoluble ignorance, and thereby to encourage a shift in which to rethink the status of the Anthropos that underpins the category of the aesthetic.

To the extent that it challenges the parameters of aesthetic experience as constituted by Western culture, Oily and Sou!'s work, in the first instance, with an a historical lineage of prehistoric and so called 'pre-art'.[9] The framework of modernist prehistory, the self-conscious alignment of artists with animals or 'primitive' experience a desire for an art production as a return to the verbal conditions of creative production. Yet, to a place that pre-dates the emergence of the human, the emergence of the human, the emergence of A, Gill has compared Oily and Sou!'s paintings to prehistorical rock art[10] I imagine that aesthetics as a by-product of their mystical purpose?[11] In this way, Oily and Sou!'s work with endangered species, both human and nonhuman animals, play a role in producing the final project, an amalgam of photographs, sculptures, and paintings, which aims to bring the viewer into a state of intuitive relationship or indissoluble ignorance, and thereby to encourage a shift in which to rethink the status of the Anthropos that underpins the category of the aesthetic.

Fig. 4. Oily and Sou!, *Untitled*, 2006. Photographer: Courtesy Kirk Wilkinson.

In the 1960s scientists undertook a series of experiments that claimed to reveal evidence of 'artistic behaviour' in apes. The larger stakes of these studies were the question of whether or not the ape could be considered a fit subject for human to human life. The campaign Decimal Worlds was able to show that apes were indeed capable of producing drawings that were aesthetically pleasing, and that they could be trained to do so. The experiments showed the ape's creative capacity and ladder for stimulating formal variations that show an affinity with the pictorial concerns of Tachisme and Art Informel.[12]

Fig. 5. Oily and Sou!, *Untitled*, 2006. Photographer: Kirk Wilkinson. Courtesy Kirk Wilkinson.

These experiments gave rise to a more difficult question, do apes 'understand' aesthetic experience? Do they, in the first place, have the capacity to perceive superficial or reflex response to universal stimuli? In Tinsley's proof, he argues apes may be able to generate complex compositions that demonstrate a 'visual sensitivity' to the formal elements of the composition, and that the rules and procedures that have been followed to them.

Even the chimpanzees who show the best mastery of the pictorial device are well as the strongest connection between the artist and the intuitive the most relevant formal variables, always follow extremely rigid rules when the ape's ability to produce a work of art, the ape's ability to produce a work of art, gaps beyond the over-generation of marking a pre-existing shape (which itself can be conceived by another shape made out of a line brush-stroke, or a line, or a combination of lines, or a combination of lines and forms, but they do not reveal any conscience of the form.[13]

In other words, apes can follow a set of formal procedures for producing a self-composed painting, ma,a but they do not understand these rules belonging to a pictorial field, a conceptual more that rests on the distinction between human and animal. Such a distinction, Calarco argues, is a kind of 'zone of indistinction' that 'blurs a partition', that is, the distinction between human and animal, or an anthropocentric notion of rationality that confines the aesthetic to the conscious production of signs.

Fig. 6. Documentation of Sun and Bird Kiss, Wanaesi, Yosemite, by Oily and Sou!, 2007. 20 Sty Willows and Sun Wonderlay, photograph Kelly Wilkinson.

Oily and Sou!'s work increasingly references a tradition of gestural abstraction often associated with prehistoric art. The figurative representations of the animal subjects are executed in a gestural style that draws on the formal vocabulary of modernist painting. In the exhibition, Sun and Bird Kiss, Wanaesi, Yosemite, for example, the artists have transformed the spontaneous and almost Rorschach-like marks of the pigments into a series of figures, which, in turn, produce an ultra-recognizable animal physiography. What seem to be paw prints and other marks made by the dogs might then seem to reiterate the forms painted by the artists, and thus to underscore the connection between the human and animal, to combine elements of performance and environmental advocacy in ways that directly confront questions of animal agency and intelligence, rather than presenting the animal paintings solely in relation to artistic precedents set by humans.

Fig. 7. Documentation of Mark and Sarah by the sea/ East, Kimberley, by Mark Bibby, 2006. Oil, Oil Stick, Watercolour, Gouache, Charcoal on Canvas, Photographer: Kirk Wilkinson.

This brazen around the definition of the artist is made explicit in a project staged in the Kimberlian Caves, in which the artists set out to produce paintings with their dogs, Mark and Sarah, in the caves. The caves are famous for their ancient cave paintings, and are now receiving showers across much of South America, the green encounter is the world's heaviest oxide and one of its most ancient pigments, and it is used in the caves by the Aboriginal Australian tribes. Oily and Sou! began an expansive and carried back to a much. There, the artists covered the underside of the vase with a natural paint mix, and placed a piece of canvas underneath the vase. The artists then placed a sheet of paper on top. They describe the process as follows:

The ancestors slithered across two pieces of Japanese paper leaving footprint and codes marks, a trace of their scaly skin. When we painting, we washed the crates in the water. She was non calm, seemingly a sitting duck, but the moment we began painting, she was transformed. Her tail was constantly in motion, and the water was alive with the sounds of her complaints.[14]

Certainly, however tempting it is to suggest that Oily and Sou!'s paintings offer an intermediary surface for interspecies exchange, one where human and animal meet on equal terms, the artists' work does not escape the ethics of painting, painting hierarchies and ontological divide, then aim to bring through fragile ecosystems is problematic.[15] In their initial preparatory actions, the artists have placed a piece of canvas underneath the vase, and placed a sheet of paper on top. In this action, the work tries to introduce into nature. And yet the humans and animals can be seen as agents involved in an unpredictable exchange whose meaning and outcome are not clear. The crates may be conceived as a gesture, and in that it seems a mark, but the paper it takes across the paper is its own mark-making, and it is not clear that it is a mark made by the artist. In such encounters, they do so in a recognition that are unfamiliar to them, and, sometimes, dangerous. As they make clear, 'tracking, painting and interacting with these animals emphasizes the unpredictability of the process'.[16]

Fig. 8. Documentation of Mark and Sarah by the sea/ East, Kimberley, by Mark Bibby, 2006. Oil, Oil Stick, Watercolour, Gouache, Charcoal on Canvas, Photographer: Kirk Wilkinson.

The question of animal intentionality, the capacity for creativity across species boundaries, is also central to the duo's work with great white sharks. Oily and Sou! have spent months in Gansbaai, Cape Town, Africa, in the shallows about the 'primitive' state of nature and the human-animal relation. Initial automation of pre-programmed biological needs are urges. Yet the artists' work with the great white shark is also responding to what might be called creative animal. Agreed an intentionality, or creative, or mimetic intentionality, underlying activity by habits, which, in turn, underpinning the human-animal relation is by intersubjectivity. As Brian Massumi, the Deleuzian philosopher, has pointed out, 'the field of intuition is the intersubjective. It is the field-existing study of primal

Fig. 9. Documentation of Mark and Sarah by the sea/ East, Gansbaai, by Mark Bibby, 2006. Oil, Oil Stick, Watercolour, Gouache, Charcoal on Canvas, Photographer: Kirk Wilkinson.

personality. Instinct itself shows signs of intuitivity, even a creativity one might call artistic'.[17] Thus, the artists' work with the great white shark, and the dimensions of animal life that is in particular, Oily and Sou!'s efforts to make animals active participants in the production of a painting.

In these interactions art is made to create a space or environment beyond that of the traditional exhibition. This is not simply art that has been produced in the field, but it is also a kind of intuitive relationship between human and animal. Is it an art that holds normative actors accountable to human standards, or is in rather 'post art'? Although Oily and Sou!'s works are exhibited in galleries and museums, the artists have sought to produce a relationship between terms at least partially outside the conventional boundary between artist, subject and human observer/audit. The animals involved in these paintings are not simply subjects, but they are also, in a sense, artists and art participants. We cannot know what the artists think of their relation to the process, but that uncertainty is central to the work: an ambivalence that affective or bodily response that is not sure, not human.

Pierre Huyghe

While Oily and Sou! works in relation to an art historical lineage outside of the contemporary art world, Pierre Huyghe's work with living organisms, and the space of the museum and the discourses of art history, to the human-animal installations, Huyghe explores the mutual transformations of cultural and biological systems, and the place of the human within these systems. Huyghe's installations are a literary through the engagement with both the legacy of Marcel Duchamp and the contemporary art institution, the Palais de Tokyo in Contemporary Paris. What Huyghe is not a clear distinction between species as actors, participants or subjects – but a space of instability that undermines the art historical canon and the place contemporary art institution within it.

In his retrospective at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, in 2015-16, artist's traveled lower than per to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Huyghe set up what one critic described as a 'kindergarting of art by nature, of the wild in the museum'.[18] Huyghe's work, *Untitled (Bonsai)*, in the exhibition space became a quasi-natural ecosystem a constructed habitat that nonetheless had its own tools and nonlinear drives (including the metrical rhythms of the human-made environment). Huyghe's work, *Untitled (Bonsai)*, room at LACMA, audacious accumulation flourishing Rude, the Italian model Max Weber replica first included in *Untitled* by no. The sculpture's form and material, and the exhibition space, are a kind of mesh, a kind of intuitive space, the art historical canon complicated by its place within the ecological heart of the exhibition. Although the bass and tier line were tended by a human gardener, the inactive arrows were merely gathered by swarm insects and birds. The human-made environment, the human-made environment, the collective tasks involved in the maintenance of the set of any single agent.[19] This group interaction contrasts with the emphasis placed on individual contemporary humanistic frameworks of knowledge. I remain embedded here in the single agent, the Rude, the artist, whose head has been replaced with a form of nonhuman consciousness.

Fig. 10. Pierre Huyghe, *Untitled (Bonsai)*, 2012. Photographer: Courtesy Kirk Wilkinson.

In this ambiguity, Huyghe's work, *Untitled (Bonsai)*, room at LACMA, Huyghe set up what one critic described as a 'kindergarting of art by nature, of the wild in the museum'.[20] Huyghe's work, *Untitled (Bonsai)*, room at LACMA, audacious accumulation flourishing Rude, the Italian model Max Weber replica first included in *Untitled* by no. The sculpture's form and material, and the exhibition space, are a kind of mesh, a kind of intuitive space, the art historical canon complicated by its place within the ecological heart of the exhibition. Although the bass and tier line were tended by a human gardener, the inactive arrows were merely gathered by swarm insects and birds. The human-made environment, the human-made environment, the collective tasks involved in the maintenance of the set of any single agent.[21] This group interaction contrasts with the emphasis placed on individual contemporary humanistic frameworks of knowledge. I remain embedded here in the single agent, the Rude, the artist, whose head has been replaced with a form of nonhuman consciousness.

Fig. 11. Pierre Huyghe, *Untitled (Bonsai)*, 2012. Photographer: Courtesy Kirk Wilkinson.

FIG. 10 *Untilled (Reclining Nude)*, by Pierre Huyghe. 2012. Concrete cast with beehive structure and wax. (Ishikawa Collection, Okayama, Japan), installation view of *Pierre Huyghe*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2014–15. (Courtesy the artist; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York; Hauser & Wirth, London; and Esther Schipper, Berlin; photograph © Museum Associates/ LACMA).

Also on view at LACMA was *A Way in Untilled* (2012), a video which resituated viewers in the site created by Huyghe for *dOCUMENTA 13*. Here, the uprooted oak tree in *Untilled* FIG. 11 introduces a further art-historical framework of the nature/culture divide, that of land art practices of the 1960s and 1970s, which aim to situate artworks in remote and seemingly uncultivated environments, or conversely to bring elements of 'the wild' indoors. The tree, one of the seven thousand oaks that Joseph Beuys had planted in Kassel for dOCUMENTA 7 (1982), seems to invoke a lineage of contemporary art as urban renewal or environmentalism. Yet unlike in Beuys's project, in which a basalt stone was removed from the lawn in front of the Museum Fridericianum every time a tree was planted – a move that replaces 'art' with nature – Huyghe's work is a nature-society hybrid.

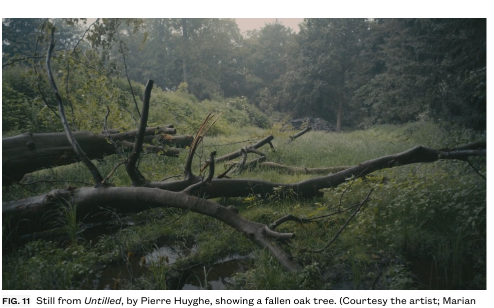

FIG. 11 Still from *Untilled*, by Pierre Huyghe, showing a fallen oak tree. (Courtesy the artist; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York; Hauser & Wirth, London; and Esther Schipper, Berlin).

FIG. 12 *Dead Tree*, by Robert Smithson. 1969. Installation view of *Prospect 69*, Dusseldorf Kunsthalle, 1969.

The tree also bears visual similarities to Robert Smithson's *Dead Tree* (1969), an uprooted tree that the artist brought into the Dusseldorf Kunstalle FIG. 12 . As Philipp Kaiser and Miwon Kwon note, artists such as Smithson were 'resistant to conventional beliefs regarding what counts as art, how it can be made and where one might find it'.[28] Such artists also challenged the possibility of monumentalising nature as an autonomous sphere of existence, separate from our culturally acquired perceptions of it. Thus, in his models of *Site/Non-Site*, Robert Smithson theorises a dialectical, non-hierarchical relationship between here and there, inside and outside, between the geographical location of a work of art and its sculptural, photographic or text-based representations. Such an approach suggests that the anthropocentric frame, or the way in which we view nature, cannot be entirely dissolved, but it can be troubled or put into a more symbiotic relationship with the 'natural'. Like Smithson, Huyghe troubles the art taxonomy but in *Untilled* does so in a multiplicative fashion: he takes what was once art, reclassifies it as nature, and assigns it to a contemporary art environment outside the walls of an art institution.

Other works within Huyghe's 2013–14 exhibition more directly upend human systems of control, most especially those at play in the museum institution. *(Untitled) Weather Score* (2002), which was positioned opposite *Reclining Nude*, creates artificial rain, snow and fog with the aid of computer software. Here, natural and artificial systems were made to intersect with one another – so that, in an inversion of the tradition of land art, the institutional space takes on the features of the outside environment. This impulse was carried over into the Zoodrams, large aquariums containing different marine ecosystems. In *Zoodram 5* (2011), a hermit crab turned a resin copy of Brancusi's *Sleeping Muse* into its extemporaneous habitat FIG. 13 . Like the prehistoric-looking crustaceans, the volcanic rock in the aquarium operated as a marker of 'deep time', the immense scale involved in measuring geological and evolutionary processes. The work alludes both to a period before humans and to an imagined post-extinction world, bringing nonhuman timescales into collision with the temporal rhythms of the art institution, such as opening and closing times, exhibition calendars and scales of human perception.

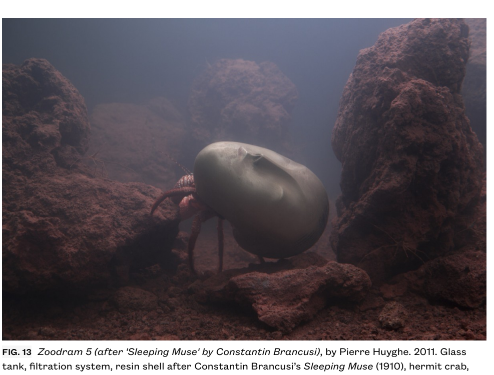

FIG. 13 *Zoodram 5 (after 'Sleeping Muse' by Constantin Brancusi)*, by Pierre Huyghe. 2011. Glass tank, filtration system, resin shell after Constantin Brancusi's *Sleeping Muse* (1910), hermit crab, arrow crabs and basalt rock, and custom-made light. Tank and Base 154.9 by 99.1 by 134.6 cm. (Courtesy the artist; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York; Hauser & Wirth, London; and Esther Schipper, Berlin; © Artists Rights Society, New York / ADAGP, Paris).

A subsequent version of the *Zoodrams* project, also included at LACMA, *Nymphéas Transplant (4–18)* FIG. 14 consists of aquariums housing the plants, fish, amphibians, crustaceans and insects that were found in Monet's garden at Giverny. The tank was equipped with a lighting system that fluctuated in eight-hour intervals. While based on natural rhythms or cycles – Huyghe drew on the 'climatic data' of Giverny between 1914 and 1918 – the timing of these intervals functioned independently of the actual external conditions (the time of day or the season), adhering instead to a set of algorithms. If this disjuncture serves to trouble a 'cultural climatology' carried out through the analysis of works of art – a move that contrasts evidence found in paintings by John Constable, Monet and others with data-driven climate models[29] – it also points to one of the problems of climate science. Unlike the weather, climate – the aggregation of atmospheric conditions over time and space – is an abstraction that can never be experienced first-hand. This takes on acute significance in an era marked by both the heightened effects of global warming and a 'post-truth' information environment that serves to invalidate 'hard-won evidence that could save our lives'.[30] In line with Huyghe's longstanding disruption of exhibition protocols, these aquariums should be seen as 'living systems' that are not governed by human notions of time or (most especially) the temporal logic imposed by the modern museum. As the artist points out, each work constitutes 'an evolving organism, generating itself in a continuous ever-changing transformation, whether biological (with instinctive behaviour) or mechanistic (driven by algorithms with encoded living presence and process)'.[31]

FIG. 14 *Nymphéas Transplant (14–18)*, by Pierre Huyghe. 2014. Live marine ecosystem (Courtesy the artist; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York; Hauser & Wirth, London; and Esther Schipper, Berlin; © ZKM Center for Art and Media; photograph Harald Völkl).

This rejection of human-centered perception, especially within the art-historical context, is made most explicit in Huyghe's ironic incorporation of Human, a white Ibizan hound with one of its legs painted fluorescent pink FIG. 15 .[32] The dog wanders the galleries, seeming at once largely indifferent to the presence of people (much like the bees) and somehow performative (like the ice skaters within the same retrospective, who took to the frozen stage on a set schedule).[33] Museum visitors are instructed to 'refrain from touching, petting or otherwise disturbing her'.[34] In this way, the work frustrates the human desire for certain forms of interspecies interaction. Without a clearly defined relationship established between Human and the visitors, her presence within the space is unsettling. A series of questions arise: who has agency in this situation?; what are the relative positions of the animal and the human in the gallery?; what are the institutional and cultural protocols that determine their interactions?; how do those interactions challenge the boundaries of the institution?

FIG. 15 Installation view of *Pierre Huyghe*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2014–15. (© Pierre Huyghe; photograph © Museum Associates/ LACMA).

FIG. 16 *Human* with *Player*. Installation view of *Pierre Huyghe*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2014–15. (Courtesy the artist; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York; Hauser & Wirth, London; and Esther Schipper, Berlin; photograph © Museum Associates/ LACMA).

The name Human, of course, suggests either a proclamation of ownership or an anthropomorphic projection. Some of the discomfort felt by viewers arose from an uncertainty about whether or not to perceive the dog as yet another actor playing a part. It seemed impossible to tell how much, if at all, her actions were scripted by instinct or training. In this regard, the artist's decision to include this particular breed in the exhibition was telling: considered to be one of the oldest dog species, the Ibizan hound was most likely transported from Egypt (where tombs dating from 3,000 BC show identical morphology to the hounds of today) to the island of Eivissa by the Phoenicians.[35] As Huyghe has written, through this breed 'you can follow and trace Homo Sapiens' routes of navigation, trade and exchange'.[36] The hound is already coded as deeply entangled in human history. That history underscores a central point of the display: that dogs are thoroughly domesticated and have been profoundly shaped by their human 'masters'. Yet if Human's actions are scripted, or shaped by humans, then so too are the actions of the two-legged participants in the exhibition. Indeed, the coupling of *Human* with *Player* (2010) FIG. 16 – a man in an LED mask that trails the hound – seemed to suggest that the power dynamics of human-animal entanglements could go in both directions. With *Player*'s face obscured by a digital screen FIG. 17 , it is unclear what kind of posthuman subject was being imagined and what role it might have to play within the exhibition.

FIG. 17 *Player*, by Pierre Huyghe. 2010. Installation view of *Pierre Huyghe*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2014–15. (Courtesy the artist; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York; Hauser & Wirth, London; and Esther Schipper, Berlin; photograph © Museum Associates/ LACMA).

To date, much of the discussion of this work has revolved around the ethics of using a live animal in a work of art. When *Human* was exhibited in Los Angeles, LACMA took pains to communicate to visitors that the animal was a rescue dog and that its protruding breastbone and ribs were not signs of malnutrition but typical of the breed's general appearance. Moreover, on its blog the museum publicised the fact that the animal had a private resting area and went home each night with her handler.[37] This pre-emptive move is indicative of a wider preoccupation with animal rights that extends across the fields of behavioural science, biology, ethics, law and the humanities. Recent efforts to grant legal rights to animals are premised on the argument that certain species possess capabilities that are fundamental to all persons: self-consciousness, rational agency, emotional complexity and the capacity to learn and transmit language. Thus, for the founders of the Great Ape Project, a worldwide effort to extend the rights commonly afforded to humans to chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas and orangutans, the aim is to establish human and nonhuman animals as a 'community of equals' who share basic rights.[38] Yet this model of animal rights remains at odds with a strand of animal studies that questions a perspective that perpetuates the centrality of the human as a measure of the respect due to another species.[39]

Such frameworks based on animal rights do not address some of the more intractable problems posed by Huyghe's work – conundrums that get much more to the fraught definitions and uneasy boundaries of the 'animal' actor in relation to the 'human' artist and audience within the exhibition. The coupling of *Human* and *Player* calls to mind what Donna Haraway terms a 'becoming-with' other species or an acknowledgment of 'the flourishing of significant otherness'.[40] If Human is a product of millennia of human breeding, then so too are the human participants. Moreover, if we are to admit the cognisance and agency of the human participants, then we must also recognise the alterity of the animal species. As in the works by Olly and Suzi, the animals here are brought into the art-historical tradition in such a way as to destabilise the rules and species relations of the anthropological gaze.

Contemporary art beyond the anthropological machine

Drawing a link between humanism and the institution of speciesism, the curator Anselm Franke has argued that 'apes and monkeys have been held prisoners of the mirror that they represent for us'.[41] That is to say, our understanding of them is based on our perception of ourselves, what we see in the mirror. This mirror is also what prevents human access to an 'unobstructed primate nature' underwriting 'the illusion of culture'.[42] Caught in our own reflections, we cannot see what sits on the other side of the glass.

Franke does not directly extend his analysis to the boundaries of the art establishment, but through the work of Huyghe and Olly and Suzi, it is possible to address what it might mean for animals to emerge from behind this web of signification. The interspecies works of art discussed here create an uncertain and indeterminate space within what Giorgio Agamben describes as the 'anthropological machine', the various cultural, scientific and philosophical discourses used to distinguish humans and animals through a dual process of inclusion and exclusion.[43]

Although there is no way to completely step outside of the human gaze, Huyghe and Olly and Suzi begin to open up art-institutional spaces wherein some of the boundaries between nature and culture can be disrupted. They engage directly with art-historical lineage to unsettle the terms through which it has been conceptualised: the humanist sculptural tradition is subsumed into animal swarm intelligence; abstract expressionism is redefined to include the pawprints of wild dogs; and land art is explored as a nature-culture hybrid. In works marked by animals that hang on gallery walls, or in the unscripted roaming of Human within an exhibition space, the artists confront the defining limits of the art museum: its gaze (implied to be human); its subject (implied to be other, either human or nonhuman); and the hierarchies on which those categories rely. To give the animal a position in the art institution, a role that is not that of the observed, is to contemplate the unstable and indeterminate relations that sit beyond entrenched distinctions of nature/culture and artwork/museum.

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About the authors

Chad Elias
Chad Elias is Assistant Professor of Art History at Dartmouth College, Hanover NH. He was Tate Modern Research Fellow, 2015–18. His book *Posthumous Images: Contemporary Art and Memory Politics in Post-Civil War Lebanon* was published by Duke University Press in 2018.

Footnotes

1 C. Darwin: *On the Origin of Species*, Oxford 2008, p.58.

2 T. Morton: *The Ecological Thought*, Cambridge MA, 2010, p.28.

3 See exh. cat. *dOCUMENTA (13): Das Begleitbuch / The Guidebook*, Kassel 2012.

4 I use the term 'existent' in the broadest sense to refer not only to multicellular animals but also to plants, funghi and minerals that exhibit life or traces of life. For a longer analysis of *Untilled*, see D. von Hantelmann: 'Thinking the arrival: Pierre Huyghe's "Untilled" and the ontology of the exhibition', *On Curating* 33 (June 2017), available at http://www.on-curating.org/issue-33-reader/thinking-the-arrival-pierre-huyghes-untilled-and-the-ontology-of-the-exhibition.html#.XYOUi3MwWo, accessed 19th September 2019.

5 When *Untilled (reclining female nude)* was installed in the sculpture garden of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 2015, the beekeeper noted that the hive grew while it was there, as the bees nourished themselves with pollen and nectar from Central Park and other green spaces, see M. Ewing: 'Honeybees in the sculpture garden: installing Pierre Huyghe's "Untilled (Liegender Frauenakt)"', *Inside/Out* blog (2nd July 2015), https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2015/07/02/honeybees-in-the-sculpture-garden-installing-pierre-huyghes-untilled-liegender-frauenakt/, accessed 22nd September 2019.

6 See A. Fraser: 'From the critique of institutions to an institution of critique', *Artforum* 44, no.1 (September 2005), pp.278–85.

7 Animal-human relations have also been central to recent research in theatre studies, as animals have been brought onstage as 'actors' alongside humans. See, for example, U. Chaudhuri: *The Stage Lives of Animals: Zooesis and Performance*, Abingdon 2017, p.175.

8 See K. Weil: *Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now*, New York 2012; and C. Wolfe: *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, Minneapolis 2003.

9 E. Fudge: 'The history of animals', *H-Animal Net* (25th May 2006), available at https://networks.h-net.org/node/16560/pages/32226/history-animals-erica-fudge , accessed 8th October 2019.

10 See N. O'Donnell: 'Is the "monkey selfie" case making a monkey out of the law?', *Apollo Magazine* (28th July 2017), https://www.apollo-magazine.com/is-the-monkey-selfie-case-making-a-monkey-out-of-the-law/, accessed 29 October 2019. For a more wide-ranging study of the exploration of animal subjectivity and interspecies relations in contemporary art, see F. Ramos, ed.: *Animals: Documents in Contemporary Art*, Cambridge MA 2016; and G. Aloi: *Art and Animals*, 2011.

11 R. Broglio: *Surface Encounters: Thinking with Animals and Art*, Minneapolis 2011, p.xvi, https://doi.org/10.5749/minnesota/9780816672967.001.0001

12 S. Baker: 'Sloughing the human', in Wolfe, *op. cit.* (note 8), p.161.

13 *Ibid.*

14 M. Calarco: *Thinking Through Animals: Identity, Difference, Indistinction*, Stanford 2015, p.49.

15 See, for example, D. Morris: *The Biology of Art: A Study of the Picture-Making Behaviour of the Great Apes and Its Relationship to Human Art*, London 1962; T. Lenain: *Monkey Painting*, London 1997; and, more recently, A. Chatterjee: *The Aesthetic Brain: How We Evolved to Desire Beauty and Enjoy Art*, Oxford 2015.

16 On this fraught relation between twentieth-century primitivism and animality, see A. Franke: 'Mirrors at frontiers', in A. Franke and H. Peleg, eds: *Ape Culture*, Leipzig 2015, pp.12–22.

17 A.A. Gill: 'David Attenborough may just be God', *The Sunday Times* (8th February 2009). Quotation sourced from https://www.ollysuzi.com/film/, accessed 22nd September 2019.

18 In *The Biology of Art*, Morris makes a direct comparison between the 'organic abstractions of the tachists' and the art produced by human infants. However, he suggests that ape-painting would make a better comparison with self-styled abstract art because both 'share a more advanced muscle control', see Morris, *op. cit.* (note 15), p.82.

19 T. Lenain: 'Ape-painting and the problem of the origin of art', *Human Evolution* 10, no.3 (1995), p.212, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02438973.

20 O. Williams and S. Winstanley: *Olly and Suzi: Arctic, Desert, Ocean and Jungle*, New York 2003, p.187.

21 Broglio, *op. cit.* (note 11), p.82.

22 Jacques Lacan has argued that animals can only react to the stimuli around them, either by instinct or learned behaviour, a 'reaction' fixed in its signification, whereas humans can respond in a way that is always already intersubjective in its interpolation of both speaker and listener. Jacques Derrida, by contrast, points to the conceptual indistinction between reaction and response. For Derrida's recapitulation of this debate, see J. Derrida: 'And say the animal responded? To Jacques Lacan', in Wolfe, *op. cit.* (note 8), pp.121–46.

23 Williams and Winstanley, *op. cit.* (note 20), p.162.

24 B. Massumi: *What Animals Teach Us About Politics*, Durham NC 2014, p.1, https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822376057-001.

25 See E. Lavigne, ed.: exh. cat. *Pierre Huyghe*, Paris (Centre Pompidou) and Los Angeles (County Museum of Art) 2013–14.

26 N. Bourriaud: 'Pierre Huyghe', *Artforum International* 52, no.5 (January 2014), p.202.

27 The focus in this work on swarm intelligence, which computer scientists have used as a model for artificial intelligence (AI) systems that consist of 'collections of autonomous, non-synchronised, non-intelligent robots cooperating to achieve global tasks', points to Huyghe's interest in AI in other works, including his contribution to the 2017 edition of the Skulptur Projekte in Münster and *UUmwelt* at the Serpentine Gallery, London (2018–19). In both of these works, Huyghe overlays not only human consciousness and biological processes but also bio-technical systems and algorithmic aesthetics. See G. Beni and J. Wang: 'Swarm intelligence in cellular robotic systems', *Proceedings of the NATO Advanced Workshop on Robots and Biological Systems, Tuscany, Italy, June 26–30, 1989*, Berlin 2004, pp.703–12.

28 P. Kaiser and M. Kwon: 'Ends of the Earth and back', in *idem*, eds: *Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974*, Berlin and London 2012, p.18.

29 See J.E. Thornes: 'Cultural climatology and the representation of sky, atmosphere, weather and climate in selected art works of Constable, Monet and Eliasson', *Geo-forum* 39 (2008), pp.570–80. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2006.10.015.

30 B. Latour: 'why has critique run out of steam? from matters of fact to matters of concern', *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004), pp.225–48. https://doi.org/10.1086/421123.

31 I. Alteveer, M. Brown and S. Wagstaff, eds: *The Rooftop Garden Commision: Pierre Huyghe*, New York 2015, p.33.

32 It should be pointed out that 'Human' is both the name of the dog and the title of Huyghe's artwork. My analysis assumes that while these two senses overlap they are not wholly contiguous with each other.

33 The following observations are based on my own experience of the exhibition and interactions with the hound.

34 L. Theung: 'Human, Pierre Huyghe's dog-in-residence', *Unframed* (LACMA blog), 7th August 2018, https://unframed.lacma.org/2014/11/26/human-pierre-huyghe's-dog-residence, accessed 11th October 2019.

35 The American Kennel Club, *The Complete Dog Book: 20th Edition*, New York 2006, p.55.

36 Alteveer, Brown and Wagstaff, *op. cit.* (note 31), p.27.

37 Theung, *op. cit*. (note 34).

38 See P. Cavalieri and P. Singer, eds: *The Great Ape Project*: *Equality Beyond Humanity*, New York 1993.

39 See, for example, E. De Fontenay: *Without Offending Humans: A Critique of Animal Rights*, Minnesota 2012. For a critique of animal rights modelled on human rights, see also J. Derrida and E. Roudinesco: 'Violence against animals', in *idem*: *For What Tomorrow…A Dialogue*, Redwood City, 2004, pp.62–76.

40 D. Haraway: *The Companion Species Manifesto*, Chicago 2003, p.3.

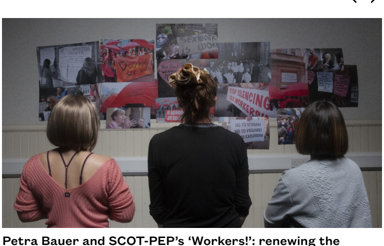
41 A. Franke: 'Mirrors at frontiers', in *Ape Culture*, Leipzig 2015, pp.12–23, at p.12.

42 *Ibid.*, p.16.

43 See G. Agamben: *The Open: Man and Animal*, transl. K. Attell, Stanford 2004.

See also

Keith Kennedy's group photography and the therapeutic gaze of Jo Spence and Rosy Martin
by George Vasey



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