

The Animal Gaze Returned

Information on the artists and their work

(Please do not remove from the gallery)

Work displayed in the ground floor gallery:

Lucy Powell

Impossible Line

2009

In *Impossible Line* a chicken is hypnotized by drawing a chalk line away from its beak. After a few minutes the bird awakes from the trance and flies off, unharmed. Filmed in Super 8, the film has an educational film aesthetic. There are many ways to hypnotize a chicken, a state that is referred to by ethnologists as 'tonic immobility' - a natural state of semi-paralysis that may be a defence mechanism to feign death in the face of threat. What appealed to me was the idea of the straight line being something so confounding it could send a creature into a trance, or perhaps the idea of having one's world divided in two. What is actually going on in the chicken's mind is something just as mysterious.

Lucy Powell is based in Berlin and has an interdisciplinary practice that intersects science and dreams, nature and culture, meaning and absurdity. She studied Fine Art at Liverpool John Moores University. Recent exhibitions/screenings include "Screening Nature" Whitechapel Art Gallery, "Amateurism" Kunstverein Heidelberg, "The Worldly House Archive" Documenta 13, "Jäger und Gejagte" Museum Villa Rot, "The Animal Gaze" London Metropolitan University, "Animal Kingdom", Schinkel Pavilion Berlin, "Tier und Film", Oberhausen Kurzfilmtage, "Derridas Katze" Kunstamt Kreuzberg. She has recently had residencies at the Sirius Arts Centre, Cork, L'Entreprise Culturelle, Paris and Künstlerdorf Schöppingen and is a co-founder of the Satellite Salon for art-science conversations.

Greta Alfaro

In Ictu Oculi

2009

In Ictu Oculi proposes a reflection about the vulnerability of life in relation to the appearance of absolute control that we attempt to create, the violence inherent to all states of calm, the always present albeit concealed threat and the critical instant when a situation changes its character. A table is set for a banquet in the countryside. The vultures are to come and to eat our food and destroy our setting: the still life, the banquet, the space of enjoyment and civilization. The vultures, the beasts linked to death and dirt, to violence and fear, arrive by surprise, and like in a fable, represent for us some of our own qualities.

Greta Alfaro (Spain 1977) works mainly in video, installation and photography. She graduated in a MA in Photography at the Royal College of Art in 2011 and holds a Fine Art degree by the Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Spain. Her solo shows include *A Very Crafty and Tricky Contrivance*, commissioned by the Genesis Foundation at the Fish and Coal Building in London 2012, *Invención*, curated by Andrea Paasch, Museo Ex Teresa Arte Actual in Mexico City 2012, *Elogio de la Bestia*, Museo Huarte de Arte Contemporáneo in Pamplona, Spain 2010, *In Ictu Oculi*, curated by Antonia Gaeta, Carpe Diem Art & Research in Lisbon 2009, and *Ricorrenza*, curated by Alba Braza Böils, Dryphoto arte contemporanea in Prato, Italy 2008. She has taken part in group shows such as *Whitechapel Open* at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, *Bêtes off* at La Conciergerie in Paris, *Drama, Baby, Drama* at Kunsthaus Essen, Germany, *Inanimate Beings. Inéditos* at La Casa Encendida in Madrid and *Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2010* at the ICA London. Her video work has also been part of the *International Film Festival Rotterdam*, the *International Documentary Film Festival Punto de Vista* in Pamplona, Spain and the *Rencontres Internationales* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

Edwina Ashton

Beautiful Pot (2003)

Fly (2003)

Spring Here (2006)

Mouse (2005)

Big Chested Boy (2008)

They Travelled the World (2008)

Beetle (2003)

Edwina Ashton makes videos, drawings, sculptures and costumes. She studied Fine Art at Goldsmiths and graduated in 1993. She is represented by Works|Projects Bristol and had solo exhibitions at Peer in 2005, Camden Arts Centre in 2006. She has exhibited in New York, Rome, Miami, Berlin and Tokyo. In February 2010 she had a solo show at Works|Projects Bristol.

“I’ve always been interested in them and, as an artist, I went on an entomological expedition to Sumatra with scientists from Oxford; it had a big impact on me. Insects aren’t cute, but they can stand in for humans. I tried making a dog costume but it didn’t work. Dogs, cats and rabbits are too familiar, so the films become like ads or something on children’s TV; but you don’t recognise my insects as a particular species.” (Interview, *Time Out*)

Rosemarie McGoldrick

Water Rail

2010

Water Rail is a looped video work, featuring a long, fixed-tripod camerashot looking out from a birdhide to an expanse of lake on a warm day while nothing apparently happens – no birds, no animals, nothing. This is against a performed audio track of a man talking in between binocular views to another individual, an unheard novice, about watching and waiting for something worth looking at.

Such a lake might well be where the elusive British bird called the water rail hangs out or not. The context is visual, artful and self-reflexive: looking, seeking, anticipating spectacle. Visiting galleries. Seeing things that may not be there and making judgements before judgements may be due. Difficulty in communicating vocation or purpose to another viewer - an interior monologue, modulated for a one-sided conversation.

The absence of the animal is the single, unambiguous condition of the performance – a modernist, phenomenological concern to flatten out or immaterialize the subject, perhaps, where an animal might be a Levinasian condition of possibility for existence and not just an object encountered in it. But look closely over some time and there are evidently worlds of fish and insects in this scene that a birdwatcher may overlook, to introduce a quiet, pragmatic argument in ecological aesthetics and politics over too regular a focus on faciality, mammals and megafauna.

*no animal is made to perform in this piece except the human animal.

Rosemarie McGoldrick is a London-based sculptor and installation artist who has shown at the Chisenhale Gallery, the Nigel Greenwood Gallery, the E. Averoff Gallery (Greece), Plymouth City Museum, the Centre for Contemporary Arts and the Natural World (Exeter) and a residency (*Stonechat*) at Aldeburgh Lookout in 2013. Her commissions include sculptures for Futureworld at Milton Keynes, the London Docklands Development Corporation at Royal Victoria Docks, the Homerton Hospital (Public Arts Development Trust) and for the Chiltern Sculpture Trust in August 2006 in Oxfordshire (Arts Council & Southern Arts). Her work is in the DFPNI collection in Northern Ireland.

Born within the sound of the great Bow Bells to Irish parents and studied art at Hornsey, Chelsea and Goldsmiths, Rosemarie McGoldrick is Course Leader of the BA Fine Art courses at the Cass School of Art, London Metropolitan University, where she leads the art studios *Things, Objects and Non-Objects* and *Others and the Self*. She champions art's intersection with animal-human studies and has curated two large UK touring shows, *The Animal Gaze* (2008-2011) and *The Animal Gaze Returned* (2011-2013), each accompanied by a two-day symposium at the Cass School of Art, drawing delegates from across the world.

Kathy High

Lily Does Derrida: a dog's video essay
2010

A video essay made in collaboration with Lily Dog about companion animal relations, and interspecies communication.

How do we think about animals? Or rather - how do our animal companions think? How can we imagine the lives of our (non-human) animal friends? In this video essay, Lily Dog looks at Derrida's writings and makes a case about how humans and non-humans understand each other – or not – based on her own life and adventures. Jacques Derrida was interested in animal consciousness and animal subjectivity, and he wrote about them both in *The Animal That Therefore I Am* – a text that Lily Dog quotes and speaks to in the video.

Kathy High (USA) is an interdisciplinary artist working in the areas of technology, science, speculative fiction and art. She is interested in working with animals and living systems, considering the social, political and ethical dilemmas surrounding animal sentience, interspecies telepathy, death and dying, and the practices of scavaging and recycling life. She produces and directs video stories that have been screened at museums and film festivals around the world including Documenta13, the American Film Institute and the Museum of Modern Art, NYC. She has been awarded grants from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts among others. She has had artist residencies with SymbioticA at the University of Western Australia (2009-20), and in Hong Kong with the Asian Arts Council (2005). High is Professor in the Department of Arts, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY - a department specializing in integrated electronic arts practices.

Andrea Roe

Defining Wildness

2011

Every Butterfly Ever Observed

2011

The artwork *Defining Wildness* (2011) was made to consider what it is to be determined wild. Here Roe is interested in the etymology of the word and how using it might change our interpretation of an image. Roe's interest in definitions of wildness began after talking with Dr Andrew Kitchener (National Museums of Scotland) about the endangered Scottish wildcat and learning of the difficulty of differentiating the purebred wildcat from feral and domestic cats. In the artwork she asks if an animal can be both wild and domestic simultaneously.

Every Butterfly Ever Observed (2011) consists of a copy of every print run of the Observers Book of Butterflies, displayed with over 3000 entomological pins inserted into a table top. The Observers books used in this artwork were reprinted twenty-seven times between 1938-1985 and there are noticeable differences in the print quality of the featured butterflies. When sourcing the books, Roe discovered there are collectors of the Observer's Books themselves. Here Roe focusses attention on the collector and uses the books to talk about species loss and as a substitute for a butterfly collection.

Andrea Roe is an artist and lecturer at Edinburgh College of Art whose work examines the nature of human and animal biology, behaviour, communication and interaction within specific ecological contexts. She has undertaken residencies in a number of institutions - ranging from the Wellcome Trust to the Crichton Royal Hospital, to the National Museums of Scotland - where she has learned about and responded to research projects and collections. Recent work examines contemporary ideas about wildness in particular relationships that threaten to blur the distinction between the wild and the domestic. One of her current concerns is to highlight the plight of the endangered Scottish wildcat and to explore the scientific methodologies used to distinguish the true wildcat from feral and hybrid cats. She is interested in exploring human-animal bonds and the possibilities of co-existence between humans and wild animals.

Darren Harvey-Regan

Heidegger's Lizard

2010

The piece shown here is from a body of work titled *Elisions*, considering the animal as something of an end-point, the limits of our human reach where names strain under the impossible weight they bare and representations skew. The work offers a space for imagining more-than-human perceptions and the boundaries that separate these from ours. *Elisions*, therefore, is about the gap between what we know and what there 'is', about the world that waits and the interpretation, through perception, representation and language, that we bring to it.

Darren Harvey-Regan is a graduate of the Royal College of Art. Solo exhibitions include *A Shifting sense of Things*, Sumarria Lunn, London (2013), *A Collection of Gaps*, Phoenix, Exeter (2011) and *Fact*, Room Gallery, London (2011). Group shows include *GeoGráfica*, Fototropia, Guatemala City (2013) *Brush It In*, Flowers East, London (2012), *Breaking Surfaces*, Galerie Jette Rudolph, Berlin (2012), *Object Dada*, Edel Assanti, London (2011), *Photography as Object*, Sumarria Lunn Gallery, London (2011), *Catlin Art Prize*, London (2011), *Spinning Yarns*, Gallery 114 and Kendall Gallery, Michigan, US (2011), *New Contemporaries*, ICA, London (2010). Darren Harvey-Regan was a finalist at The Arts Foundation 2013 and The Catlin Prize 2011. *Elisions* features in the summer issue of *Philosophy of Photography* with a text by Rikke Hansen.

Olivier Richon

Portrait of a Monkey with Books

2008

Olivier Richon is an artist working with photography. His photographic practice proposes an investigation and celebration of the artifice of representations. His essays on the photographic image are informed by art history, philosophy, literature and psychoanalysis. Born in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1956, he studied at the Polytechnic of Central London, where he was taught by Victor Burgin. He received a BA (Hons) in Film and Photographic Arts in 1980 and an MPhil in 1988 for a research project on Exoticism and Representation. He taught Photographic Studies on BA and MA courses at the Derby School of Art from 1985 to 1993 and at the University of Westminster from 1993 to 1997. He has been head of Photography at the Royal College of Art since 1997.

Aurelia Mihai

Transhumantia

2007

being alien, being strange

Text by *Julia Draganovic*

Transhumanta, which was created in Goch in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, is a two-channel video installation that follows a herd of sheep on its way from the countryside to the town. For a time the herd is accompanied by a shepherd (and the camera) on foot; then, from a helicopter's perspective one sees the herd on a trailer behind a tractor travelling through rural Westphalian scenery until it arrives in the narrow streets of the small town.

Both projections evoke an impression of displacement: the sheep do not belong in those asphalted streets – not as a herd nor as passengers on a tractor's trailer; they do not belong near those brick houses, or in those pedestrian zones or those playgrounds. The clearest indication that the sheep are totally out of place in this north German urban environment are the looks on the faces of the passers-by, who stop their everyday activities to stare after the black and motley coloured herd. The climax of the strangeness occurs in the final scene when, much to their surprise, the sheep find themselves in a museum; the slippery parquet flooring hinders them from running and jumping, so they walk around amidst the exhibits, wide-eyed. Transhumanta (from Latin 'trans' meaning over, and 'humus', earth; English: transhumance) is the Romanian word for the twice yearly seasonal movement of sheep herds from lowland to highland pastures and back again. This saves the trouble of keeping the sheep indoors in the winter, and used to be practised all over Europe.

Aurelia Mihai is an artist and filmmaker born in Bucharest, Romania who lives and works in Bucharest and in Hamburg, Germany. She is professor at the Braunschweig University of Art, Germany since 2009. Her video work has been the recipient of the E STAR Scholarship from the Institut for Electronic Arts, Alfred, New York and the Villa Aurora Scholarship, Los Angeles, USA (2001), the EMARE Scholarship Hull Time Based Arts, UK (2004), Prize for young artists of Düsseldorf (2001), Prix Spiridon-Neveu-DuMont (2002), Euregio Kunstpreis / Germany / NL (2005), Hamburger Arbeitsstipendium für Bildende Kunst, Scholarship Schloss Ringenberg (2005), Project scholarship for short films, BBRKM, Künstlerhaus Schloß Balmoral, Germany (2009) , German Academy in Rome, - Villa Massimo (2007), Italy, and IASPIS, International Artist Studio Programme Stockholm, Sweden (2010). Her works have been exhibited internationally at the Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg, K21 Düsseldorf, Kunsthalle Mainz, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany, at the Chelsea Art Museum, New York, The Cheekwood Art Museum, Nashville Tennessee, USA , Centre Pompidou, Paris, Centre International d'Art Contemporain de Pont Aven/ FR, Cobra Museum in Amstelveen, NL.

Suky Best

An Observation of Flight
2010

A 4:3 ratio animation turned through 90° to be projected large on a wall. The shape is in opposition to the norm of landscape; it no longer seems relevant to stick to this arbitrary convention. Projectors can be placed on their sides. This work is about flight and as such the verticality of the content needs to be emphasised by the form of the work. The work is 1 min 20 seconds long and begins and ends on black, this is so it can loop repeatedly. The looping gives the work greater presence; it's more of an extended picture than an animation. It has a structure but no story. It's meant to just play over and over. A fragment that fades from and to black, representing

something larger, the life of a bird spent inside a box at the behest of the scientist observing it. Although the bird is small it takes up the entire area, and can move in any direction. Nothing else can or will use this enclosure. This further isolates the bird from us. We are thankful not to be in the space with the bird. The bird is also going to be living its life within this enclosure. Not the natural habitat for a wild animal, an object of intellectual observation and of human power, to be able to have a wild animal in an enclosed space.

The bird takes off from a perch at the centre of the frame, in medium close up and flies out of the frame, it's feathers and gesses trailing behind it. The bird, stark white silhouette against a solid mid blue that is marked in horizontal white bars. It's not clear where this action is taking place. Flying out from left to right, the bird is then seen from a greater distance flying at speed towards us enclosed in what seems to be a tall rectangular three dimensional space. The space turns to enclose the bird as it flies, moving with the space keeping the bird central within it. The space has a square grid on its base, a back wall of horizontal lines and the remaining walls are clear to allow for good observation. This is a measuring space that will keep this bird a prisoner. The grid is alluding to the Cartesian model of three dimensional space. The space isn't constant; it can expand and contract to match the movement of the bird.

The bird flies as fast as it can in the enclosed space, going up to then plummet down and around, the box encircling it constantly. Sometimes the bird is against the measuring wall at other times the background is clear. The sound that accompanies the bird is vigorous flapping; there is a slight hardness to the sound, almost an echo as the sound bounces off the hard walls of the enclosing space. The wing beats accentuate the effort of flying. After a minute the bird flies around and as it gets close to the ground its wing brushes the floor grid, the friction creates a brief shadow. Then the bird is off up to the top of the space for another dive. At this one the wings crack as the bird makes its decent. The bird changes shape becoming a moving shifting splash. It begins to put its feet out to land, as it does, it shifts shape again away from begin a bird, a flying mass of horizontal matter. Then it coalesces into a bird and lands on the grid. Its work is over.

Suky Best is an artist based in London. Working with print, animation and installation, she has exhibited nationally and internationally. Commissioned works include, *Early Birds* an Animate Projects commission for Channel 4 in association with Arts Council England, currently on show in *Extinct* at the Natural History Museum, London. *About Running* a moving image commission for The Great North Run, *Stone Voices*, a permanent sculptural piece for the Devils Glen in Ireland, and *From the Archive*, an animation for the main reception area of University College Hospital London and *The Park in Winter* Arts Council Englands online Christmas card 2008 She has exhibited at the *Baltic Gateshead & Art Now Lightbox at Tate Britain* and has had a solo exhibitions and publications, including *The Return of the Native* at the Pump House Gallery London. In 2005 she completed a Wellcome trust funded SCIART project, making animations for hospital outpatient areas. She was Fellow in Printmaking at the University of Wolverhampton (funded by the Henry Moore Foundation) 1998-2000, and has recently completed an MPhil research degree at the Royal College of Art London investigating the relationships between birds and film.

Bob and Roberta Smith

I became a vegetarian when I stopped eating animals
2011

'I made my work, 'I became a vegetarian when I stopped eating animals' after seeing a documentary about how pigs have the mental capacity of a 4 year old human child.' (Bob and Roberta Smith 2013)

Displayed in the Gallery Mezzanine - 1st floor:

Ian Brown

Stories of Alienation and Disaster (Swarm)
2011

This body of work brings together fictional and non-fictional accounts of various natural and technological disasters to explore our relationship with the *natural world* and the *invented world*. Wax cylinder recordings and letterpress printed broadside sheets present tales of how we deal with hardship, death, destruction and survival. New disaster songs have been developed from existing melodies and disaster film narratives recounting animal attacks, floods, earthquakes, shipwrecks, plane crashes and collapsing bridges.

This particular work, *Stories of Alienation and Disaster (Swarm)*, brings together the Boll Weevil Song and the film *The Swarm*. Centred on the inhabitants of the fictional town of *Marysville*, our relationship with animals is propagated as conflicted and sensational.

Ian Brown works in a wide range of media, exhibiting both on his own and as part of the artist group Common Culture. Exhibitions include: Fold Gallery, London (2012); Die Raum, Berlin (2011); D21Kunstraum, Leipzig (2011); Manifesta 8, Murcia, Spain (2010); The Golden Thread, Belfast (2010); Solar, Vila do Conde, Portugal (2009); Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Cork (2009); The Bluecoat, Liverpool (2008). His curatorial projects include *Trying to Cope with Things that Aren't Human (Part One)* - DCP, San Francisco, Cell Project Space, London and AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent (2009); *Witnessing The Wilderness*, Wimbledon Space, London (2013), co-curated with Geraint Evans. He is currently working with Royal Botanical Gardens Kew on, *An Incredible World Of Beauty And Terror*, bringing together diverse positions from botany, scientific illustration, natural history documentaries and science fiction. Ian Brown is Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Staffordshire University

Steve Baker

Roadside XXVI

2012

My recent roadkill imagery reflects the experience of cycling the country lanes of Norfolk, together with an exploration of the pitfalls of animal representation in contemporary art. It takes, perhaps, a deliberate clumsiness to bring human presence and human implication visibly into play in the imagery while still keeping the death of the animal as the subject of the photograph. In the *Roadside* series this is something I've tried falteringly to address, principally by having bits of the bike on which I encounter these bodies find their way into the photographs. It's not for me to say whether this even begins to undercut what might otherwise be regarded as the merely decorative (or gratuitously gory) display of dead animal form, but it does mark an actual encounter with a specific creature's lost life on one particular summer's afternoon.

Steve Baker is Emeritus Professor of Art History at the University of Central Lancashire. Now based in Norwich as an independent writer, researcher and artist, his new book *ARTIST|ANIMAL* has been praised by the artist Mark Dion for its "deep understanding of the nuance, intricacy, and contradictions in how artists work today." Over the past three years his roadkill imagery has been included in group exhibitions in London, New Orleans and Melbourne, and reproduced and discussed in the journals *Art & Research*, *Antennae*, *Tierstudien* and *Angelaki*.

Cartwright & Jordan

The Reapers

2009

The Reapers is a short documentary film on traditional pigeon hunters, concealed in their tower hide, deep in an oak forest in Perigord, France. Combining a score by Olivier Messiaen with factual scenes and dialogue, the film depicts a secretive and disconcerting rural practice, taking place in a rudimentary encampment of cages, wires and decoys. Interweaving the absurd and the sinister, the film captures the relationship between the hunters and the birds, force-feeding their prized stool-pigeons and sharing out their quarry at the end of the day.

Jacob Cartwright and Nick Jordan are artists based in Manchester, UK. Their work has been exhibited internationally, including at ICA, London; Kunstmuseum, Bonn; Cornerhouse, Manchester; Academia de Cine, Madrid; and Musée du Quai Branly, Paris and Headlands Art Center, San Francisco. Their collaborative practice is cross-disciplinary, encompassing video, drawing, painting, photography, objects, publications and events, often exploring the relationship between the natural world and our multifaceted cultural histories. Publications include *Alien Invaders* (Book Works), which takes the form of a guidebook to non-native species found in Britain, and *The Audubon Trilogy*, a series of short films drawn from the writings of 19th century artist & frontiersman John James Audubon. The artists have recently directed their debut feature-length documentary *Between Two Rivers*.

Snæbjörnsdóttir/Wilson

Vanishing Point: Where Species Meet

2011

Vanishing Point here denotes a space of possibility and thinking which we consider to exist in the interstices between meeting beings. In this space, a place perhaps not visible from where we might currently stand, we imagine another basis for conference between species.

Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir and Mark Wilson are a collaborative art partnership. Their art practice is research-based and socially-engaged, exploring issues of history, culture and environment in relation to both humans and non-human animals. Through their practice they set out to challenge and deconstruct various notions and degrees of 'wilderness'. Underpinning much of what they do are issues of psychological and physical displacement or realignment in relation to land and environment and the effect of these upon cultural perspectives. Their artworks have been exhibited widely throughout the UK and internationally. They are frequent speakers at international conferences on issues related to their practice and their works have been written on and cited as contributive to knowledge in the expanded field of research-based art practice. They conduct their practice from bases in Iceland, the north of England and Sweden.

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