

scope

Contemporary Research Topics

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Animals at the Edge

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Editorial Team: Leoni Schmidt (Series Editor), Michele Beevors (Editor) and Pam McKinlay (Editorial Liaison), Dunedin School of Art, Otago Polytechnic / Te Kura Matatini ki Otago, Dunedin, Aotearoa/New Zealand.

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THE ANIMAL PROBLEM

Michele Beevors

In 1995, Steve Baker wrote *The Post-Modern Animal*, addressing the then recent phenomena of a return of animal subjects to the world of art. Early Modernist art was largely devoid of animals; Franz Marc's horses and dogs, and Picasso's reference to himself as alternate manifestations of the bull and the monkey are exceptions that take opposing views on the idea of the representation of the animal in art. Marc was trying to capture something of the essence of the horse, and Picasso was using the commonly held beliefs about monkeys (naughty/rude) and bulls (virile) as an examination of self. If representations of the animal did not appear in Modern art unless it was as a disguise, it appeared everywhere in modern capitalism. The animal as material substance in the meat industry (and the pet food industry, who put the gelatine in silver gelatine photography) rose alongside. In advertising, animals appeared as the selling point of cars at one end (think of the brand Jaguar and the speed it implies) and, at the other, Louie the Fly as a popular brand of fly spray designed to kill poor Louie. In popular culture, the animal appeared – from Disneyfied versions of rabbits, mice and deer; to the nature documentary where animal/camera nexus brings the violence of real life into the home.

Since Baker's text arrived, many discussions have evolved in the realms of cultural studies and art histories, about the role representations of animals play in displays of power, capitalism, colonial discourses, and art history. Recent development of issues-based art see the animal question become even more urgent. These ideas have seen young artists turning to this issue time and again over the unresolvable nature of the majority of the arguments, with multiple positions for and against representation. In 2019, the Dunedin School of Art hosted a one-day symposium to address some of these ideas. In this issue of *Scope (Art & Design): Animals at the Edge*, some of the issues at stake with representing animals are addressed. The essays collected here consider different aspects of the animal problem, and fall into three distinct categories: representation, ethics, and the nexus between animals and environment. Each of these categories have fuzzy edges though as the terrain is definitely complex.

In his essay "Animals, De Anima, objet (petit) a. and the Anthropocene," David Green examines the animal from its first appearance on cave walls to stock footage gleaned from the internet and reformatted to give a skewed view of the violence of spear and camera alike. In his art work, Green examines the animal bodies inscribed as a desire to have. Like most things seen in this manner, it doesn't bode well for the animal. Viewed at this angle, desire is seen as a longing for what can never be again. Madison Kelly's text "Uncertain Observer" describes the problem of habitat (and loss) by avoiding direct and traditional approaches to representations of animals, turning instead to the animal's indexical trace in the interconnectedness of environment to modes of seeing. In "Not So Natural History: depicting the role of the Animal in Human Histories," Elaine Mitchell is concerned with the misrepresentations of species in early scientific illustration, examining the specimen cases of museum dioramas in dramatic water colours that pit the representation of the animal against imagined scenes of destruction.

Curator Emma Burns describes the Otago Museum as a library of life in "The Living Dead: The afterlives of Animals in Museums", bearing the historical weight of responsibility of colonial efforts to understand and know the living world. Nowadays, museums find they are caught between the worlds of science and research, education, entertainment and community access. The historical purpose of the museum, the collections, become springboards to information-centred learning, to care for the environment and to protect the biodiversity of local species, serving as indicators of change and loss. Kari Schmidt's essay "Farmed Animals and the Law in New Zealand" is brimming with an enthusiasm

for an update to legislation that is outdated in the care and welfare of farming practices in New Zealand. As the nature of farming moves from the home kill to industrial practices, the legislation falls far short of protecting its vulnerable species. Ethical considerations are also examined by Jenny Aimers and Peter Walker in "Animal Ethics in New Zealand Art: A Social Science Perspective" as they turn to the Dunedin Public Art Gallery collection, examining six specifically New Zealand Pākehā images, where the art work is judged to be fulfilling the criteria of an ethical post-humanist position, or not. An ethical turn is examined by Irena Kennedy in "Animals on Display: The Ethics of Keeping Animals," as her art works look at the problematics of breeding standards of kennel clubs and dog shows. The dog reflects the owner's style as an accessory. Kennedy's art work is informed by a stint working at La Sende Verde Animal Sanctuary in Bolivia, South America. The having and keeping of wild animals as pets, along with the illegal trade in exotic species, is born of the same kind of longing as the keeping of domestic species. The pet industries are called into question in Kennedy's art works. In her empty zoo, exhibited in Melbourne, all the artificial trappings of environment are enacted for a viewer (tyre swing, fake water fall, enrichment activities) but the presence of the animal is registered as a loss.

Pam McKinlay takes a poetic turn when looking at the art works of Kylie Matheson, whose small scale ceramic works invoke feelings of love and care – a childhood nostalgia for a world devoid of violence, a world where Beatrix Potter and AA Milne might have lived.

While the idea of a cat at a café is not so remarkable, taken to extreme lengths as a reason for tourism, it is explored in the text "Japanese Animal Tourism and the Kawaii (cute) Aesthetic" by Emily Crossley. Small cute creatures, bred for the purpose of fulfilling a need to cuddle something soft and furry, can be seen, in light of the *Tiger King*, to be immensely problematic. Informed by our need to mother, a cute neotinised baby orangutan or hedgehog fulfils this longing, but an unregulated industry can lead to inhuman treatment, miserable lives, and illegal deaths.

The deaths of animals, especially birds, from plastic in the ocean informs Tori Clearwater's work as an artist. Clearwater is concerned with the statistical information of the hyperobject of plastic pollution. In one of her schematic works, plastic tiles are melted into a screen that obscures the view; its colourful, up close always oily surface, reflects the light. The work reveals the way we take for granted the carelessness of generations of plastic consumers, and the death of sea life as the multi-coloured spectacle of advanced capitalism (e.g. the throw-away shopping bag). In "Human Nature," Clearwater asks, how does anthropomorphism effect how humans see nature in contemporary art?

In writing, as an art work, "Silent Spring to Climate Rebellion," Adrian Hall's personal history is turned to political action. Hall's writing is a call to arms – a provocation. Hall sees the interrelation of action and local environment echoed on the world stage, as Trump shuts down arguments of climate change and Thunberg dams us to a hell of our own making. Hall's art works can be read as quotation marks, beginning and ending the text. Turning upside down, long held beliefs, and calling for fresh eyes to really see things as they are, not as we imagine them to be. Bridie Lonie begins her work, "Solastalgia, Extinctions, the Chthulucene and the Symbiosphere" by focusing us on the word "solistalgia," which means distress at the environmental change perceived as negative. Coined by Glenn Albrecht, solistalgia is not just a sadness at the mess we are in, but an inability to get out of our own way, doomed to keep repeating the same mistakes, even though we know the consequences. All life becomes a trade-off. The chickens in your garden or the spiders – you choose. For my own part, in "Taxidermy", I wrote about the animal problem as it relates to taxidermies as sculpture, to pit an open reading of materiality against the decorative formalism of some contemporary artworks.

Most of the articles that appear in this issue were given as papers at the *Animals at The Edge Symposium*. The premise was to highlight some issues around representing animals and to give students a balanced view of the complexity of looking at animals. We asked for papers from local scientists involved with conservation efforts, from lawyers involved in legislation change and other educators in other institutions. As you can imagine the response was overwhelming and more than a one-day symposium could cope with. To the writers, we say thank you for your contribution. To Otago Polytechnic, we say thank you for recognising that this is something worth doing. To our readers, we say that we are not done here, because when we don't represent our most urgent thoughts, art becomes a hollow reflection of capital only, a super commodity about anything and nothing.

ANIMALS, *DE ANIMA*, OBJET (PETIT) A, AND THE ANTHROPOCENE

David Green

There is every indication that the first men were closer than we are to
the animal world; they distinguished the animal from themselves perhaps,
but not without a feeling of doubt mixed with terror and longing.

George Bataille¹

During my MFA study I looked at research material describing neural processes associated with visual perception. There are certain objects and dynamics in our immediate environment that we've evolved to analyse instantly and precisely using an impressive neural armoury. Our adaptive sensitivities make sense; we recognise both animal and human body movement in the environment with very little to go on. Our considerable neural investments include recognising faces and reading facial expressions, which are critical survival skills for knowing when to crawl away or when to run. According to neuroscientist Eric Kandel, "the human brain devotes more area to face recognition than to the recognition of any other visual object."²

Now working on a practice-led PhD, I continue to experiment with images that work to perceptual acuities of the brain. It may come as no surprise that these same subject matters are the perennial focus of cinema. Arguably, the cinema never transfixes us more than when it is focused on human and animal motion and behaviour.

In my art practice, after filming or appropriating digital video in order to model a problem or dynamic that piques my curiosity, I go through the footage and experiment by stripping away detail or by using image against image to occlude detail, bringing it just to the verge of perceptibility. Footage abstracted in this way is generally more readable by motion than by form. I call this methodology "disarticulated cinema." It is a contrasting strategy to traditional cinematic structure. Rather than feed information out in strategic doses from a single screen, I fragment and redistribute evidence around a navigable space for consideration by the viewer. I invite the viewer to use their own memory and imagination to activate meaning in order to fill the gaps between fragments of evidence.

In 2017 I experimented with a colonial-era African animal exploitation film that became the basis of an installation I called *Emergence*. Working with images of imposed human-animal interactions and animal herd behaviours prompted a cascade of questions and thoughts in my mind. I described the installation in detail in an earlier *Scope* artists page by the same title.³ This writing picks up and extends certain thoughts from that article as they concern our uneasy relationships with wild animals.

Even though the vision of a galloping antelope may feel cohesive to the observer; we now know that the retinal information is actually broken up into fragments for neural analysis, subject to "parallel distributed processing" (or PDP) in the visual cortex and then linked to other neural networks for further analysis. Object edge, colour field, direction of movement, and object growth are analysed in separate processes and streamed in forward motion through a variety of neural channels.⁴ So far, no one has located a specific process that is responsible for reuniting fragmented components or even synchronising them. We perceive a cohesive animal in full flight, but that animal,

like consciousness, may never actually be stitched together at any particular moment in time or in any single location in the brain. In fact, this conundrum, called “the binding problem”, could turn out to be neurologically unlocatable. Perhaps it is an emergent phenomenon resulting from PDP signal spillage, or something equally recondite that Stephen Jay Gould and Elisabeth Vrba would describe as an “exaptation.”¹⁵

Disarticulated artworks are intended primarily as propositional objects; video installations can prompt questions and actuate thinking. Deconstructing and experimenting with the film from colonial Africa prompted a number of questions for me: How would early man receive the visual experience of migrating herds in the distance without a ubiquitous and easily transferable visual culture or a history of art to call upon? What manner of desire compelled our forebears to drag these neurally held images, reproducing them sometimes kilometres deep in a cave? Above all, how could our utterly conjoined existence with fellow animals devolve so disastrously as to bring us to where are now, at the tipping point of the Anthropocene? This article meanders along my questions and speculations regarding our conflicted relationships with other animals.

CAPTURING ANIMALS



Figure 1. A multiple exposure photo of flying pelican taken by Étienne-Jules Marey circa 1882.
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e0/Marey_-_birds.jpg

Animals are well and truly entangled in the advent of early cinema. Animal locomotion was the primary obsession behind many of the earliest applications of still photography for the purpose of time-based recording. The problem-solving techniques invented by 19th century experimental photographers such as Marey, Anschütz, and Muybridge were seminal contributions to the birth of cinema. Their discoveries helped accelerate development of a nascent motion-picture technology, which would pave the way for the global industry that exploded in its wake. One could say that our obsessive-compulsive fixation with animals has a long history of bringing about conceptual revolutions.

The word ‘animal’ comes to us from the Latin word “anima”, or breath, a symptom of oxygen exchange, and an important detail in describing the various signs and symptoms associated with being a multicellular creature in the world. “Anima” is also the Latin word for soul. However, the concept of soul has held different meanings in different times and places.

In his work translated from Greek to Latin as, *De Anima*, or in English, “On the Soul,” Aristotle uses the concept of soul as a kind of black box to describe the mysteries around a living body’s attributes of perception, behaviour, and growth. These include the calculating, actioning, growing, dying, and energy seeking mechanisms of self-determining bodies that move intentionally to satisfy the needs and desires associated with being alive.⁶ The autonomous bodies with soul that Aristotle describes include all those that, by observation, share the basic qualities of responsiveness to stimuli and spontaneous decision making in the world. This includes all living animals of every scale – not only humans, mammals, or vertebrates – all. Movement is at the centre of many debates intent on defining how this “black box” works and exactly what it does. For Aristotle the soul is the origin or cause of the animal’s motion. For Aristotle, plants too had this living attribute, but they were inverted, with their mouths in the soil and their genitals in the air.

For contemporaneous philosophers who argued this conceptual construct, the idea of “the soul” was an epistemic object (or thinking tool) that had at its heart the question: “What is it to be alive?” For Aristotle, it was anything that seeks nourishment, grows, and declines – but only while it actively does. This ineffable quality, or its lack, is the difference between a dead body and a live one – which for him did not mean that when this dynamic leaves a body it continues to exist somewhere else, just that the soul is no longer to be found there.

The idea of the soul, of course, is at the heart of much of religious thought in countless permutations, but from the anthropocentric revolution at the heart of the Enlightenment, as soon as the Cartesian apartheid split the human organism into body and soul, we began to break earth on the superhighway to the Great Acceleration. The other animals paid first and most dearly when they lost their souls and transformed into mere mechanisms in the eyes of Western culture.



Figure 2. David Green, *Emergence*, 2017, partial view video projection installation, Dunedin School of Art Gallery.
Photograph: Mark Bolland.

From cave paintings to contemporary robotics, we strain to mitigate our desires arising from the many enviable qualities that other animals enjoy. Perhaps from the first moment of sentience, our subspecies coveted the remarkable attributes, abilities, and agilities of our fellow terrestrials.

As I paired back images from the ninety-year-old, compressed, and otherwise degraded film footage captured in colonial Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, I was reminded of the images captured in Werner Herzog's film shot in the Chauvet Caves.⁷

PARIETAL ART

Many scholars have weighed in on the 45,000 or so year-old markings discovered deep within cave systems in diverse corners of the world. Anyone can guess what might have been going on in the minds of the mark-makers — and many have. There are countless theories published over the last century: individual theories, collections of supporting theories, and varietal recapitulations containing the most compelling theories. Some believe that cave drawing began spontaneously, when first man became a competent hunter; felt sated, secure, and comfortable enough to enjoy a little leisure time, which resulted in an outbreak of "art for art's sake." Other scholars have questioned this, asking why the featured animals are always of the awe inspiring variety — where are the cute mice and decorative insects? Some think image-making automatically arose with higher order consciousness, as an evolved concept of self, associated with the ability to construct a past and project possible futures. Others are convinced that the markings are simply chalkboard lessons in how to identify and kill optimum prey species while remaining alert to their associated predators. Still others believe the impetus was more spiritual, more mystical, perhaps the animal images were made as aspirational self-portraiture, a claiming of totemic relation with the most awesome and powerful of the others sharing life on the savannah.

On a meta-level, I wonder if the emergent ability to conceptually separate ourselves from the fabric of life through these and other lines of demarcation, as no fellow creature could before,⁹ marked the beginning of the end of our subspecies' first and final epoch: the Anthropocene.

UNTAMED

Animals came from over the horizon. They belonged *there* and *here*. Likewise they were mortal and immortal. An animal's blood flowed like human blood, but its species was undying and each lion was Lion, each ox was Ox. This — maybe the first existential dualism — was reflected in the treatment of animals. They were subjected *and* worshipped, bred *and* sacrificed.

John Berger¹⁰

In his book, *Animals in Film*¹¹, Jonathan Burt notes that in modernity, animals captured in still and motion pictures help us construct a soothing virtual impression that we still share their world. We manage to feel this even as we increasingly supplant them in order to feed our exploding populations. Burt comments on Bill Viola's 1986 Film, *I Do*



Figure 3. Chauvet Cave drawings of rhinoceros. Screenshot from Werner Herzog's film *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*.⁸

*Not Know What It Is I Am Like*¹², writing that the wild animal exterior is presented as the frontier that can never be crossed (even as we dolly in, slowly, wistfully, until we are close enough to see our own technological manifestation reflected in their full screen eye). We bear down on them. We know they can see us. Yet, they are inscrutable; we cannot know what they make of us, or what it is like to be them. Noting that wild animals never welcome our attention, Burt describes John Huston's film version of *Moby Dick*¹³ as an example of a narrative built entirely around an intimate relationship between a man and an animal. Despite the complex anthropomorphic intentions and emotions projected onto a single white whale by the bitter Ahab, their on-film relationship can only play out as a collision of surfaces.



Figure 4. David Green, Frame from 'Parietal', 2017, a single channel video, from the video installation, *Emergence*.

The feature film I appropriated was called *Untamed Africa*.¹⁴ It had been cobbled together in the early 1930s from footage gathered by a U.S. born "entrepreneur" named Wynant Hubbard. The film is disturbing, documenting a nadir of cultural and animal collisions during the colonial era. Hubbard's gleeful documentations leave a toxic record of cultural and zoological catastrophes.

According to Daniel Bender in the book, *The Animal Game*¹⁵, after gaining an undergraduate degree in geology from Harvard University, Hubbard moved his young family to South Africa on the promise of a management position in an asbestos mine. Luckily for the local inhabitants, the business went bankrupt as the family was in transit. Unluckily Hubbard wasn't a quitter; so he undertook to redeem the bad move with the notion of trapping African fauna to sell to zoological parks, while adding to his income by trafficking in used animal parts (e.g. tusks, horns, and pelts). In the very midst of these misadventures, Hubbard found time to write a self-promotional book whose title completes the picture: *Wild Animals: A White Man's Conquest of Jungle Beasts*. He also arranged to have himself and his young family filmed while engaging in their day-to-day delinquencies. Among Hubbard's nefarious gifts was

inventing “natural history” filming techniques; he slapped together small but secure, set-dressed enclosures, where he would pit ruminants or scavengers against pre-starved predators as the camera rolled. On other occasions he would have his cameraman train the camera on peacefully grazing herds in the veld, and then suddenly fire a volley of bullets offscreen so frightened animals would panic and scatter for viewers at home. Between long idyllic pans over galloping all-sorts, his shot list would read like a litany of criminal acts to contemporary sensibilities. But in the late 1920s, his little films had a first life as short entertainments shown between feature films. Ironically, when the patchwork of human and animal humiliation and torture were stitched into a full-length feature film, the studio linked scenes together by pitching Wynant Hubbard as an ethologist. As a post-script, Hubbard eventually went bankrupt, and few, if any, of the animals he captured on or off-screen made it to a prospective zoo in one piece. Quoting Bender: “Wynant, fully aware of the precariousness of his own marriage and finances, craved affirmation of his hunting skill. Grasping at straws, if he couldn't bring animals back alive, at least he could face down—and kill—Africa's biggest beasts.”¹⁶

Untamed Africa offers a perfect illustration of hubris and desire gone wrong. It is a key narrative for the Anthropocene. As I stripped back some of the more picturesque scenes I imagined how it might feel to be an ancient ancestor watching these enigmatic beings from across the savannah. In the visual distillate emerging from the purloined footage, I found myself transfixed by the coordinated movements of majestic animals in the distance and imagined a primitive desire to capture and hold onto something of their magnificence.

OBJET (PETIT) A

Similar to the endless interpretations of the meanings behind prehistoric cave art, there also seem to be innumerable variations on an idea central to Jacques Lacan's theory of desire, the “objet (petit) a”.¹⁷ From time to time, during Lacan's weekly seminars, initiated in Paris in 1951, he would return to this idea in order to briefly circle around it once again. Perhaps as his final object lesson, he promised a book on the subject — which never appeared.

The “objet (petit) a” seems to move as a shifter around the object of human desire. Sometimes it is described as the thing that obscures or impedes the desired prize, sometimes it is described as the lesser prize that fills a need but not the desire. Other explanations oppose that idea and relate it to the “agalma”, a magical prize of surplus enjoyment, imagined to be hiding within the object of desire, with the object of desire always providing a gap for it to hide within. It is with this latter interpretation that I will continue; we can't ever get what we want because our longing will always target exactly what we cannot have. The obscure object of our desire must always remain beyond our reach — because our want is, by definition, unanswerable.

To explain this idea, the wholeness we experienced as an easy rider in the womb is suddenly and unexpectedly ripped away from us at birth. This loss, the castration experience behind the anxiety, is profound, ongoing, and unresolvable. We were warm and comfortable, weightless, didn't have to find food or even breathe for ourselves. This is every single human's paradise lost and we will want it back for our entire lives. Loss becomes lack as the rip-cord is pulled and the engine starts up with a splutter and a wail.

The engine of lack runs on our desire for the “objet (petit) a”.¹⁸ If we are lucky enough to be breastfed, we locate it in the breast, which always gives out or is taken away. From then on we manage to locate it elsewhere, but if ever we do manage to find some way to grasp the object that we believe encompasses the “agalma”, we find it missing; the former object of our desire turns to dust in our hands. It never succeeds in making us whole because, of course, nothing can. We must immediately replace it with another, located in the distance, in order to live with our lingering deficit. We may answer our needs but we can never truly answer our want.

Instinctively, though not intentionally, the highly refined Hollywood structure of cinematic narrative clearly illustrates the Lacanian engine. A world in balance (life in the womb) is suddenly thrown out of kilter by a new crisis (birth),

and a collision of forces ensues (being-in-the-world). At the end, the best part of the fantasy treat, satisfaction, the world finds a new balance. — Only in real life this can never happen (I can't git no...¹⁹), or at least not for long.

Humans diagrammatically described through this lens might appear as a double torus: one driven by a constant biological need to obtain energy through digesting other life forms, in tandem with the other; driven by a persistent psychological and emotional need to regain what has been forever lost in the form of an obscure object of desire. Between them, these engines of lack propel humans graspingly forward, chasing all around this small planet, as we try and we try, and we try, and we try, but we can't fill either empty middle for very long, if at all.

The "objet (petit) a" is the insatiable hunger that is at the heart of commodity fetishism and I would argue that this same dynamic would have once described our universal lust for the majestic megafauna that in most corners of the planet are now only marks on the walls of deep caves. Those magnificent animals, seen in the distance, excite a desire for their power and their beauty. But when we finally succeed in cornering them, they want less than nothing to do with our senseless desires.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

We have a few options for connecting with wild animals: we can paint them, carve them, fetishise them, dance with them, or dress up like them. Those efforts failing, we can eat them. We want the animals, but all we can really do is to bring them to ground, cage them, gaze at them, and murder them either quickly or slowly. We can have them analytically through methods of scientific study: vivisection, dissection or; if you have a weird sense of humour, through taxidermy. Behaviourally, we can get closer by kidnapping and imprinting their babies to follow us around, thereby damning them to dead-end human margins.

Maybe we are just hard-wired to love animals to extinction. On the one hand, our love is fervent, confused, impulsive and violent. Like Steinbeck's character of Lenny in the novella, *Of Mice and Men*²⁰, we can inadvertently crush the objects of our affection. On the other hand, wild animals balk at our desire to know them, and our love can go bad when it meets with frustration; a radical reversal often seen when intimate relationships between humans fail.

Dramatic interactions, like those listed above, are the very meat of the cinema — an apparatus built upon our fascination for animals and our desire to know them better. In my art practice, the processes of disarticulated cinema enable me to model complex dynamics using methods of fragmentation and partial occlusion. In making artworks as propositional and epistemic objects, I recombine and redistribute cinematic elements in ways that activate my thinking about and around our Anthropocene predicament.

Aristotle's description of the soul in *De Anima* sought to define the ineffable enabler of embodiment that we share with virtually all multicellular organisms. We now know that every soul-bearing being he described nearly 2400 years ago, in turn owes their own internal biological alliances to ancient relationships forged between vast arrays of microbes operating in concert and opposition with each other; and with every unique environment they tumbled into.

Setting the stage for the Enlightenment, dualism gave license to both rationally and magically transform all plants, animals, and othered peoples, into soulless biological machines. By bringing the concept of a detachable soul, and assigning it exclusively to certain humans, Descartes rendered all the othered animals and organisms as disposable biomechanical devices; objects devoid of rights, here to serve or to burn in the hope of quenching our insatiable desires. In embracing this pernicious idea we have permitted ourselves to slash the plexiform web of intricate connections, including those of our forbearers and of our nearest relations, renting the very fabric of our own existence.

In this article I investigated some of the questions, thoughts, and digressions prompted by disarticulating an animal exploitation film from the early years of the twentieth century. I have considered the complex, and seemingly insatiable, nature of human desire and its role in the environmental collapse that we see playing out before us. The

world has changed a lot over the last 90 years; we share so much more of it with other humans and so much less of it with other species. Bullets, nets, bulldozers, and plows continue to claim more of the finite and delicate web of life our sub-species was born into.

Recently, the global transmission of Covid-19 found many of us temporarily contained in self-isolation across the world. For a moment in time the fires of commerce slowed down. Almost immediately a dramatic drop in toxic emissions from vehicles and industries was registered by satellite over some of the most polluted regions on earth. Soon images of wild animals reclaiming territory long since held by humans and their machines flashed across the internet. Even in New Zealand, indigenous birds ventured from their margins in the hope that we had finally departed. As I write this we are in the early days of recovery from our first round with the deadly virus, and so far the overwhelming response to a timely opportunity to reconsider our ways— is simply to make up for lost time.

David Green is an artist who lectures at the Dunedin School of Art. He is interested in applying the phenomenology and the neurology of perception to the collaborative engagement between artwork and viewer.

- 1 George Bataille, *Theory of Religion*. Trans: Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 35.
- 2 Eric R. Kandel, *The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind, and Brain, from Vienna 1900 to the Present* (New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 2012), 333.
- 3 David Green, "Emergence," *Scope: Contemporary Research Topics* 13 Art and Design, (2017): 30–37.
- 4 Semir Zeki, "Parallel Processing, Asynchronous Perception, and a Distributed System of Consciousness in Vision," *Neuroscientist* 4, no. 5 (1998): 365–372.
- 5 Exaptation is a feature of evolutionary adaptation that takes a sudden leap to perform a second completely unrelated but equally adaptive function: for instance, feathers were thought to have been originally selected for their insulation value, but one day afforded escape from a predator through an accidental flight, becoming adaptive in a secondary, unrelated, and emergent way. Stephen Jay Gould, Elisabeth SVrba, "Exaptation – A Missing Term in the Science of Form," *Paleobiology*, 8, No. 1 (Winter, 1982): 4–15.
- 6 Mark Shiffman, *Aristotle De Anima* (Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2011), 53–61.
- 7 Werner Herzog, dir., *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, Creative Differences (2010).
- 8 Screenshot of *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rhinos_Chauvet_Cave.jpg, Public Domain.
- 9 "...in contrast to the reversibility of figure and ground within the discontinuous world, the figuration of the discontinuous human world against the ground of the continuous pre-human world is irreversible." Kevin Fisher, "The Ecstatic Gestalt in Werner Herzog's *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*," *Refractory: A Journal of Entertainment Media*, 24 (2014): 6
- 10 John Berger, *About Looking* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 6–7.
- 11 Jonathan Burt, *Animals in Film* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2002).
- 12 Ibid, 50–52.
- 13 Ibid, 65–69.
- 14 De Leon Anthony (writer), *Untamed Africa*, Warner Bros. (1933).
- 15 Daniel Bender, *The Animal Game* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 85–88.
- 16 Ibid, 85–88.

- 17 Jacques Lacan and Jeffrey Mehlman, "Introduction to the Names-of-the-Father Seminar," *October* 40 Television (Spring, 1987): 82
- 18 Jeanne Lorraine Schroeder, *The Four Lacanian Discourses: Or Turning Law Inside Out* (Oxford: Birbeck Law Press, 2008), 18–21.
- 19 Although I don't roll with his precise interpretation, Professor Paul H. Fry rocks when making use of the Rolling Stones' song *Satisfaction* (1965) to illustrate the idea of Lacan's "objet (petit) a" in his Yale Open Course, *Introduction to Theory of Literature*, entitled "Jacques Lacan in Theory."
- 20 John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*, (United States: Covici Friede, 1937).

UNCERTAIN OBSERVER-ATTENTIVE PRACTICES FOR THREATENED NONHUMANS

Madison Kelly

In Sorawit Songsataya's *The Interior* (2019)¹, bird species of Aotearoa New Zealand, gathered in stillness on the outside deck of Toi o Tamaki Auckland Art Gallery, observe the form of a fallen moa. The avian communion, rendered three dimensional in fiberglass, polyester resin, acrylic lacquer, and Oamaru stone, offers navigable space for visitors (human observers) to join them in their looking. The gallery's statement about the work suggests its function as an inversion of classical human/nonhuman relations, inwardly turning our "often fraught relationship with the natural world...typically defined by 'the outside' or by remoteness".²



Figure 1. Trevor Lloyd, *Te tangi o te moa*, 1907, watercolour, 520 x 380 mm. Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, bequest of Miss Connie Lloyd. Auckland Art Gallery, accessed June 16 2020. (www.aucklandartgallery.com/explore-art-and-ideas/artwork/5907/te-tangi-o-te-moa)

From the human "inside", looking towards the animal "outside", the trope of a fixed representational porthole as visual incision into "wild" space has long been used to set up nonhuman worlds as othered and unchanging sites. Certainly, the painting referenced in *The Interior*, Trevor Lloyd's *Te Tangi o Te Moa* (1907, Figure 1), ascribes to such an ideal, offering through strategies of history, landscape, and fantasy painting, an anthropocentric glimpse into both the enigmatic lives of the "wild" bush, and the moa's own extinction around 600 years ago. As a record of attention towards an extinction event, *Te Tangi o Te Moa* presents a singular presumption, one of many "competing constructions" typical to our understandings of extinct species, those creatures evocative of not only "scientific enquiry" but "fantasy [and] the projection of cultural values" as described by Phillip Armstrong in his essay *Moa Ghosts*.³

A representation of (imagined) exterior looking, *Te Tangi* finds methodological kin in fields reliant upon observation as a knowledge-producing tool (the natural sciences, and the institutions of animal display they have borne: museums, dioramas, scientific illustrations, and zoos). Operating under the facade of objective viewing, observation here acts as a tether to certainty. Microbiologist Margaret McFall Ngai acknowledges such in her writing on advancements in microbial observation, noting "our understanding of the biological world has always been fundamentally linked to how we are able to perceive it".⁴ With growing and ever more attentive records of looking, however, new questions emerge across fresh scales, and with them, new uncertainties.

Fittingly, *Te Tangi o te Moa* features as cover for visual culture text, *The New Zealand Book of Beasts*. In their introduction, the authors give impetus for looking, and examining ways of looking, at Aotearoa fauna, writing: "There is no such thing as an objective or neutral point of view... Every position we occupy... is partial in two senses: both incomplete and partisan. The most powerful and enduring of our assumptions about animals are those we are most inclined to accept without question... they have come to seem natural to us, all the more so because we are in the habit of thinking of animals...as part of the biologically given order of things."⁵

In the era of the Anthropocene, biologically given order is far from a stable phenomenon framed for viewing. In her 2018 analysis, collated biodiversity findings by Sarah P Otto tell us over one in five species of vertebrates, invertebrates, and plants are now at risk of extinction. In Aotearoa, we can woefully claim the world's highest endangerment rates. The concept of a biodiversity crisis, though long enduring in our own country, is yet to tire out. Cited threats include pollution, and changing ecosystems; that is, anthropocentrism and its ensuing climate crises.⁶

With this disruption of stability, enters a necessary unsettling of the systems we have counted upon for understanding and reckoning with endangered animals, communities, and their extinctions. *The Interior*, as a contemporary meddling of the subject/object relationships of *Te Tangi*, offers not a space for exclusive gleaning, but rather reciprocity and reflection. As habitable site and scene, observation becomes newly embodied with each visitor's own movements/paths around or amongst the gathered birds. The act of looking, in turn, is a scrutinised act: humans watching birds, watching humans, watching birds. Attentiveness becomes a necessary contribution by visitors to the work, and the implicated human position is situated not just in an exterior gaze, but also within a broader nonhuman community, enveloped amongst the extinct and near extinct alike.

Such an inward turn of attention, towards our attention, aligns conceptually with photographer Froydi Laszlo's analysis of image making and worlding: "as representations of disappearing life forms continue to be disseminated, we tend to think they are still there... this alone should demonstrate the imperative to complicate the image culture."⁷ She suggests that this begins with acknowledging that "we are accustomed to only feel the loss of that which can be related to our own worlding."⁸

This presents a challenge, even for those well practiced in the noticing of nonhuman rhythms in relation to their own. Assured reckoning with extinct species (an ever growing number; some never known to begin with), threatened species (some close by, others completely isolated), or even "everyday" species (subsumed into normalcy yet teetering in threatened spaces of climate induced change) presents not only a challenge to attention but also to our compassions, lest we feel relations too weakly or too strongly. The fatigue of maintaining certainty as a solution for unstable systems is highlighted by artist Mark Wilson in his writing on the ecology of uncertainty: with "the need to bring everything into the realm of what is understood and 'known', [leading] us to cut ourselves adrift from things which otherwise would tax us."⁹ This reductionism, Wilson suggests, leaves the certainty-seeker "impoverished in other ways", unable to be "not just in the world, but with the world."¹⁰

In addition to Wilson's "ecologies of uncertainty", I also wish to acknowledge the conceptual supports of Derrida's theory of hauntology, and Jameson's spectrality in my thinking around the arts practices to follow. Speaking to tensions of appearing/disappearing, seeking and losing, and the wax and wane of visual and cultural signifiers, the interplay of uncertainty, ghostliness, and haunting becomes a valuable ecology by which our position alongside at-risk communities can be measured.

Spectrality does not involve the conviction that ghosts exist or that the past (and maybe even the future they offer to prophesy) is still very much alive and at work, within the living present: all it says, if it can be thought to speak, is that the living present is scarcely as self-sufficient as it claims to be; that we would do well not to count on its density and solidity, which might under exceptional circumstances betray us.¹¹

I am lead to think of endangerment and extinction as slippery spectralities, with imminent absence sliding alongside (or maybe above, below) present ground. With increasingly expanding and interconnected changes for humans and nonhumans alike, strategies for attention-practicing and making must adapt and shift across variable spatial and temporal scales, whilst also maintaining approachable poetics through which others can emulate their own attentions. The observational process, as a familiar mode of understanding, holds valuable potential for such relational engagement. How can observation and its offered attentions operate across such confronting magnitudes of extinction, endangerment, and flux? The rest of this paper aims to situate the attentive art practices of myself and others along a spectrum of change affecting nonhumans, from the basis of the individual, to community, to species population, to intermingled human/nonhuman communities.

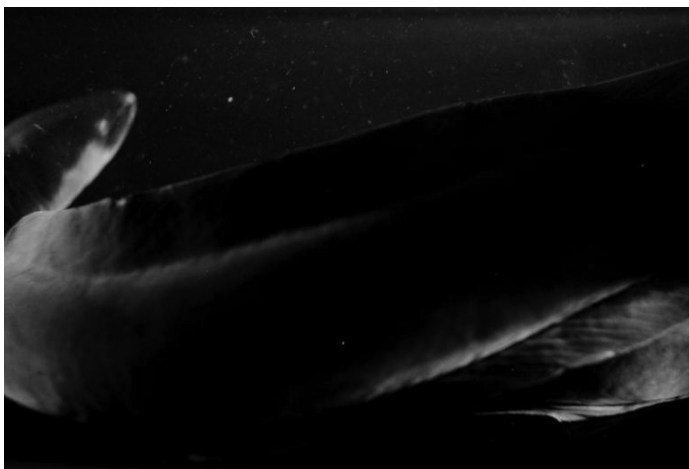


Figure 2. Joyce Campbell, *Taniwha V* from the *Te Taniwha* series, 2010, silver gelatin photograph. Accessed June 16 2020. (www.joycecampbell.com/collections/view/23)

Entanglements of site, observational strategies and the spectral animal are evident in the work of photographer Joyce Campbell, who questions our visual position relative to the long-finned eel and its migratory channels in her 2013 series *Te Taniwha* (Figure 2). Chronically declining in numbers, and subject to a long history of scientific inquiry due to their unobserved periods spent at sea, Campbell approaches the eel (tuna, in te reo Māori) in context of both past and present uncertainties. The works archive attempts at documenting in equal parts, the mythological water dwelling Taniwha Hinekōrako, the native tuna, and their home site, the politically and ecologically contested waters of Te Reinga. She explains: "Contemporary cameras do not lend themselves to the depiction of mystery [...] by contrast, the nineteenth century techniques of ambrotype and daguerreotype [have] an innate tendency to produce artifacts [...] Campbell has taken photographs of caves, gullies, pools and cascades but her hope is that in the silver we might catch a glimpse of the Taniwha as well."¹² Campbell's records of looking embrace a realm beyond the known, seeking the nature/culture relations of tuna, taniwha and Te Reinga as a series of enduring confluences.

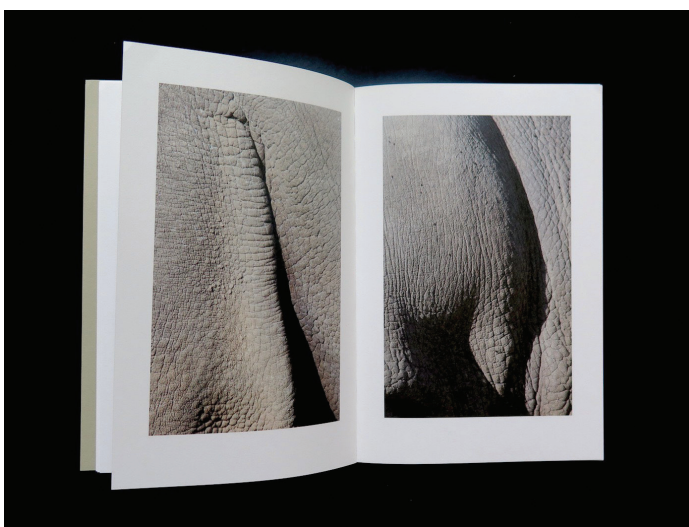


Figure 3. Giovanna Silva, *Good Boy 0372*, 2016, photobook. Published by Motto Books, accessed 15 June 2020. (www.mottodistribution.com/shop/good-boy-0372.html)

Italian photographer, designer, and publisher Giovanna Silva continues this thread of welcome unknowing in her photo book *Good Boy 0372* (2016, Figure 3), a project wherein attentive practice is directed towards a singular animal representing the finality of their species. Collated over the course of a ten day stay in Kenya, the publication documents time spent with Sudan, North Africa's last surviving male white rhinoceros. Referred to as "good boy" by his keepers, photos of Sudan (now passed away) exist at perhaps the most wavering and immediately spectral boundary. A contemporary echo of *Te Tangi o te Moa*, *Good Boy 0372* is tempting in its high-fidelity photography, a promise of explicit insight to the last moments of a species' time on Earth. The first few images, disclosing every rivulet of Sudan's plated skin, certainly invites such thinking, evoking the visual satisfaction and long relied upon solidity of wildlife photography, which Matthew Brower aptly describes in *Developing Animals* as access to "deep nature."¹³

This access is subverted, however, by extreme close ups throughout the book and incrementally fading glimpses of Sudan, succumbing to blankness by the book's close (Figure 4). Deep access and enlightenment denied, Silva prioritises sprawling, gappy, and intimate mapping. Any project narrative is refused, other than that which considers Sudan's uncertain fate as species representative, and Silva's uneasy role in observing him. Susan Sontag wrote that photography "implies [we] know about the world if we accept it as the camera records it. But this is the opposite of understanding, which starts from not accepting."¹⁴ Photographic records such as Silva and Campbell's present artefacts of not-accepting as a method for continued criticality.



Figure 4. Giovanna Silva, *Good Boy 0372*, 2016, photobook. Published by Motto Books, accessed 15 June 2020. (www.mottodistribution.com/shop/good-boy-0372.html)

While the photography of Silva and Campbell evoke the unreliable "density and solidity" of Jameson's spectres, through noncompliant image making in fixed space, Diana Thater's video works introduce uncertainty through the distribution of observational records across physical space. Her 2017 show *A Runaway World*, exploring threatened African animal communities, offers simultaneous and unfixed records of watching across several intersecting screens and projectors in the gallery space. As *Radical As Reality* (2017, Figure 5), a four panel projection of (again) Sudan the white rhino, offers a different space to that in *Good Boy 0372*, with Sudan and his human guards fully disclosed in the camera's framing. The continuity of this posse, however, is visually disrupted by any movement around the work, with footage dispersed into connected but divergent screens. In the same show, *A Runaway World* (2017, Figure 6) opens the habitat and everyday activities of a local elephant community. Only incrementally further from extinction than Sudan, the elephants are observed as a site-specific collective. In discussion of the show, Thater suggests

“specific sites are integral to the works...animals are inseparable from their environment...there are many and they intersect.”¹⁵ Via spatial and filmic junctions, the works produce flexible tethers between site, threatened animal, and their human observers both in situ and in gallery.

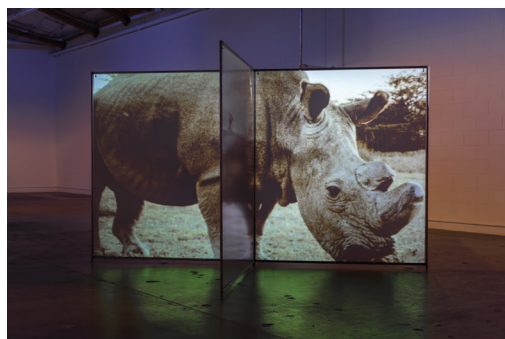


Figure 5. Diana Thater, *As Radical as Reality*, 2016, video projection. Installation view at The Mistake Room, 2017. Photo by Fredrik Nilsen, courtesy of Thater studio.



Figure 6. Diana Thater, *A Runaway World*, 2017, video projection. Installation view at The Mistake Room, 2017. Photo by Fredrik Nilsen, courtesy of Thater studio.

Movements between in-situ populations and their distanced human observers formed the basis of my 2017 project with conservation geneticist Natalie Forsdick and her study of the kakī/black stilt. Isolated to Canterbury's Waitaki basin, kakī are the world's rarest wading birds. They are subject to hybridisation with the self-introduced pied stilt, a phenomenon that threatens possible extinction of their genetic line. Here, uncertainty manifests not only in the kakī's taxonomic status, but in their representation to researchers and the public. As a population, kakī undergo various (somewhat alchemical) representational shifts in relation to their researchers – from real birds, to photos and videos, to blood samples and DNA samples, to computer sequenced code. These shifts occur relentlessly, with conclusions discerned from the various observations fed into an equilibrium of ex-situ research and in-situ management.

The resulting work *Kakī, reared and sampled* (2017, Figure 7) explores these shifts through site specific drawings, relaying representational modes of the kakī as noticed, documented and shared between myself and Natalie. Made on the gallery wall, unfixed charcoal drawings were accompanied by shelves that held the dust produced over

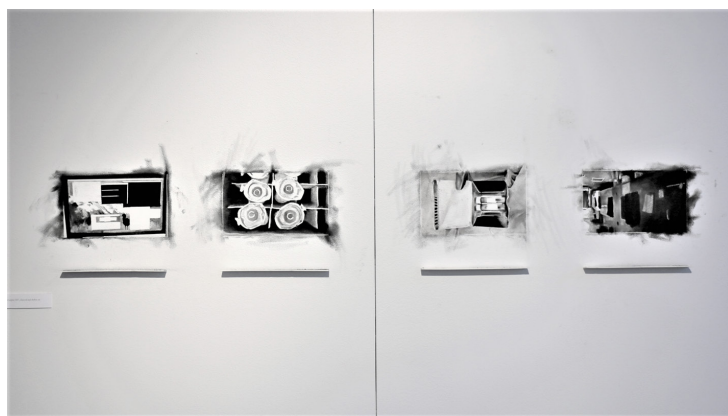


Figure 7. Madison Kelly, *Kakī, reared and sampled*, 2017, charcoal and shelves on wall. Installation view at the HD Skinner Annex, 2017. Photo by Liam Hoffman.



Figure 8. Madison Kelly, *Kakī, reared and sampled*, 2017, charcoal and shelves on wall (installation detail). Photo by Liam Hoffman.

the real-time course of their making (Figure 8). Collected dust revealed the drawing's code, offering up figurative gradients of change between each lab-based kakī trace.

Hybridity, as a process of micro-liminal change, calls for urgent and careful attentions, regularly repeated and compared. In this archiving of incremental shifts, I turn to Clive Humphrey's writing on the observational drawing process. Suggesting that as well as seeing the world, we also "unsee the world...using the process of seeing to confirm our expectations", Humphreys establishes observation and the recording of observation as an "invaluable process for examining accepted knowledge", referencing Berger's notion that "the relation between what we see and what we know is never settled."¹⁶ With great relevance to the concerns at play in this paper, Humphreys elaborates on the observational drawing process as offering repeating and unfixed evidence of "engagement with Other...the continuous act of re-ingestion."¹⁷ In each uncertain evaluation, interchanging presentations of the kakī as code or sample, collective or individual, original or hybrid, can be further questioned. If the kakī population presents opportunity for reckoning with change at a species level, what approaches may be adopted for more outwardly shifts – those at scales beyond the individual or taxonomic group?

Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Haunted Landscapes of the Anthropocene, discusses "not just the loss of individual species, but of assemblages...an entangled world where bodies are tumbled into bodies, extinction is a multispecies event."¹⁸ The new scales and unpredictability of observing "long evolving co-ordinations and interdependencies"¹⁹, further invite what Mark Wilson describes as "the stumbling blindness...the onotology of the moment... possible re-appraisal and potential."²⁰ Multidimensional changes call for multidimensional evocations, reflective of any number of ecologies, economies, or cultures in their making.

The global interplay of ocean organisms, their symbioses, and ensuing cycles under the pressures of ocean acidification became the assemblage of focus for another personal art/science collaboration, this time with parasitologist Colin MacLeod. Researching the impacts of changing parasite behaviours on their intermediate snail hosts under increased CO₂ conditions, Colin came to notice a lack of attention towards intersections of parasitology and climate science, despite parasites' foundational role in many community structures. As such, a concern for both Colin and I was the need for multi-faceted methods of approaching linkages between not only the parasite's changing parameters, but also changes occurring in the ocean, and the potential of making these turns accessible to a distanced public.

Ingrid M Parker writing in "Remembering in Our Amnesia, Seeing in Our Blindness", approaches scientific practices through the lens of observation, explaining: "The history of the scientific field of ecology is one of discovery through learning new ways of seeing [...] in another revolution in awareness, one of the most important developments in ecological science was the rise of manipulative experiment as a tool for studying what could not be seen."²¹

Limited by the spatial and temporal scales of real-time ocean acidification, Colin's work with parasites revolves almost entirely around manipulations and simulations of ocean acidification effects on sample parasite and host populations. Lab-based observations via artificial CO₂ tanks, microscopy, and fluorescent tagging are utilised to form collective understandings of interacting processes, that which would otherwise remain inaccessible to singular human perspectives. *Drawing to Discern Parasites* (2018, Figure 9), made in darkness using UV blacklights, a multi camera set up, fluorescent pigment and a water tank, documents the process of repeatedly observing and representing the parasitic life cycle under the changing pressures of fluid dynamics and their eventual obliteration of each drawing over the course of an hour.

The video documentation of drawing attempts, sped up to 17 minutes in total, is installed as a two-channel work, allowing simultaneous viewing of both the surface of water (the site of life cycle drawing) and the tanks' side (where pigment accumulates). As a looping digital document, the noisy green glow builds until no parasitic forms can be clearly discerned. In drawing, assuming the role of observer and image-maker, the call to action lies in a commitment to continuing drawing on an unforgiving ground. Viewers are presented with adjacent options, to commit to seeking

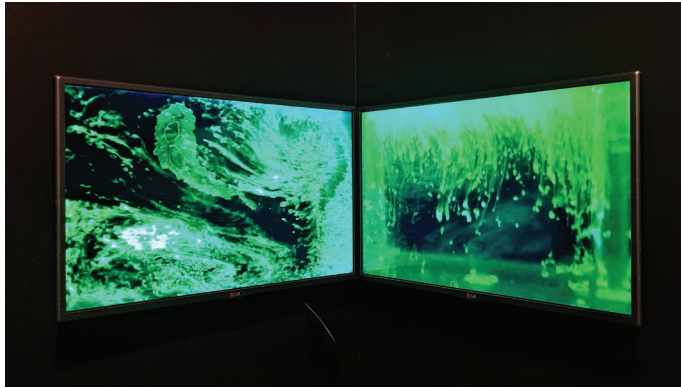


Figure 9. Madison Kelly, *Drawing to Discern Parasites*, 2018, two channel video documentation of acrylic in water; 16:45. Installation view at the HD Skinner Annex, 2018.

and discerning the life cycle amid growing turbulence, or to observe changes occurring below the surface. Though borne of uncertainties around parasite/host communities, the work eventuated as metaphorical observation of complex, more-than-human phenomena, reliant upon a submersion in unpredictability.

Investigations into communities of change continued in my 2019 work with Jon Lindqvist, a geologist and ichnologist at the University of Otago. Ichnology, the study of trace fossils, occupies a uniquely subjective (and projective) geological niche, speaking more to animal's inferred activities upon the Earth rather than the explicit preservation of their anatomies.

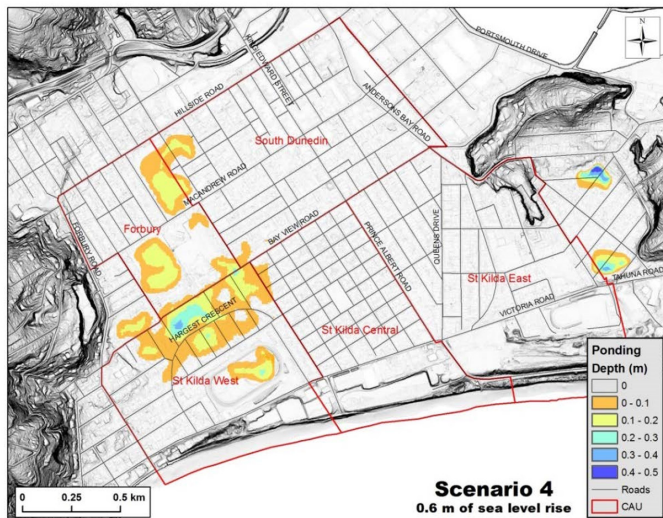


Figure 10. Otago Regional Council, "Above-ground ponding for 0.6 m of mean sea level rise, relative to the 2003-2015 average", from *The Natural Hazards of South Dunedin*, 2016, p.52, fig.43. The Musselburgh drawing site is visible as the darkest blue point to the right of the map. Accessed May 15 2020 (www.orc.govt.nz/media/2217/the-natural-hazards-of-south-dunedin-report-july-2016.pdf)

Adolf Seilacher, in *Trace fossil Analysis* writes “why are there thousands of footprints and not a single bone or tooth of these creatures? This question touches a fundamental problem in paleontology; the fossil record is far from a collection of photographs...there is selective preservation.”²² As a selective recording process, trace fossilization offers opportunity for reappraising assumptions of nonhuman worlds as readily available or fixed for access.

This thread of re-appraisal was brought to a humble street corner in Musselburgh, South Dunedin. Here, alongside several other saturated topographies in the reclaimed South Dunedin area, Dunedin City Council hazardscapes predict high levels of surface level ponding with increasing sea level rise (Figure 10). Here, speculative interplays of future water, sediment, and life offered fresh terrain for acknowledging the complexity of urban systems affected by global change.



Figure 11. Madison Kelly, *Present/forthcoming*, 2019 (detail), handmade paper; charcoal.



Figure 12. Madison Kelly, *Present/forthcoming*, 2019 (detail), handmade paper; charcoal.

A compelling aspect of trace fossilisation is the levelling of biotic and abiotic appearances in the fossil record. The tool-marks of twigs dragged along a sandy surface speak with the same mark-making language as the burrowing trails of the wormlike ichnogenus *Gyrochorte*. This language of a mark reliant record was explored through observational drawing at the threatened site. Activities at different vertical points of the sample area were observed over several months. Paths of travel, encounters or avoidances, movements in the wind (or of the wind), bees flying to flowers, humans and dogs walking past, were all treated as active agents in the observational record. These initial drawings in clay became negative moulds for recycled paper pulp and charcoal dust. Resultant sheets, layered upon one another, form a multidimensional archive of the site (Figure 11 and 12). The laminations presented are not concerned with concrete data collection, but rather with attention towards networks in flux, as they exist now, and in a nearby future.

The drawings making up the accretion continue as digital archive in an accompanying video (Figure 13), interspersed with video documentation taken in between drawings at the site: bumbling, cellphone footage. These clips do not claim visual apprehension, but rather propose the shaping of what Mark Wilson proposes as “the ontology of the moment.”²³ The digital archive of drawing and video observation, alongside its pseudo fossil, operates equally to evidence site-specific uncertainty and time-based observation, as well as dynamics of change inherent to sea level rise – its flow on effects and their implication of communities both immediate and distant. Drawings situated at the beginning of the paper layers introduce ever



Figure 13. Madison Kelly, *Present/forthcoming*, 2019 (video still composite), handmade paper; charcoal, and video, 6:05.

increasing undulations to those that follow. Having now, a year later, read William Connolly's "Extinction Events and Entangled Humanism", I see new functions of uncertainty in the pulpy rock, material echoes of his described passive climate change nihilisms, where "second order residues" re-emerge in "higher order beliefs...[subsisting] as uncanny reminders"²⁴ of Othered changes. At home, in the middle of COVID-19 lockdown, I have started trying to draw shadows of the garden's flora and fauna throughout the day, involving myself further into muddled ghosts and new residual anxieties.

Anxieties aside, I feel most lucid in this de-stabilised looking, and likewise feel with interest its call for action: the call to look again. In our relations with threats, endangerments, and extinctions, there exists a productive in-between, a movement around mourning and hope that informs our conception of the nonhuman communities we have implicated in our actions. In an unstable era, it is imperative we continue to look upon and communicate upon equally unstable ground, provoking new ways of visualising those we cannot, or may not see again.

Madison Kelly graduated with honours (majoring in drawing) from the Dunedin School of Art in 2017. Her Ōtēpoti based practice seeks understandings of nonhuman/human relations, focusing on drawing's capacity for evoking records of time and attention towards threatened species and sites.

- 1 Sorawit Songsataya, *The Interior*, 2019, fibreglass, polyester resin, acrylic lacquer, Oamaru stone. Carver: Brett Tutauanui Keno (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi te Rangī, Ngāi Tahu). Commissioned by Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2019, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, <https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/whats-on/exhibition/sorawit-songsataya-the-interior>.
- 2 'Sorawit Songsataya: The Interior', *Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki* (blog), n.d., <https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/whats-on/event/sorawit-songsataya-the-interior?q=%2Fwhats-on%2Fevent%2Fsorawit-songsataya-the-interior>.
- 3 Margaret McFall-Ngai, "Noticing Microbial Worlds: The Postmodern Synthesis in Biology," in *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 52.
- 4 McFall-Ngai, 52.
- 5 Annie Potts, Philip Armstrong, and Deidre Brown, *A New Zealand Book of Beasts: Animals in Our Culture, History and Everyday Life* (Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press, 2013), 4.
- 6 Department of Conservation, *New Zealand's Sixth National Report to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity* (Wellington, New Zealand: Department of Conservation, 2018–2014), <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/about-doc/role/international/nz-6th-national-report-convention-biological-diversity.pdf>.
- 7 Froydi Laszlo, "Place and World: The Photographs of Bryndis Snaebjornsdottir and Mark Wilson as Environmental Photography," in *You Must Carry Me Now: The Cultural Lives of Endangered Species*, ed. Mark Wilson and Ron Broglio (Arizona, USA: 284 Publishing, 2015), 145.
- 8 Laszlo, 143.
- 9 Mark Wilson, *Beyond Control-towards and Ecology of Uncertainty* (University of Cumbria, 2012), 3.
- 10 Wilson, 3.
- 11 Colin Davis, "Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms," *French Studies* 59, no. 3 (2005): 373.
- 12 Joyce Campbell, *Te Taniwha* (2013), <http://www.joycecampbell.com/collections/view/23>.

- 13 Matthew Brower, *Developing Animals: Wildlife and Early American Photography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xiv.
- 14 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Penguin, 1977), 23.
- 15 Diana Thater, Call of the Wild: Video installation artist Diana Thater's Runaway World, n.d., <https://baku-magazine.com/art/diana-thater-runaway-world/>.
- 16 Clive Humphreys, 'Eat Up Your Greens-Drawing as Re-Ingesting the World,' *Scope: Contemporary Research Topics I Art* (2006): 11.
- 17 Humphreys, 15.
- 18 Elain Gan et al., 'Introduction: Haunted Landscapes of the Anthropocene,' in *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene* (Minneapolis, USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 3.
- 19 Gan et al., 3.
- 20 Wilson, 'Beyond Control-towards and Ecology of Uncertainty', 2.
- 21 Ingrid M. Parker, 'Remembering in Our Amnesia, Seeing in Our Blindness,' in *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 164.
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NOT SO NATURAL HISTORY: DEPICTING THE ANIMAL ROLE IN HUMAN HISTORIES

Elaine Mitchell

Palmyrene (Northern Bald Ibis), and *Vestigia a ante diluvium (Cave hyena)* are a pair of watercolour paintings, which I produced in 2018 during my third year in the Bachelor of Visual Arts degree. In both works, I sought to explore how animals are seen and depicted in contexts such as natural history illustration, museum taxidermy dioramas, and as subjects of science. I found that entangled in each of those subjects were deeper, underlying questions about how cultural expectations of the natural world can shape our perspectives on truth and subjectivity.

This article will be in two halves: one for each of the two paintings that I will discuss. The first half is concerned with a narrative deep from the annals of science history and the place that animals occupy in human narratives, while the second will delve into the successes and failures of how science has depicted animals in natural history illustration specifically.

ANIMALS IN HUMAN HISTORIES

I want to begin the first half with a narrative that begins in Northern Yorkshire, England, in 1821. Quarrymen in the valley of Kirkdale were working when they discovered a cave underneath the road, and upon investigation, found that the cave was filled with piles of old bones. Samples were sent away for identification and the results that came back were shocking. The bones did not belong to cows or other livestock, as had been expected, but to hyenas, and specifically a species of hyena larger and more ancient than those still alive in Africa today. Alongside the hyena bones were those of rabbits, mice and wild boars, but also those of elephants, hippopotamuses, rhinoceroses, bison, and deer. These were not the kind of animals that one expected to find in the middle of rural England in the 19th century.¹



Figure 1. Simon De Myle, *Noah's ark on the Mount Ararat*, 1570, oil on board, 114 x 142 cm.

News of the discovery reached a man named William Buckland not long after it was made. Buckland was Oxford University's first professor in the still fledgling science of geology, and he was also an ordained minister of the Church of England; he would later go on to become the Dean of Westminster. As both a geologist and a religious man, Buckland was already caught in the middle of a contentious debate between the church and the scientific community, but his investigation of the Kirkdale cave, and the bones within it, would put him at the centre of that debate. The contentious question was this: how did the biblical flood fit into the story of earth's geological history? At this point in time, the flood was seen by many as a real, historical event, and many scientists were trying to use the new tools that geology presented them to search

for evidence of the flood. They found evidence everywhere: the waters of the diluvial flood were given credit for carving out what we now know to be glacial valleys from the last ice age, and erratic boulders and loose stones once pushed by those same glaciers, were thought to have been cast into place by violent underwater currents. Importantly, fossils of dead and extinct animals were also attributed to the flood; was it not obvious that they were the remains of those animals and people not fortunate enough to make it on to the ark?

Buckland himself was a proponent of diluvian theory; he believed that the flood described in Genesis was a literal one. In his inaugural speech as geology professor he said:

“the grand fact of an universal deluge at no very remote period is proved on grounds so decisive and incontrovertible, that, had we never heard of such an event from Scripture, or any other, authority, Geology of itself must have called in the assistance of some such catastrophe, to explain the phenomena of diluvian action which are universally presented to us, and which are unintelligible without recourse to a deluge exerting its ravages at a period not more ancient than that announced in the Book of Genesis.”²

This is the context with which Buckland entered the Kirkdale cave. Diluvial theory said that the fossils there, those of elephant and hyenas and all the rest, had to have been carried from Africa to Britain and been deposited into the cave by turbulent flood waters. Buckland soon found that there was something lacking in this explanation though. The only entrance to the cave was small, too small for an elephant or rhinoceros to fit through, and it was low on the side of the cave rather than in the roof.³

Buckland also found tooth marks gouged into many of the bones, and there was extensive evidence that the hyenas had lived in the cave before their death; they had not been dead upon arrival like diluvial theory would posit. In the face of the evidence, Buckland developed a new theory. He concluded that the animals must have belonged to an ancient ecosystem from a time in the deep past when Britain was made up of hot savannas rather than rainy forests, and was more like modern-day Africa than the contemporary place.

To Buckland it seemed clear that the hyenas had belonged to the pre-diluvian world, and it was the flood that had caused the environment and ecosystem to change. The hyenas themselves had not been killed by the forty days and forty nights of rain but the world as they knew it had.



Figure 2. Elaine Mitchell, *Vestigia Ante Diluvium* (Cave Hyena), 2018, watercolour, acrylic, and gouache on paper, 196 x 95 cm.

Buckland believed this version of events for years, but a slow shift occurred and as time progressed, the presence of the flood in his hyena story fades. By 1840, 19 years after the cave was first found, Buckland saw the story not as proof of the flood, but as a puzzle piece that fit into the new, up-and-coming theory of universal glaciation, or the ice age. This version of the story is much closer to what we believe today. The hyenas and their contemporaries had lived in the second to last interglacial period of the last ice age, which in England is called the Ipswichian interglacial.

My goal with *Vestigia a ante diluvium* (2018) was not to illustrate the narrative of the Kirkdale cave, but to use its story as a basis through which I could engage with its contextualising themes. The painting is a triptych on paper and depicts three (or perhaps two and half) life-sized cave hyenas. I used measurements taken from their closest relative, the spotted hyena, and scaled them up to match the size of a cave hyena, as based on skeletal and fossil remains.

I imagined the hyenas caught in flux, in the moment of change as they shifted from being living breathing creatures, to symbols within a human narrative that would forever be fixed in history. On top of that, I wanted to instil a sense of theatricality or artificiality into the painting in reference to the staged and often odd poses you see in museum taxidermy dioramas and in natural history illustrations. The painting's connection to museum displays is also why the painting is split over three panels. The negative space of the splits was intended to mimic the shape of the cabinetry that traditionally houses museum dioramas. They present a barrier between the human viewer and the animals viewed; the hyenas are stuck inside the picture frame, while the viewer is stuck outside of it.

ANIMALS IN NATURAL HISTORY ILLUSTRATION

Palmyrene is about a narrative from history just as *Vestigia* is, but instead of exploring narrative context, here I wanted to consider the broader context of how animals, and specifically birds, are represented in natural history illustration. Both paintings are intended to be historiographical rather than historical; they consider how a history is told and represented, rather than focusing on the contents of the history itself.



Figure 3. John James Audubon, *Plate 26* (Carolina Parakeets), 1833, coloured engraving.

Natural history illustration is both an art and a science, which aims to convey biological information in an accurate, intelligible way. It is a field which formed in the era before photography and the other indexical media that we have now, in a time when it would take months for messages to travel between continents, and when language barriers made it harder for scientists in different countries to share their discoveries. For natural history illustration to be able fulfil its goal as an information source, it had to adopt a set of stringent conventions. Natural history illustrations had to be realistic and comprehensive in their depiction of any given species, and often illustrators would work from taxidermy and skins to ensure this. Individual animals within an illustration would be posed in such a way that all of their identifying physical features were visible to the viewer; and if the species displayed any sex- or age-based variation in size or colour, then often multiple individuals would be arranged together so that all the different variations were represented.

In *Plate 26* (*Carolina Parakeets*), from John James Audubon's *The Birds of America*⁴, Audubon has depicted multiple birds within one illustration, as is common in natural history

illustrations of small animals. The illustration displays a consistent internal scale and perspective, and the animals are flatly lit so there are no shadows that might confuse their forms or markings. In the background of *Plate 26*, there is only a limited representation of setting, and this too is common among natural history illustrations. In this case, the setting is a cocklebur plant that serves to ground the parakeet figures within the illustration, so that they are not left floating in the middle of blank space.

There are many things which *Plate 26* does very well, and, as a tool intended to convey physical information about the species, it succeeds. You can count the number of feathers that make up the species' tails and wings, as well as see how those body parts fold and fan. The multiplicity of poses lets a viewer turn the bird around in their head to see its plumage from every angle, its beak both open and closed, and feet both relaxed and grasping. There are limitations to what *Plate 26* can tell us about the species though.

Because Audubon has given the representation of physical information such high priority in this illustration, behavioural information has been distorted. To see this, one only has to look at each parakeet individually and imagine the strain that its muscles must be under to hold its pose. Their necks are craned, and their wings have been pulled away from their bodies while only half open. Only two of the seven are perched upright; the others hang off the cocklebur plant sideways toward the viewer so that they are easier to see.

The parakeets do not pose as real, living birds might, because they aren't living. Audubon worked from taxidermy specimens that would have been contorted into reference poses for him to draw from. In *Paper Nature: 500 years of animal art* (2016), Charlotte Sleigh writes: "An image could stand in for a specimen for the purposes of description and identification. Even a drawing could be substituted for a specimen which would fade, wilt, or crumble when sent from one city to another, or from one continent to another."¹⁵ From this I think it is clear to see that natural history illustration isn't intended to represent living animals; it is instead a more portable and convenient type of taxidermy that studies the dead in the hope of learning about the living.



Figure 4. Elaine Mitchell, *Palmyrene* (Northern Bald Ibis), 2018, watercolour, acrylic, and gouache on paper; 132 x 195 cm.

The relationship of natural history illustration to the animals it depicts was something I thought about constantly while working on *Vestigia* and *Palmyrene*. I considered making work where the animals were ostensibly dead and looked it, rather than shrouded by a veneer of life as traditional natural history illustration is. I also thought about how natural history illustration would look if it was drawn from living subjects, and it is this latter idea that *Palmyrene* engages with.

Palmyrene depicts two of the critically endangered Northern bald ibis, at life-size over two sheets of paper. I imagined the painting not as a mock illustration, but as an illustration of the illustration process; the subject is not the species itself, but how it has been depicted. I then considered what would change about the composition if the ibises depicted were still alive, unlike Audubon's dead parakeets, and not fully cooperating with the illustrator:

In this scenario, the ibises had been posed as the parakeets had been, with outstretched wings, craned necks, and fanned tails. But in the moment before the illustration could be made, the explosions erupted in the background and the ibises were frightened instantly out of their poses and we see them as they are turning to flee. Like the hyenas in *Vestigia*, the animals are in a moment of change, but this time it is in the opposite direction; they are going from being representations of their species, back to being living individuals.

Elaine Mitchell graduated from the Dunedin School of Art in 2019 with a first class honours degree in Visual Arts. She is interested in how human culture represents the natural world and in stories where the two realms overlap.

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THE LIVING DEAD: THE AFTERLIVES OF ANIMALS IN MUSEUMS

Emma Burns

The animals in the collections at Otago Museum have surprisingly busy lives. It is the same in many natural history collections around the world. While the original colonial collector of creatures in the past did so for pleasure, leisure, and educational display, new roles for fauna collections continue to emerge. The creatures in our care are kept with a purpose that continues to change and grow in relevance with the times. They allow new questions to be asked, in new ways and for new reasons; questions about them and of ourselves. Today these collections play a fundamental role in defining and archiving biodiversity – and becomes primary evidence of change and loss.

Museums worldwide have a bit of an identity crisis to work through. What is a modern museum? Who is it for? What does this look like in practice? Popular philosophies around creating outward-facing, inclusive, contemporary, infinitely engaging, highly entertaining, haptic, attention-grabbing, 3D sensory experiences, that will inspire and wow audiences, can create quite heady goals. For natural history museums and their collections, while some aspects of these ideas are important in fostering and reinforcing connections with the natural world, they limit the view of what the role of these collections play in society, which is arguably more than entertainment. The goal of a modern natural history museum should be to support our understanding of nature. How that works in practice should also be an evolving dialogue with our communities.

Members of the public and funders often focus their definition of a museum's purpose on public displays. It's what they are familiar with. They are often stunned that less than 1% of the Natural Sciences collections we hold at the Otago Museum are displayed. This is not unusual.¹ The bulk of the specimens were not preserved and collected with a display in mind.² They are comparative collections built up over, in Otago's case, 150 years, for educational study and research.

For practical purposes, what we select for display is skewed toward the attention-grabbing charismatic megafauna. There are not shelves upon shelves of whales, elephants, lions, albatross and monkeys in storage. What's upfront is often the only specimen we have. Logistically, it is easier to have the big items displayed rather than in storage. In the same physical space we use to house one whale, we could store tens of thousands of invertebrates. These are practical discussion points, because for those working with natural history collections – curators, collection managers, and conservators, we have an important but often unseen role, doing some very practical things, which is often overlooked in animal conservation circles and researcher's academic papers.

Sometimes people find what we do a little uncomfortable, and morbid, and weird. We do spend a lot of time with the evidence of death, and in thinking of extinction, loss, change, fleeting time, and our own animal origins. As a curator, I realize the privilege of it, but I'm not precious about it. Death, for everyone, is the unavoidable flipside of life. In the Otago Museum's case, the moment of death has often already happened. People bring us *kererū* hit by cars, possums caught in traps, penguins washed ashore dead, and invertebrates collected by entomologists over decades of work. Our collections team's job is to intercept remains of selected flora and fauna, and fossils that would otherwise decay, be discarded, eaten or eventually eroded (destroyed by nature itself). Foregoing these natural processes, we step in with unnatural ones. We preserve the remains, preparing them for their afterlives in museums as taxidermy, cleaning, pressing, pickling, and pinning. This staves off decay,

but specimens will still age and deteriorate. Given enough time, everything does. Once preserved, they become envoys for their kin and their environment, representing a species, from a specific place and time. Their data is recorded on labels, in collection notes and computerized catalogues. To elongate the animal's afterlife as much as possible, museum's employ conservators and practices to protect specimens further: In climate-controlled, dark rooms, their individual needs are assessed and treated.



Figure 1. Historic study skins, light-mantled sooty albatross (*Phoebastria palpebrata*), AV081 and AV082, Kane Fleury © Otago Museum, Dunedin.

Museum natural history collections are more akin to an archive.³ If you are pun inclined, you could call it an Ark-hive – a library of life. In the same way, you take a book off a shelf and read from its pages, people visit the collections to study the living dead, the objects, the specimens, the animal. Like document archives, the animals in natural history collections are organized using taxonomic nomenclature, a strict international classification system for assigning names to organisms, based on shared characteristics. Traditionally, taxonomy was the main purpose of natural history museums – to find, describe and house new species.

Today a steady stream of emails roll in from researchers requesting to examine the different collections. They are interested in skeletons to extract DNA from or study the physical characteristics of; in keratin from feathers, claws, and baleen to provide stable isotopes (chemical signatures used to understand diet); study skins to investigate plumage variations; and historic data points for surveys in areas where land use is quickly changing. There are many different ever-developing techniques to converse and ask questions of the dead in our care. There is no rest for the dead in a museum.

Some critics still hold the view that museums are just full of “old dead stuff”, and ask if there is a place for natural history museums in modern society? In the face of climate change, massive habitat loss, and continued exploitation of the natural world, the answer is yes (now, more so than ever). On our planet, there about 2 million known

species, and at the 2019 UN Summit in Paris, a report tabled that 1 million species were at risk of extinction (those species known to science). But there could be anywhere from 5 million to 100 million species on the planet. In the same way astronomers talk about the unknown universe beyond our solar system, there are still vast amounts of unknowns in the natural world, right here on Earth.⁴ While new species continue to be found and described all the time, it is likely that many go extinct without notice. Increasingly, new species are identified from specimens collected 50 to 100 years ago, with the use of ancient DNA analysis. Where once their identity was clumped with a close relative, we suddenly find a distinct species. In some sad cases, they no longer exist, and these new species are instantly extinct.⁵

We still live in a very anthropocentric society that struggles to see the benefits of protecting enough wild places for the species we share our planet with. Politically, we are left desperately short on ways of assessing and communicating the value of what we are losing. But biodiversity can be measured: the fewer species in an area, the less biodiversity there is. We rely on taxonomy to describe species as units of biodiversity. This requires revisiting historic "type specimens", the formal exemplars of a species held in museum collections, to determine if something is new or known. In New Zealand, many of our species are found nowhere else on earth. Both species of New Zealand bat are endemic, as are all four frogs, all 60 reptiles, more than 90% of insects, and a similar percentage of marine molluscs, about 80% of vascular plants and a quarter of all bird species.⁶ Many are poorly described, and vast numbers remain to be discovered and described taxonomically. Taxonomists themselves are threatened species in New Zealand; it is a workforce that has been in decline for many years.⁷

To work around skills shortages, both in the past and in the present, museums have often done exploratory and basic survey collecting of flora and fauna from specific areas. Sometimes all the samples sit unsorted, sometimes those that are easily categorized get identified. More tricky individuals might be sorted into their higher classification levels, family or genus. They are then put on a shelf, waiting for a fresh set of expert eyes, maybe the next generation of taxonomists, to visit and examine them. This is why there is an often-published trope of a new species being found "hidden/languishing/locked" in a museum's cupboards. The truth is they are not hidden at all, they are just waiting to be further studied. When people say that the museum is full of "old stuff", I tend to say good, they are doing at least half of their job. The other half is that they should also be strategically adding new specimens to the natural history collections to maintain and build the reference libraries of life. Here's why.



Figure 2. Trays of pinned geometrid moths, collected during surveys and opportunistic collecting, now have a growing importance in ecological research, Kane Fleury © Otago Museum, Dunedin.

Each natural history specimen vouchered into a collection, with good information about where and when it was collected, becomes a priceless window into the past as a tangible object that can be revisited for different purposes. These specimens help researchers to study change: change in distributions, population genetics, environmental impacts of climate change, diet, pesticide use, and also our cultural attitudes towards different species.⁸ How we as humans perceive the world is subject to a type of bias called “shifting baselines”. Due to our short life-spans and unreliable memories, humans have a poor conception of how much of the natural world has been degraded by our actions. With each generation, our “baseline” of normal shifts. This means that what we see as pristine nature today would be seen by our ancestors as hopelessly degraded, and what we see as degraded, our children will view as “natural”. Museum collections offer testable evidence of change. But because change is constant, by not collecting, we are closing those windows into the past, and might as well turn out the lights.

Visitors to the museum stores ask questions like, do we really need 150 specimens of flax looper moth? Yes, everyone is unique and has something to add to a data set. Across that group of 150, you are likely to have representatives of different sexes, physical variations, morphs, and genetic variations from different sites, and different times. There could also be ephemeral data to be gained from things preserved on the moths, like parasites and pollen grains.

The dead in museums can also play an important proxy role, reducing pressure on living populations. Cambridge-based Professor Gordon Hull has created a global gorilla resource, tracking down approximately 950 skins, 2500 skulls, and 1650 skeletons (that's 5100 individuals in museum collections worldwide). There are also many hundreds of histology samples (blood, urine, tissue etc) and slides maintained in many zoos. The published list, including the Otago Museum's gorillas, is an important resource, allowing researchers studying health and pathology issues of gorillas, to examine existing material to understand how to save the living of this critically endangered species.⁹ Our collection managers plug away in the background, cataloguing specimens from catalogue cards, swing tags, and digital records, so we can work towards liberating similar information on international aggregator websites. If researchers know where the resources are, then our biodiversity libraries (aka the natural history collections) become more useful, reducing the need to resample what might already be a dwindling population, as well as to hone techniques or add more power to data sets or model outcomes under different climate scenarios.



Figure 3. Female gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*), purchased from Rowland Ward Studio 1930s, VT2421
© Otago Museum, Dunedin.

In an example closer to home: tuatara were once found throughout New Zealand. There is evidence of this in museum collections of cave remains and midden material. Today, wild populations are restricted to 32 off-shore islands in the Cook Strait and northern New Zealand.¹⁰ The ultimate goal for tuatara conservation is to remove predators and re-establish thriving mainland populations. But because ambient temperature affects tuatara health, as well as determining the sex of offspring, care needs to be taken before approving translocation sites. To determine where in New Zealand tuatara could be the most successful, now and with a changing climate, PhD candidate Scott Jarvie from the University of Otago's Zoology Department created a scientific model. He visited us to 3D scan the Otago Museum's tuatara collection, to collect accurate proportional measurements of body length to skin surface area. This process is tricky to do on live tuatara, but an important factor in developing the modelling equations for an animal where skin surface plays a crucial role in thermoregulation.¹¹



Figure 4. 3D scanning a pickled tuatara (*Sphenodon punctatus*) for Scott Jarvie's tuatara research, 2015, Emma Burns © Otago Museum, Dunedin.

In my role as curator, we don't collect randomly, but do so in line with a collection strategy that identifies priorities for collecting, and filling in gaps in an ever-evolving research program that focuses on the environment, attitudes, climate change and biodiversity of the region. When I decide to add an animal to the collection, there is generally some sort of anticipated purpose, but in the same way that my predecessors would be blown away by the techniques now used to gain information from the collections, I have little idea how future technologies will be applied to these collections.¹² Part of my role is spent researching and adding information to records that help contextualize collections within their individual object histories. Without these, it is easy to make assumptions that can unintentionally affect researcher's results, as well as the perspectives of the visitors to our exhibitions. These contexts can be at a practical level, like researching the history of chemical preparation methods of the pickled specimens that were popular during different periods and with different collectors. These can be factors that affect the successful future sampling of specimens for DNA and isotope data.

At a philosophical level, it is also important to question established truths about society and what we consider "common knowledge". Museum collections are artefacts that reflect the material culture in which they were collected. What is kept in collections are

loaded with inherent bias, which curators help researchers and visitors to navigate. These biases may be based on an institution's strengths (one of ours is spiders), weaknesses and priorities through time (dinosaurs are one of ours because very few have been found in New Zealand), what species are easier to preserve (not jellyfish), what is showy (stuffed birds), versus what is perceived common (New Zealand's commercial fish species), and what was important to people collecting at any particular time. Over time, society shifts, fashions fade, and power, politics, and priorities change. With the benefits of hindsight, better tools and more diverse points of view, we can more easily identify bias. Recently, research lead by Natalie Cooper looked at the bird and mammal collections of five of the biggest museums in the world and found an over-representation of males as the type specimen.¹³ Ecological studies have mapped museum collections and ecological survey data, and found that collecting locations often correspond with road and river networks, which means ecological distribution modelling has to factor in this skewed coverage.¹⁴

Despite millions of species on Earth, most natural history museums have a certain déjà vu to the displays. Somewhere there will be a tiger, a cast of an archaeopteryx fossil, a giant clam, and probably a kiwi. These represent a historical bias, based on colonial trade routes. Historically, opulent exhibitions were held around the empire, to entertain and boost trade. They displayed the riches of a region, showcasing natural resources. New Zealand's first World Fair, *The Exhibition of New Zealand*, was held in Dunedin in 1865. A collection of geology and taxidermy was displayed under the labels "Otago Museum", this planted the seed of an idea, but the actual museum did not open until 1868.

Animals as objects are not good or bad in themselves but represent relics of a society seen by some as an oppressive symbolism, and how they are interpreted, can be challenging. There are important research and interpretation factors when working with collections, including remembering that natural history is intertwined with a colonial

cultural context.¹⁵ But viewers should also take care not to draw assumptions too quickly and hasten items of the past to be hidden. We all carry our own preconceptions when we look at animals. It is important to keep an open mind, and sometimes some questions should be asked of what we don't see, or what hasn't been collected.

Museum collecting is also often incorrectly blamed for driving species to extinction. The Victorians had a very different relationship with death than we do today. During that period there was an explosion in taxidermy creativity and techniques, fuelled by public demand for curiosities that represented the natural world. In the context of the time, the practice of preparing taxidermy for display was a branch of an enormous industrial skin, fur, and feather trade. Taxidermy fell out of public fashion rather early, around the time of the Great War¹⁶, although other forms of the fur and skin trade continued. Museums remained as one of the only prominent places where the public could see large taxidermy collections. A lot of what we know about extinct species, like the huia, for example, comes from the remains kept and cared for by museums, not the birds shot for their tail feathers and ivory bills. Rarely seen anymore are the once popular zoomorphic objects: rhino feet ice buckets, baboons holding silver drinking trays, elephant trunk lamps, or tiger skin rugs. We have forgotten that these were high fashion commodities for interior design. Similar cultural amnesia is setting in now around the volumes of fur coats, reptile handbags, and birds perched atop hats. Fashions fade and society forgets.



Figure 5. Preparations of different purpose. One of the few examples of zoomorphic taxidermy in the natural science collection among scientific study skins on display in the Animal Attic. Bengal Tiger skin rug, *Panthera tigris* VT728 © Otago Museum, Dunedin.

Today our collecting practices are guided by museum industry ethics¹⁷, as well as multiple layers of international legislation. In New Zealand, it is also guided by the national wildlife and marine mammals act, consultation and working with manawhenua, and adhering to local permission processes. Most of what we collect are salvaged specimens – those that have died by natural causes, accident or have been euthanized by the Department of Conservation. This further reduces the impact on wild populations. It is not random, however, but guided by a collecting strategy that addresses gaps, focuses on our region, and responds to some of the most pressing environmental issues of the day.

Recent fires at the National Museum of Brazil, and New Delhi's National Museum of Natural History, have meant vast international collections have been lost. It reminds us that museums are not necessarily the hall of permanence

and perpetuity that we promote. They require significant investment to build, maintain, and sustain. Since the 1980's museums have increasingly focussed on business viability, where ticketing, entertainment, tourism and merchandise are used to support the financial bottom line. As such, the traditional focus on taxonomy, research, and academic interpretation have diminished, due to cost pressures and notions of unprofitability. In the mid-1950s, the Otago Museum was enacted to a board of regional representatives, so our collections must also reflect the community. As an organisation, the Museum is constantly considering ways to better balance our support structures, including financial, scholarship, and community. We need people to care about collections. The "living dead" in museums are demonstrably important – not just for education and cultural reasons, but for wider environmental reasons too. They are easy for the living to ignore, and they need louder voices speaking for them. They are not just objects, artefacts, or relics of the past; they are valued organisms. If we want to protect biodiversity, and understand changes in our environment, we need to sustain natural history collections as our reference libraries of life.

Emma Burns is a Curator of Natural Science at the Otago Museum. Her role as a curator has an ambidextrous focus on what's displayed front of house and activities behind the scenes. It involves looking backwards into the past and forward into the future and across all taxa.

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- 16 Alexis Turner, *Taxidermy* (New York, Rizzoli, 2013), ISBN: 978-0-8478-4097-7.
- 17 Ethics Working Group of the International Council of Museums International Committee for Museums and Collections of Natural History (ICOM NATHIST), "ICOM code of ethics for Natural History Museums," (ICOM 2013).

FARMED ANIMALS AND THE LAW IN NEW ZEALAND

Kari Schmidt

The New Zealand Animal Law Association (NZALA) was established in 2014 to advocate for animals through the legal system. Kari Schmidt is currently drafting a report on behalf of the NZALA on the law regarding farmed animals in New Zealand. This report considers how the codes of welfare and regulations under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 fail to meet the standards prescribed by the Act. In particular, it examines the codes of welfare and regulations for pigs, dairy cattle, meat chickens, layer hens and the lack of a code of welfare for fish. This report will be released in 2020. This research was generously funded by the New Zealand Law Foundation – *Te Manatū a Ture o Aotearoa* – an independent charitable trust that provides grants for legal research, public education on legal matters, and legal training.

INTRODUCTION

Animal Welfare in New Zealand is governed by the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (hereafter, the Act) and by codes of welfare and regulations established under the Act. These codes of welfare and regulations are delegated legislation, meaning they are not enacted by Parliament but by the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI), to which Parliament has delegated law-making authority. The Act also established the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC)¹, whose functions include advising the Minister of Primary Industries on issues relating to welfare of animals; developing codes of welfare and recommending them to the Minister²; and providing animal welfare advice to the Minister on regulations to be made under the Act.³

The Act sets up an overarching framework in relation to animal welfare law. Lauded both nationally and internationally as highly progressive, it provides for a preventative and proactive approach to animal welfare compared to its historical equivalents (which established provisions only to prevent overt cruelty to animals). Owners and persons in charge of animals are required to ensure that the “physical, health and behavioural needs” of animals are met.⁴ These are defined as proper and sufficient food, proper and sufficient water; adequate shelter; the opportunity to display normal patterns of behaviour; physical handling in a manner which minimizes the likelihood of unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress, and protection from, and rapid diagnosis of, any significant injury or disease.⁵ These are also known as the “five freedoms” and are now a widely accepted concept within animal welfare theory.⁶

The codes of welfare and regulations established under the Act are intended to supplement the Act through the provision of specific guidelines in relation to particular species or use of animals.⁷ Unfortunately, there appears to be a gap between our ostensibly progressive Act and the delegated legislation established under the Act, with the codes of welfare and regulations failing to adequately provide for the “physical, health and behavioural needs” of farmed animals.

PIGS

Pigs are a good example. The continued use of farrowing crates for four weeks post-farrowing does not adequately provide for the “physical, health and behavioural needs” of pigs. In particular, the severe spatial restrictions placed

on pigs in these circumstances means that their ability to express their normal behaviours is extremely limited – in these crates, pigs cannot even step forwards or backwards and cannot turn around.

Historically, the main reason for the use of farrowing crates has been to reduce piglet mortality, with the close confinement of the sow preventing her from rolling or stepping onto her piglets. However, there have been a number of studies published since the code of welfare for pigs was released showing that piglet mortality between crate and pen-based systems are relatively similar⁸, and that other methods can be used to ameliorate piglet mortality in non-crate systems.⁹ Additionally, NAWAC has recently acknowledged that research shows a much shorter period of time in the farrowing crate is feasible, and suggested that “the period after birth that the sow is confined in a crate could be limited to around four days.”¹⁰

Space in general is at issue for pigs. The code of welfare provides for an equation to determine the minimum space allowable for pigs based on their body weight.¹¹ However, this calculation only pertains to minimum allowable “lying space” and does not take into account the amount of space pigs need to exhibit their normal behaviours. Pigs are highly motivated to explore and engage in other behaviours such as rooting and foraging, however, the limited space provided to them under the code of welfare frustrates these behaviours. NAWAC even recognises this in the code of welfare: “Based on emerging international research, NAWAC believes the current industry guidelines for space requirements need to be reviewed as 10%–50% more space may be required to provide for all pigs’ needs, depending on their level of activity and the thermal conditions.”¹² While NAWAC recommends the provision of greater space in the code of welfare, this is not a mandatory requirement.

LAYER HENS

Colony cages are currently permitted under the code of welfare for layer hens. These cages contain up to 60 hens, with each hen living its life on 750 square centimetres (slightly larger than an A4 piece of paper). NAWAC and MPI have argued that colony cages are an improvement on the battery cages that preceded them, as the hens have more space and a range of artificial enhancements to facilitate their normal behaviours, such as a scratching pad and nesting site. However, the increase in space from 550 square centimetres to 750 square centimetres does not enable these chickens to adequately exhibit their normal behaviours. For example, studies have shown that group-housed hens “require an average of approximately 475 cm² for standing, 540–1005 cm² for scratching, 771–1377 cm² for turning, 652–1118 cm² for wing stretching, 860–1980 cm² for wing flapping, 676–1604 cm² for feather ruffling and 814–1270 cm² for preening.”¹³ Further, the artificial enhancements provided are insufficient, with up to 60 birds expected to share one scratching pad and one nesting area.

MEAT CHICKENS

Perhaps the primary welfare issue in relation to meat chickens is selective breeding for fast growth rates, with chickens reaching their slaughter weight of about 2–2.5kg at about 5–6 weeks of age.¹⁴ The issue applies not only to intensively farmed meat chickens, but to free-range meat chickens as well, which are “still the same genotype.”¹⁵ Commentators have noted that this rate of growth is a significant departure from how birds were raised historically, with traditional meat chickens taking around 12 weeks to reach their slaughter weight of about 2 kilograms.¹⁶

The use of fast-growing breeds leads to a range of welfare issues, including heart problems, ascites, sudden death syndrome and leg disorders.¹⁷ In 2017, NAWAC recognised in a report on selective breeding that “selection for high juvenile growth rate, breast-meat yield and efficiency of feed conversion has left meat chickens vulnerable to welfare problems such as cardiovascular disease, and lameness or difficulty in walking”.¹⁸ However, while NAWAC identified concerns about the welfare implications of high growth rates in the code of welfare for meat chickens¹⁹, there are no provisions preventing the use of fast-growing breeds or even recommending the use of slow-growing breeds.

Additionally, meat chickens in New Zealand are highly stocked, with the code permitting 38 kg of live weight per square metre²⁰ – being approximately 15–19 birds per square metre.²¹ High stocking densities inhibit locomotion and exploration, with meat chickens at high stocking densities spending more time sleeping, congregating around feeders and being more fearful.²² High stocking densities result in an inability to move and explore, which leads to conditions such as contact dermatitis.²³ Birds in such environments are more likely to be exposed to higher ammonia levels, irritating their eyes and respiratory systems.²⁴ And it has been shown that high stocking densities lead to an increase in lameness in broiler chickens and to health issues relating to the legs of broiler chickens generally.²⁵ A 2013 survey by MPI on lameness in meat chickens recognised that where stocking density is high this is “likely to reduce activity and contribute to an increased prevalence of leg weakness.”²⁶ Further, high stocking densities have a negative impact on gut health in meat chickens, predisposing chickens to necrotic enteritis.²⁷

DAIRY CATTLE

While the code of welfare for dairy cattle generally provides that these animals have access to areas free of surface water and mud²⁸, protection from adverse weather²⁹, and that they are able to lie down and rest comfortably for sufficient periods to meet their behavioural needs³⁰, winter grazing and the issues associated with it are not specifically addressed in the code of welfare. Winter grazing involves animals being fed during the winter period on forage, such as pasture or crop. Animals are kept on a measured area of forage and once they have finished grazing, are moved to another strip of forage.³¹ This practice has recently been identified by MPI as an animal welfare issue for dairy cattle, with cows being kept in excessively muddy and wet conditions for prolonged durations. To investigate this, MPI formed a “Winter Grazing Taskforce”, which released a report on this topic in 2019 identifying numerous animal welfare issues associated with winter grazing.³²

Additionally, in 2019 NAWAC revised the code of welfare to include minimum standards relating to off-paddock facilities.³³ The 2019 revisions allow for cows to be kept on off-paddock facilities year-round, subject only to a recommendation that “mature cattle in off-paddock facilities should be given daily voluntary access to pasture or to a suitable outdoor area.”³⁴ NAWAC chair Dr Gwyneth Verkerk has stated that NAWAC wants “dairy cattle that are housed long-term to have access to outdoors, but affected farmers have time to comply”.³⁵ However, it remains to be seen what future provisions regarding outdoor access will look like, and when they will be implemented. It also seems likely that these future provisions will not require cows to have access to pasture – as NAWAC outlined in its report, dairy cattle would simply have to have access to a “suitable outdoor area... [with] a soft compressible surface and sufficient space that allows a wide range of normal patterns of behaviour including the ability to exercise on soft non-slip surfaces, freedom to choose when to lie down, space and soft surfaces for lying in a range of normal lying positions, and space for grooming and for avoiding aggressive interactions.”³⁶ This is despite the fact that “cattle prefer pasture access under certain conditions and are motivated to access pasture”³⁷, and despite the health benefits associated with pasture. These include reductions in: mortality rates, incidence of lameness and mastitis, severe hoof disorders, risk of poor locomotion, incidence of infectious forms of foot disease and metabolic and digestive disorders, among others.³⁸

FISH

The lack of a code of welfare for fish is concerning, as it means there is limited guidance available as to how fish should be farmed in order to ensure their physical, health, and behavioural needs are met. This is particularly problematic given the extent of New Zealand's fishing industry, with approximately 15 thousand metric tonnes of fish harvested from fish farms every year.³⁹ There are a range of welfare issues that such a code would need to consider, including in relation to handling, stocking density, holding facilities, bone deformities (a common health issue in farmed fish), veterinary medicines, food, water quality, and lighting.

FARMED ANIMALS IN NEW ZEALAND

These are just a few examples of how the standards outlined in a number of the codes of welfare and regulations conflict with the requirement outlined in the Act to meet the “physical, health and behavioural needs” of farmed animals. There are many more.⁴⁰

The inadequacy of our legal regime in regards to farmed animals is particularly problematic, as these animals comprise the bulk of domesticated animals in New Zealand. As at 2016, New Zealanders owned approximately 4.6 million pets.⁴¹ In contrast, according to recent statistics, New Zealand annually farms approximately 63.55 million dairy cattle⁴², 39.22 million beef cattle⁴³, 125 million meat chickens⁴⁴, 287 thousand pigs⁴⁵, 3.69 million layer hens⁴⁶, and approximately 116 thousand tonnes of seafood.⁴⁷ Given that New Zealand has such high levels of animal production and consumption, there is a particular onus on us to ensure that the welfare of our farmed animals is adequately protected.

Agriculture is also a significant industry in New Zealand, generating around 36 billion dollars a year in exports and constituting around 12% of New Zealand's GDP.⁴⁸ New Zealand accounts for around a third of the world's international dairy trade.⁴⁹ It is in this context that high standards of animal welfare, which is recognised as important to overseas consumers, are now a goal of many industry bodies in New Zealand. Given our dependency on the primary sector and agriculture in particular, trade reputation is a strong driver of animal welfare policy in New Zealand and this is outlined in numerous of MPI's policy documents.

Further, high standards of animal welfare are inherently important to many New Zealanders. For instance, in 2017 MPI issued a report on New Zealanders' views of the primary sector. Over 95% of respondents agreed, “It is important that the welfare of farmed animals in New Zealand is protected.”⁵⁰ Such attitudes are further reflected in consumer decision-making with increasing numbers of New Zealanders opting to buy free-range, reducing their meat consumption, or converting to a vegan or vegetarian diet.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORM

In light of the above, the codes of welfare and regulations are in need of review, such that the standards they prescribe are in keeping with the Act – including the requirement to consider the latest available scientific knowledge and good practice.⁵¹ Any practices inconsistent with the Act, which cannot be revised immediately, should be turned into regulations under section 183A of the Act, subject to the phase-out periods of 5–15 years outlined in this section.

The role of MPI and NAWAC in administering the codes of welfare and regulations are also in need of review, as this discrepancy between the Act and the codes of welfare and regulations appear to be linked to the role these agencies have in administering delegated legislation under the Act. For instance, MPI's primary motivations are to further “export opportunities for our primary industries [and to] improve sector productivity.”⁵² Thus, animal welfare is at least a secondary priority, if not a competing priority. Additionally, the methodologies adopted by NAWAC in developing the codes have often failed to ensure that the standards prescribed are at least the minimum necessary to ensure the purposes of the Act are met. This is due to an often inadequate and inconsistent review of the available scientific literature, and a failure to adequately consult and engage with the public. There is also a lack of clarity regarding the methodology that NAWAC uses to review the codes.⁵³

A review of MPI and NAWAC's administration of the animal welfare law could be undertaken under the auspices of a public or government inquiry. The performance of NAWAC and MPI in relation to animal welfare should also be audited or overseen by another government agency or an independent body so as to provide adequate oversight. Ultimately, the establishment of an adequately funded Independent Commissioner for Animals or an independent committee for animal welfare would be the best approach to ensure that the codes of welfare are robust, up-to-date and meet the requirements of the Act.

CONCLUSION

The Act has now been in force for over 20 years, with about a decade having passed since each of the codes of welfare for farmed animals were reviewed in full.⁵⁴ It is critical then that the implementation of the Act through these delegated instruments be assessed closely. A comprehensive review of the codes of welfare and regulations, as well as the processes by which they were established by MPI and NAWAC, are an important and overdue step in ensuring that New Zealand does have world-leading standards of animal welfare that honour what is enshrined in the Act.

Kari Schmidt is a Solicitor in the Disputes Resolution team at Gallaway Cook Allan in Dunedin. She also has a sustained interest in research, animal welfare law, art writing and curating, zines and meditation.

- 1 Animal Welfare Act 1999, section 56.
- 2 Ibid, section 57.
- 3 Ibid, section 183A(10).
- 4 Ibid, section 10.
- 5 Ibid, section 4.
- 6 The “five freedoms” are the freedom from hunger or thirst; freedom from discomfort; freedom from pain, injury or disease; freedom to express (most) normal behaviour and freedom from fear and distress. The “five freedoms” is a concept fundamental to animal welfare theory, with its origin in the 1965 Brambell Committee Report: R Brambell, *Report of the Technical Committee to Enquire into the Welfare of Animals Kept Under Intensive Husbandry Systems* (London: Cmnd 2836, HMSO, 1965). The “five freedoms” have been adopted by veterinarians as well as animal welfare organisations such as the RSPCA, the World Organisation for Animal Health and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.
- 7 There are currently 19 codes of welfare relating to circuses, cats – pet or companion, dairy cattle, deer, dogs, goats, horses and donkeys, layer hens, llamas and alpacas, meat chickens, ostriches and emus, painful husbandry procedures, pigs, rodeos, sheep and beef cattle, slaughter of animals, temporary housing of companion animals, transport of animals and, zoos. Ministry for Primary Industries, *Codes of welfare*, <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/animal-welfare/codes-of-welfare/> (accessed 10 February 2019).
- 8 For instance, Andrew Knight, *Uncaging New Zealand's Sows: Scrutinising Farrowing Crates* (Save Animals from Exploitation (SAFE), 6 June 2018) at 20; and A Olsson, J Botermans, and J Englund, “Piglet Mortality – A parallel comparison between loose-housed and temporarily confined farrowing sows in the same herd,” *Acta Agriculturae Scandinavica, Section A – Animal Science* 68, no 1 (2018): Introduction.
- 9 Including selecting for sows that display the traits of calmness and protectiveness; genetically selecting for smaller, healthier sows and smaller litter sizes; adequate environmental enrichment (including the provision of nest building material); increased space and hygienic and temporarily heated flooring; minimizing physical and social stressors; as well as the provision of design features that stimulate good maternal behaviour; and developing good human-animal relationships enabling the stock person to influence maternal behaviour.
- 10 NAWAC response to the Petition of SAFE to end the use of farrowing crates, *Submission to the Primary Production Select Committee*, 27 July 2018 at 2.
- 11 Code of Welfare (Pigs) 2018, Minimum Standard No 6(b). This calculation is area (m²) per pig = 0.03 × liveweight^{0.67} (kg).
- 12 Ibid at 12.
- 13 Poultry Standards Group and Guidelines Drafting Group. *Layer Hen Cages, Supporting Paper Public Consultation Version* (Australia: 2016).

- 14 Gerard Hutching, "Behind New Zealand's Most Popular Meat," <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/107888831/behind-new-zealands-most-popular-meat> (accessed 10 December 2019).
- 15 Hans Kriek of SAFE, interview with the author; 8 November 2019.
- 16 Gerard Hutching, "Behind New Zealand's Most Popular Meat," <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/107888831/behind-new-zealands-most-popular-meat> (accessed 10 December 2019).
- 17 A Robins, and C J Phillips, "International Approaches to the Welfare of Meat Chickens," *World's Poultry Science Journal* 67, no 2 (2011): 355; and S Singh, H Verma, and D Chakraborty, "Ascites Syndrome, A Challenge for Blooming Poultry Industry," *International Journal of Advances in Agricultural Science and Technology* 5, no 6 (2018): 10; and M Morris, "The Ethics and Politics of Animal Welfare in New Zealand: Broiler Chicken Production as a Case Study," *J Agric Environ Ethics* 22 (2009): 21.
- 18 NAWAC, *NAWAC Opinion On Animal Welfare Issues Associated with Selective Breeding*, (New Zealand: Ministry for Primary Industries, 2017) at 16.
- 19 Code of Welfare (Meat Chickens) 2018, 'General Information' section of minimum standard 11 (Providing for Behavioural Needs) and 'General Information' section of minimum standard 14 (Management of Health and Injury)
- 20 Code of Welfare (Meat Chickens) 2018, minimum standard 10(b) (Stocking Densities)
- 21 On the first reading of the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill 2013, 27 August 2013, Mr Phil Twyford asserted that 38 kg of live weight per square metre in effect allows for 19 birds per square metre (as outlined in Gillian Coumbe, "Beyond Charlotte's Web - the blight of factory farming: An argument for law reform," (paper presented to the Auckland Women Lawyers' Association seminar, Auckland, March 2015) at 5, footnote 19). The Poultry Industry Association of New Zealand considers this figure to be somewhat lower at 15 chickens per square metre (Email from Michael Brooks (PIANZ) to the author, 9 December 2019).
- 22 A Robins, and C J Phillips, "International Approaches to the Welfare of Meat Chickens", 351.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid at 360.
- 26 NAWAC, Survey of Lameness in New Zealand Meat Chickens, New Zealand: Ministry for Primary Industries, 2013 at 23.
- 27 VTsiouris, I Georgopoulou, N Batziou, R Pappaioannou, Ducatelle, and P Fortomaris, "High stocking density as a predisposing factor for necrotic enteritis in broiler chicks," *Avian Pathology* 44, no 2 (2015).
- 28 Although no minimum standard explicitly states this, Minimum Standard No 6 provides that cattle "must be able to lie and rest comfortably for sufficient periods to meet their behavioural needs." Further, the Code states that cows prefer to lie on soft, dry and clean surfaces rather than hard, muddy, slippery or wet surfaces at 11. It also recognises that muddy environments are a contributing factor to lameness at 32.
- 29 Animal Welfare (Dairy Cattle) Code of Welfare 2019, Minimum Standard No 7 at 13
- 30 Animal Welfare (Dairy Cattle) Code of Welfare 2019, Minimum Standard 6(b) at 11
- 31 New Zealand Veterinary Association, "Winter grazing", <https://www.nzva.org.nz/page/wintergrazing> (accessed 31 January 2020).
- 32 Including poor hoof health leading to claw lesions and lameness; increased risk of mastitis; birthing in mud; reduced lying time and poor quality of lying and sleep; reduced ability to ruminate; malnutrition and underfeeding; dehydration; cold and heat stress; lack of choice for lying site, fodder choice and social interactions; negative social interactions at high density (e.g. competition for feed, water and lying spaces); nutritional or metabolic problems; injury caused by fencing and equipment including fractures and broken legs due to mud; dental problems; and death resulting from misadventure, exposure or acute metabolic incidents. Winter Grazing Taskforce, *Improving Animal Welfare on Winter Grazing Systems*, 25 November 2019 at 3.
- 33 This is "a facility that incorporates a constructed base, and may or may not have a roof or walls. Off-paddock facilities include calf sheds, purpose-built housing barns for cows, stand-off areas or pads (including long-term wintering pads), and also feed pads)." Code of Welfare (Dairy Cattle) 2019, 'Introduction' to Minimum Standard No 9 (Managing Dairy Cattle in Off-Paddock Facilities) at 15. Code of Welfare (Dairy Cattle) 2019, "Recommended Best Practice"(g) to Minimum Standard 9 (Managing Dairy Cattle in Off-Paddock Facilities) at 18.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Rural News Group, "Keeping cows comfortable off-paddock", <https://www.ruralnewsgroup.co.nz/rural-news/rural-farm-health/keeping-cows-comfortable-off-paddock> (accessed 15 November 2019).
- 36 NAWAC, *Report to accompany an amendment to the code of welfare for dairy cattle*, 31 October 2019 at 21.
- 37 Ibid.

- 38 Ibid; and G Olmos, L Boyle, A Hanlon, J Patton, J J Murphy, and J F Mee, "Hoof disorders, locomotion ability and lying times of cubicle-housed compared to pasture-based dairy cows," *Livestock Science* 125 (2009): 199-207.
- 39 Email from Mark Preece of New Zealand Salmon Farmers Association to the author; 23 March 2020.
- 40 These are outlined in further detail in NZALA's report, mentioned in the preamble to this article.
- 41 NZ Herald, "Kiwi's World Leaders in Pet Ownership", https://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c_id=6&objectid=11694903 (accessed 22 July 2019).
- 42 Stats NZ, "Agriculture", <https://www.stats.govt.nz/topics/agriculture> (accessed 7 October 2019).
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 *Otago Daily Times*, "Surge in chicken consumption prompts new testing probe", 13 July 2020 <https://www.odt.co.nz/business/surge-chicken-consumption-prompts-new-testing-probe> (accessed 11 July 2019).
- 45 Statista, "Number of pig livestock in New Zealand from 2010 to 2019," <https://www.statista.com/statistics/974513/new-zealand-pig-livestock-numbers/> (accessed 11 July 2019).
- 46 Figure.NZ, "Total hens for egg production on New Zealand Farms," <https://figure.nz/chart/NJrkHqndarpsFDZa-33x67SqoNoRsxCL3> (accessed 11 July 2019).
- 47 Sustainable Aquaculture, "New Zealand Aquaculture: A sector overview with key facts and statistics," <https://www.aquaculture.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/New-Zealand-Aquaculture-facts-2018.pdf> (accessed 11 July 2019).
- 48 Figure.NZ, "GDP breakdown by industry in New Zealand," <https://figure.nz/chart/WRpSmBftC60IEu2q> (accessed 11 July 2019).
- 49 LEARNZ "Primary Industries in New Zealand," <http://www.learnz.org.nz/primaryindustries172/bg-standard-fi/primary-industries-in-new-zealand> (accessed 11 July 2019).
- 50 Ministry for Primary Industries, "New Zealander's views of the primary sector" (October 2017) at 83.
- 51 As outlined at sections 73(2)(b), 9(2)(a) and 10 of the Act.
- 52 Ministry for Primary Industries, *About Us*, <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/about-us/> (accessed 27 April 2020).
- 53 For instance, no-where does NAWAC clarify *how* exactly it reviews the latest scientific literature and good practice. For example, what databases does it use? How does it ensure that its methodological processes are robust such that key information is not missed? How is it acknowledging and accounting for its own bias in the search for and interpretation of data? And how does it ensure that the independent peer reviewer is suitably independent and qualified to review NAWAC's report?
- 54 15 December 2008 for the Code of Welfare (Dairy Cattle) 2019; 20 October 2010 for the Code of Welfare (Pigs) 2018; 29 June 2012 for the Code of Welfare (Layer Hens) 2012; 12 October 2011 for the Code of Welfare (Meat Chickens) 2018; 29 March 2010 for the Code of Welfare (Sheep and Beef Cattle) 2018; 2007 for the Code of Welfare (Deer) 2018; 1 August 2011 for the Code of Welfare (Goats) 2018; and 2013 for the Code of Welfare (Llamas and Alpacas) 2018.

ANIMALS ETHICS IN NEW ZEALAND ART - A SOCIAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE

Jenny Aimers and Peter Walker

INTRODUCTION

This article examines art works from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery (DPAG) in order to understand the position of animal ethics within New Zealand (NZ) society. The research responds to the assertion that we take the animal-human connection so much for granted, it is worthy of increased scrutiny.¹ Our decision to select a public art gallery as a source of data comes from the assumption that exposure to art and other types of visual references reinforces the social values inherent in our relationships with animals,² and that art itself is representative of human and cultural identity. If we also accept the argument that art institutions can confer a civilising effect on society to encourage “morally just and proper behaviour”,³ then we can also assume that the collection of a major public gallery provides a window on how New Zealand society views “proper” behaviour; in this case with regard to animal ethics.

ANIMAL ETHICS

Within the context of this paper, the companion discourses of humanism and post-humanism are central to our approach. While both of these discourses are broad and wide reaching, in the case of humanism, we have focused on the argument that human consciousness elevates the status of humans above other creatures.⁴ Influenced by the Christian Bible, anthropocentric discourse, evolutionary theory, and cartesian thought,⁵ humanists believe that humans have absolute dominion over the natural world and consider animals as irrational; to be placed in the position of the “Other”, compared with rational humans who possess language and are capable of exceptional thought.⁶ As a result, the animal has fewer rights and protection under human laws, occupying an inferior position to humans. Any rights bestowed on animals such as their right to the five freedoms,⁷ are conditional on the animal also meeting human needs, such as occurs within free-range farming or responsible pet ownership.⁸ The underpinning of humanist ethics rests, therefore, upon humankind having the ultimate right to control and care for animals as they see fit; the natural laws of the animal are of little consideration, which is sometimes pejoratively referred to as being “speciest”.

The discourse around post-humanist ethics extends beyond the natural world, however; for our purposes we focus our attention on the aspect of post-humanism that seeks to reject anthropocentric dominance, to situate humans as one of many natural species.⁹ Under post-humanist ethics, humans are positioned as having no inherent rights to control, dominate, or destroy nature. Human rights are comparable to animal rights within a power neutral spectrum. Human limitations are acknowledged, not to undermine rational thought inherent in humanism, but to provide space for other (non-human animal) intelligences to exist. Assumptions of human dogma across such fields as science, philosophy, and politics, are rejected in an attempt to re-establish what it is to be human. This requires a deconstruction of human thought discourses, to expose anthropocentric normative notions of our relationship with non-human animals and the environment. Post-human ethics also acknowledges that humans normalise violence towards animals, and such violence undermines the humanity of the perpetrator. Furthermore, animals obey different laws than humans and do not bow to the supposed superiority of human laws.¹⁰

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

As social science researchers we aim to maintain rigour and scientific transparency¹¹ by outlining here, our approach to articulating our data. Our data set consisted of six art works by New Zealand artists, selected in order to expose animal ethics discourses within the context of animal representation. In order to determine our sample, we restricted our scope to ensure that the research setting had a sense of boundedness (culture, time, and place) enabling it to provide a variety of relevant, interconnected, accessible data. To that end, we reviewed New Zealand figurative and landscape artwork, available as open access digital copies online, from a single public collection at Dunedin Public Art Gallery. From this, we selected a sample of six works that could illustrate discourses in relation to humanism and post-humanism in animal representation in New Zealand art. In preparation for analysis, we described the works and then identified the social or cultural contexts (culture, time and place) relevant to viewing the animal subjects. We chose Dunedin Public Art Gallery as a significant collection of art, and the oldest public art gallery in New Zealand, on the assumption that it is representative of New Zealand artwork since Pākehā settlement. Please note that as we are Pākehā, we are not qualified to research the cultural nuance in Te Ao Māori and have restricted ourselves to examining work from Pākehā artists.

In our analysis, we applied two principles drawn from the intersection of humanist and post-humanist ethics, namely:

- a. The application or threat of violence on non-human animals as an ethically accepted right of humans, based on moral superiority and rationalism under humanism. This includes: slaughter for food or clothing, and euthanasia and physical punishment as part of control of animal behaviour (noting that these actions can be seen to diminish our humanity).
- b. The laws and sets of behaviour recognised by post-humanism, whereby different species of non-human animals abide by their own laws when unimpeded by humans.

We considered how the representation of animals in each art work reflect and/or expose either of these ethical principles.

THE ARTWORKS

The six art works we selected represented a century of Pākehā artist endeavor, from the 1880s to the 1980s. Mediums included photography, serigraph, oil painting, and watercolour, thereby offering an intermedia approach. The animal representations were variously described as domestic, abject or celebratory, however we were mindful that whatever taxonomy we ascribe to these animals did not change the essential nature of the animal itself, but only how our society values or uses them.¹² The works are presented here in chronological order:

In Richmond's¹³ 1887 work, *Mount Excelsior, Takitimu Range*, we can see tiny cattle, horses, and flying birds used as points of perspective, from which Richmond contrasts the pastoral landscape of the Takitimu Range. The horses in the foreground are considerably larger than the cattle in the middle distance, and both serve to give scale to the mountains, which dominate the work at the horizon. The soft pale rendering of the watercolour medium highlights domesticated animals as graceful elements of an idyllic pastoral scene. During the late 1800s, colonialism was well established and fast becoming the dominant force in New Zealand, and paintings of an idyllic landscape were often utilised to promote British settlement.¹⁴ While the animals are unhampered by fences or restrictions, seemingly free to live according to their natural laws, the time and context suggests otherwise as horses were integral forms of labour for the colonists and the cattle were a source of food. Our natural humanist bias tends to see the pastoral landscape as culturally invisible;¹⁵ we are so accustomed to seeing domesticated farm animals in such a landscape that we consider what it represents as normal. However, animals farmed for their meat and other products are subject to the violence of humans, as a normal part of farming: early weaning the calf from its mother; dehorning,



Figure 1. James Crowe Richmond, *Mount Excelsior, Takitimu Range, Southland N.Z.*, 1887, watercolour; 516 x 751 mm. Reproduced with permission, collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

and tail docking are all preparing the animal for eventual slaughter. The horses are subject to early weaning, restraint, and training as discipline is applied, including the use of bits, whips, and spurs. Whilst horse meat is not commonly used for human consumption in this country, horses are slaughtered and disposed of when their useful life is ended. Thanks to the work undertaken in Britain in the 1920s, legislative protection for animals was introduced, and as a colony of Britain, New Zealand followed suit. The first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) was established in 1884 to enforce animal welfare legislation (primarily to horses, cattle and sheep).¹⁶ Such protection offered animals, deemed as stock or working animals, a modicum of protection from cruel and neglectful behaviour. However, stock management disrupts the formation of familial social groups necessary for herd animals to maintain their own natural hierarchies of power, and we cannot forget that all farming ends in slaughter.



Figure 2. David Con Hutton, *Old Man and Black Dog*, date unknown, oil on canvas, 915 x 660 mm. Reproduced with permission collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

David Hutton's¹⁷ oil painting is a study in anthropomorphism, here we have an elderly man enjoying the company of his dog, in what we presume is his home or public house (a humble abode where both are comfortable and safe). The use of dark greens and browns add to the soft, homeliness of the interior. The dog is focused on the viewer; while the man looks toward something out of view, to the left of the painting.

In the case of pet portraiture, the family dog is often used as a symbol of house and home, as well as to symbolise the notion of familial unconditional love.¹⁸ Viewing this work in the context of Victorian values, highlights the dual concepts of safe "home" and unsafe "homelessness". A home reflected middle-class values, and was idealised as somewhere that a pet was cared for; and that promoted the domestic ethic of practicing kindness to animals. Stray or homeless animals were also a resource for vivisection laboratories, or were seen as potential carriers of disease and with possibly dangerous behaviour, presenting a public health concern that added weight to the negative connotations of "stray". Thus, "home" was a space of control, and part of the civilising mission of the Western philosophy of colonisation and benevolence. This concern for the

benevolent treatment of (primarily) cats and dogs, also went hand in hand with an awareness of child protection, as children and pets occupied a similar status. Owning and caring for a pet, ironically, made us more human.

We see the pet anthropomorphically, even allegorically as a reflection of ourselves. In the case of Hutton's man and his dog, this is illustrated by the way the man and dog are closely situated, companionable, and forming a comfortable social relationship. We like and trust the man more, for the presence of his dog. The attachment between humans and pets, and how they relate, is complex. Yet when examined closely, the term "pet ownership" is clearly in the humanist camp. There is social disruption inherent in domestication, forms of violence in physical and psychological discipline, the potential for pet abuse and neglect, and the final violent act of "humane" euthanasia. If left in a wild state, dogs become pack animals having little or no regard to human laws and mores.

Kate Ogston's 1888 oil painting, *New Zealand Game*, shows a dead kea as a still life, in rich earthy colours that highlight the bird's plumage within an indeterminate background. The kea is posed in the foreground, with a wing casually spread to display the forest hues of the plumage with a flash of orange under the wing. It is, however, the title that gives us the clue into the context of this work, "New Zealand Game" places the dead Kea as a pest. Although initially considered only a fruit and nectar feeder, the kea became increasingly implicated in the killing of sheep during the 1800s, with farmers claiming a 30%–40% loss of stock from kea predation.¹⁹ By the 1900s, this claim was challenged as overly inflated, but in the minds of the public, the kea as a sheep killer was well established. This work is a profoundly interesting piece, while small in size, and appearing modest and domestic in nature, it captures a moment before native birds became protected and celebrated. To the contemporary eye this is shocking, as we are used to revering the native bird. To see this still-life/still-death is deeply ironic, in that the bird is killed to protect a farm animal that will also be killed; pest eradication merely allows the farmer to choose the time and place of death. The natural behaviour of a predator also directly challenges human property rights, depriving the farmer of income and control. This illustrates an important aspect of humanism, that is, it is up to the human to assign status of pest or protected.



Figure 3. Kate Mary Ogston, *New Zealand Game*, 1888, oil on board, 460 x 355 mm. Reproduced with permission, collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Don Binney's²⁰ serigraph *Swoop of the Kotare, Wainamu*, depicts a New Zealand native bird in full flight over a wild, remote location, devoid of buildings or obvious signs of human influence. The flattened image and use of block colour, reflect a modernist register:

Binney has been described as one of the few New Zealand artists to represent animals as animals, with their identity their own, not as a representation of human[ist] culture.²¹ Binney has explained the prominence of the bird in the landscape is from his ornithological practice of viewing birds through binoculars, which magnify the

bird in relation to its surroundings. He also states that he sees the placement of the bird to be in the environment, rather than in a landscape, and that this in some regards is a direct critique the 18th and 19th century romanticised landscape.²² Binney, therefore, is presenting his birds in a post-humanist way; his work is concerned with the exploration of the birds' experience of their environment, be it natural or built. As an ornithologist, Binney may well have been influenced by the burgeoning environmental movement. From the 1970s–2000s the environmental movement launched numerous successful campaigns to protect native forest and the species who dwell within.²³ While the protection of the indigenous environment could be argued as responding to post-humanist ethics, the subsequent management practices relied on the destruction of “pest” species such as rats and possums, where again humans decide which species is worthy of protection.



Figure 5. Peter Peryer; *Dead Steer*, 1987, silver gelatin print, 190 x 187 mm. By permission of the Estate of Peter Peryer, collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

destined for food, but for some reason discarded dead on the side of a rural road. Here the animal dominates the frame, challenging the viewer to consider the life and death that is an everyday reality in agricultural practice. The landscape of asphalt road, hedges and power poles underpins an industrially controlled, ubiquitous landscape, that is almost invisible. The dead steer is confronting, positioned unavoidably front and centre.

The advent of photography was an important tool allowing early animal rights activists to provide an authoritative representation of the everyday practices that led to animal suffering, and allowed the general public to see inside the slaughterhouse.²⁶ By the 1970s, liberation movements paved the way for the animal liberation movement, which sought to create an awareness for the sentience of animals on a par with humans, and counter what is described as specieist beliefs, elevating the rights of humans over animals.²⁷ At the same time, anti-vivisection movements



Figure 4. Don Binney, *Swoop of the Kotare, Wainamu*, 1980, serigraph, 625 x 456 mm. By permission of Philipa Binney, collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

As noted with Richmond's work, New Zealand's natural environment has been a driver behind both immigration and vacation advertising campaigns since colonial times. There is no suggestion of violence here, the human is absent. Brown²⁴ asserts that, with a few notable exceptions, animals in New Zealand art are rarely portrayed as themselves, as sentient and prescient, but here, without doubt, the native bird is responding to its own laws on its own terms.

Peter Peryer's²⁵ photograph, *Dead Steer*, is an abject image of a bloated cattle beast, dead on the side of the road. Peryer portrays the pastoral as death, brutal and visceral, in a stark black and white image of an animal

flourished in New Zealand, leading to the creation the National Vivisection Action Committee (NVAC) and Save Animals from Exploitation (SAFE).²⁸ There is no doubt that Preyer's image is a critic of the violence inherent in animal husbandry. In an essay by Peryer in 2008, he details his childhood experiences on a Taranaki dairy farm, witnessing practices such as dehorning. Peryer's *Dead Steer* is one of his most well-known and controversial works. When it was exhibited in 1996 in Frankfurt Germany, in the midst of the mad cow disease outbreak in Europe, the New Zealand government (unsuccessfully) attempted to have the work removed as they were worried that this image would suggest New Zealand beef was affected by the disease, and hurt exports of beef at a time when these were already declining.²⁹



Figure 6. Mary Macpherson, *Fabrication 4*, 1988, colour photograph, 275 x 275 mm. By permission of Mary Macpherson, collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

It is worth noting that while looking through the Dunedin Public Art Gallery collection of New Zealand art, we found animals in a pastoral setting were largely absent, it has been argued³⁰ that post-war urbanisation has led the “nationalist eye” toward an “ecologically constructed”, sublime, primordial environment, resulting in the farm animal being largely absent from New Zealand contemporary art. This serves to make Peryer's work all the more important to the post-humanist discourse, as he confronts us with the gritty reality for farmed animals under humanism.

Mary Macpherson's³¹ 1988 photograph, *fabrication 4*, is colour photograph that highlights texture, movement and colour of differing fabrics that adorn humans. In this image, we focus on the dead fox, constructed as a stole, and likely produced in the 1940s, when they were popular for a brief period. By the 1970s, these fox furs were common in second-hand clothing stores or Op shops, and became sought after by young alternative dressers in the 1970s–80s.³² Dunedin indie band, The Verlaines, captured this in their 1987 song *Joed Out*: “.... your hair is as soft as the fox fur you wear...”³³

While the fox is not found in New Zealand, this image represents our predilection for using animal skin or pelts as clothing, for this could easily be possum fur or lamb skin. This is another example of the violence that is acceptable under a humanist ethical position. The fox in Europe is a pest, but perhaps more importantly when this garment was likely produced, fur was a symbol of luxury and slaughter and skinning was not considered unethical within this context. By the 1980s, fur was falling out of favour, as animal liberation groups protested its use. Mooney's furrier actually bought up many vintage fox furs and re-made them into new garments, without the head during this period.³⁴ This image reveals a change in perspective, firstly the humanist right to inflict violence to create a product, but also a hint in the abject gaze of the dead fox, that society is becoming more influenced by post-humanist thinking, such that such practices appear increasingly abhorrent and diminishing for the hunter/farmer, furrier and the customer.

CONCLUSION


As we reflect on the ethical position these works represent, we must keep in mind our earlier statement that our analysis does not change the essential nature of the animal itself but only how our society values or uses them.


The works that display New Zealand's agricultural past are strongly located in a humanist vision in Richmond's romanticised pastoral scene. Hutton's work is also humanist as it is strongly anthropomorphic, represented by

the companion animal the man and his dog. The humanist view is then strongly critiqued by depiction of animals as products. Overall, this reflects our insatiable hunger to control and tame the environment, as depicted by Richmond, alongside the flesh, pelt and dominion, as seen in the work of Ogston, Peryer and Macpherson. Peryer and Macpherson, in particular, illustrate that in this power play, it is the animal who suffers; the animal always dies.

Considering the two works depicting native birds, Ogston's work (where a Kea is slain for pest control thereby denying the bird's inherent sentience) is in stark contrast to Binney's interpretation of the emancipated native bird. Both are native species, but each is treated differently, based on their value to human constructs of the times: the humanist society of the 1800s versus the beginnings of post-humanist thought highlighted within the animal liberation movement of the 1970s onwards.

In conclusion, these works appear, on the surface at least, to represent a maturing of societal mores, and an increasing rejection of humanist perspectives. However, if we dig deeper, increased concern for animal welfare in farmed animals, serves an economic purpose in the marketing of ethical produce. Indeed, protection of native species is not without the loss of other animal lives, and also provides an engaging image for our tourism campaigns. And the place of the companion animal, despite the inherent social contract, is without doubt on our terms and played out within the boundary of human rules.

Jenny Aimers ( ORCID No: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7285-1053>) is a research co-ordinator at Otago Polytechnic, she is a social science researcher with a background in community development and third sector organisational practice and research. She has a life-long interest in art and the human animal connection.

Dr Peter E Walker ( ORCID No: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1491-2153>) is a senior lecturer in social work in the Department of Sociology, Gender and Criminology at the University of Otago. He has previously published on animal ethics in the helping professions and established the postgraduate paper titled "Animals in Social Work" in 2017.

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- 17 David Con Hutton was born in Scotland and arrived in Dunedin, New Zealand in 1870 to take up the position of Drawing Master for the Provincial Government at what would become the Dunedin School of Art. His wash drawings and watercolours were known for their true primitive quality. He exhibited throughout New Zealand and Australia. Una Platts, *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Artists: A Guide and Handbook* (Avon Fine Print, 1980).
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- 20 Don Binney was born in Auckland, and over his career has exhibited widely throughout New Zealand and overseas, describing himself as a figurative painter concerned with the psychic metaphor of the environment. A keen birdwatcher, Binnie described this activity as a passage into the landscape and the opportunity to develop a personal relationship with it "Don Binney - ARTIS Gallery - Artists", 5 February 2013. https://web.archive.org/web/20130205183926/http://artisgallery.co.nz/artists_show.asp?id=132.
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ANIMALS ON DISPLAY: THE ETHICS OF KEEPING ANIMALS

Irena Kennedy

In this essay I will focus on my artistic practice, discussing the dialogue/influence in the use of canine as a companion species and as an accessory and commodity, with ideals of perfection implemented through breed standards set out in dog shows. I include the constructs of the zoo, and its humanistic influence, and how these themes have moulded and adapted my theoretical discourse and art practice. This paper has been written in the time of the Covid 19 lockdown, and because of this world changing event, I have added an epilogue to discuss the impact it may have on the human and non-human animals mentioned in this paper.

ANIMAL OR ACCESSORY

Contrary to lots of dangerous and unethical projection in the Western world that makes domestic canines into furry children, dogs are not about oneself. Indeed, that is the beauty of dogs. They are not a projection, nor a realization of an intention, nor the telos of anything. They are dogs; i.e., a species in obligatory, constitutive, historical, protean relationship with human beings...¹ – Donna Haraway

In her companion species manifesto, Haraway has used terms such as cohabitation, symbiotic relationship, and companion animal in some of her analysis of domesticated dogs' relationship with their human companions. Her terminology, relating to this notion of companion species, speaks to an inter-relationship with non-human animals, which is genuine and equal, and contrasts with terms like master, owner, and parent (all terms of hierarchy). Haraway's referral to the Western world's "furry children", in the opening quote, resonates, when associated with pop culture and media influence. I was reading such texts in 2005, when Paris Hilton was at the height of social influencing, and constant media images of her chihuahua, Tinkerbell, appearing in her hand bag adorned with clothing and jewels matching that of her human companion, set the stage for fashion trends of accessorised companion animals.² Although the use of animals as accessories was not an entirely new concept, the media attention that this drew set off worldwide trends. Adornment of dogs, coupled with dyed hair and painted claws, anthropomorphised the non-human companion.



Figure 1. *Pink Poodle*, image of performance in Bellbird retail shop, photograph by Anne Basquin.



Figure 2. *Pink Poodle*, image Dunedin Public Art Gallery, photograph by Anne Basquin.

Pink Poodle, a sculptural performance-based work I created in 2005, was influenced by this farcical movement, which, in my eyes, seemed cruel and with little thought towards the animal's health and wellbeing. *Pink Poodle* (Figures 1 and 2) was photo documented in various sites around Ōtepoti/Dunedin. The act of carrying and posing with *Pink Poodle* (Figure 2) in the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, clothing shops, make-up shops and on the street, simulated that of the people I was emulating. I wore a pink wig and jewellery to compliment the pink fur and jewellery of my companion.

Carolee Shneemann's evocative work *Infinity Kisses*³ further influenced my work, addressing an intimate and erotic interaction with her non-human companion, and challenging the viewer with the intimacy of a morning kiss shared with her cat. Documented in a photograph in 2004 and a video in 2008, this initiated a dialogue on boundaries between human and non-human companions. The colloquial saying "the dog's lipstick" was used in a literal, erotic manner. For the exhibition of *Pink Poodle*, a lipstick was attached to the tip of the dog's penis. One of the performances was held at MAC make-up store, where I stood evocatively applying a MAC "pink poodle" branded lipstick to my mouth with the sculpted *Pink Poodle* standing by my side. Within the act of application, I addressed the notions of erotic intimacy with my non-human companion.

To create accuracy in sculpting *Pink Poodle*, I researched dog shows and breed standards. The poodle, with its origins as a water retriever for hunting⁴ is obscured by what we see in the modern dog show, sporting foot cuffs and kidney puffs.⁵ United Kingdom Kennel Club statement on breed standards reminds us:

The pedigree breeds we have today are our legacy from the breeders of the past when dogs were bred to perform different jobs, from hunting and guarding to fishing and sledging. In order to ensure that dogs could do these jobs they needed to have certain physical characteristics and the appropriate temperaments. It is the fact that dogs were bred to perform such a wide variety of functions that has given us the diverse range of dogs – small and tall, energetic and laid back – that we now have. Although many dogs may not perform the same functions today, it is those physical attributes laid down in the standards and the "look" of a breed and/or its temperament which make the person decide "I want a dog like that", "I love pugs" or "I must have a whippet".⁶

Although these dogs rarely perform their original task, the reverence and stature survives through a pedigree, the gene pool an evident symbol of status. Akin to buying a specific make of car, papers are issued, signed and stamped to show the authenticity of purchase. The film *Best in Show*⁷, directed by Christopher Guest, presents an accurate account of the strange world of dog breeding, upholding the ideals of perfection that humans place onto their non-human companions. Meanwhile, strong concerns have arisen around the wellbeing of particular breeds where the standards cause inherent ailments: brachycephalic airway syndrome, hip and elbow dysplasia, allergies, dermatitis, early onset cataracts, to name a few. The 2008 BBC One investigative documentary *Pedigree Dogs*⁸, was an exposé on the cruelty that dog shows enact through obsession with beauty and traditions of purity through genetic inbreeding. The commotion caused by this documentary instigated the United Kingdom Kennel Club in 2009 to put a wellness clause into their code of ethics, and launch a review of every pedigree dog breed in the United Kingdom. The late biologist and geneticist Dr John Armstrong's paper titled *The Poodle and the Chocolate Cake*,⁹ discusses the genetic effects of inbreeding pedigree dogs, describing the loss of diversity in genetic strains, causing defects that are visible in particular breeds. He encourages breeders to record their dogs so that weakened strains are not passed on. Whilst kennel clubs have strict breed standards and lists of accredited breeders, due to price and demand, puppy mills and black markets are regularly used, perpetuating animal rights breaches and genetic malformations.

In 2006, I created the work *Best in Show*, exhibiting nine sculptures of purebred dogs: one Dalmatian sire (Figure 3), two Chihuahua sires and one stud (Figure 4), and four Pug studs and one sire (Figure 5). Creating an imbalance of breeding options, paralleled the statistics of dominance of one sex to the other; relating to the dichotomy of ideal breeding pedigrees. In my sculpting methodologies, I applied the American Kennel Club breed standards, adhering to the strict size and body characteristics. This also includes eye shape, coat colour, forms of markings, body stature, and poise. The



Figure 3. Irena Kennedy, *Dalmatian*, 2006, fiberglass, flock, glass eyes, photograph by Irena Kennedy.



Figure 4. Irena Kennedy, *Chihuahuas*, 2006, fiberglass, flock, glass eyes, photograph by Irena Kennedy.



Figure 5. Irena Kennedy, *Pug*, 2006, fiberglass, flock, glass eyes, artwork by, photograph by Irena Kennedy.



Figure 6. Irena Kennedy, *Best in Show*, 2006, photograph by Irena Kennedy.

installation of this work was staged in a walled-in room that the viewer could only visually access by crawling on hands and knees into a dog cage (Figure 6). This controlled and positioned the viewer, executing a role reversal with the companion animal being the alpha; although the dogs were chained to the walls a dichotomy of control was present.



Figure 7. Irena Kennedy, *Bronze Chihuahuas*, 2013, photograph by Irena Kennedy.

In 2013, I created the work *Trophies* (two sculpted bronze chihuahuas; Figure 7), continuing themes from the 2006 work *Best in Show*. Further acknowledging the role of the maker into the discourse, akin to Gepetto the puppet maker from *Pinocchio*, I attempted to make something that is alive but faced with the stark reality of being beheld as an object. The material bronze, suggested the notion of third place to centre the idea of being unable to achieve full perfection in creation.

REMOVING THE ANIMAL FROM THE ZOO

The zoo animal is treated in a different manner to the companion species, exoticised by its wild animal stature, and captured as a symbol in its historic rhetoric of status and colonisation. In 2008–2009 I volunteered over a six month period at La Sende Verde (translated: Path of Green) animal sanctuary in Bolivia, South America. Working first hand with rescued animals in their natural habitat, this included monkeys, macaws, spectacled bears, ocelots, and rescued dogs. Animals that arrived at the sanctuary had been rescued from humans. They had been habituated, and this habituation meant that they were unable to be returned to the wild due to a low chance of survival (lacking hunting skills and unable to determine the intentions of humans as care-givers versus hunters/trappers). Within the ethos of the sanctuary, the animals were premier. Although paying visitors were received, the animals' health and wellbeing were foremost. Visits were short and if an animal became distressed, then visitors were asked to leave. The visitors provided the income to feed and house the animals and workers; as a not-for-profit and a non-governmental organisation they relied on external support. There are many examples of the different living situations that the animals came from, but each animal that came to La Sende Verde arrived with its separate story of abduction or being bred into captivity. For example, it is common for capuchin monkeys to be used as substitute human animal children; one named Martin arrived at the animal sanctuary with an entire wardrobe of clothes, and most of his teeth missing from decay brought about by the consumption of sweets. Wild and exoticised animals are deemed desirable, and humans aspire to own and control these animals as a status of power.

On returning to Aotearoa, these same animals that I had so closely worked with, were kept captive in zoos, situated in man-made habitats with formatted boundaries and the human animal positioned as the viewer. Ideas generated from my Bolivian experiences, led me to re-examine the constructs of the zoo, and formed the topic of my masters thesis, *Traversing the Zoo: A Studio Research Project Examining Thresholds Between Nature and Spatial Practice*.¹⁰

Within my applied art work and research, I removed the physicality/positive space of the animal, and focused on the negative space/surroundings. I refer to this in the terms of life drawing and how negative space is highlighted, referencing the animal through its physical absence in my work. Thereby, its presence is both known and felt. Through this absence, the objects within the space are highlighted, as is the structure, enclosure, or naturalistic environment. With the removal of the animal, the staging of the viewer is foregrounded. Spaces are addressed architecturally, manipulating the viewer. Illusion is staged as John Berger writes:

“The Décor, accepting these elements as tokens, sometimes reproduces them to create pure illusion as in the case of painted prairies or painted rock pools at the back of the boxes for small animals. Sometimes it merely adds further tokens to suggest something of the animal's original landscape the dead branches of a tree for monkey, artificial rocks for bears, pebbles and shallow water for crocodiles. These added tokens serve two distinct purposes: For the spectator they are like theatre props; for the animal they constitute the bare minimum of an environment in which they can physically exist.”¹¹

Berger describes nature backdrops as giving a visual aid to “suggest something of the animal's original landscape.” The zoo thus mimics nature to provide the guise of origin, although many of these sets are crudely executed. In recent years, zoos have spent more time and finances on developing theme park-like exhibits, with artificial nature environments. The Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha, USA¹² employed the Larson Company to design the “Lied Jungle” exhibit. This company designed and fabricated artificial nature, employed by the Zoo to go into the jungle of Costa Rica to take direct casts of trees and rocks. These were taken back to Omaha and press-molded onto cement replicas for the exhibit.

The philosopher Timothy Morton, in his book *Ecology Without Nature*, discusses the word “Nature”, its over-use in the English language, and how it has lost its original meaning (this can be compared to man-made nature environments, with leaves and trees being sculpted from man-made materials):

"Nature, a Transcendental term in a material mask, stands at a potentially infinite series of other terms that collapse into it, otherwise known as a metonymic list: Fish, grass, mountain, air, chimpanzees, love, soda water, freedom of choice, heterosexuality, free markets... Nature. A metonymic series becomes a metaphor. Writing conjures this notoriously slippery term, useful to ideologies of all kinds in its slipperiness, in its refusal to maintain any consistency."¹³



Figure 8. Irena Kennedy, *Cement Rock*, 2010, cement, photograph by Irena Kennedy.



Figure 9. Irena Kennedy, Anteroom artist residency exhibition, 2013, installation view photograph by Irena Kennedy.

Within my artistic practice I began making what I have termed "nature objects". These objects pose the question: what is nature? Initial works dealt with the singular or the banal, such as the cement rock (Figure 8). In 2013, I was Artist in Residence at the Anteroom in Port Chalmers, Ōtepoti/Dunedin. Over the three week period that I was there, I explored the idea of creating artificial zoo natures. Banal in its execution, I sculpted a polystyrene cement waterfall. Also crude in its implementation, a mechanical pump, recycled water from the bottom to the top, emitting a sound not from nature but of a mechanical "whir". Logs were included as casts of dead native trees, referencing death masks - white, chalk-like and ceramic. The objects were placed with the notion of sparsity and loneliness (Figure 9), and the viewer was able to interact with the space as the human animal. This work was a precursor to other created nature objects. Glass leaves (Figure 10) were individually sculpted and cast, in an attempt to recreate nature in a material that is vulnerable, and holds romantic notions. Aluminum branches (Figure 11), titled *Perch*, sculpted from metal, invoke a discourse surrounding the sterility necessary in zoo enclosures to keep good health amongst the animals.

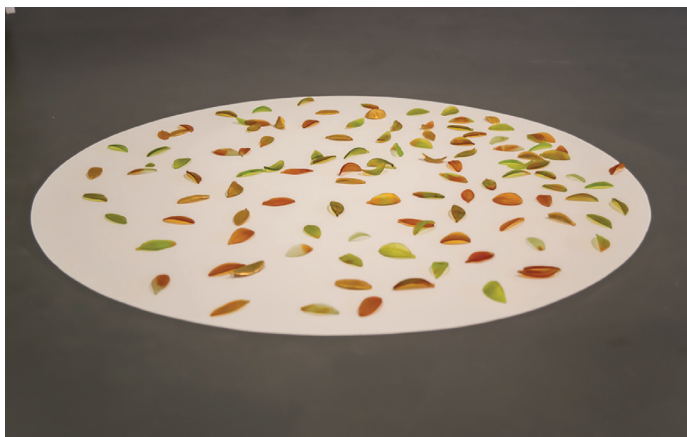


Figure 10. Irena Kennedy, *Glass Leaves*, 2014, cast glass, photograph by Theresa Harrison.



Figure 11. Irena Kennedy, *Perch*, 2014, aluminium, photograph by Theresa Harrison.

Artificial nature and man-made environments have played a significant role in my art works. These environments, that captive animals are expected to spend their living days in, seem so far from their land of origin. The modern zoo is focusing more on bioclimatic enclosures, including species diversity, environmental weather control, and with spaces for the animals to hide. Some focus on enrichment-based enclosures. The chimpanzee enclosure at Wellington Zoo (New Zealand), features an outside area with climbing frames and a large play space. The inside feeding area is the old enclosure, and appears cold and archaic, with its tiled floors and the only stimulus in rope and tyre swings (Figure 12). These enrichment enclosures are seen to help keep the animal stimulated and engaged, instigating play. For the exhibition *Traversing the Zoo*, I also produced enrichment devices, mimicking those found in zoos. The idea that such a device might stimulate an animal for a prolonged period of time, saddens me, as the animals I worked with (particularly the monkeys) moved quickly between tasks. A ceramic tyre swing (Figure 13) was exhibited in *Traversing the Zoo*. I sculpted this in white clay, to enhance the feeling of fragility around time, with the suggestion of sterility creating a feeling of loneliness.



Figure 12. The indoor chimpanzee enclosure Wellington Zoo, 2013, photograph by Irena Kennedy.



Figure 13. Irena Kennedy, *Ceramic Tyre Swing*, 2014, white clay, photograph by Theresa Harrison.



Figure 14. Irena Kennedy, *Traversing the Zoo*, 2014, photograph by Theresa Harrison.

I have been unable to address all the complexities of this project here, and the discourse it entailed. Instead, I highlight the staging of space that animals are placed in. I opened with my work in an animal sanctuary, to highlight the differences between the taxonomy of the zoo and its replicas of nature, and a place for humans to view and be entertained by their non-human counterparts (in juxtaposition to the animal sanctuary where the non-human animals are the priority).

A further installation art work from *Traversing the Zoo* (Figure 14) presents minimal chosen “nature” objects and an enrichment device, carefully spaced to promote the negative space where the animal would reside. The spacing of objects aids the feeling of loneliness, and the static nature of the objects also provides a feeling of loss. The viewer has access to the internal space of the installation, where on entering, they become the human animal, transformed from viewer to the viewed. The sculpted objects included in this installation included: a glass waterfall, tyre swing, two white ceramic logs, and two aluminum perches. The nature objects were based on the natural environment found in Aotearoa/New Zealand, for a work exhibited in Melbourne, Australia. Thus, like the “Lied Jungle”, it became a man-made copy as representation of actualised nature.

EPILOGUE

The work included here reminds the reader of the power/control dynamic that humans have with non-human animals, as objects of desire, these non-human animals are commodified, objectified, anthropomorphized, and set on stages for viewing. Statements of equality between human and non-human in the pedigree world of dog shows are insufficient; unless there is a societal change, the animal will always come out as the lesser. When zoo environments treat the animal as premium and stand true to their statements of retaining animals for conservation purposes in the name of species survival, rather than providing the staged spectacle for the viewer, then animals may have some of the respect they deserve.

I have been writing this paper during the Covid 19 outbreak, a time when a lot of the world has had to forcibly slow. Humans will not be the only ones to feel affected by this pathogen, their non-human counterparts will also receive the blow. While in lockdown, programs like the Tiger King “documentary” have been released online. What seems, on the face, to be about large exotic cats, rather highlights the dysfunction of humans and their desire to own and acquire an animal that should be wild. Even as the viewer of this spectacle, we are drawn away from the animals and into the farcical story of the human participants. Like many animals in this article, human-centric needs outweigh that of our non-human counterparts. My thoughts have also gone out to the animals that appear in dog shows. What will happen to the pedigree puppies born at this time? Dog breeding will not stop during the lockdown, however, the economic impacts may affect the sales and commodity value of these dogs. There are many newspaper articles about the struggles for zoos, when they rely on visitor payments to cover the cost of feeding the animals and staffing the facilities. There is uncertainty in what the future will hold for these animals. These news articles prompted me to make contact with the animal sanctuary La Sende Verde, where I had volunteered, and they are struggling to cover their US\$800/day food costs, and are worried about veterinary and food supplies diminishing. With no volunteers, they now rely on donations from first world countries, where they will be up against a plethora of other organizations in desperate need of capital.

My hope is that the non-human animal is not sacrificed in this time... my awareness tells me otherwise.

Irena Kennedy is a multidisciplinary artist, holding a Master's Degree in Fine Art from Monash University Melbourne, Australia. Sculpting in mixed mediums Irena has exhibited in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, and Thailand.

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- 3 Carolee Shneemann, *Infinity Kisses II*, 1990-99, photogrid, 2004, 24 self-shot 35mm Ilfachrome prints, 48 x 56 cm (each), The Merchant House, <https://www.halesgallery.com/news/251/>
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- 8 Jemima Harrison (Producer), *Pedigree Dogs*, BBC One, (2008).
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KYLIE MATHESON: CERAMIC ARTIST

Pam McKinlay

A butterfly alights delicately on a fox's nose. Is it an unintended passing encounter or a greeting of two unexpected friends: Butterfly and Fox? We bring our own dialogue to this silent moment of innocence and trust. Kylie Matheson's hand-built sculptures evoke an emotional response in the viewer, of curiosity and wonder. Drawing inspiration from animals and their behaviour, Matheson focuses on the secret relationships between her characters and draws in the viewer, to create their own narratives between the ceramic duos and scenes she creates between them.



Figure 1. Kylie Matheson, *Fox and Butterfly*, 2019, ceramic, hand-built paper clay, oxide wash and engobe, 280 × 240 × 250 mm.



Figure 2. Kylie Matheson, *Grizzly and Queen Rabbit*, 2019, ceramic, hand-built paper clay, satin glaze, 280 × 250 × 340 mm.

ODD COUPLES – SECRET WORLDS

Grizzly and Queen Rabbit are another unlikely couple. Grizzly and Queen Rabbit's conversations are a series of vignettes which chronicle the relationship of two friends. Grizzly is strong and gentle, an older and wiser character. Rabbit is an independent soul, feisty and stubborn, making her own way in the world, but she values her friend Grizzly and the reciprocity of their friendship. The protection offered by Grizzly is metaphorically asserted by Grizzly's size and bulk and juxtaposed against the lightness of touch in the creation of Queen Rabbit. The pair are modelled again and again mid conversation. What are they saying? Listen closely. Each piece adds to the ongoing story of Grizzly and Queen Rabbit in their unfolding exchanges. Look closely.

OTHER-WORLD ADVENTURERS



Figure 3. Kylie Matheson, *The Drifters*, 2019, ceramic, hand-built paper clay, oxide wash and engobe, 170mm x 90mm

Rabbit goes on long adventures. There's no owl and the pussycat aboard her green vessel, just Rabbit setting off alone into the unknown in her small wooden skiff. Adrift on a windowsill, mantle-piece or table. Sometimes peering over the side, or at the bow looking for land ho, sometimes lying back with legs crossed in contemplation of the clouds in the sky. Always on the way, never arriving.




Figure 4. Kylie Matheson, *Polar Bear*, 2019, ceramic, hand-built paper clay, oxide wash and engobe, 100mm x 100mm x 110mm.

White Bear puts his paw in a glassy puddle of glacial blue melt water. The gesture is highly symbolic at a time of heightened climate change awareness. Is she standing at the edge of the precipitous ice sheet or on the edge of a shrinking iceberg? Either way her fate is the same, sink or swim and into the water she must go. She looks up before she takes the plunge. One last look to see if there are other options on the near horizon. One last look, our eyes locking, imploring us to act. In the latest of Matheson's creations, the animals are not always the masters and mistresses of their own fate. They break the fourth wall, and worlds become one.

Matheson engages the viewer in a world of figurines in conversation, in action, at rest and on their way. On their way to where you might ask? Don't ask me. We must cross the boundary and step into this other-world, arrested in the moment with the animals we encounter in front of us. At once playful and thoughtful, Kylie's sculptures reveal a raw vulnerability in the relationships between the creatures, capturing a delicate balance between the big and the small, the tough and the fragile. A world of trust and reciprocity between all creatures.

Kylie Matheson is a practising Dunedin ceramic artist. Kylie has won numerous awards including the Cleveland National Art Award, been guest artist for Ceramics NZ and received a merit award in the 2019 Portage Ceramic awards.

Pam McKinlay ( ORCID No: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1731-6437>) works part-time for the Dunedin School of Art and Research Office at Otago Polytechnic. She has an academic background in applied science and history of art and is an artist who is a maker predominantly in weaving, ceramics and photography.

JAPANESE ANIMAL TOURISM AND THE KAWAII (CUTE) AESTHETIC

Émilie Crossley

INTRODUCTION

Japan is rapidly developing a global reputation as a tourism hot-spot for animal lovers. Opportunities for tourists to interact with animals can be found across a range of settings throughout the country, from the famous snow monkeys of Nagano, to free-ranging deer in Nara, to the assortment of cat, and other animal cafés in Tokyo. Many such attractions are marketed as a chance to experience animals that are described as “cute”, “adorable” or “fluffy”. These portrayals draw on the “kawaii” aesthetic, which is a prominent feature of Japanese popular culture. Kawaii is a culturally specific form of cuteness that often references animal characters or animal-like qualities. While sociological explorations of the cultural phenomenon abound, the implications of characterising real animals as kawaii, such as those used in the tourism industry, have received limited academic attention. However, recently the welfare of Japan’s cute animals has come under scrutiny from international tourists, sparking vocal criticism on social media and even petitions calling for unethical attractions to be closed down. I explore how kawaii has shaped the terrain of contemporary Japanese animal tourism and how contestation of the aesthetic is opening up debate regarding animal welfare and ethics in Japan.

KAWAII: THE CULT OF CUTE

The kawaii, or “cute”, aesthetic has become an integral part of Japanese popular culture. Kawaii is a ubiquitous term used to describe a range of cultural artefacts, including fictional characters such as Hello Kitty or Pikachu, animal-like regional mascots known as “yuru-kyara”, bento boxes containing rice balls shaped to look like characters or animals known as “kyaraben”, and, of course, cat cafés. The term is also commonly used in reference to a hyper-feminine, girlish fashion style, which often features pink babydoll dresses, knee-high socks, frills and bows reminiscent of children’s clothes, and animal ear headbands. While the domestic appeal of kawaii cannot be denied, the aesthetic has also proven to be a valuable, exportable commodity as part of the national “Cool Japan” brand and ideology.¹ Figures such as Hello Kitty have become internationally recognisable icons of Japanese popular culture.² So successful has the globalisation of kawaii been that many people outside of Japan will intuitively recognise this version of cuteness, with its pastel colours, childlike innocence and anthropomorphised animals, even if they have never heard of its Japanese name.

While kawaii translates as “cute” in English, the Japanese term has a broader semantic meaning. Kawaii is derived from “kawahayushi”, which is used to describe someone blushing in embarrassment³ and the word also shares an etymological link with “kawaisō”, meaning pitiable or pathetic.⁴ Thus, while the Anglophone and Japanese terms both bring to mind smallness, youth and innocence, kawaii carries additional connotations of embarrassment, obedience, weakness and dependency. There is also a nostalgic element to kawaii, invoking memories of childhood warmth, sweetness and comfort.⁵ Kawaii, or cuteness, is often conceptualised relationally rather than as a property belonging to an object or person; it is understood as a “performative act expressing affinity”⁶ or a “mode of regard”⁷ that establishes a relationship of empathy, care and intimacy. Parkinson emphasises the power dynamic inherent in such relationality,

suggesting that cuteness relies on inequality between “the diminished weaker object and the larger stronger subject.”⁸ While kawaii provides an outlet for the desire to nurture, for some the desire is to be the one who is nurtured. This relates to the Japanese concept of “amae”, which denotes a childish desire to be indulged, taken care of and loved.⁹

As a cultural phenomenon, kawaii emerged in the 1970s, following a period of social and political unrest. One of the first expressions of kawaii to be noticed was in the handwriting of female high school students in Japan, who began using childish, rounded letters and characters, and punctuating their text with little drawings.¹⁰ In response to the prevailing cultural norms of seriousness, rigidity and responsibility, these girls mounted a “graphological rebellion” that used cuteness to challenge adult authority.¹¹ Other appraisals suggest that a love of cuteness is more deeply rooted in Japanese culture and can be traced back to the Edo Period when miniature carved “netsuke” were popular collectable items.¹² Equally, some credit the artist Rune Naito as a pioneer in the aesthetic of kawaii through his magazine illustrations of baby-faced (“nitōshin”) girls in the 1950s.¹³ Regardless of its origins, kawaii has faced a domestic backlash, particularly from feminists who perceive the aesthetic as fetishizing and disempowering girls.¹⁴ Outside of Japan, the reception has been mixed and, while many have embraced and emulated the kawaii aesthetic, it has also been labelled an “obsession” that has promoted a “cult of cute.”¹⁵

KAWAII ANIMALS IN JAPAN

Animality is a prominent feature of kawaii, and Masabuchi lists “animal-like qualities” as one of the seven elements that define cute in the Japanese context.¹⁶ Stylised depictions of animals and animal characters appear on consumer products such as clothes, accessories, toys, games and food. Animal-like mascots known as “yuru-kyara” have been used as a city branding strategy in an effort to increase tourist visitation, and each year Japan hosts a Grand Prix to find the country’s most popular mascot.¹⁷ One of the most iconic yuru-kyara is Kumamon, the mascot of the Kumamoto prefecture. Kumamon has the appearance of an anthropomorphic bear with rosy red cheeks, a wide smile, and a perpetual look of surprise on his face. While Kumamon is instantly recognisable as an ursine mascot, the official word from the Kumamoto Prefecture is that he is in fact not a bear, although we do not learn what sort of creature he is instead.¹⁸ Similarly, many are surprised to learn that Hello Kitty is actually a little girl rather than the cat she resembles.¹⁹ Kawaii representations are thus often ambiguous, leaving the viewer uncertain whether they are encountering an anthropomorphised animal or an animalesque human.

Animals as cute characters and mascots have been subject to research, particularly given the recent rise of “contents tourism” – a term originating in Japan that denotes travel motivated by narratives, characters, and other aspects of popular culture.²⁰ However, what has been left relatively unexplored is how Japan’s obsession with cuteness impacts the lives of real animals. A lucrative industry has emerged to cater for the desires of those who choose to have “fur babies” rather than human babies²¹; a preference that has been problematic for Japan given its declining birth rate and aging population. Instead of procreating, many Japanese people choose to shower affection on their hugely indulged pets. The sight of small dogs dressed in cute clothes being pushed around the streets in strollers, just like babies, is not uncommon. This expression of kawaii is arguably benign, at least in terms of the effect on the companion animals. However, more ethically questionable practices can be found in the tourism and hospitality industries, where animals are put on display for the benefit of paying customers. Tourism blogs compiling lists of the “top five natural kawaii places to visit in Japan”²² or the “cutest things to do in Tokyo”²³ often direct prospective tourists to animal attractions. The power of animals as tangible embodiments of kawaii is clear and, as one blogger puts it, “Nothing screams kawaii more than places filled with loveable furry animals.”²⁴

A prominent example of kawaii used in animal attractions is the phenomenon of cat cafés, which emerged initially for the domestic market as part of the “iyashi” (healing) boom that followed the economic recession of the 1990s. Particularly fashionable in Tokyo, cat cafés provide relaxing, intimate spaces that allow urbanites to get away from the stresses of everyday life and to experience an aesthetic of domesticity that has become unattainable to many.²⁵ In this context, feline cuteness is framed as therapeutic and the cats’ softness and carefree demeanour are echoed

in the atmosphere that the cafés actively seek to cultivate. The iyashi qualities of cats include “their physical warmth and the visceral, pleasurable texture of their fur.”²⁶ Plourde notes that cat cafés are often decorated in ways that are “childlike, innocent, and non-threatening”, using pastel colours, round shapes, soft furniture and cosy blankets – all elements that are synergistic with the kawaii aesthetic. While Japan’s cat cafés reached the peak of their popularity in 2009, the craze sparked a new generation of animal cafés. In addition to cat cafés, one can now visit cafés featuring dogs, capybaras, piglets, goats, hedgehogs, owls, rabbits, otters, chinchillas, fennec foxes, parrots, hamsters and flying squirrels. While data on this new wave of animal cafés are limited, it seems likely that international tourists are at least one intended target market.

HARRY – a hedgehog café in Tokyo – invites customers to enjoy a cup of coffee and to “play with cute animals” that are “soft, warm, and at times cheeky.”²⁷ HARRY’s website is adorned with stylised illustrations of little smiling hedgehogs and a photograph of two hedgehogs on the homepage is overlaid by the words “so cute!” that appear repeatedly over their heads. These hedgehogs are set against a pastel pink background, channelling the kawaii aesthetic. HARRY is listed as the number one kawaii thing to do in Tokyo, according to an online list published this year.²⁸ The hedgehogs can be observed in glass tanks, fed mealworms and handled using special gloves to protect customers against their spines as, despite the website’s suggestion, hedgehogs are not all that soft. Customers enthusiastically document their encounters with the hedgehogs, reporting “cuteness overload” at the “overwhelmingly adorable” creatures.²⁹ Common features that are identified as cute include their small size, little pink snouts, round ears, yawning and sleepiness. One blogger reports that she “just about melted inside” when a hedgehog curled up in a ball and fell asleep in her hands, adding that a photograph of her partner holding the hedgehog “looked like he was a proud father; holding his new-born baby for the very first time.”³⁰

In a very different setting, Zao Fox Village in Nagano Prefecture is advertised as being home to “100 fluffy cute foxes”³¹ and foreign travel bloggers have enthusiastically described the attraction as the “cutest”³² and “fluffiest”³³ place on Earth. The “village” can be classified as an animal park, or small niche zoo, that allows the foxes to roam freely in its woodland setting. Some foxes, however, are kept in cages and cubs are available to cuddle at certain times of the year. Its website features a smiling, winking yellow fox in the logo, images of recently born cubs, and a rather comical photograph of a fox wearing a train conductor’s hat during its inauguration as a stationmaster for Shiroishizao Station. The kawaii aesthetic presents differently in relation to foxes compared with hedgehogs; it is not so much their small stature that visitors adore as their “fluffy mischievousness”.³⁴ The foxes are reported as being a bit naughty with a tendency to nibble at tourists’ clothes and bags. However, given that visitors are prohibited from touching the foxes, this mischief is often seen as a welcome interaction and all part of the animals’ charm. Many tourists recommend visiting the village in winter when the foxes’ coats are thickest and fluffiest; the snow providing the perfect backdrop for their bright fulvous fur and endowing the park with a magical, fairy-tale quality.³⁵ Similar to the hedgehogs, when the foxes are curled up asleep they form that familiar soft, round, chubby shape that is suggestive of kawaii.

Use of the kawaii aesthetic in the branding, marketing and physical setup of Japanese animal attractions has implications for how tourists perceive and experience these sites. On the simplest level, the kawaii label can act as a drawcard that entices tourists to visit animal attractions, ensuring that businesses will be listed on “top ten” lists of cute things to do in Japan and reframing animals as a cultural tourism experience. It is also possible that kawaii, as a superimposed frame of reference, affects how tourists see the animals at these attractions, heightening their awareness of certain physical or behavioural characteristics such as smallness, fluffiness, softness, roundness, sleepiness and cheekiness. Equally, the atmosphere of childlike innocence that the kawaii aesthetic provides, primes tourists for a benign, guiltless experience. Positive visual cues can be found everywhere, from the smiling cartoon hedgehogs and foxes depicted on the HARRY and Zao Fox Village websites to these same characters that welcome visitors onsite, emblazoned on signs, all of which is designed to provide reassurance and comfort. In addition, animal behaviours that might be found problematic in another context find an explanation in kawaii. Hedgehogs yawn not because they are exhausted from constant daytime handling, but simply because they are being cute. Foxes bite at the bags of visitors not out of boredom or because they are hungrily searching for food, but because they are expressing their cute mischievousness.

ANIMAL AESTHETICS AND ETHICS

Kito argues that Japan's understanding of animal ethics and treatment of animals in the tourism industry are problematic, going so far as to liken some Japanese animal attractions to a form of "dark tourism".³⁶ This (mis) treatment of animals can be related to a pervasive anthropocentrism that infuses the tourism industry globally and to which Japan is not immune.³⁷ The animal attractions reviewed in this paper have proven to be polarising, with not all visitors gleefully experiencing "cuteness overload". A cursory glance at tourism review websites such as TripAdvisor reveals tourists' perceptions of the "unethical" or even "cruel" treatment of the animals. In the case of HARRY, tourists express concern about keeping the nocturnal hedgehogs awake during the day, inadequate supervision of customers to ensure that the hedgehogs are being correctly handled, a lack of enrichment in their glass tanks, and signs that the hedgehogs are stressed, exhausted and depressed. In the case of Zao Fox Village, concerns include foxes being kept in cages, sedation of foxes for petting, fighting resulting from overcrowding and competition over food, poor health including open wounds and malnourishment, and disturbance of sleeping foxes (which are also naturally nocturnal). Indeed, the conditions at Zao Fox Village have caused such consternation that an online petition has been set up calling for the facility to be closed down.³⁸

Mkono and Holder conceive of social media as digital spaces of collective moral reflexivity, which signal heightened public engagement in human-animal recreational ethics.³⁹ Meaning and morality, in relation to tourist experience, are routinely engaged with, co-created and contested through online forums. Kawaii has thus become embroiled in online debate regarding animal welfare and ethics. In the case of Zao Fox Village, enthusiastic blogs and vlogs branding the facility as the "cutest" and "fluffiest" place on Earth have been rebuked by online responses exposing why, to quote one author, it is "not the cutest place on Earth".⁴⁰ In the comments of this particular blog entry, the word "cute" appears frequently between inverted commas, hinting at suspicions that the term has come to be used deceptively, concealing a dark reality. For some, kawaii has been revealed as a marketing ploy and product of media hype. However, not everyone agrees that cruelty exists behind the smiling face of the cartoon animals beckoning us to visit these attractions. Satisfied customers argue that the appearance or behaviour of animals that can appear disturbing is often perfectly natural. Patchy fur, taken as a sign of poor health, can result from shedding in the summer to keep the foxes cool. Fighting over food is a normal way for foxes to assert their dominance. And while foxes and hedgehogs are indeed nocturnal in the wild, it is possible for domesticated animals to adapt to new routines, much like house cats who are naturally crepuscular (active mainly at dawn and dusk).

The intersection between the kawaii aesthetic and animal ethics is complex. It is widely accepted that the animals we find cute display morphological neoteny: juvenile physical traits such as large eyes, a big head, round body, short limbs and soft textures.⁴¹ These features, also referred to as the "kindchenschema" (baby schema)⁴², remind us of human babies and trigger the cute response. We are particularly drawn to mammalian neoteny and baby mammals, such as puppies and kittens, represent the height of cute. Estren argues that neoteny presents a barrier in animal ethics, making us more inclined to divert research and conservation efforts towards cute animals at the expense of the "non-cute".⁴³ However, even for those animals designated as cute, relationships with humans can be problematic. May argues that the anthropomorphism of cute presents an "imperial force that brings everything under human sway", resisting any acceptance or understanding of Otherness.⁴⁴ However, he also suggests that anthropomorphism can be conceptualised more favourably as an attempt to humanize the Other and extend our circle of moral concern and empathy. It is this tension that plays out in Japanese animal attractions; tourists are called upon by kawaii to adore animals, yet in the process they risk shielding themselves from the inherent unknowability of another species. While the desire to care for animals may be admirable, without a solid knowledge base about them we may inadvertently cause harm. Finally, Parkinson reminds us that cuteness "invites care through the affective draw of inequalities of power".⁴⁵ Is such a relation of care, premised upon the belief that animals are weak and in need of human protection, ethical or desirable?

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have shown how the popular kawaii aesthetic has implications for animals used in Japan's tourism industry. Cute sells, and Japan's quirky brand of cute has proven to be particularly lucrative. While previous research has explored how kawaii practices shape anthropomorphic animal characters, mascots and merchandise, relatively little attention has been devoted to how real animals are affected by their designation as cute. I have identified how the kawaii aesthetic is used to market animal attractions in Japan and to disarm tourists with their façade of innocence. Tourists trying to make sense of their experiences engage in collective moral reflexivity via social media, which has drawn the terms "kawaii" and "cute" into contention. Some report the condition or behaviour of animals that, while at first appearing to be cute, indicate potential animal neglect and cruelty. The anthropomorphising tendency of kawaii reveals an ethical quandary, both engendering empathy with other species and risking harm by resisting an understanding of animal Otherness in all its wondrous complexity. It is this potential for care and for harm that must be weighed up when gauging the ethical value of Japanese animal attractions.

What the future holds for Japan's animal tourism industry depends both on customer demand and government regulations. Mindful of the rise in scrutiny and criticism that the sector has faced in recent years, some animal tourism businesses are adapting. For example, the cat café franchise, Neco Republic, is now working with animal shelters in an effort to rehouse stray cats through their cafés.⁴⁶ Increasingly, travel blogs and tourism websites are including statements regarding the ethical status of particular animal attractions, encouraging consumers to be more discerning. Also, as I have indicated, tourists are beginning to question naturalised labels such as "kawaii" and "cute" that are used to promote animal tourism. We are currently at a pivotal moment in the history of global tourism; disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is leading many scholars, practitioners and activists to re-envision what tourism may look like in the future. While there will be immense pressure to rebuild a viable industry post-pandemic, there is a chance, and perhaps a desire, to rebuild with sustainability, ethics and the welfare of animals in mind.⁴⁷

Dr Émilie Crossley is a tourism researcher whose work draws on social psychoanalytic theory to approach the psychological in tourism in a non-reductive, culturally engaged way. Her research explores tourist subjectivity, cosmopolitan empathy, and reflexivity. Émilie's research has been published in international journals including *Tourism Geographies* and *Tourism Recreation Research*.

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HUMAN NATURE

Tori Clearwater

HOW DOES ANTHROPOMORPHISM AFFECT HOW HUMANS SEE NATURE IN CONTEMPORARY ART?

Animals for many years have been portrayed by humans in countless different forms, as we attempt to understand, capture and control their presence. In modern times we have begun to question the implications of portraying animals, as we seek to define, dominate and understand them in our human minds. In my work I explore human-animal relationships, as well as looking at the environment and the impacts humans have on their surroundings.

Humans attempt to understand the world by projecting meanings and feelings upon animals and wildlife. We surround ourselves with a constructed view of reality, a world in which we, at the top, control all that is below. This anthropocentric way we view animals and nature, and how this effects conservation and environmental movements, is what I aim to address in my sculptural works. By breaking down and representing animals, I deal with the complex issues associated with the animal form, with the intention of conveying to the general public, awareness of the current state of the environment and our relationship with our ecosystem. In this essay I examine the way anthropomorphism affects how humans see nature in contemporary art, by looking at human relationships with different animals, how we use them in our society, and how this shapes conversations about animals in art. These ideas have influenced my work in many different ways.

This is a conversation about animals on the edge of extinction as well as on the edge of society. Humans have a truly unique view of our environment, one often of control and separation, we partake in wildlife tours and observe from behind a screen. Our interactions in nature are constricted and distant. As Malamud stated in "Animals On film", "We don't like to think much about wild, natural animals, because we have just about extinguished wildness and nature. We prefer our animals framed, domesticated, dressed up for our spectacles".¹ This way we view animals, has caused a separation; no longer do we see ourselves as part of the environment but something better and above. We own land, and own animals, we see everything as a commodity that can be controlled. This understanding of animals is deeply ingrained in our society. Starting from a young age, we see depictions of animals on screens and in stories that portray the animal in a certain way, many important lessons and phrases are founded on it.² This use of animals in popular culture has had an impact on how the animal is viewed, as they often become a symbol for something very human.³

The way we use animals introduces challenges for conservation efforts, as certain animals have specific meanings placed upon them. We are more likely to protect some species because of this effect.⁴ For example, when animals are projected as killers and beasts, this image makes it hard for protection groups to gather support and donations for their cause, as people see the animal as frightening and not worth protecting.⁵ This has especially impacted shark conservation, for although shark attacks are rare, movies like 'Jaws' have conceived a threatening image.⁶ In contrast to this, certain animals have had great success in conservation by being portrayed as lovable, cute, and clumsy beings.⁷ This portrayal plays on our hearts and makes us wish to protect what we see as a rather funny, silly animal.⁸ This has been hugely successful, especially for animals like the panda and sloth, with videos of

tumbling pandas and memes of sloths making us feel like we have a relationship with these animals as we see them as children or reflections of ourselves.⁹

Representing animals, even with the best intentions, will unavoidably present some challenges as we cannot help but see the world with human eyes and be influenced by the culture and history that surrounds us. Any images we produce are a reflection of the human gaze, it is not “real”. We cannot depict the real animal, as the image is truly just an image and one crafted by us, depicting often what we want to see, not necessarily what is actually there. We tend to depict the beautiful animal, the animal that relates to us. Bearing this in mind, I believe the animal form can, and will, be used to convey a message. We cannot ignore their important role in history and how this has impacted our society. As Baker puts it: “The actual question is what will the animal yet be made to signify?”¹⁰

Photographer Nick Brandt captures images of wild animals, mainly from Africa, and then manipulates the image by juxtaposing it with another time. One of his collections, titled *Inherit The Dust*¹¹, placed “natural” images of living animals back into an environment that they once inhabited, one now dominated by humans. These animals now inhabit as ghosts, a whisper of the past, part of another life and time.¹² These images show the domination and separation of humans from their environment, as the animal is the central focus and seems “human” as the shots portray their loss¹³, while the “real” human figures often appear faceless and inconsequential. This is ironic, because although the animal is the “ghost”, the humans seem less present than the constructed animal image, as decay and squalor swallow individuals and amplify our collective impact. Hope is present yet fragile as young individuals, captivated by the animal, interact with these “sculptures” in a landscape they have never seen and may never see. In *Under Pass with Elephants (Lean Back Your Life is On Track)*, 2015,¹⁴ the photograph’s composition matches the mood in the image; we can almost feel the sadness and loss of the animals. Alone, the animal image would seem soulless, a collection of missed encounters. On site on the wall of an overpass they dominate yet question the foreign landscape. The animal remains a representation of the living, but a question too of what remains, will we “inherit the dust”?¹⁵

My art practice is centred around environmental concerns and is focused on creating works that depict and represent the current state of the environment. I often use representation to gain interest in the viewer in order to raise awareness of certain issues. My first large scale work that depicted the animal was *The Anthropocene* 2017 (Figures 1 and 2). It was a work that addressed and represented our consumerist society. Made from plastics, it depicted five full size northern royal albatross, which represent the five ocean garbage patches. The year this work was exhibited, it was discovered that, even with protection, constant care, and observation, eight out of nine regurgitations collected from northern royal albatross chicks contained plastic, fed to them by their parents.

I created sculptures in the form of the albatross to represent the growing plastic pollution problem. The image or symbol of the albatross is commonly a symbol of hope originating from maritime folklore. In Dunedin, the albatross is also an image that can bring the message close to home, with the colony being a short drive away from the city. I wanted to use, and add to, the symbolic meaning of the albatross to increase understanding, and further knowledge and awareness of our plastic problem. The albatross is a wanderer, a traveller, and is greatly affected by plastic pollution, and as a symbol of hope, I wanted the works to reflect that – hope for our situation.

In this work I embraced the symbolism of the animal, I used it to my advantage and including how people would view the work. Even the space reflected how we view nature in a constructed way, as the mezzanine above the space acted as a viewing platform.



Figure 1. Tori Clearwater: *Pacific Ocean*, Part of the collection *The Anthropocene*, 2017.

As I progressed through my study I became more interested in an animal's portrayal and how people respond to it in different ways. It made me wonder if physical depiction was the best way to convey a serious message, or if the suggestion of form was more thought provoking. This led me to look at animals in more depth, specifically as tools to communicate. The animal has long been a way to depict human issues, as they are not bound to our different cultures or religions, and so are a perfect symbol to depict all humans.¹⁶ For example, in a Genesis power commercial in New Zealand, a pukeko represents a homemaker.¹⁷ In Queen Bee's Waxing Cat of 2009, the naked cat stands in for "women".¹⁸ The object on the screen is the object of desire, this raw "to-be-looked-at" objectification of women is exemplified by the male gaze in cinema. The gaze directed at animals in visual culture allows the raw material of the animal to be interpreted by the "human gaze", not just that of the male gaze. As Malamud puts it: "Call it, instead of the male gaze, the human gaze; and replace woman with "animal.""¹⁹

Looking at publications by animal protection groups, I came across contrasting advertisements that aim to raise awareness of an issue facing the animal. I found the advertisement where the animal is not pictured, e.g. a lumpy black polythene bag with the caption which starts "This bag contains a dead doggy,"²⁰ powerful, as the animal, left to the imagination, becomes more horrific.²¹ Another graphic advertisement of killer cows by PETA "Eating Meat Kills More Animals Than You Think" depicts a bull tearing into the flesh of a jaguar.²² It is a little ridiculous (no cows are out killing wildlife). Perhaps it's a good depiction of the animal, standing in for the human, but I believe it goes too far and appears so ridiculous that the message and purpose become lost. People can only take so much graphic imagery. In order to communicate a message, a viewer must first be engaged²³, and from this perspective, there is little value in conveying information through artworks that are so abstracted or disgustingly confronting that people do not want to look.²⁴

My work *Plastic Gaze* (2019) included three yellow-eyed penguin sculptures, made of found beach plastic from the local area where they nest. The plastic products were recognisable on close inspection, forming a blistering skin, suffocating and encasing the form. The work lights up to turn the animal into an object of display, highlighting its plastic form and embracing its transformation into a commodified object – both beautiful and disturbing.

My distorted definition of "beautiful" takes advantage of people's natural curiosity and allow them to discover the meaning on their own. I find this a powerful way to talk about the environment; people often shut down when presented with hard-to-grasp or confronting issues, so I attempt to understand what these limits are and make work that people will "like" but also chose to understand.

Another interesting way to depict and raise concerns about animals is to use the human as a stand-in for the animal. This makes us uncomfortable, and can bring a problem close to home. Using this technique it is possible for us to "see" the un-pictured animal.²⁵ Yet another animal rights ad features a man with a large bull ring through his nose and the caption "Bullfights would stop if tourists weren't led there."²⁶ This 1990 poster about bull fighting was an early example. Despite there being no animal present in the image, the animal's suffering is felt more strongly, as it is in relation to the human. The human is made to be the object or symbol for the animal. The image is more powerful, as we can relate to other people better than we relate to other animals. When the human is treated like an animal, using the symbolic wound of the ring, it opens our eyes to the unseen suffering animal.²⁷

I incorporated this strategy to talk about the animal in my 2018 work *A Crushing Problem* (Figure 2). *A Crushing Problem* depicts me holding up a bag of found ocean plastics. This work is a response to data compiled from flesh-footed shearwaters, where one 90-day-old chick was found dead with a gut full of plastic, which accounted for 15% of the bird's body mass.²⁸ My bag of plastics weighs 8.25kg which is how much plastic would be in my stomach if I was this sea bird. I used raw statistics and combined it with the human body to show how much plastic was really inside that chick. The mass appears much larger and more disturbing when it is held in reference to a human body. People can "enter" the photograph and place themselves in the image. It represents the animal but is not the image of the animal itself.



Figure 2. Tori Clearwater; *A Crushing Problem*, part of the series *Where is Away?*, 2018, photograph by Hayley Walmsley.

After looking into animal meanings in society, it made me aware that all materials have an image and meaning placed upon them, due to their history and use. Artists like Tara Donovan produce works with specific materials that convey a certain meaning while initially hiding their true form. Donovan believes she doesn't intentionally represent anything more than the beautiful material and experience that comes with viewing her work. I disagree, as her chosen materials, including certain animals, come with social and contextual meaning. In her work *Haze*²⁹ the material of straws is still recognisable as straws, invoking the social concepts of consumerism and pollution. Donovan's materials are only revealed at close range. This product is a symbol of our modern consumer driven society. In Donovan's work there is a realisation of the material, leading to questions of quantity. In the United States, 500 million drinking straws are used every day.³⁰ To understand this enormity, *Haze* depicts roughly one 240th of this, or six minutes of straw usage. This really puts Donovan's "large" installation in perspective. With access to this knowledge as it portrays the very large impact of a very small object. She says her work is representing nature, but "plastic nature" is very real, with plastic infiltrating every habitat on earth. As one description of her work puts it: "At a distance, one felt that he or she was looking at a formation of encrusted minerals, a cross section of a coral reef, or wisps of a strange, opaque fog."³¹ However, what you are viewing is consumerism. I think this is an effective way of communicating about the environment, as the viewer comes to a realization on their own, upon discovery of the material. With access to facts and numbers, the true scale of the work can be appreciated; it begins to stand for something larger and more complex and this can be appreciated on a human level.

In my work *You Are What You Eat* 2018 (Figures 3 and 4), I used discarded plastic cutlery to create forms of animals that we see ourselves as superior to. They were very fragile, and some of them were broken and destroyed during the exhibition, their tiny miniaturised forms crushed beneath human feet. Making animals out of plastic cutlery was a way for me to question what is in the food chain, using the initially disguised material, as a symbol of our waste, consumption, and pollution. As one of the everyday single-use products that we throw away, unnecessarily, it is an invisible item that has anything but an invisible impact.



Figures 3 and 4 (detail). Tori Clearwater; *You Are What You Eat* part of the collection *Where is Away?*, 2018, photograph by Kathleen Riach.

When depicting the animal in art, it can sometimes be useful to portray them in a representational form, in order to draw attention, raise awareness, and create understanding. Photographer Chris Jordan's works depict "numbers our brain just doesn't have the ability to comprehend."³² The works made of objects, depict things in a way we can understand. In *Year of the Tiger*, 2010, he depicts 3200 toy tigers, which are equal to the estimated number of tigers remaining on Earth - the space in the wild would hold 40,000 of these tigers, equal to the global tiger population in 1970.³³ By portraying these statistics visually, we can understand their enormity. The real animal is at first hidden and it is only upon closer inspection that a realisation and understanding is reached.

My work *The Great Filter* 2018 (Figure 5.) made of multiple plastic tiles, shows how we look at the world and nature as something we can construct, name, and control. The "wall" is an attempt to represent the barriers we have built that prevent us from seeing, although they are the walls that keep us "safe", the walls we build that protect us, both politically and personally. It is also a reference to the theory that there is a "filter" or barrier that prevents intelligent life from developing past a certain point. This to me is important, as how could a species be so intelligent, yet set in motion changes of such an extent that we may lead to our own demise?

This "wall" forces the viewer to renegotiate the space, one work from one side, and a completely different one from the other; as light highlights and darkens certain colours and interacts with others. The see-through quality of plastic means the work changes and interacts with natural light and movement in the space. This addresses photodegradation and its impacts on the food-chain, while also responding to the natural environment outside the gallery.



Figure 5. *The Great Filter*, part of the collection *Where is Away?*, 2018, photograph by Lana Young.

This work was made from 810 plastic tiles, representing the estimated 8 million tons of rubbish entering the ocean every year; so each tile represents one hundred thousand tons. The total weight of the plastic in the work is roughly 200 kg, which is the amount of plastic entering the ocean every second.

I have tried, throughout my research and art, to consider the animal and use it to my advantage to communicate environmental problems. I have used different strategies to do this, starting by using the real animal form to address issues of consumption and waste, then moving to a more representational way of depicting the animal by applying statistical

data onto a human scale. I have also used the human viewer as the unaware bystander; their actions in a space unintentionally having bigger impacts than planned. Lastly, in my large wall work, I have broken down statistics and made something beautiful in the way it looks and repulsive in what it represents. Each of these works challenges different aspects of the environment and attempts to convey to the viewer on a very human level the impacts our modern society has upon the living world. I use plastic as a way to communicate our view of nature as something we control and understand, our human nature.

Tori Clearwater is a contemporary Dunedin based artist working on incorporating environmental data and statistics into sculptural works. She graduated from the Dunedin school of art in 2018 with a Bachelor of Visual Art with honours. She uses found materials to create representational works that comment on the state of the environment.

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SILENT SPRING TO CLIMATE REBELLION A BRIEF HISTORY OF CIVIL DISSENT OVER THE LAST SIXTY YEARS: THE CONTINUITY OF DREAD, AND WHAT IS A.R.T. FOR?

Adrian Hall

This short essay is based, on a simple premise: that we as humans, do have to take a responsibility to our environment on behalf of our progeny, and that that should be an immediate initiative. We should no longer tolerate the poisoning of the earth, nor air, nor waters, nor should we be affecting the natural evolution of the flora and fauna which form our world. We are at a point of crisis where unchecked commercial greed, and inequity at a gigantic ratio is responsible: far too much for too few: far too much inequity and ignorance. Scientific evidence has been available for decades, that humans are irrevocably heating the planet, primarily by burning fossil fuels. This has caused species of everything - to be so affected that extinction is escalating. As Rachel Carson did around nineteen- sixty, I first noticed the absence of particular creatures but only over the last fifteen years, and then discovered the multitudinous tragedy of the natural world in the twentieth century being compounded exponentially in the twenty-first. Though I have and do campaign on behalf of individual species, through a study of ecology, realising the relationship of things to each other, the overwhelming tragedy has been revealed as a totality of negative forces, effecting a totality of individual tragedies. I also considered the concomitant history of Dread in the late 20th. Century, and choose to mention some contemporary heroes who generate optimism through integrity and action.

A thread of these thoughts was that the overwhelming Dread-of-the-future which affects younger persons, has a history. Greta Thunberg happily, is a remarkable young woman continuing and extending conscientious civil dissent, while circumstantially harnessing the technology of her generation to thoroughly affect the twenty-first Century. Significant history though is within living sight, and worth knowing because it offers hope, and means of offsetting impending disaster. There is a continuum of insanity with peoples who recklessly threaten the existence of the human race. In the decade following nineteen-fifty, there was a vivid shadow of the Second World War. In Europe and the U.K., casualties of that war were everywhere to be seen on the streets. Austerity was ensured by rationing, profiteering discouraged by retail price maintenance. The conclusion of World War Two by the use of nuclear weapons, showed that hitherto impossibly destructive powers could at any time be unleashed. Tensions escalated with Cold War gamesmanship. So "putting aside childish things" for me, in the 1950's and 1960's, was about International Socialism in a pre-Thunberg age, and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

In the nineteen-fifties after serving on the Nuremberg War Crimes Commission, Bertrand Russell - mathematician and philosopher became prominent in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, together with Pat Arrowsmith and Hugh Brock, editor of Peace News. The 40 mile Aldermaston Marches to London became annual events. A conscientious objector during the Second War and ex-R.C.A. student, Gerald Holtom designed the C.N.D. symbol. He said, "I was in despair, deep despair. I drew myself: the representative of an individual in despair, with hands outstretched palm outstretched outwards and downwards in the manner of Goya's peasant before the firing squad." He formalised the drawing into a line with a circle around it. The letters C - N - D from the

semaphore alphabet were contained within that depiction. The Peace Sign remains, crossing all kinds of categories of belief and understanding, but is one whose essential meaning remains.

"Silent Spring" by Rachel Carson¹ was published in September 1962. She had written extensively and poetically from her cottage home about marine life as a marine-biologist. One who had never been under water until she had become very famous, and then only a tentative once, near her home. Carson had alerted the public and reversed the position of industrial chemical companies on the haphazard use of among other chemicals, dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane. I have vivid memories as a child of the smell, and of taking turns before bed to drench the flat where we lived in Malta by pumping out commercial fly-killer from the Flit-gun.

No hydro-carbons however; with a tin pump spray-gun. On opening the doors of the living area in the morning, my first job was to sweep up the scores of large damp, dead flies off the tiled floor; still reeking and wet from D.D.T.

Almost single handedly Rachel Carson reversed the position of mighty chemical companies on the haphazard use chemicals. She had noticed the decreasing bird-songs around her home, over the years and traced the root cause to the pesticide poisoning of the land by DDT, which had been developed to combat mosquitoes and malaria, in the Second World War. A cycle of poisoning was revealed to Carson, and she made that cycle public. From the earth to the plant-life to the animal life to avian species, and into the ground waters then into the sea, where other habitat and creatures were affected. The ubiquitous use of that deadly chemical eventually ceased - against huge and persistent industry resistance. In many countries now it is totally banned. This was a point of individual awareness and horror; whereby change was effected through science and scrutiny from realisations of a lone individual, in the land and at the time of "Mad Men" oblivion. A high time in self-congratulatory American industrial-business culture: of Levitt-Towns and the expanding car industry. With production of every 'labour-saving device', capitalism in the United States, became a disproportionate bloat. The previous working-class through expansion in industry and commerce, became very much the white, middle-class. Television as a nascent phenomenon was able to magnify all these novel wonders without question, and make them desirable with a jingle.

In parallel to giddy consumerism, Dread was already prevalent. Of radiation poisoning, and supremely destructive explosive force, for common discourse included references to nocturnal nightmares of global nuclear war. Psychotherapies proliferated. International relations were as factious as now, and there was a concern over the "balance of power", muscle-flexing being the dominant mode. That dread came to a head when Russia built Cruise missile sites in Cuba, pointing towards The United States, following the "Bay of Pigs" invasion incident in 1961. A failed invasion by exiled Cubans covertly funded and organised by the United States, was followed the next year by the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. This was the moment during the Cold War when the two superpowers: the United States and the Soviet Union came almost to nuclear war. Secret communications and miscommunications which played out between the White House and the Kremlin made the crisis a unique event. President Kennedy faced down the Russians and ignored the pressures of General Curtis LeMay, he was urging a pre-emptive nuclear strike.

Those Russian missiles, pointing at the U.S. were removed from Cuba after a thirteen day staring contest.

In the United States it became commonplace for even lower middle-class people, to build bomb-shelters in, or around, or under their homes; cities planned against fallout, and built bunkers for executives. Civil paranoia over threats of global nuclear warfare became the new normal. These events and tensions escalated and were followed by the assassination of the President and a series of other murdered high profile politicians, black leaders, and actual assassins. Civil Rights became an eruption and an obvious urgency as so it remains, as do other parities. The Vietnam War continued with American intervention. There were courageous and dangerous civil rights marches in the American Southern States. Into the Seventies in Europe the Cold War simmered, wars continued as a global habit, as colonised countries shook off the shackles to become independent, others consolidated. Anti-Vietnam War marches erupted everywhere. Capitalism thrives with armed conflict, fossil fuel industries also grow. Since the thirties Los Angeles was designed to grow without consideration of public transport, and grew expressly as a city for

the automobile and the expressways. Car culture thrived everywhere - but in L.A., legendary traffic smog became thick enough to cause sore eyes, and lung diseases across the whole city.

In the mid-late sixties radio alerts were called on the morning news to warn susceptible persons to stay indoors on that day. Children too were warned to stay indoors during a 'Smog Alert'. To drive 35 miles from the San Gabriel Mountains down into Burbank and across the city to U.C.L.A. where I was teaching, was akin to submerging into a mud-grey morass, which would cause immediate eye and lung irritation the deeper downhill one drove into the San Fernando Valley. This became a source of strange pride for residents, a rite of passage which had to be endured by visitors until their sensitive tissues became inured. Phlegmatism on a heroic scale, akin to boasting of survival after warfare. In the twenty-first century, sixty years later, similar conditions are the norm in major cities everywhere. Disastrous pollution become rights of passage to be endured by new generations despite the lessons of history. But beyond personal jeopardy, it has become clear that this lies behind the changes of climate temperature, and this is responsible for most of the extinction tragedies in our century. So to concentrate on small batches of species data is to miss the point; not only the whales, the dolphins and the polar bears, but all of us mammals are in jeopardy - and the horses we ride in on.

In the nineteenth century European colonialists thoroughly destroyed gargantuan numbers of birds in particular - under the aegis of science, though boosting fashionable hat and clothing trades. Those figures at this only slightly more aware time, are mind boggling - even the New Zealander for whom the Buller River was named and a species of local Mollymawk, slaughtered hundreds and hundreds of birds every day on expedition. 'Cataloging' meant capture and kill even to the last survivors. Thousands of Rockhopper Penguins were slaughtered at one time, regularly, simply for their small bright yellow plumes, which went back to Europe for use in the hat trade. The after-effects of that slaughter were invisible to scientists on the other side of the globe, though museums were popularly stuffed with cases and cases of stuffed creatures, from rodents to primates to mammals and large insects, little insects in drawers. Every thing which moved or crawled. The Victorians had a curious mind and an insatiable thirst for animal novelty. The most prominent contemporary exponent of the Victorian hunting style is a son of the current American President, who also has a fetish for firearms of a military capacity. He has no military experience, but he has proudly killed an elephant to cut off the tail with a Buck knife, and recently obtained a seldom granted licence to kill a Kodiak bear in Alaska. In the twenty-first century with everything we know and is available to us, there are those people who choose to remain willfully, even criminally ignorant simply for the sake of affluent egotistic destruction.

This though was the style in the nineteenth century for all the young adventurers with aspirations toward the Royal Society in London - which presented such science discovery activities as fashionable knowing-entertainment. There is a Royal Society of New Zealand in 2020. Interestingly, that society made no distinction between the natural sciences and the engineering sciences. Such public excitement also famously developed the galumphing, voracious use of fossil fuel as coal- burning steam power. Pure smoke, to be later replaced by pollution from the automobile and petroleum industries, the most significant contributor to the Climate Crisis and species annihilation. Not just the cuddly ones, the cute ones, but the essential ones for the growth of food-stocks, such as humble honey bees and other pollinators. We now can see and understand all kinds of inter-relationships enough to have a clear view towards the destruction of the *Homo sapiens* species itself. This is catastrophe over-reaching all borders, this is where nationalism as a notion, fails.

When ecological systems are weakened to the point of re-structuring, as they are with new migration patterns emerging, or starvation, then unexpected hazards arise in terms of disease amongst animals and humans. Viruses are appearing at a worrying rate, new and deadly, and ancient and unknown, emerging from melting glaciers and from new interactions with animals. With the excessive mobility of humans across the globe and animals too, we learn that viruses move too. Who could have predicted a bat and the pangolin, introduced through trade for arcane beliefs in medicine in another continent, could maybe start another pandemic?

With science spectacularly improving useful knowledge, there become proliferating unknowns, most mysterious are the viruses, which are even debatable as life forms. Our lax responsibility; in recognising and processing available data at the start of what shall be serial pandemics, is fluorescent. Credit is due to Bill Gates of Microsoft predicting from available science data in 2015 the dire need to prepare for a succession of coming pandemics, learned from the Ebola and SARS outbreaks, none of which had then touched urban areas. His scientific facts were presented in person to the newly elected President of the U.S. in 2016, as being the most urgent issue for which the World should be preparing...

While throughout world history significant change took a significant time to happen, with the pressure of rapidly escalating climate change, newer technologies, and our own eyes, we can witness in real time visible physical changes. Can Mount Everest really be getting smaller? What has happened to the glaciers on Aoraki?

Why did nobody seriously remark upon those huge ice-bergs which propelled by the warm southern current, were carried north in 2004, just east of the Otago Peninsula? Certainly they were noticed, as use was made of helicopters to carry wedding parties out to them for chilly nuptial celebrations, as the 'bergs entered warmer waters ready to turn turtle.

Warmer climate has also caused opportunistic shifts of mosquitoes to new breeding regions to find newly accessible hosts. Local yellow eye penguins for instance die of avian malaria and diphtheria, and are scarce to the point of extinction. Hotter climate sustained for longer periods gives the continent of Australia, bush fires beyond experience. And through this, and through new media we have been able to view close up, the destruction of cuddly koalas, plus the whole ecology of tropical and sub-tropical forest, from continent to continent. Add to this the long- time salinisation of for example, the Australian Murray River; replicated worldwide in similar conditions and circumstances and we can compile a planet-size list of criminal ignorance toward habitat, and creatures great and small.

Climate Crisis is quietly making the most unimaginable changes to nature.

The Guardian reports that the romance bird of John Keats, the nightingale, is unlikely to continue the long migrations which have been nature for it, as its wing length is shortening, and the clutch size of its eggs is diminishing. More of those birds are choosing not to make their 7,000-mile annual migration between Africa and Europe due to increasingly severe summer droughts. As numbers of marine mammals are slaughtered without regard for tomorrow, fish stocks are depleted through bigger and bigger and more destructive fishing methods.² Giant trawl nets scour the ocean floor of kelp forests, destroying and depriving innumerable fish- species of breeding habitat. Those kelp forests also significantly off-set atmospheric carbon-dioxide from our highway traffic. Our local Yellow Eye Penguins have three choices for their imminent extinction: to starve, as did another one I retrieved today from the beach, or die of avian malaria, or diphtheria.

There is no thought by industries of the need to replenish or sustain, by the common sense use of marine reserves to allow creatures to breed and replenish the oceans. Industry proponents are at loggerheads with ecologists and politicians weakly try to mitigate. There has to be an informed balance; sustainability has been a clichéd term in bureaucracy for thirty years now, useful for only a limited effect because of limited understanding, but we are at a point where a plenitude of scientific data is available and should be guiding the debate. There is no need to look to foreign parts and we have to start at home, and we do have to support activists and lobby on a global scale. The inter-relatedness of things on Earth is obvious if it is studied, so too are human crimes of negligence, ignorance, causality and irresponsibility. We should have Dread, and those of us with grandchildren will know this Dread well.

A likely symbol for our time, as powerful as that of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament way back when, is possibly to be that designed for Extinction Rebellion. The symbol of Extinction Rebellion is a white on black stylised hourglass, all angles around a central 'X'. "Climate Emergency" is the cry. Extinction Rebellion is a global environmental movement with the stated aim of using nonviolent civil disobedience to compel government action, in trying to avoid more severe destruction of the climate system, biodiversity loss, and the risk of social and ecological collapse.

Roger Hallam in the U.K. believes the world has only ten years until mass starvation happens. He is a once farmer from the West Coast of Wales. His crops were destroyed two years running by unprecedentedly hostile weather. The only way for effective change now he says, is the way of Ghandi, the Freedom Riders, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandala;³ that is civil disobedience. He is not uninformed: he holds two Doctorates from Cambridge - he proudly says in "civil disobedience", and 'rebellion'. His goal is to avert accelerating climate breakdown through passive rebellion. Fossil fuel industries are a principal target and their shareholders, through nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience. In 2018 one hundred U.K. academics signed a call to action and XR was launched at the end of October by Roger Hallam, Gail Bradbrook, Simon Bramwell and other activists from the group Rising Up!

The movement is unusual in that a large number of activists have pledged to be arrested and are prepared to go to prison. Extinction Rebellion intends to rally support worldwide around a common urgency to tackle climate breakdown. With the rationale that overwhelming arrests for passive protest; such as in London in November 2018, will clog the prisons and tie up the judiciary. Then, bail or release are the quicker options. As Roger Hallam said in Penzance, Cornwall, UK.

Penzance is a small sea-side town, once a healthy, proud fishing port, now ratty surf capital of the UK. The audience filled the small school gymnasium. Hallam was articulate and personable, talking calmly about taking time out in prison, reading and getting more informed and organised. He tells appalling stories about 75% of the Arctic Ice having melted in the last 30 years. He also mentions that the man who discovered the (first) Hole in the Ozone Layer in the nineties asserts that in the year 2022 - there will be no permanent ice in the Arctic at all. Now there is a second Northern hole in the ozone, to balance the one over New Zealand.

The more sensitive end of the human spectrum traditionally, is that of the artist, and now they are needed more and more to register in more significant ways than as entertainment, or investment, or vogue-ism. Invention, imagination, and courage, and intelligence, and concern are desperately needed. We have to help do the apparently impossible for this planet, now with less ego-constructs. This essay is being written within the context of an art-school... within the context of more data than we as humans can cope with, and more disaster looming than we can have ever begun to contemplate.

The plight of extinction for unimaginable numbers of creatures, is easy to sympathise with as it starts with recognising imminent tragedy of those cuddly or cute varieties: also those believed to enjoy superior powers of intelligence. For then there is a possibility of empathising with a supposition of shared emotions and a presumption of understanding. It then becomes a tragedy to share, as we see vast slaughter; singular cruelties and ignorant behaviours whittle species down by the score, by the thousands. Truth of the matter is that there has been within evolution a self-checking balance and interdependence which allows the physics of the planet to be maintained and effect necessary changes or evolution to proceed at a slow and steady pace. In the twenty-first century the velocity of change has moved beyond all imagination, and the slow and steady self-regulating body is now out of balance to an impossible degree. The thinking of James Lovelock in 1978, in a book *Gaia*⁴ which considered the evolution of the ecologies of the planet - as a whole organism, was written by a serious independent scientist. It functions as a model for understanding a wider ecology and is a broad, useful simile, to stress the inter-relatedness of things and systems.

The current pandemic we are attempting to survive, illustrates the manner in which the breakdown of civil structures mimics the breakdown of natural structures, allowing an insight into the relationship of those entities we chose to see as partitioned, as separate. The Earth as organism seems not so far fetched. Cracks in political structures are being perceived everywhere. Production, supply and commerce are in confusion as panic and urgency are driven by fear. Human hegemony is no defence against the disaster of the virus; no stratum nor individual is exempt. Habituated forms of doing business, of educating, of communicating, of living, are in flux. We are at a global hiatus.

Reliance on overseas producers has left individual nations weak, prone to disaster when products or services are withheld. Global capitalism is held together by agreements outside national needs, bargains made to suit the few,

for reasons that do not benefit any population. Cold War politics of tit-for-tat disagreements attempt to patch the impossible relationships between disparate governments, piratical industries and demanding investors. The machinery of global commerce appears to thrive, promoting talk of global economy while communities are destroyed, and nations wither. As companies streamline, close, modify; jobs are lost, skills are forgone and responsibilities forgotten; those of Governments to the people and of industries to the Governments. A peculiar interactive energy ensues, in concert destructively with other movements around the globe. There is a multitudinous wiggling with a vague sense of causality, but the major benefits are for the shareholders, and unimaginable benefits for the drivers of these floatation tanks. Jeff Bezos the richest man in the world due to a fortunate idea which developed into Amazon; in the first weeks of the current COVID 19 epidemic, grew twenty-four billion U.S. dollars richer overnight due to stock changes. Through various covenants tax is not an issue for this man, nor is it for most world billionaires, of which there are around thirty-six.

Reflexive trading with the fever of a major poker game, disallows time to think about the greater good. Which we are unused to recognising this as a basic necessity, and so we hurtle on. Climate controls, emissions standards, are all too difficult, shareholders must be appeased and gratified to ever greater expectations. International agreements or government policies entered into the statutes by one government can be easily undone by another. We see the rise of autocrats buoyed together by an entertaining fabric of lies, performing to a balcony of grinning investors oblivious of the real world. Lies are the new truth. The entire natural world is being destroyed with all of us mammals, by homo-sapiens.

The present viral emergency, although it has taken immediate focus off solving the climate emergency, has allowed us to see that that the world can shut down, for some things to be rearranged, even resolved. This disruption is a useful pause for thought and could be a time for rearranging other things that are broken; such as voter registration, and election structures in the United States. Things which have been taken as 'givens' too, but only having habituated meaning - like 'democracy' and 'civil rights', which are ill-defined often misunderstood. They need to be re-debated, meanings clarified, reasons understood. The danger is that this pause can also be taken as another business opportunity, or another means to use fear against the populace, as is happening. However the most shocking news to me recently was when the Secretary General of the United Nations on 23 March 2020 - António Guterres, urged warring parties across the world to lay down their weapons in support of the bigger battle against COVID-19. The most shocking, absurd, and terrifying declaration to all the world in world history! This must mean something. But this virus is not to be defeated by instant world peace, unless immediate climate cooperation takes place, for behind the danger of serial epidemics lies the root cause of global warming. Climate crisis: means so many demands to be examined, things which need to be questioned as being useful. Or recognised as not at all useful like cruise-ships.

After investigating air quality on cruises, Johns Hopkins University professor Ryan David Kennedy told CNN their onboard air pollution was "comparable to concentrations measured in polluted cities, including Beijing and Santiago". Yet the health risks posed by cruise ship emissions do not only affect their passengers. As Forbes reports, a single cruise ship emits daily pollution equal to a million cars. One passenger's carbon footprint triples in size when taking a cruise. Currently there are 90,000 passengers quarantined in U.S. waters alone, unable to be cleared for landing. The Royal College of Physicians reported that the premature deaths of about 40,000 shore-bound Britons every year are linked to air pollution, the cruise and shipping industry being significantly responsible. Those vessels also expel enormous quantities of discharge into the ocean. They are notorious for covering up that they illegally dump sewage, garbage and fuel waste - often into protected waters, and burn cheap sulfurous fuel, illegal for use in land vehicles. Carnival Corp's environmental violations date back to 1993 and are still pending. We are at war with the planet still. In the manner of pillaging nineteenth century colonists, but we have forgotten this global warfare also costs. Hugely. The solution as Hallam states requires restraint and sacrifice. Mahatma Gandhi knew this. The period of irresponsible decadence we have enjoyed has to be paid for now, with more austerity and more restraint in a far more equitable way, as was done during and after the Second World War. Because the causal is becoming more visible, and there is a strong chance we have only ten years before waves of mass starvation.

All attempts at making art have a context of creation, and necessarily are indicative of concerns-of-that-time with those attempts to think-with-imagination. All attempts to deliver a shudder or otherwise, from the present toward the enormity of time, can only tremble lightly against the truths which become more evident and more terrible every actual day. Progress in anything anywhere, is a moot point at this time, definitely within the multiple worlds designated or colonised, as a.r.t.. Nevertheless we who have chosen - must continue to make whatever noises we can however we can, and for those noises to gather and reveal significance over time, poetic allusion has to prevail. I should like to point out to the Academy at large, that the activity of any questing-artist throughout all time, is 'research' of a primal nature; independent, personal, inventive out of necessity and political in essence. So much so, that that word has scarcely been used throughout our history, as it is intrinsic to the practice: as is physical and mental labour; and invention beyond the norm. This is why in the past we have had those magnificent, flawed, sensitive, and sensible structures which have stood proudly as independent art-schools: umbrellas for contentious experiment, invention, challenge, independent thinking, experience and debate; incubators of sensibility and even prescience. Never schools of artifice or manipulated egregious 'taste', not apologetic factories for commodified markers of rank, nor bogus academies of commerce meeting the hegemonic expectations of the self-propagating education industry.

Whether evident or not, a realisation of history will direct or encourage speculation or questioning after evaluation, of the experience-of-being, in a designated space, or more importantly as a part of Humanity. Sensing and realising the elements of content; ensures provocation or revelation over time. This experience unravels slowly within the consciousness of the other through that a.r.t.. Sensing the disquiet in gaps of logic, sensing scale or space in that experience; leads over time to realisations within the other person, of congruity, awareness of similarity, of dissonance, or social sympathy, of anger. Or even rebellion.

Sensational!

For what more can we hope?

Adrian Hall has been an innovating artist for sixty years. He has practised in Europe, the United States of America, Northern Ireland, Eire, Australia, Japan, and for the last sixteen years has lived and worked from Aramoana, Otago. Born in Cornwall, UK.

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SOLASTALGIA, EXTINCTIONS, THE CHTHULUCENE AND THE SYMBIOSPHERE

Bridie Lonie

Understanding our emotions may help us respond to the scenarios of the Anthropocene. Reason alone is plainly inadequate. To this end, Glenn A Albrecht has generated a set of neologisms for what he calls the “earth emotions” that have emerged in the context of ecological loss. Of these, his “solastalgia” has entered the lexicon of the Anthropocene.¹ This article approaches these neologisms both with gratitude for some very useful words, and a caution about the anthropocentrism of Albrecht’s wider project. This caution is informed by the post-structural thinking of such writers as Donna Haraway, whom he cites, and whose approaches offer a more complex, metaphysical and poetic model, while arguing for a diminution of human exceptionalism.

In the first years of this century, and as the term “Anthropocene” entered popular discourse, Albrecht, an Australian researcher in sustainability and emotion, coined “solastalgia” from three words: solace, its antonym desolate, and algia (meaning pain), to refer to the grief experienced when the place one knew has been transformed forever in a destructive way.² My family knew the English/Australian wildlife artist Margaret Senior, whose images of Australian flora and fauna can still be found in museum and botanical centres. In the early 1960s, the Seniors moved from a flat and tree-less suburb to a small cottage set amongst trees. They looked down onto a lagoon, and lizards, snakes and spiders sunned themselves on the rocks around their house. Thirty years later I visited Margaret. There was no bush to be seen. She was surrounded by suburban homes, and could no longer draw, for physical reasons. But also, she was heartbroken. The place that was her home had changed beyond redemption. Today, that scenario has been multiplied exponentially, but the condition can be traced back throughout human history, from the earliest industrialization of agriculture. It is one of the primary emotions of the Anthropocene and may be experienced across species.

Donna Haraway is a different kind of thinker, whose alternative to the term Anthropocene is the Chthulucene, (kthu) named with reference to a spider that lives an upside-down, underworld life, in an appeal to the deep structures that unite all matter, organic or inorganic.³ or Haraway, entanglements and tentacular forms best describe the new world, and “think we must”, she urges, as our minds assist us in adjusting to an order in which plastic will not go away, and species do not align themselves according to our ideas of the peaceable kingdom. In 2015, drawing from work on the relations between humans and primates, and humans and dogs, she argued against the notion that subjectivities were contained within distinct species and distinct bodies. She argued that identarian and agential positions could occur within engagements across species, and even across the categories of the organic and the inorganic.⁴

Haraway draws on the development of ecological thought during the second half of the twentieth century within the interdisciplinary work of anthropologists, mathematicians, biochemists, and physicists. The systems thinking that grew from this research insists on connection and the operations of probability rather than certainty. Where many factors exist, possibilities become stochastic; that is, one can only be sure that one or more of a range of probable outcomes will occur. Increased interdisciplinary understandings have nuanced the notions of free will and human agency. Unexpected and unintended results occur from actions that have quite different intentions. James Lovelock argued, in the 1970s, that the planet operated according to a biodynamic logic that is indifferent to human

intention.⁵ The larger causal factors are the biochemical constituents of the planetary system, which have diverse implications for life forms. Looking at the planet's histories, he pointed out that the primary gas was at times sulfuric acid, at times oxygen. Labelling his model as Gaia, he suggested, in an unforgettable moment of savage irony, that from that point of view, one might see the human as being most useful as a generator of methane.⁶ I read that in 1980, selling the book from my emissions-emitting bright green Holden Torana, in Aotearoa's petro-chemical centre, Taranaki. Lovelock's characterization of the planet's systems as the self-managing organism, that he named after the Greek goddess Gaia, has been challenged because of its notion of agency: the planet does not "think", or "desire", the argument goes, but nonetheless, within the biochemical system, the increased presence of CO₂ has enormous agency. While the concepts understood as necessary, in day-to-day engagements with the ongoing nature of our mode of existence, may have been ethical and economic, today they must include greater understanding of the processes of emergence, tendency, and complexity, and greater respect for the operations of science and the ways that it is used. Now familiar ecological models, such as those of Félix Guattari, describe these systems as engagements, in which agency is distributed across and breaks down the modernist divisions between species and between the organic and the inorganic.⁷

This means that we must pay attention to the impacts of all our activities, in particular those that we take for granted and have become invisible to us. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1963) that described the destructive power of DDT on previously robust ecologies, brought into the political arena, the wilful ignorance driving the "laissez-faire, let the market find its own level" approach to agriculture.⁸ Carson's research was provoked by a solastalgic moment, when a friend wrote to her that DDT had killed all the biological life in her environment: no birds sang, and the spring was silent.

Accounts of sustainability use Venn diagrams to model relations between the econosphere, the biosphere, and the sociosphere. One of the first artworks to grapple with changing ecologies, climate change, and the role of the non-human sentient entity in the food chain, was the extensive exhibition *The Lagoon Cycle* (1974-84), produced by the artists Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison.⁹ The project drew on the findings of an international report that, in suggesting the planet's resources would soon be unable to feed its fast-growing population, led to the increased industrialization of agriculture.¹⁰ In a case study based on the exportation of the Forksal crab from Sri Lanka to California, the artists documented the failing Indigenous ecosystems that supported the farming of the Forksal crab in Sri Lanka, extensively imported to the United States, and explored the alternative of artificial farming systems in California. They observed the ways that such systems generated anomalies and unsustainable scenarios in a diminished ecosystem. The Harrisons' focus at that point was primarily anthropocentric, but their thesis was ecological. They recognized that climate change and rising sea levels would lead to extensive estuarine loss. The case of the Forksal crab was indicative of any estuarine food system, as here we would speak of kai moana. In this process, they discovered that, in the production of artificial farming tanks, the Forksal crabs began to look up at those who fed them. The sequence ends with the words "and will you feed me, when the waters rise?" These words, designed as a conversation between humans, now, in the context of extinctions, must include the other species who share the planet's struggling ecosystems.¹¹

An account of solastalgia begins Albrecht's *Earth Emotions, New Words for a New Planet* (2019), but to this he has added, and continues to add, new terms for every major event or change in the developing Anthropocene.¹² His forensic approach to the subject of our emotions is determined by his history as a philosopher of ecology, a disillusioned lecturer in sustainability, and his experience living in the midst of Australia's greatest drought in living memory, where he watches ecosystems fail through the impacts of mining and urban development.¹³ The term can be applied in post-war situations, after hurricanes and volcanic explosions, or during the "great acceleration" of urbanization in the latter twentieth century. Solastalgia's etymological base in "desolate", also implies loneliness, an underlying theme throughout Albrecht's account. That subtext reflects the disconnection intrinsic to Eurocentric models of subjectivity, which underrates the potential of interindividual, transversal, emotional connections, between members of our own and other species, to over-ride the short-term goals that drive economic models. Interindividuality is a model offered in the discourses Albrecht's arguments do not consider; for instance those of

the post-structural ecologist Félix Guattari, whose genealogy in Marxism and in psychoanalytic theory, places the human within the context of the collective rather than the individual.¹⁴ From this philosophical approach, Albrecht does cite Haraway, who, he writes, “has given generously of the creative imagination needed to take symbiosis out of bioscience obscurity and into the environmental humanities in the twenty-first century.”¹⁵ It is true that, in some ways, Albrecht’s aspirations coincide with those of the less anthropocentric models. In response to the notion of the Anthropocene, he proposes the alternative “Symbiocene”, defined in his “Glossary of Psychoterratic Terms” as “[t]he era in Earth History that comes after the Anthropocene. The Symbiocene will be in evidence when there is no discernible impact of human activity on the planet other than the temporary remains of their teeth and bones. Everything that humans do will be integrated within the support systems of all life and will leave no trace.”¹⁶ In that sense, he agrees with many others, such as T J Demos, that the term Anthropocene describes the bad present, while what is needed is a new way of being.¹⁷

Albrecht aligns connectedness and love in the term “ghedeist”: a “secular feeling of intense affinity and sense of mutual empathy for other beings”.¹⁸ Of the Symbiocene, he writes:

“We now have a clear understanding that bacteria, trees and humans are not individuals existing as isolated atoms in a sea of competition. The foundational idea of life as consisting of autonomous entities, organisms in competition with one another, has been shown to be fundamentally mistaken. Life consists of commingling microbiomes within larger biomes, communities within communities at ever-increasing scales, otherwise known as “holobionts”. This is more than an “entanglement” of different but independent beings; it is the sharing of a common property, called life.”

Entanglement is the term used by Haraway to demonstrate the complexity of our current engagement with the organic and the inorganic, a sense of the status quo that we must work with (“think we must”, Haraway repeats)¹⁹. Because Albrecht is resolutely humanist, anthropocentric, and ultimately modernist, he does not agree with the more blurred and intersecting languages of affect, nor with the analogies of entanglement and complexity so common in the newer ecological discourses. Instead, he characterizes emotions as concepts, and further, as propositions, to generate solutions. This is a political and rhetorical tactic, just as were the formations of the many terms to describe the current situation: the Necrocene, for extinctions; the Capitalocene, for causation; the Chthulucene, for the entanglement of organic and inorganic forms; the Plantationocene, for the racial exploitation of the beginnings of the industrial era; and others continuing to reflect different positions.²⁰ The pain such terms express requires a response, but so does their empirical entanglement in the intersections of systems.

We do need new ways of articulating the weirdness of today’s environment: when an epidemic can lead to the kind of cessation of resource over-use that has been called for generations now, but only with the short-term goal of preserving existing human life and ensuring the consequent ongoing sustainability of the economies of the planet. Here one might consider the justice-based approach of Bruno Latour’s *The Politics of Nature, How to bring the Sciences into Democracy*, where he argues for the redistribution of political agency amongst the other species and entities with which we share the planet.²¹ Albrecht’s approach may facilitate that, but it does not fully take the point made by the speculative materialists, that anthropocentric subjectivity is inadequate. All other entities, the biota facing extinction and the inorganic resources facing depletion, have a voice to which we seldom, in the Harrison’s term, “pay attention”.

I spent the final months of my pregnancy a kilometre away from where I was myself a baby, amongst macrocarpas sloping quickly to a rocky beach. I woke to labour from an urgent dream of operating on a water-breathing mammal in pounding surf so that it could draw air into its lungs. At that point, I knew my phylogeny involved more than one species. But mostly, we forget our biodynamic nature, we forget our place in the ecologies of the planet. And in our urge toward homemaking, the *oikos* of ecology, we tidy. The daily lessons have to do with spiders, the upside-down, chthonic beings Haraway argues for. Every time I tidy, I disturb spiders, moths and other biota. If I shift old stacks of wood, I disturb spiders. If I shift stacks of old tin, I eradicate lizard habitat. If I clean, tidy, organize, edit the garden, their

habitat diminishes, and species disappear, such as the harvestmen I haven't seen for a few years (in fact, since we let our two hens free-range). Supermarket shelves groan with murderous bottles promising the delights of hygiene and proper living. Our responsibility for biodiversity starts at home. It can and must extend to the wider places of city, the region, the island, the continent, but it starts with the attention we pay to the areas in which we are implicated. We forget to think small. Biodiversity is intrinsically local and it is in the local that we both experience our own solastalgia and may mitigate further extinctions through our understanding that we are connected. Albrecht's analyses engage with the emphasis we put on our own emotional responses, even as we must also acknowledge their collectivity across our own and other species, and their irrelevance, in a sense, in what we must make happen. Albrecht's Symbiocene intersects with the other negative and positive terms for our current era, as it is described according to its refracted, infinitely complex, non-linear, and stochastic attributes. However, his hope that humans may at some point leave "no discernible impact on the planet other than the temporary remains of their teeth and bones" jars in comparison with Haraway's more realistic insistence that we come to terms with that impact in the here and now.²² Albrecht's solastalgia belongs in our new lexicon, but in the wider collective, it must move across species and become entangled in our Chthulucenic understandings.

Bridie Lonie, PhD, is Head of School at the Dunedin School of Art. She is a graduate of the Department of History and Art History at the University of Otago and her thesis is entitled "Closer Relations, Art, Climate Change, Interdisciplinarity and the Anthropocene" (2018). She has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting from the University of Auckland and was a founding member of the Women's Gallery, Wellington 1980-84.

- 1 Glenn A Albrecht, *Earth Emotions, New Words for a New World* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2019).
- 2 Ibid, "Solastalgia, the homesickness you have at home" in *Earth Emotions*.
- 3 Donna Haraway, "Staying with the Trouble: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene," in Jason W Moore, *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Oakland, California: PM Press, 2016), 34–76.
- 4 Haraway cites Beth M Dempster and expands this list in her valuable and extensive endnotes. Beth M Dempster; *A Self-organizing Systems Perspective on Planning for Sustainability* (Msc thesis, University of Waterloo, 1998); D Haraway, "Staying with the trouble," 65, note 16.
- 5 James Lovelock, *Gaia, A new look at life on Earth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).
- 6 Ibid, 131.
- 7 Félix Guattari, *Three ecologies*, (London and New Brunswick: The Athlone Press, 1989), 2000. Also see <https://mediaecologies.wordpress.com/2008/10/07/the-three-ecologies-felix-guattari/>
- 8 Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1962).
- 9 The Lagoon Cycle, <http://theharrisonstudio.net/the-lagoon-cycle-1974-1984-2>
- 10 Donella Meadows, *The Limits to Growth A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Man* (New York: Universe books, 1972).
- 11 The debate around nomenclature is extensive. For the Necrocene see Justin McBrien, "Accumulating Extinction: Planetary Catastrophism in the Necrocene" in Jason W Moore, *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Oakland, California: PM Press, 2016). Also see T J Demos, *Against the Anthropocene, Visual Culture and Environment Today* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2017).
- 12 G Albrecht, "The Psychoterratic and the Coronavirus (COVID-19)," *Psychoterratica*, 28 March 2020 <https://glennaalbrecht.com/2020/03/28/the-psychoterratic-and-the-coronavirus-covid-19/>
- 13 G Albrecht "A Sumbiography," in *Earth Emotions*, 13–25
- 14 Felix Guattari *Three ecologies*, London and New Brunswick: The Athlone Press, 2000 (1989). Also see <https://mediaecologies.wordpress.com/2008/10/07/the-three-ecologies-felix-guattari/>
- 15 G Albrecht, *Earth Emotions* 110.
- 16 Ibid, 201.
- 17 T J Demos, *Against the Anthropocene, Visual Culture and Environment Today*.
- 18 G Albrecht, "Gaia and the Ghedeist, secular spirituality" in *Earth Emotions*, 131–155.
- 19 Haraway, "Staying with the trouble," 39
- 20 Jason W Moore, *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*.
- 21 Bruno Latour; *The Politics of Nature, how to bring the sciences into democracy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- 22 G Albrecht, *Earth Emotions* 201.

TAXIDERMY

Michele Beevors

Once upon a time a student bought a dead dog to an art school to exhibit it as an art work.

This problem has led me to various places where I wouldn't normally go, to read things which I'm not interested in, and to examine the inadequacies of my own productivity in relation to it. The dog was not taxidermied, but frozen. The dog had been hit by a car, stolen from a freezer, and exhibited as a memento-mori with other bits of detritus on an upturned milk crate as a plinth, there were scrawlings on the wall, against this and that. Death punching life in the face.

In light of this incident, I find the art work of Polly Morgan outrageous, particularly the twisted snake sculptures.¹ I'm repulsed by taxidermy, but I use the stuffed versions of animals at various museums as reference material in my own practice. Polly Morgan uses taxidermy in her art work. The twisted and knotted skins of snakes sometimes displayed floating in space, sometimes twist around some other abstract modernist form or display device. The objects are quite small, to go in your home, on a shelf, or a side table, beside a lamp or a book. I imagine one here, in the living room, on the coffee table. I don't think it would be a happy arrangement. Snakes coil when they are trying to kill something. The death of an animal is enacted doubly in these works. The snake, and whatever its absent prey was, is alluded to by the coil. In Australia, we have an admiration, and respect mixed with fear of snakes; this is healthy, it keeps you alive. "They won't bother you unless you bother them" and "walk lightly, carry a big stick", are some of the things we were told.

Polly Morgan's sculptures of taxidermied snakes, scare me. I tell myself that the snake is not alive but my animal brain thinks the snake is harmful, my animal brain wants to flee. My rational brain understands why this is happening, and also about that dead dog. Who buys these works? How do they live with them? Is the invocation of the nearly alive snake, the vicarious thrill, the threat of it, motivation? Is it an indifference, a fashion statement, a curiosity? Is it because it is innately beautiful /scary or have we just become so accustomed to seeing taxidermied things, that the commodified and coded animal skins are now so ubiquitous, and encounters with the natural world so rare, that the fundamental fear associated with the animal has dissipated?

If we were to look at the animal skin as a formal device in Morgan's works *Metanoia*, the viewer is allowed the pleasure of consuming the skin without threat of the skin. The pattern moves as the eyes of the viewer follow the curves up and down and around the work, and this allows a concentrated view, a view that moves over the surface of the thing. This is a practice highlighted in modern sculpture and draws on specifically modern strategies. A formal reading handed down from Antony Caro and Henry Moore, whose strategy "truth to materials"², sees the material, in this instance the dead animal, conform to a shape.³ Since the snakes in Morgan's sculptures in many cases don't have heads, or if they do the head is buried within the coil of the body so it looks like the animal is sleeping, thus allowing the fascinated gaze. Understanding the business end of the snake is very important. A headless snake ensures that fear is suppressed in favour of pleasure. Botched or otherwise (taste and horror) are entwined in Morgan's sculptures.

Steve Baker's 2000 book, "The Post-Modern Animal", addresses some of the concerns that were beginning to be highlighted around arts interaction with issues relating to animals at the turn of the century.⁴ In a passage from

an essay called “The Human Made Strange”, Baker describes some more notable artworks using what he terms “botched taxidermy” Baker has himself admitted that the idea of botched taxidermy has been taken and turned into something else by some artists who missed the point, and also that he included works by artists who were not really concerned with the animal at all. It is artists who have taken the term and turned it into something else, which concerns me about the work of Polly Morgan.

The clearest example of botched taxidermy that Baker gives is the work of Thomas Grunfeld. Since 1990, Grunfeld's combinations of miss-aligned animal taxidermies under the title *Misfits*, leads to more questions than answers, and this is what I have come to expect of any art work.⁵ Grunfeld's work asks: what is the significance of the hybrid nature of such animals and what kind of mistakes did scientists of the enlightenment make? What are the possibilities for evolution in the future? What happens when you combine an ostrich with a giraffe, or a penguin with a peacock? Grunfeld's work anticipates a Jurassic Park of the future different than that of Michael Crichton.⁶ It is one that looks forward and backward at the same time. During the 17th century, a parlour game of sorts existed where taxidermy examples of hybrids were presented as new species, not only to fuel the fires of conquest, but to demonstrate knowledge of the exotic and the wonders of the natural world for an audience primed for the next new thing. Classification and destruction of exotic species for European collections (both private and later public), go hand in hand. Grunfeld's work draws from these ideas, and places human exploitation as the critical centre of the works. Unpacked so blithely by Monty Python's famous “Dead Parrot” sketch⁷, the dead exotic species of Norwegian blue parrot (purchased at a local UK pet shop) has been replaced by a flocked plastic novelty prop (made in the thousands), lying at the bottom of the cage and then banged on the counter: Nevermore Polly. The commodity here enacts that replacement of the animal with the thing. – So used to the act of othering, of replacement, this for that... we laugh.

In Polly Morgan's work, the animal-as-commodity short circuits all other meanings. One is free to do whatever with the skin of a dead animal, to make it the other of the monolith in miniature, a coffee table sized monolith. Something profound is lost and different between those works that can be explained best as a commodity, and are therefore closed to other more critical discussions, in contrast with works that are that are open ⁸ and resist this closure.

In his 2017 book, “Speculative Taxidermy”⁹, Giovanni Aloï has described what could be considered an open work. Looking at the work of Stephen Bishop and Nicolas Galanini, Aloï examines the material relations to meaning as a demonstration of an open work; the viewer closes the gap between the objects displayed and various meanings. In Galanini's *Inert*¹⁰ (made from the skins of two wolves) and Bishop's *It's Hard to Make a Stand* (a polyurethane taxidermy model of a horse, with a fur coat wrapped around the head)¹¹, Aloï insists that the viewer is encouraged not only to gasp in horror at the animal death, but to think about the social, political and cultural forces that have led to the animal death being demonstrated in this way.

Aloï uses Foucault's term “dispositif”¹² to unpack these works. The dispositif unearths the hidden relations of power that are institutionalised and carried by the docile bodies, burdened with the responsibility of carrying out the actions and activities mapped out for them, by those forces that underlie societal controls. Although Foucault says very little about animals, Aloï's use of the dispositif, to open works of art to a material reading, is useful as it reveals a critical edge to some works that is absent in most. This reading of works relies on the material realities of the work (so the focus is on sculpture not painting) and questions about representation are side stepped by the real animal skin that has been manipulated by the artist (in Galanini's *Inert*, it is the wolf skin, and it is the fur coat that is shaped like a dog, in Bishop's, *It's Hard to Make a Stand*). Reading things materially, instead of semiotically, makes the unpacking of these works more direct. The meanings of the docile bodies of wolves, as well as dogs and horses referred to in such works, move out from the material thingness to the discursive spaces of the institutional practices of race and speciesism through the dispositif. This includes: within the sport of hunting and racing, dogs and horse are trained in particular ways to perform; the institution of the commodified breeding and the class relations of the hunt; and the power relations of scientific investment in breeds and

classification since the enlightenment. As the power relations are laid bare, so too are the commodity relations. All material comes from somewhere, to make anything, you have to be willing to destroy material in its form.

Yet Aloï's examination of taxidermy in art stops short of a critical engagement with work that uses the animal body as decoration, as furniture, as fashion. Ethical taxidermy, "well they were dead anyway", or "respect for animal skin" is at odds with the decorative and commodified in some works by Polly Morgan, Angela Singer, and Julia De Ville. These flight of fantasy artists use the animal body as a sign of the beauty of nature, in favour of its decorative, patterned, sparkly, kitsch surface. What is problematic about those works is that they lay more heavily on the side of the thing, than the being they once were. The easy relationship of decoration to commodity, is a nod to formal abstraction. Skipping ahead from any discussion about the animal's death (they were dead anyway) to the formal relationship of patterned skin to monument or furniture: decoration suppresses the material reality in the same way that representation sometimes does. It's a mirage, an illusion. Alluding to the status of ownership, the surface of the skin relates to handbags and to cowboy boots. The snake skins in Morgan's works, become emblems of conquest as abstraction. The empty snake skin with its soft curve balanced against hard coloured and aerated concrete is the centrepiece to today's sterile homes. Is this different than the Victorian fascination with dead things?

Rachel Poliquin gives some much needed perspective on the history of the taxidermy animal, aesthetics, science and the whole thingness in her book *The Breathless Zoo: Taxidermy and the Culture of Longing*,¹³ beginning with the rise in popularity of cabinets of curiosity in the 17th century, to the aesthetic and scientific gathering of knowledge in the Enlightenment, through to present day practices in museums, and hunting trophies. Poliquin traces improvements in the production of taxidermy specimens, from skins stuffed with straw, to experimentation with chemicals, to some Twentieth Century museums discarding of those specimens thought to be of no use or botched beyond recognition, (because even the most carefully prepared specimen remains perishable and therefore temporary).

Poliquin uses the idea of longing¹⁴ to unpack the pursuit of the exotic animal body in Victorian parlours and museums, as fulfilling a desire for adventure in areas as diverse as art and science. Driven by the quest for everything exotic, the delight in different species than the familiar; the aestheticisation of the dead at the point of their obliteration, until all that remains of the species that we have led to the brink of extinction and beyond is evident in the drawers and store rooms of museums, and representative of entire species. As Poliquin reminds us, aside from classification systems there is a limited vein of knowledge available in the skins and specimens that are on display. Surely this sense of longing has been replaced by something more. But just because we did this historically do we still need to do it now?

The remarkable efforts of digital artists to replace and replicate animal skins, and filmic traces of these in photography and the TV Documentary so eloquently discussed by Johnathan Burt in his book *Animals in Film*¹⁵, leave us wanting more. The encounter with the animal body is analogous for us in the visit to the tiger enclosure at the zoo, or the stuffed tiger in the museum, but these are a poor substitute to the encounter with the tiger in the wild. However, as Burt notes, this may be all that is left, as soon as animals appear in film, they begin to disappear from the wild. One doesn't have to look further than Disney's live action "Lion King" or the recent remake of "Dr Doolittle" to understand the confusion between realism¹⁶ and fantasy. For an hour and twenty five minutes the spell is unbroken, as we cavort with, understand, go along with the action; taxidermied animals can't begin to give us the vicarious thrill of playing with a tiger; or of cavorting with a chimpanzee. Not only has film replaced the all other encounters, digital film surpasses the animal, makes it redundant because the digital animal can out-perform every tiger, and every chimpanzee. Everything we can do, can be done better, on film. – Except in the 2020 film "Cats".¹⁷

Michele Beevors is a Principal Lecturer in Sculpture. She lectures in the undergraduate programme specialising in Modernist Sculpture and postmodern practices. Michele holds a Masters of Visual Arts degree from the Canberra School of Art (Australian National University) and a Masters of Fine Art from Columbia University (New York). Her art practice concerns a feminist perspective, related to the commodification of culture, together with an interest in animal studies.

- 1 Polly Morgan, *Metanoia*, 2016, jesmonite, Burmese python skin, polyurethane; *Depression in a surface*, 2014, taxidermy albino corn Snake, ocean blue marble, slate; *Should you have any questions?* 2016, plaster; taxidermy royal python, cardboard box, <https://www.PollyMorgan.co.uk>
- 2 Moore's idea of "truth to materials" reflects a problem, that a material has innate qualities, that any shape decided on by the artist to be used should highlight the qualities that the material already has... and the other side is that the material should not therefore be painted. Essentially it is a rule against decoration.
- 3 And the sensitive observer of sculpture must also learn to feel shape simply as shape, not as description or reminiscence. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/henry-moore/henry-moore-the-sculptor-speaks-r1176118>
- 4 Steve Baker, *The Post Modern Animal* (London: Reaktion Books 2000), 75. "A botched taxidermy piece may be described as referring to the human and the animal without itself being either human or animal and without its being a direct representation of either: It's an attempt to think, a new thing"
- 5 Thomas Grunfeld, *Misfit (giraffe)* (1997), <https://www.designboom.com/art/misfits-by-thomas-grunfeld/>
- 6 Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park* (Alfred A Knopf 1990).
- 7 *Monty Python's Flying Circus* BBC 1969–1974, <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2hwqnp>
- 8 What is an open work? Eco describes an open work, as a work that is completed by the viewer – a temporary closing, in bringing together the history of the work and the history of the viewer: The viewer, in completing the work, is participating in its composition, butting ideas words and meanings together in their imagination as they move through the work. While in the area of music, and literature one can conceive of a modernist work remaining open, but in the area of the visual arts that seems more unlikely. Examples Eco used at the time, including works by Giacometti, have now become emblems of status and wealth, hardly the meanings intended for them by the sculptor: The commodity shuts down these other meanings (In Giacometti, alienation haunts the gnarly, abject, surreal figures) as the work is subsumed, and consumed into exchange. The Open Work really anticipates interactivity as an intellectual activity, not as an entertainment factor: We see the entertainment factor everywhere now expressed at biennales, as viewers are encouraged to lie down, stand here, dance, sing, and take off their clothes. Eco strived towards a systematic, semiotic structure of meaning, that could be used to unpack each art form: music literature, visual art, dance etc. Umberto Eco, *The Open Work* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989).
- 9 See Aloj Giovanni. For an analysis of *It's Hard to Make a Stand* using the dispositive in, "This is not a horse: Bio power and animal skins in the Anthropocene." *Speculative Taxidermy: Natural History, Animal Surfaces, and Art in the Anthropocene* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2018).
- 10 Nicolas Galanin, *Inert*, 2009, wolf skins, felt, <https://walkerart.org/magazine/nicholas-galanin-indigenous-art-contemporary-traditional>
- 11 Steven Bishop, *It's hard to make a stand*, fur coat, polyurethane, polythene, mirrored acrylic wood, 2009 https://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/steve_bishop_its_hard.htm
- 12 M Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other Writings 1972-77*, ed C Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980).
- 13 Rachel Poliquin, *The Breathless Zoo: Taxidermy and the Cultures of Longing* (Pennsylvania: The Penn State University Press, 2012).
- 14 Susan Stewart, *On Longing* (Durham London: Duke University Press, 1993).
- 15 Johnathan Burt, *Animals in Film* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002).
- 16 *Dr Doolittle*, trailer; Universal Studios (2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEf4I2bSPLs>
- 17 *Cats* (2019) Thomas Hooper (Dir) (Don't watch this movie)