

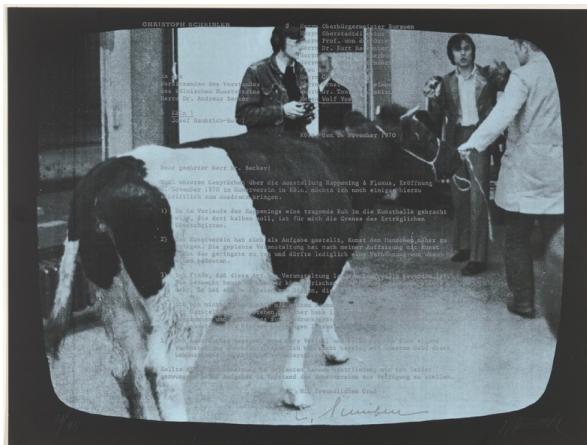
CALL FOR PAPERS
Journal « Elephant & Castle »

Artists' Animals

Between Abstraction, Figuration, and Hybridization from the Late Twentieth Century to the Present

Curated by Maria Elena Minuto (Université de Liège, KU Leuven) and Elio Grazioli (Università degli Studi di Bergamo)

Submissions deadline: February 18, 2022



Wolf Vostell, *TV-Oxen II (TV-Ochsen II)* from *Weekend*, 1971

René Block Editions, Berlin, 1972

« Io son come un serpente, ogni anno cambio pelle. La mia pelle non la butto ma con essa faccio tutto ».
Pino Pascali, excerpt from the introduction to the exhibition *Nuove sculture*, Galleria L'Attico, Rome 1966

« Le devenir-animal de l'homme est réel, sans que soit réel l'animal qu'il devient ».
Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Mille plateaux. Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, 1980

Problematised by art (Allora & Calzadilla, 2013; Fritsch, 2013; Dion, 2011), philosophy (Despret, 2021; Nancy, 2014; Lestel, 2010), and contemporary art criticism (Ramos 2016; Teixeira Pinto, 2015; Niermann, 2013; Baker, 2000), the controversial relationship between artistic affection and animality is more than ever a rich and futable theme of interdisciplinary perspectives and intermedial approaches.

From Gerhard Richter's photo paintings of antelopes, to Kiki Smith's sculptures of extinct species, from Maurizio Cattelan's installations of stuffed birds, to Berlinde De Bruyckere's drawings of chunks of flesh, from Pierre Huyghe's *écosystèmes*, to Tomás Saraceno's spider webs, the intricate relationship between visual art and animal imaginary continues to foster the international critical debate by establishing itself at the core of contemporary theoretical and aesthetic reflection.

The book *Theater, Garden, Bestiary. A Materialist History of Exhibitions* (Garcia & Normand, 2019), the exhibition *Animals. Respect / Harmony / Subjugation* (Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, 2018), the dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel, and the exhibition *Zoométries. Hedendaagse Kunst in de ban van het dier* (Université de Gand, 2003) are just some of the significant testimonies of the complex dialogue between artistic research and the animal kingdom in the twenty-first century.

An age-old question of an ethical, philosophical, political, and social nature, the relationship between the art and concept of animality sinks some of its deepest and memorable roots in the historic avant-gardes. Accomplices of this compelling reading are Hans Arp's *Cobra-Centaur* (1952), Meret Oppenheim's mug of beer with a squirrel's tail for a handle (*L'écureuil*, 1960), Unica Zürn's phantasmagorical bestiaries (*La Serpenta*, 1957), and the autobiography *Écritures* (1970) by Max Ernst who, as concerns the recurring image of a bird in his paintings, wrote as follows: "En 1930, [...] j'ai eu la visite presque journalière du Supérieur des oiseaux, nommé Loplop, fantôme particulier d'une fidélité modèle, attaché à ma personne. Il me présenta un cœur en cage, la mer en cage, deux pétales, trois feuilles, une fleur et une jeune fille."

A symptom of the twentieth century's overturning of history, of its technological advances, and of the climate crisis, the animal issue was examined several decades later by the neo-avant-gardes of the 1960s and 1970s in light of a new critical, aesthetic, and conceptual perspective, which once again pondered the natural and cultural time of the Anthropocene. In the years when Joseph Beuys explained to a dead hare the meaning of some of the paintings hanging in a room (*Wie man dem toten Hasen die Bilder erklärt*, 1965), Wolf Vostell was installing the first version of *Endogene Depression* (1975) featuring turkeys, concrete, and television sets in a room at the Sprengel Museum in Hannover, Jannis Kounellis was displaying a parrot on a perch fastened to a steel sheet (*Pappagallo*, 1967), and Carolee Schneemann was wrapping bodies, the remains of animals, and objects in an orgiastic ritual by enacting the ancestral link between animality and eroticism (*Meat Joy*, 1964).

Mythological (Matthew Barney), totemic (Jan Fabre), autobiographical (Ana Mendieta), ludic (Jeff Koons), hybrid (Vettor Pisani), sonorous (Bruce Nauman), legendary (James Lee Byars), numerical (Mario Merz), political (Regina José Galindo), sacrificial (Hermann Nitsch), and psychoanalytical (Louise Bourgeois), animals have crossed the multiple glances of art, finding the writings of Donna J. Haraway (*When Species Meet*, 2007; *The Companion Species Manifesto*, 2003), *L'animal que donc je suis* (2006) by Jacques Derrida, and *L'Aperto. L'uomo e l'animale* by Giorgio Agamben (2002) to be some of the most fertile and radical expressions of contemporary critical thinking.

How is the centuries-old relationship between artist and animal re-read today? How does this relationship define and continue to redefine the hybrid boundaries of art, from Rosmarie Trockel to Mircea Cantor, from Tania Bruguera to John Akomfrah? And how can we query the animal world in the changing of its intentions, expressions, and figurations?

From the theories and movements of the neo-avant-garde in the 1960s and 1970s (from Arte povera to performance art, from Fluxus to public art), via the research of the 1980s and 1990s all the way to the most recent manifestations, this issue of the journal *Elephant & Castle* invites academics, critics, and scholars to put forward unpublished and original contributions, analysing in an interdisciplinary and comparative manner the theme of the animal in contemporary art: a sounding board for our historical actuality.

Key-words: Contemporary Art; Contemporary Art Criticism; Avant-Garde; Neo-avant-garde; Animals; Interdisciplinarity; Intermediality.

Topics may include, without being limited to:

- The artist and the representation of the animal in the historic avant-gardes
- The Surrealist bestiaries (1924-1947)
- “Foreshadowed futures and reconstructed pasts”: the topic of the animal in neo-avant-garde art of the 1960s and 1970s and its historical evolution
- Fluxus and the animal: developments of an inter-medial poetics
- The political animal and performative art
- The relationship between artistic affection and animality in contemporary art criticism
- Arte povera and animal imaginary
- The post-colonial animal in contemporary art
- Animality, performativity, and eroticism
- The topic of the animal in its various forms, manifestations, and expressions (photography, public art, installation, video art, sculpture, artist’s cinema)
- The artist’s animal as an allegorical form of the contemporary
- Visual art and the animal kingdom in the twenty-first century

How to contribute:

Proposals are to be sent to mariaelena.minuto@kuleuven.be and elio.grazioli@unibg.it by **February 18th 2022** at the latest, and must contain an abstract of the contribution (max. 5 000 characters, spaces included), a provisional title, five keywords, a reference bibliography, and a short biographical note of the author (max. 700 characters).

The communication of the selected proposals will take place by the end of February 2022.

The submitted article may be in Italian, English, or French, and must contain a maximum of 30 000-40 000 characters, including notes and spaces. The contributions, accompanied by images and conforming to the editorial standards of the journal, are expected by **May 31, 2022**. Each article will be submitted to a double-blind peer review and the publication of the issue is planned for August 2022.

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