

Proprioceptiveness, and being creatively with the animal as animal

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Abstract:

The animal and being animal is a proposition and position that invites observational and critical debate. To observe the non-human animal is too often tense and politicised; to take on an understated what-it-is-to-be-animal is a sensitised and sensitive means to understand differing perspectives. Using diverse methods, processes and materials, and curious to a myriad of opening potentialities, they explore working as humans from an animal-centric perspective. They bring sensitivities to their handling of the animal as both artistic subject and collaborator, of behaving as animal, in order to observe and engage with empathy and openness to the unexpected, to animal insight and revelation. Iterative long-term projects in drawing and printmaking foreground proximity and proprioceptive, nearly devotional studio and caretaking practices centering on respiration and companionate movement before, within, and beyond, a global pandemic.

This paper explores the socialised and familiar in close observation, directly and indirectly, in their individual yet companion practices discussing roles and responsibilities. It reflects on the allowing and embracing of other species within their artworks, and of being mindful and sensible with balancing sympathies and empathies as the humans within an often unbalanced system of agency. Specifically, it centres on our mindfully responsive exhibition at Tippetts and Eccles Galleries at Utah State University in 2021, where we invited a canine collaborator into our thinking through praxis and the interventions and residual outcomes this created.

The submission is to present an individual paper.

Bartram bio:

Angela Bartram is an artist and artistic researcher working with objects, sound, video, print, performance event and published text, concerning thresholds of the human body, gallery or museum, definitions of the human and animal as companion species and appropriate strategies for documenting the ephemeral. She is Professor of Contemporary Art and Head of Arts Research and the Digital and Material Artistic Research Centre at the University of Derby, is a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Utah State University, and has a PhD from Middlesex University.

Deigaard bio:

Lee Deigaard is an artist and writer whose work responds to spontaneous voluntary interactions with generous, curious animal collaborators. She works in a variety of media exploring multi-species empathy, animal cognition and personality, sensory processes of memory and grief, and the nature of intimacy. She has shown and presented her work nationally and internationally in numerous solo and group shows. She is a poet, writer, bookmaker, and curator, and was recently Distinguished Visiting Professor at Utah State University.