**Draw | Breath | Animal**

**Angela Bartram and Lee Deigaard**

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.

Artists Lee Deigaard (USA) and Angela Bartram (UK) critically approach the animal as the animal. Using diverse methods and materials and curious to 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 within a global pandemic. This exhibition explores the socialised and familiar in close observation, directly and indirectly, in their individual yet companion practices and additionally features the artists in conversation and active collaboration on site in the gallery.

Bios:

**Angela Bartram** is an artist 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 strategies for documenting the ephemeral. Bartram is Professor of Contemporary Art and Head of Arts Research and the Digital and Material Artistic Research Centre at the University of Derby. Bartram is Executive Board member for the Society for Artistic Research, CHEAD Research Alliance Strategy Group member, peer reviewer for Project Anywhere global exhibition programme (University of Melbourne) Emotion, Space and Society journal, the Journal for Artistic Research (JAR), and the Austrian Science Fund, and consultant for The Danish National School of Performing Arts journal and Kingdom University (Bahrain). Additionally she is a Chair of the steering group for Contemporary Visual Arts Network East Midlands. She has a PhD from Middlesex University.

**Lee Deigaard** is an artist from New Orleans and rural Georgia. Responding to spontaneous voluntary interactions with generous, curious animal collaborators, her work explores multi-species empathy and animal cognition and personality. She has shown and presented her work nationally and internationally and was a 2017-18 Artist-in-Residence at the Joan Mitchell Center. Her work has appeared in Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture, National Geographic's blog PROOF, Lenscratch, Oxford American, and as part of Format International in the UK and was featured in Pride of Place at the New Orleans Museum of Art. She is also a curator and writer and occasional professor.

**Be Your Dog**

Angela Bartram, 2016

*Be Your Dog* explores and analyses relationships beyond the hierarchies of pet and owner and as collaborative artists within the gallery (KARST, Plymouth). The project selected and invited participants and their dogs to attend workshops over two consecutive weekends to learn how to establish empathy, equality and connection within a new artistic ‘pack’. Essentially, the project tests scientific findings through art practice, and concludes that it is possible to learn about, and relate to the cohabiting animals when empathy and equality is engaged instead of dominance. A concluding public event was staged at KARST following the workshops on 6 November 2016 where all participants, human and dog, performed as collaborators. This video is a 17 minute extract from the 1 hour 45 minute public event.

**366: 366 (finally)**

Angela Bartram, 2016-2020

For the leap year of 2016 I exhaled on an etching plate every day, at roughly 8pm. 366 breaths layered on the same surface, in the same place, and at roughly the same time. Each breath took about four seconds to lay on an A5 zinc etching plate. So, roughly 1464 seconds in total, or just over twenty-four minutes, or a third of an hour…that is a lot of breath. From 1 January 2017 to the end of 2020 I took the breaths back to make 366 prints from the same plate. Through an exploration of repetition within process, the mundane within the order of making the breaths were taken back.

**Gus and Deuce Go Elsewhere**

Lee Deigaard, 2014

As a project for an artist residency, I invited two horses, Gus and Deuce, ages 3 and 4, to visit a “living museum” housed in a former thrift store in downtown Greensboro, NC. An open-door policy prevailed; they were invited to look within, and if they chose to enter, they were free to poke around at will, their interests and curiosity guiding the exploration without expectations or predetermined outcome. With Gus and Deuce Go Elsewhere, my goal was not to get horses inside a building but to present them with an opportunity to enter a space normally closed off to them and to watch what they decided to do, how they might reject or choose to explore the museum’s floor-to-ceiling visual and textural density.

**Quarantine Drawings**

Lee Deigaard, March 17-May 19, 2020

Inspired by Lynda Barry’s five-minute drawings of cats and her workshop Drawing and Writing the Unthinkable, I decided, somewhat arbitrarily, at the beginning of Phase 1 quarantine in March 2020 to make 12 drawings each day in black ink on index cards of my companion in quarantine E dog. I chose an uncomfortable medium that was also accessible as office supplies. E dog was a motherless stray as a baby on the streets of New Orleans. I was recently widowed. Quarantine would last a few weeks; why not make some drawings. The series ultimately continued for nine weeks marking primary quarantine or phase 1 in New Orleans and became 600 drawings that fit within a shoebox.