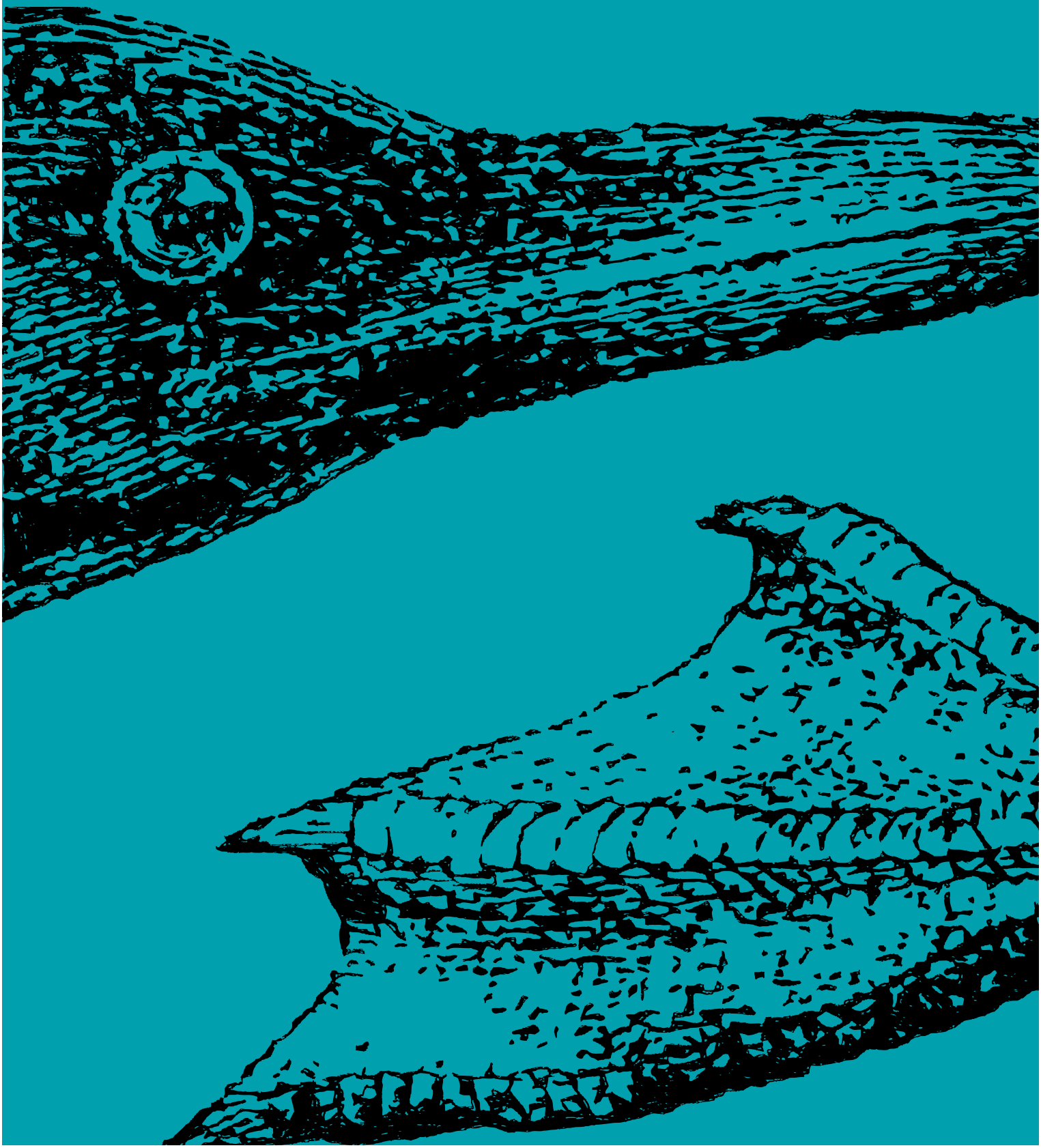
RECONSTRUCTING THE ANIMAL



RECONSTRUCTING THE ANIMAL

Exploring a re–thinking of animals
and human–animal relationships
through the work of contemporary artists

Artists:

Adam Geczy & Jan Guy

Angela Singer

Harri Kallio

Kate James

Alicia King

Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir & Mark Wilson

Curated by Dr Yvette Watt

Plimsoll Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art,
Centre for the Arts, University of Tasmania,
Hunter Street, Hobart, Tasmania
18th March — 15th April 2011

Please note: Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir & Mark Wilson's
I'm not there can be viewed at the Beaumaris Zoo,
Queens Domain, Hobart between 10am — 4pm daily

RECONSTRUCTING THE ANIMAL

Animals have invaded contemporary art. Creatures of all sizes and shapes flutter, lope, crawl, or canter through the work of artists from Damien Hirst to Patricia Piccinini. Animals are constructed, painted and photographed; remnants of their bodies are tarred, embalmed and bejeweled; while in some cases artists collaborate with living animals to create an artwork. Animals have also made their presence felt in the literary world, with the novels of Yann Martel, J. M. Coetzee and Eva Hornung exploring in very different ways what it means to be animal and how humans relate to other species. This current obsession with nonhuman animals extends throughout the humanities: animal studies (or human-animal studies) has become the 'new black'. But a trend to treat living or dead animals as suitable objects on which artistic experiments can be carried out is now being tempered by reassessments in the sciences, reflections in philosophy, wide-ranging public discussion and deliberations in art itself, that demand nonhuman animals are considered in a new light.

For instance, animal behaviorists have recently revealed that many species of animal reason, experience pleasure, understand aspects of human language and behavior, and are capable of sophisticated planning and using tools. Pigs have intense emotional lives that are directly influenced by their living conditions; chicken communication indicates complex decision-making; chimpanzee gangs violently kill individuals from neighboring groups in order to expand their own territory; honeybees have a symbolic dance language, which forager bees use to communicate the location and value of food resources; and fish feel pain and are far smarter than was previously suspected.

And there is evidence that animals adjust their behavior to cope with human environments: silvereyes, the tiny native birds that dart through Australian urban areas and sing in sentences, have heightened the pitch of their song and slowed its pace to allow for the loud background noise of cities. The call of silvereyes in rural areas remains the same. Cultural and literary theorist Cary Wolfe asserts that animal studies "would probably not exist…without the work [such as this] done in field ecology and cognitive ethology over the past twenty to thirty years" and that the revelations this work is making about animal lives is forcing a shift in the ethics of reading and interpretation. Some of the discoveries made by researchers have been reflected in animal welfare regulations in the United States, Europe and Tasmania. Similarly, recognition of animal agency has given a new perspective to how animals can influence the lives of humans and has engendered a new respect for them and an appreciation, not only of the potential of nonhuman animals but also of the possibilities for interaction in a range of situations related to health, medicine, and war.

On the other hand, there is a wave of concern over species loss and environmental degradation, as so many animals succumb to the sixth mass extinction event that continues to unfold in our lifetime. Even familiar children's picture book animals—lions, tigers, elephants—are at risk of disappearing from their natural habitats, while many species of insect and marine life are lost imperceptibly or before their existence has even been recognized by humans. Islands are home to the most unusual and rare species and one of the most vulnerable sites of extinction. Because of their relative seclusion, the animals endemic to places like New Zealand, Tasmania, the Galápagos and Mauritius have evolved in unique ways: they are often dwarf or giant versions of their type, relics of species extinct in nearby regions, they rarely migrate and, because there are few large predators there, many species have never developed defensive mechanisms. The continued survival of island species depends on factors such as natural selection, genetic variation, and the severity of events such as cyclones or volcanic activity.

But human-caused disturbances tend to be the greatest reason for mortality. Two of the animals featured in this exhibition, the dodo and the thylacine, are examples of island species whose loss resulted from human actions. An installation by Snæbjörnsdóttir and Wilson at the old Hobart Zoo site overlooking the Derwent River shows some of the common names given to the thylacine. Visual and verbal representations of this marsupial often suggest a similarity with feared or hated European or Asian animals. They are evidence of a slow but successful campaign to exterminate the Tasmanian 'tiger'…and demonstrate the importance of representation to a species' survival.

It is important, then, to draw attention to the ways in which we interact with species endangered in the wild. But genetic manipulation and the use of both exotic and domestic animals in experimentation, factory farming, and in the production of commercial goods are also subjects that are being debated in law, philosophy, and the wider community. Meanwhile use of the term 'nonhuman', though anthropocentric, reminds us of the qualities we share with animals and makes these practices all the more contentious. It also shows there is a growing politicization of animal topics in every sphere of life. In fact, the humanities in the twenty-first century is experiencing an 'animal turn'—sometimes called the Animal Moment—when animals are the subject on everyone's lips.

Art historian Steve Baker, however, draws attention to the difficulty of thinking about and representing the animal, an endeavor he believes is fraught with the danger of anthropomorphism, trivialisation or sentimentalism. The artists in this exhibition have been chosen by curator Yvette Watt because while their work displays a diversity of approaches to the subject of animals, it also provokes a reconsideration of and engagement with the ethics of human-animal relationships. Many of the pieces use animal materials—bones, fur, hair, feathers. These artists 'reconstruct' animals in ways that persuade us to rethink both the animal and how we relate to them. The works may do this in a literal sense as recycled taxidermy and as three dimensional representations of extinct birds; or as metaphorical reconstructions, where the viewer is asked

to reconsider or reflect upon their attitudes to animals. Individual pieces may ask us to reassess the relationship we have with animals who exhibit very similar feelings and behavior to ours. They may stimulate reconsideration of our perspective on familiar objects that are, in fact, made from the body of an animal. Or they may encourage us to re-evaluate the physical displacement of animals in the environment and ponder about traditional practices.

Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir and Mark Wilson bring animals into close and sharp relief in their interviews and video installations called *between you and me* (2008–09). Their work explores human relationships with seals in Iceland, a large island on the edge of the Arctic Circle in the North Atlantic Ocean with a relatively small number of animal species. The works include images of a place that is at once bleak, beautiful and compelling: with granite-colored water, confrontations with death, the texture of coarse fur, and the sound of wind and birds. It is a challenging environment for humans but a familiar, watery home for the animals that inhabit this region. Seal hunting was once one of country's main industries and Snæbjörnsdóttir and Wilson focus on past practices, the indigenous sealing culture, and projections for the future. Their videos bring everyday interactions with seals into the foreground, including the intricate reconstruction processes of taxidermy. They invite viewers to consider how relationships and ideas about seals have evolved over time, to reassess issues of human and animal needs, and to notice how the value and status of animals is changing on this island. Given the popularity of seal images, their approach to the subject—with an emphasis on specific and close interactions with humans—challenges conventional (re)presentations of this species in popular films, marine parks and on the table, and questions their value for the animal.

Hunting, still a popular pursuit in New Zealand, is a primary focus of Angela Singer's work, but her background as an animal rights activist strongly informs her practice. Through her recycled taxidermy she attempts to 'make the trophy more controversial, give it greater presence and make it not so easy to ignore'. She also aims to make amends for the death of the animal. She does this partly

by seeking out the histories of discarded hunting trophies—including wounds, missing parts of the bodies and stories of the hunt, and then by reconstructing the last hours of that animal's life. Singer conveys these histories through adorning remnants of the animal body with buttons or precious and glittering jewels, producing a juxtaposition of beauty of horror. One of the questions she wants the viewer to ask themselves is 'Why has this taxidermy animal been altered to look like this?', stimulating them to confront the suffering involved in their death and to interrogate their own feelings about and relationship with animals. Her work stresses the violence of hunting and slaughter by intensifying the animals' pain. Singer's work shocks: it is concerned with bringing attention to unnecessary deaths and exposing how mounted trophies trivialize these deaths.

Mauritius is one of three small islands in the Indian Ocean that make up the Mascarene group. In 1510 when first visited by Dutch mariners it was uninhabited by humans. By the late 1600s, less than a hundred years after settlement, one of the gentle, flightless birds that inhabited the island was extinct. Much of the information about what the dodo looked like is based on a few inadequate firsthand accounts, conflicting statements, and simplistic interpretations of evidence. Sculptor Harri Kallio, however, has meticulously sifted through the small number of remaining bones and body parts left in museums and consulted a wide range of pictorial sources and written accounts to produce life-sized reconstructions of the most probable appearance of this extinct bird. His photographs situate dodos in their habitat as it is today: a place where only sparse remnants of the original forest and seashore vegetation remain. Essentially, Kallio's work recreates both a place and an animal that no longer exists. It offers the viewer an imaginary encounter with what has been and could have been. It is therefore both inventive and nostalgic. It begs the question of just how human ignorance and irresponsibility could have obliterated so much life from this lush and isolated tropical island.

Kate James's work is generated by a strong affection and empathy for animals. Her hand-crafted objects, video works and photographs reveal the often–overlooked and frequently misunderstood anxieties domestic animals often feel and encourage us to compare their experiences with our own. 'Wind-suck' is the term used to describe the action of a horse that anchors its incisor teeth onto fixed objects and repeatedly bites down, gulping in air and making a characteristic grunting noise. An activity often caused by stress, boredom, or the frustration of being stabled, windsucking often becomes habitual. By recording this behaviour and playing it on a loop format, James's video communicates the distressing and monotonous nature of this type of animal suffering. But human fear or apprehension can also be provoked by animal hair and fleece that appear in works such as *Sweet Jane* (2009) and *Letting Go* (2007). Some viewers may gain a sense of warmth and comfort from these materials, but others may find them disturbing, unattractive, or allergy-provoking. James has an intense attachment to the animals that share her life and many of her images grow from the fear of losing nonhuman companions whose lifespan is relatively short. In this way she keys into the experiences of many of us who lose dearly loved animals and are overwhelmed (and sometimes surprised) by the grief we feel. By drawing our attention to the physical and emotional states we share with them—fear, boredom, anxiety, comfort, dependence and security—James aims to bring human and animal closer together.

In her video and sculptural pieces Tasmanian artist Alicia King explores the Galápagos Islands: a wild, relatively isolated environment quite different from her home. The ancient archipelago is renowned for its marine iguanas, giant tortoises, Darwin's finches, flightless cormorants and many species of lava lizard: a vast community of life forms found nowhere else. The Galápagos is a World Heritage Area, a marine reserve, and UNESCO biosphere reserve—an area that 'demonstrates a balanced relationship between humans and nature' and where wildlife is carefully protected. Similar to Mauritius, these islands had no human population until relatively recently and few large predators.

But here, with so many endemic species still surviving, human interaction with 'wild' animals is negotiated on quite different terms than in most places in the world. It is this unusual space between human and animal and the desire to come closer to nonhuman animals that King is interested in and explores in her work. As is obvious in other artworks in this exhibition, the context of environment is a crucial and often defining feature in determining the kind of human-animal relationships that develop or are allowed to develop. They therefore raise questions about how we shape environments for the animals who inhabit them; what the limits of our power or responsibilities are toward nonhuman animals; and how these relationships impacts on the survival of the natural world itself. For King, the Galápagos Islands present a rare space for the navigation and 'reconstruction' of human-animal relations.

We take for granted the animal materials that provide us with so many things we use in our everyday lives. Often we are not aware of, or chose not to think about, the components or processes involved in producing them, or the source of the food we eat. When we are made aware of these, it can radically alter the way we perceive a product and pose questions about animal consumption and commodification. For example, a red pigment used in cosmetics, shampoos and food dyes is obtained by crushing tens of thousands of female cochineal insects; collagen is a fibrous protein usually derived from animal tissue; musk flavouring is extracted from the genitals of musk deer, musk rats, civet and beavers by a cruel and painful process; to obtain the silk used in cloth, silkworms are usually boiled in their cocoons. Adam Geczy and Jan Guy focus on bone china—a type of porcelain that contains animal bones, crushed and burned to produce ash. Thomas Frye, who developed the product in eighteenth century Britain, lived very close to the cattle markets and slaughterhouses of Essex. Later this type of china was used by Spode and became highly sought after because of its translucency, whiteness and mechanical strength. Geczy and Guy have used bone china made from domestic chicken and turkey bones to reconstruct the bodies of Australian native birds that are common in urban parkland and gardens. The pieces,

some in hand-blown glass domes referencing Victorian domestic displays of stuffed birds, have multiple connotations—the colonial collection of animals, the abundance and disappearance of species, and the differences and similarities in attitudes toward wild and domestic animals. But transcending all of these are the implications generated by the ceramic material used in this work—the rigidity of the feathers, the birds' static wings, and the notion of grinding and burning—that encapsulate our thoughtless exploitation of so many animal species.

The artworks in this exhibition are much more than examples of the latest fad or the new black. They expose often overlooked uses of the animal body, enlighten us to the way animals feel or behave, inform about different ways people live with and relate to animals over time, and ask us to rethink our attitudes and consider how we will interact with nonhuman animals in the future. These works question the significance of our biological connections, unsettle collective convictions, stir the very heart of our existence in the world, and compel us to confront what it means to be human(e).

Carol Freeman, February 2011

BRYNDÍS SNÆBJÖRNSDÓTTIR AND MARK WILSON

The artworks in *between you and me* by Snæbjörnsdóttir/Wilson centre on representations and the intrinsic value of things and call into question the myriad bases upon which we construct such representations. Snæbjörnsdóttir/Wilson have for some time in their work been examining specific relationships between human and non-human animals — in *nanoq: flat out and bluesome the polar bear,* in *Big Mouth the Tasmanian Tiger*, in *(a)fly urban pets* etc.

between you and me specifically draws on a contemporary set of relationships between humans and seals, with its particular focus on the coastal areas of Iceland where interaction of one sort or another has been customary for many centuries.

Because most representations are constructed to perform some agenda of our own — in the case of animals, to entertain, to inform, to provide food, to remember, to stand for all others of its species, to symbolize human behavioural characteristics etc — in this process, the animal itself is occluded — eclipsed by its avatar or likeness, which is always a simplification and therefore must accordingly signify a loss.

the naming of things, 2009, Video
Duration: 53 minutes

ADAM GECZY AND JAN GUY

The works in this exhibition are the first in an ongoing collaborative project between Adam Geczy and Jan Guy. They radically alter the perception of bone china in a way that comments on genetic engineering, myths of perfectability and humanity's mediation of the natural world.

As the phrase suggests, bone china contains animal bones whose calcite lends the ceramic its translucency. In this series of works the kinds of bones that are used are specifically chosen. Here exotic and endangered Australian species have been cast out of the bones of kitchen poultry: a chicken, a turkey and some quail. Thus these birds have been extracted from their inauspicious origins, and in a process that humorously calls to mind a welter of stories of recreation from the frog prince to Frankenstein, they are remade into rare birds of great beauty. But the birds are white and frozen in time — the consolation of such a process (a comment on Botox perhaps?).

In their immaculate hand-made glass domes, these specimens are also engaged in a language of museology. But in no overly critical way — rather they suggest that museums are the melancholy storehouses of what have become increasingly rare and extinct objects, the last places where we can go to imagine the world that was and could have been.

Eastern Yellow Robin (Eopsaltria australis) (turkey), 2010
bone china, wood, acrylic, brass and glass, 43 x 43 x 54 cm

HARRI KALLIO

The Dodo and Mauritius Island, Imaginary Encounters (2004), is a reconstruction and a photographic study of the long extinct dodo bird. Based on extensive research, Kallio produced life-size sculptural reconstructions of the bird, as well as a visual photographic study of the actual dodo remains. The project culminated in photographic reconstructions of the dodo bird made with the models in their natural habitat of Mauritius Island. Research for the project was based on available historical and anatomical data, with an emphasis on art historical sources. The resulting photographic work is a visual interpretation of the dodos in the actual locations where they once lived — an imaginary encounter between the viewer and the dodos in seventeenth century Mauritius Island.

The Dodo and Mauritius Island, Imaginary Encounters, is a dialogue between the mythical, art historical and biological dodo. The dodo is a character that is very well known all over the world, thanks to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), and is also our most famous extinct species. This strange giant pigeon was exterminated due to human intervention between 1662 and 1693 on Mauritius Island — the only place on earth where dodos existed. Although the dodo became extinct hundreds of years ago, it still lives on in the collective memory of the western world.

Benares #5, Mauritius, 2004, Chromogenic print, 100 x 122 cm

KATE JAMES

This body of work results from my ongoing investigation into the relationship between humans and domesticated animals and the study and adaptation of traditional and unusual craft practices.

Through the employment of materials such as horsehair, dog hair and wool, these works draw animals and humans together, both literally and figuratively. My strong emotional bond with animals is intrinsically woven into *Sweet Jane* (2009) through the use of hair from my beloved mare. Housed in a glass dome, this lovingly (and painstakingly) crafted object combines "hairwork", a traditional Victorian era technique that utilised human hair in the construction of mourning jewellery, and "hitching", an almost obsolete cowboy craft, to create a memento mori for the death of my horse (which is yet to occur). Similarly, in the photograph *Letting Go* (2007), a treasured loved one is immortalised in a tribute, echoing the feelings of loss and grief associated with the impending departure of a dear friend.

Symbolic associations of materials such as rope have been used in the series *Pony Tales* (2009-10). Held together by counter-twisting forces, rope, in many ways, can be seen as analogous to the tension that arises from anxiety, an experience common to human and animal alike. As a fundamental tool when working with horses, rope is an apt medium through which to explore notions of control and escape. Similarly, fluctuations between feelings of control and loss of control, restraint and release, are common features of the anxious experience. The title of these horsehair works also alludes to the well known fairytales of Rumpelstiltskin and Rapunzel in which the troubled protagonists relentlessly toil, spinning gold or braiding hair, in the hope of escaping from their place of confinement. In this instance, the employment of horsehair rather than human hair, brings to the fore the historic ties

Letting Go, 2007, Inkjet print on Somerset paper, 48.3 x 33 cm

between the female and animal subject, weaving together their shared experiences of coercion — into domesticity or captivity — and the resulting anxiety this inevitably provokes.

While these works reflect my own personal experience of attachment between humans and animals, *Wind-suck* (2006) reflects a desire for a deeper understanding of the emotional world of animals. This video captures a horse wind-sucking, a term used to describe the action of a horse that anchors its incisor teeth onto fixed objects and repeatedly bites down, gulping in air and making a characteristic grunting noise. An intrusive, relentless and incapacitating behaviour, wind-sucking often signifies the presence of anxiety. In turn, the viewer may find this footage unsettling and it may perhaps lead to a deeper empathy for domesticated animals.

ALICIA KING

Preoccupation with isolated islands beyond the common laws of nature are perfected in texts such as evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley's *The Tissue Culture King* (1927), and H. G. Wells' *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896). These paradises in which nature and culture can be transformed by tools of biological technologies reveal microcosms in which humans dominate and induce for their own means, slipping between utopian and dystopian visions. Island regions such as the Galápagos Archipelago are land alone amidst vast ocean, teeming with 'wild' creatures and giant cactus forests.

These islands embody a raw utopia, shared by humans and animal residents — though all must assimilate to survive. Humans adapt to animals adapt to plants adapt to humans adapt to animals adapt to plants…

With transmutation as mantra, King's works in *Reconstructing the Animal* explore attempts to navigate the physical space between humans and other animals. Through costumed inhabitation of non-human spaces within this mythologised geography of Galápagos is the desire to gain a 'primal' and intimate experience with 'the animal' as a channel to the metaphysical realm.

From within, 2011, 4:3 Video Animation, DVD loop 00:48 sec

ANGELA SINGER

"Angela Singer is an extremely coherent artist. Over the years she has developed a solid reputation built on a body of work that fearless of aesthetic conventions has challenged us all to look at animals with different eyes.
In her continuous attack to our preconceived perception and understanding of animals, Singer does not allow herself to work with living animals, nor have living creatures killed or otherwise harmed for her art. All the animal materials used in her art are old, donated and/or discarded as refuse."

— "Death of the Animal. Angela Singer", Giovanni Aloi. *Animal Rights and Wrongs. Antennae* — Journal of Nature in Visual Culture, UK, Issue 7, 2008.

"Some artists, like Angela Singer, deliberately use taxidermy to open up wounds and exhibit the damage done to animals in effecting their apparent rescue from time. Here, the visible wounding and careless repair of the animals is part of the effort to make restitution for a larger violation. But the "questioning entities" that taxidermic art brings about may have questions to ask of that art as well as of the traditions from which that art may claim or feign to distance itself. In no other arena of art, perhaps, do violation and restitution lie so close to each other."

— "The Right Stuff", Steven Connor. *Modern Painters*, March, 2009.

Catch, 2007, Recycled taxidermy vintage rabbit, buttons, wool, mixed media, 53 x 24 x 15 cm

BIOGRAPHIES

BRYNDÍS SNÆBJÖRNSDÓTTIR AND MARK WILSON

Snæbjörnsdóttir/Wilson are most widely known for their project *nanoq: flat out and bluesome* (2001-6), an artists' survey of stuffed polar bears in the UK, the photographic component of which has been touring Europe since 2006 and is currently on show in Svalbard Museum in the arctic.

Their most recent work, *Uncertainty in the City*, explores the conception of 'pest' in the human psyche and was exhibited in Lancaster, UK (September – November 2010). A substantial publication documenting the project, will be published by The Green Box, Berlin in March, 2011. Exhibitions this year aside from *Reconstructing the Animal*, include *Interactive Futures '11: Animal Influence*, in Vancouver, B.C., Canada curated by Dr. Carol Gigliotti.

Snæbjörnsdóttir/Wilson have also been invited to exhibit in the forthcoming Gothenburg Biennale, Sweden in September 2011. In relation to their practice they have contributed essays internationally to a variety of journals and publications, the most recent being "the empty wilderness: seals and animal representation" for the book *Conversations With Landscape*, published by Ashgate, UK, November 2010.

Projects currently in development include *Matrix*, based on the architecture of polar bear dens for which they began research in Svalbard during April 2010 and *Feral Attraction* (working title), which is an investigation, based in Iceland, into human attitudes towards self-determination in previously domestic animals.

Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir is a Professor in Fine Art at Valand School of Art, University of Gothenburg and Mark Wilson is a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at the University of Cumbria, UK. They have been collaborating since 2001.

For more information on their work see:
www.snaebjornsdottirwilson.com
www.radioanimal.org

ADAM GECZY

Adam Geczy's practice is dominated by multimedia sculptural installation and video, but he also exhibits regularly in areas of drawing, photomedia and performance art. A large segment of his practice is oriented toward collaboration, including with Mike Parr, Peter Sculthorpe, the Berlin-based composer Thomas Gerwin, and artist Jan Guy.

The themes of his work range from politics and cultural mythology to ecology and non-objective abstraction. When working in the area of cultural politics, an important concern is its representation in a non-literal and resonant way. Another interest is the interface between music and image, especially with regard to the age-old preoccupation with synaesthesia.

Some of the significant exhibitions over recent years have included *The Mass Psychology of Fascism, Zip-a-dee-doo-dah, Zip-a-dee-ay* (with Mike Parr), Art Gallery of NSW and Monash Faculty Gallery, Melbourne, 2004. Other exhibitions include *Buried Alive* at CACSA, 2007, and the major survey exhibition, *Video Logic* at the MCA, Sydney. Recent performances include *Party Lines* at the 4th Dadao Live Art Festival in Beijing, 2006 and *Remember to Forget the Congo*, Croxhapox, Ghent, Belgium, 2010. Geczy has also been awarded numerous prizes, grants, fellowships and residencies, the latter including in Berlin, Paris, Lyon, Finland, Portugal, Iceland, Hungary, Latvia and Norway. His next major exhibition is entitled *Decollo* at the Municial Museum in Györ, Hungary.

JAN GUY

Jan Guy is an artist and writer who graduated from Queensland College of Art and gained an MVA from Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney. Guy maintains a broad practice and interest in ceramics with a specific focus on sculptural and installed works. Her personal research is presently concerned with relationships between the haptic senses and virtual spaces. Guy has been the recipient of a National Craft Acquisition Award and her work is in the collection of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. In 2009 Guy was a member of the organising committee for the *1st Australian Ceramics Triennale*. She also curated *Young Guns*, an exhibition of emerging international ceramics artists and established CELSIUS, a biannual online journal for the crafts and design.

The artists would like to thank Cheng Yuan Tung, Andrew Lavery, Colin Winter, Marcus Dillon, Clive Cooper and Tony Mesiti.

HARRI KALLIO

Harri Kallio received an MFA from the University of Art and Design, Helsinki in 2002. Since 1999 Kallio has had six solo exhibitions and numerous group showings. His work has been featured at the Aperture Gallery, and in the George Eastman House, NYC exhibition *Why Look at Animals* (2006) and the International Center of Photography's *Ectopia: The Second ICP Triennial of photography and Video* (2006), NYC and Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio, USA. His first monograph *The Dodo and Mauritius Island, Imaginary Encounters* was published in 2004. He is the recipient of numerous Finnish Arts Council and Finnish Cultural Foundation grants, and in 2007 was awarded the Josef Albers Foundation Residency. He lives in New York City.

KATE JAMES

Melbourne–based artist Kate James draws from a variety of media to produce hand–crafted objects, photographs, textile works and video. In creating her intricate, hand–crafted and psychologically–charged sculptures and objects, James employs repetitive and painstaking techniques, often adapted from uncommon, sometimes obsolete, craft practices.

In 2009 James graduated from the Master of Art program (by research) at RMIT University. In 2010 she held two solo exhibitions; *The Work of Worry is Never Done*, Craft Victoria and *Letting Go*, Maroondah Art Gallery. In recent years her work has also been included in the 2010 Yering Sculpture Show, *I'm Okay, You're Okay*, Level ARI, Brisbane 2010, *The Animal Gaze*, touring exhibition, UK, 2009 and *Link II*, RMIT School of Art Alumni exhibition, Melbourne, 2009.

ALICIA KING

Alicia King is an Australian interdisciplinary artist. Her practice explores biological relationships between humans, animals and the wider environment, and alludes to that which generally lies outside of the everyday category of the 'living'. In mid 2009 Alicia was awarded a PhD – Transformations of the flesh; rupturing embodiment through biotechnology – an artistic exploration of relationships between biotech practices and the physical, ethical and ritual human and animal body, from the Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania. Her practice spans sculpture, video, biotech, installation and performance. In recent years she has developed biological art projects at SymbioticA, the University of Tasmania School of Medicine, and the Vrij University

Amsterdam. Alicia has exhibited throughout Australia and beyond, most recently in VISCERAL at Science Gallery, Dublin. She is a recipient of various state and national funding grants, and international Residencies including the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, and Vrij Glas Foundation and Foundation B.A.D, Netherlands. Alicia is represented in the Fehily Contemporary and MONA Collections, and is one third of The Holy Trinity collaborative.

http://www.aliciaking.net

ANGELA SINGER

Angela Singer is a British and New Zealand artist. Since the mid 1990s her artworks have explored the human–animal relationship, calling into question the unnecessary violence humans subject animals too. Her recent exhibitions include 2010 The *Enchanted Palace*, Kensington Palace, London; 2010-11 *Sheep*, Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures, New Zealand; 2009 *Creature Discomforts*, Suter Art Gallery, New Zealand; 2007 *Existence*, Waikato Art Museum of Art and History, New Zealand; *Brand New Wilderness*, Auckland Arts Festival, New Zealand; *Troubled-over Phantoms*, Roger Williams Contemporary, New Zealand; 2006 *The Idea of the Animal*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne International Arts Festival; *Animal Nature*, The Regina Gouger Miller Gallery, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA. Upcoming books include *Considering Animals: Contemporary Studies in Human–Animal Relations* (Ashgate, UK, forthcoming) *and Art Before Ethics: Animal Life in Artists' Hands* by Steve Baker and *Art and Animals* (Art and Series) by Giovanni Aloi. Her work has featured in *Antennae: Journal of Nature in Visual Culture*, UK; *Modern Painters* arts journal, The Independent and The Guardian newspapers; *Tier Werden, Mensch Werden* exhibition catalogue, *NGBK Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst e.V.*, Berlin, Germany; *NY Arts magazine; Belio art magazine,* Spain; *Juztapoz*; *Tate: The Art Magazine*. Angela has an MFA from Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland.

LIST OF WORKS

BRYNDÍS SNÆBJÖRNSDÓTTIR AND MARK WILSON
the naming of things, 2009
Video
Duration: 53 minutes

Three Attempts, 2008
Video
Duration: 22 minutes 30 seconds

Knutur, 2009
Video
Duration: 12 minutes 20 seconds

I'm not there, 2004
20 x custom signs
Stainless steel, vinyl
Pole Dimensions: 73.5 x 25 cm (each sign)
Pole height 7.5 m
NB: This work is installed at the location of the old thylacine enclosure in the Beaumaris Zoo site on the Domain.

Courtesy the artists

ADAM GECZY AND JAN GUY
Untitled (fired chicken bones), 2010
Archival digital print
20 x 30.5 cm

Untitled (fired turkey bones), 2010
Archival digital print
20 x 30.5 cm

Scaly-breasted Lorikeet (Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus) (chicken), 2010
Bone china, wood, acrylic, brass and glass
43 x 43 x 54 cm

Eastern Yellow Robin (Eopsaltria australis) (turkey), 2010
Bone china, wood, acrylic, brass and glass
43 x 43 x 54 cm

Forest Kingfisher (Todiramphus macleayii) (quail), 2010
Bone china, wood, acrylic, brass and glass
43 x 43 x 54 cm

Courtesy the artists and Criterion Gallery, Hobart

HARRI KALLIO
Dodo Reconstruction, 2001
Production model for photographs (Male)
Aluminium and steel (armature) swan feathers, ostrich feathers, goose feathers, silicon and latex rubber, epoxy resin, glass (eyes), dacron fiber
84 x 32 x 48 cm

Armature for Dodo Reconstruction, 2001
Aluminium and steel
84 x 32 x 48cm

Riviere des Anguilles #6, Mauritius, 2002
Chromogenic print
100 x 122 cm

Domain du Chasseur #2, Mauritius, 2001
Chromogenic print
122 x 100 cm

Benares #5, Mauritius, 2004
Chromogenic print
100 x 122 cm

Courtesy the artist

KATE JAMES
Pony Tales, 2009-10
Horsehair
Dimensions variable

Sweet Jane, 2009
Horsehair and glass dome
Dimensions variable

What a Good Girl You Are, 2005
Pegasus print and wool
Print size 39.5 x 71 cm
Garment dimensions variable

Letting Go, 2007
Inkjet print on somerset paper
48.3 x 33 cm

Wind Suck, 2006
Video loop
Duration: 54 seconds

Courtesy the artist

ALICIA KING
From within, 2011
4:3 Video Animation
DVD loop 00:48 sec

Animal Intimacy Apparatus, 2011
Mixed media, 45 x 45 cm

Undercover, 2011
16:9 Video
DVD loop 02:16 mins

Just trying to fit in…, 2011
16:9 Video
DVD loop 04:22 mins

Channelling the void, 2011
Video
DVD loop 01:34 mins

Courtesy the artist

ANGELA SINGER
Catch, 2007
Recycled taxidermy vintage rabbit,
buttons, wool, mixed media
53 x 24 x 15 cm

Breaking Lake, 2009-10,
Recycled vintage taxidermy goose,
crystals, beads and mixed media
26.5 x 20 x 26.5 cm

Nepenthe, 2006
Recycled vintage taxidermy rat,
crystals, wax, glass
18 x 12.5 x 12.5 cm

1080, 2007
Recycled vintage taxidermy possum,
buttons, beads, mixed media,
55 x 26 x 18 cm

Courtesy the artist

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The curator is extremely grateful to the artists, Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir and Mark Wilson, Alicia King, Kate James, Harri Kallio, Adam Geczy and Jan Guy, and Angela Singer for agreeing to be a part of this exhibition and for being so wonderfully accommodating of the various requests made of them.

Thanks also to Dr Carol Freeman for her insightful and informative catalogue essay, which encapsulates so well the intention of the exhibition and the key concerns of the individual artists, and Jenny Manners, the catalogue designer, who has been wonderful to work with.

The exhibition would not have been possible without the invaluable advice and support of Plimsoll Gallery Coordinator, Pat Brassington, and Plimsoll Gallery Committee Chair, Brigita Ozolins.

Special thanks go to the Hobart City Council, in particular Greg Milne, for their enthusiastic support and assistance in having Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir's and Mark Wilson's artwork *I'm not there* installed at the old Beaumaris Zoo site on the Queens Domain, and for organising to have the site itself accessible to the public for the duration of the exhibition. Aurora must also be acknowledged for their generous support in supplying and erecting the 8 metre high post for this artwork.

Finally, Elizabeth Walsh and Ten Days on the Island must be thanked for their willingness to include this exhibition in the program of events.

Exhibition Curator: Dr Yvette Watt
Catalogue essay: Dr Carol Freeman
Graphic Designer: Jenny Manners
Printing: Focal Printing, Hobart

ISBN: 978 11 86295 611 7

The University of Tasmania's exhibition program receives generous assistance from Arts Tasmania through the Minister for the Arts.