

For Immediate Release
August 19, 2009

Intelligent Design: Interspecies Art

September 5-November 28, 2009

Reception: Saturday, September 26, 6-9 PM

Intelligent Design: Interspecies Art is a group exhibition of twenty international artists exploring human interaction with animals through a collection of provocative video installations, photographs, paintings, and sculptures.

Artists in the exhibition collaborate with cockroaches, pigeons, dogs, cats, ants, bears, baboons, rats, spiders, trout, and other species, which may be domesticated, imaginary, laboratory, modeled, or wild. Curious about the animal's point of view, artists design their projects as a form of conversation or inquiry about the nonhuman world. Their artwork challenges the anthropocentric perspective of the world, placing human perception on par with other animals. Inspired by Darwin, the environmental movement, and species collapse, *Intelligent Design* envisions a paradigm shift in which human beings are no longer the center of the Universe.

The exhibition will also stimulate discussions about the differences and similarities of how the arts and sciences approach the world, animals as products, animal rights, conservation, and speciesism, as a form of prejudice against animals. *Intelligent Design* will be the first exhibition in the U.S. to explore interspecies art, coming on the heels of several exhibitions and conferences in the UK this year that explored the topic in light of this year's 200-year celebration of Charles Darwin's birth.

The reception on Saturday, September 26, 6-9 PM is concurrent with the receptions for the new exhibitions at Sweeney's sister institution next door, UCR/California Museum of Photography, <http://cmp.ucr.edu>. *Intelligent Design: Interspecies Art* is organized by UCR Sweeney Art Gallery, and curated by gallery director, Tyler Stallings, and artist/independent curator, Rachel Mayeri.

For the online catalog and related events, see <http://sweeney.ucr.edu>

Artists in the Exhibition

Catherine Chalmers
Beatriz da Costa
John Divola
Sean Dockray
Sam Easterson
Carlee Fernandez
Jill Greenberg
Fritz Haeg
Kathy High
Desirée Holman

Natalie Jeremijenko
Lisa Jevbratt
Nina Katchadourian
Hilja Keading
Rachel Mayeri
M.A. Peers
Nicolas Primat with Patrick Munck
Alison Ruttan
Corinna Schnitt
Jim Trainor

Selected Descriptions of Projects

In **Beatriz da Costa's** *PigeonBlog* urban homing pigeons are equipped with GPS enabled electronic air pollution sensing devices that are capable of sending real-time location-based air pollution and image data to an online mapping/blogging environment.



John Divola entered into an unexpected and unusual long-term, six-year "relationship" with desert dogs that chased his car, which he then began to photograph; contemplating any number of metaphors about culture and nature, or the domestic and the wild.



By creating a unique line of luggage with taxidermic animals, **Carlee Fernandez** exaggerates the lack of relationship that humans can have with animals when they are treated as consumer products.



Jill Greenberg first established her artistic reputation as a preeminent celebrity photographer, and has now employed this aesthetic in her portraits of bears and primates, many of whom have appeared in film and television roles, constructing a subject that is both real and unreal.



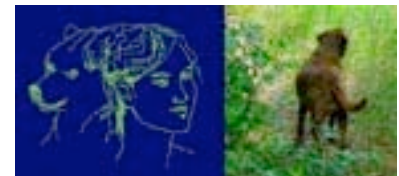
Small letters made of thread spell out the word “gift” one letter at a time in a spider web in **Nina Katchadourian’s** video *GIFT/GIFT*. But the spider removes the letters and returns the web to its previous incarnation, suggesting that human good intentions are not always viewed as the best “gift” for another species.



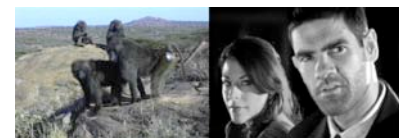
In this multi-media video installation, **Hilja Keading** portrays and interacts with a live black bear in a small cabin, exploring the psychology of performance, our ideas about “animal” and “human,” and the fine line between “nature” and “culture.”



Lisa Jevbratt’s *Interspecies Collaboration* is a relational artwork examining, facilitating and promoting the possibility of working together with nonhuman animals on art projects. She has developed a special website that provides ongoing documentation and resources. Any one can upload their interspecies collaboration to <http://www.interspeciescollaboration.net/>



Rachel Mayeri’s *Primate Cinema* is a series of video experiments that translate primate social dramas for human audiences. *Baboons as Friends*, is a two channel video installation juxtaposing field footage of baboons with a reenactment by human actors, shot in film noir style.



M.A. Peers’ paintings are studies for the Museum of Jurassic Technology’s exhibition *The Lives of Perfect Creatures: An Oil Portrait Gallery of the Heroic Canines of the Soviet Space Program*, commemorating the Russian space dogs, the first earth-born creatures to leave this planet between 1959 and 1961.



In residencies at zoos and labs, **Nicolas Primat** worked closely with apes and monkeys, exploring and engaging in the social worlds of the human’s closest relatives. His intuitive performances with primates show a human who learned how to ingratiate himself with other species.



About the Curators

Rachel Mayeri is a Los Angeles-based artist and independent curator working at the intersection of science and art. Mayeri programmed the anthology *Soft Science*, distributed by Video Data Bank, and her essay "Soft Science: Artists' Experiments with Science Documentary" is published in *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism, and Technoscience* (MIT Press, 2008). She is a guest curator of the Museum of Jurassic Technology and Associate Professor of Media Studies at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, California. Further information can be found at <http://www.soft-science.org/mayeri.html>.

Concurrent with *Intelligent Design*, Mayeri's work will be featured in a solo exhibition at Pomona College Museum of Art in *Project Series 39: Rachel Mayeri Primate Cinema*, October 31 - December 20, 2009, reception: Saturday, November 7, 5-7 PM. She will premiere a new video installation dealing with primates and their on-screen dramas.

Tyler Stallings is the director of UCR's Sweeney Art Gallery. He was chief curator at Laguna Art Museum from 1999 to 2006. Since arriving at Sweeney in 2007, he has organized *Your Donations Do Our Work: Andrea Bowers and Suzanne Lacy* (2009), *Absurd Recreation: Contemporary Art from China* (2008), *Truthiness: Photography as Sculpture* (2008), and *The Signs Pile Up: Paintings by Pedro Álvarez* (2008), among others.

Related Events

Reception & Curatorial Walk-Thru, Saturday, September 26, 6 PM, Free
Co-curators Tyler Stallings and Rachel Mayeri will provide a walk-thru of this provocative exhibition that explores collaborations between humans and animals. Reception continues through 9 PM.

Performance: Animal Scores, First Thursday, November 5, 6-9 PM, Free
Dancers will perform a series of movements designed by Fritz Haeg, an artist in the exhibition *Intelligent Design: Interspecies Art*, acting out silent actions based on animals movements. Presented during Riverside's First Thursday Artwalks.

Forthcoming events

Workshop: How to Act Like an Animal, Date and time in October or November to be announced
One-day performative workshop exploring primate communication and social organization by learning about primatology, and engaging in physical theater techniques and improvisation. Led by *Intelligent Design: Interspecies Art* co-curator Rachel Mayeri.

Workshop: Interspecies Collaboration, Date and time in October or November to be announced
A how-to workshop for creating art projects in collaboration with non-human animals, led by Lisa Jevbratt, an artist in *Intelligent Design: Interspecies Art*.

Panel Discussion: Animals and Art, Date and time in October or November to be announced, Free
A panel discussion with the co-curators and artists from *Intelligent Design: Interspecies Art*, along with University of California, Riverside professors from various science and humanities departments.

For updated dates and times for related events, see <http://sweeney.ucr.edu>

About UCR Sweeney Art Gallery

UCR Sweeney Art Gallery is located at 3800 Main Street, on the downtown pedestrian mall in Riverside, California. Open Tuesday through Saturday, 12 to 5 PM. Admission is free. Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult. For further information, call 951-827-3755 or visit us at <http://sweeney.ucr.edu>.

A groundbreaking location for the arts, the University of California, Riverside created UCR ARTSblock in 2006. UCR moved its three premiere art institutions—California Museum of Photography, Sweeney Art Gallery, and the future Culver Center of the Arts—to a single city block in downtown Riverside to create an integrated arts complex that is one of a kind. UCR ARTSblock brings exciting art, live performances, and special events to Southern California and the Inland Empire.

Image, top of page one: *Alison Ruttan, Still from Impersonator, 2005. In this two-channel video installation, a man carefully tries to mimic a cat's slow decision to fight or flee.*

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