

Antennae issue 30

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Antennae Issue 30: Virtual Animans

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In his influential essay from 1977 titled 'Why Look at Animals?' John Berger advanced the thesis that in the modern world, human relationships with animals have been predominantly shaped by representation. The essay argued that the increased proliferation of animal images emerging at the end of the nineteenth century constituted a phenomenon directly linked to the relentless disappearance of live animals in everyday life. Berger's argument has been challenged by many scholars, yet something about its grand theory of disappearances and ghostly presences has recently begun to resonate more strongly as animals are conspicuously emerging in video games and alternative reality scenarios, posing even more pressing questions about representation and human-animal interaction at a time when the virtual world seems to be on the brink of overshadowing the material one. In an attempt to map the current state of affairs with 'virtual animals', this issue of Antennae gathers together a range of perspectives from some of the most influential scholars and artists working in the field.

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