Interspecies Interactions in the Visual Arts (online/Lyon, 21–23 May 25)

online/Lyon, May 21–23, 2025

Clara Langer

Symposium "Interspecies Interactions in the Visual Arts (1550-1914). Collaborations, Experimentations, Oppositions".

This symposium proposes to study how artists have not only observed animals and, in some cases, lived alongside them, but have also sometimes attributed agency to them. The idea of an active relationship between the artist and the animal raises fundamental questions about the role of animals in artistic production. Are they merely objects of study, partners in creation, or autonomous agents in a larger process? How does the making of artworks define or blur boundaries between humans and other-than-humans? The analysis of artistic practices allows for questioning the nature of the bond between humans and other animals, and examining how, in certain works, the animal can be perceived as a protagonist capable of resisting attempts at reification. Rather than being a mere reflection of power relations between humans and animals, artistic creation thus becomes a site of negotiation, even contestation, of these relationships.
The ambition of this symposium is to offer a transversal and innovative reflection on artistic modes of appropriation of animals, without limiting itself to domesticated animals and mammals. It is also to transcend traditional frameworks of art history by examining the relationship between Western artists and animals, perceived both as companions in life, partners in creation, and as social and cultural actors. By focusing on the restricted cultural area of the West, it will allow for the exploration of particular modes of relations with animals, situating them in relation to other ontologies (Descola, 2021), and recontextualising them within broader discussions on issues of circulation and domination. In doing so, it will seek to examine how artists have echoed, or not, the profound changes in the relationships between humans and animals.

// Programme

Wednesday, May 21
Location: Auditorium Henri Focillon I Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon I 20 Pl. des Terreaux, 69001

15:30 I Welcome

16:00 I Opening remarks
Laurent Baridon (Université Lyon 2)
Clara Langer (Université Lyon 2/Universität Konstanz), Oriane Poret (Université Lyon 2)
Jean-Christophe Stuccilli (Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon)

16:30-17:30 I Thematic Museum Tour - for speakers and committee only

Ludmila Virassamynaïken (Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon)

17:30-18:45 I Opening lecture (In-person only)
Sarah Cockram (University of Glasgow)
Animals in the frame: Methods for teaching and research on interspecies interactions in visual sources
To attend this lecture, please register using the following link: https://forms.gle/wLXFsVai6jrs188W9"

18:45 I Buffet Dinner at the Museum

Thursday, May 22
Salle Marc Bloch I Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Lyon Saint-Étienne I 14 Av. Berthelot, 69007
To attend this conference day online, please use the following link: https://uni-konstanz-de.zoom.us/j/92774565894?pwd=bCtz4Mst8TgT3RhVDMr0g0uyyzPw33.1

9:00 I Welcome / Introduction
Stéphane Frioux (Université Lyon 2 / LARHRA)
Clara Langer, Oriane Poret

9:30-11:00 I Session 1 "Visual Politics of Animal Iconographies"
Session chair: Maurice Saß (Alanus University)

Paul Smith (Leiden Universiteit), On Animal Presences in Painted Paradises, from Lucas Cranach (1530) to Melchior Bocksberger (c. 1570) and beyond

Malou Bozec (ENS-PSL), La pêche miraculeuse des Amiraux. L'Allégorie de la pêche au hareng florissante à l'issue de la guerre anglo-néerlandaise de Willem Eversdijck, c. 1667, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Amy Freund (Southern Methodist University), Modernism is a Cat

11:00: Coffee break

11:30-12:30 I Roundtable 1: Quelles méthodologies pour une histoire animale de l'art ? (in French)
Chair: Chloé Pluchon-Riera (Université Grenoble Alpes)
Speakers: Guillaume Cassegrain (Université Grenoble Alpes), Armelle Fémelat (chercheuse indépendante), Marie-Charlotte Lamy (Université de Neuchâtel)

12:30 I Lunch break

14:00-15:30 I Session 2 "Collaborations? Photographic Media and the Perception of the Living World"
Session chair: Marion Bélouard (Université de Limoges)

Nicole Liao (University of Toronto), Do fish see colour? Early photo media and physiological studies in animal vision

Rosalind Hayes (Durham University), Material extraction and interspecies negotiation in the C19th

zoological photography of Gambier Bolton

Vanessa Bateman (Trent University), (Un)wanted Human-Avian Interactions in the Photographs of William L. Finley (online)

15:30 I Coffee break

16:00-17:30 I Session 3 “Animal Experience and the Production of Knowledge”
Session chair: Clara Langer (Université Lyon 2/Universität Konstanz)

Dorothee Fischer-Kuklau (Universität Trier), Slippery Subjects. Representation of Aquatic Animals and Knowledge Production in the 18th Century

Paula Bruno Garcén (University of Buenos Aires), Insects, bacteria and animal fragments before the solar microscope: experiences of wonder, dread and knowledge into the miniature world (online)

Barbara Ryckewaert (Université Paris 8), L’iconographie des traités équestres européens du 16ème au 19ème siècle, le dessin au service de l’enseignement visuel des interactions humaines-équines

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Friday, May 23
Amphithéâtre Benveniste I Université Lyon 2 I 86 rue Pasteur, 69007
To attend this conference day online, please use the following link: https://uni-konstanz-de.zoom.us/j/98711086434?pwd=aRuekwkHDqYI7pgM7Mq8x00CGte4iM.1

9:00 I Welcome

9:30 I Session 4 “Facing Animal Emotions”
Session chair: Claire Jouy (LARHRA)

Naïs Quessada (Université de Toulouse), Entre bestialité et expression : l’animal comme acteur dans la peinture de chasse des Pays-Bas du Nord et du Sud au XVIIe siècle

Robert Bauernfeind (Universität Augsburg), Interspecies Interactions in Goya’s Diversiones Nacionales. Humans as Animals, the Sublime and the Grotesque

Béatrice Denis (Université de Montréal), Dead Horses in the Snow: the Depiction of Equine Corpses in the Representations of the Battlefield of Eylau (1807)

11:00 I Coffee break

11:30-12:30 I Roundtable 2: Human-Animal Studies Now: Interdisciplinary Challenges and Ecological Perspectives
Chair: Maurice Saß (Alanus University)
Speakers: Paul Smith (Leiden Universiteit), Anne-Sophie Tribot (AMU-Institut d'établissement Océan), Marion Bélouard (Université de Limoges), Matteo Proto-Ghiringhelli (Sapienza Università di Roma/Université Lyon 2)

12:30 l Lunch break

14:00 l Session 5 “From Extraction to Artistic Exploitation”
Session chair: Oriane Poret (Université Lyon 2)

Marina Vidas (Kongernes Samling), Animals at the Danish Court: Representations of the Power and Frailty of Beasts in the Early Modern Paintings (c. 1600-c. 1700)

Patricia D. Meneses (University of Campinas), Cage Free Art: Martin Johnson Heade and Hummingbirds Between Domestication and Extraction (online)

Marie-Charlotte Lamy (Université de Neuchâtel), Peindre « d’après l’animal vivant » : Une consommation visuelle du non-humain à la ménagerie du Muséum national d’Histoire naturelle

15:30 l Coffee break

16:00 l Closing keynote
Kate Nichols (University of Birmingham), Imaging Imperial Animals: the politics of big cat presences in Victorian painting

17:00 l End of the symposium

Organising committee / Comité d'organisation:
Oriane Poret, Université Lyon 2 / LARHRA
Clara Langer, Université Lyon 2 / LARHRA / Universität Konstanz
Prof. Dr. Laurent Baridon, Université Lyon 2 / LARHRA

Scientific committee / Comité scientifique:
Prof. Dr. Guillaume Cassegrain, Université Grenoble-Alpes / LARHRA
Dr. Sarah Cockram, University of Glasgow
Dr. Kate Nichols, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham
Dr. Amandine Péquignot, Muséum national d’histoire naturelle / PALOC
Dr. Violette Pouillard, CNRS / IRHIS
Prof. Dr. Maurice Saß, Alanus Hochschule für Kunst und Gesellschaft, Alfter
Dr. Silvia Sebastiani, EHESS / CRH-GEHM

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Reference:
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