

We look at whales and dinosaurs and parrots and oversized birds that cannot fly and cats and sloths and chickens wearing sneakers and pigs getting beaten and monkeys in sunglasses and dogs wandering the streets and striped goats who were drug dealers and squirrels and raccoons and cows and rabbits because...

We Look at Animals Because

Toronto, Critical Distance Center for Curators, 2018, [92] p. Colour ill. Eng.

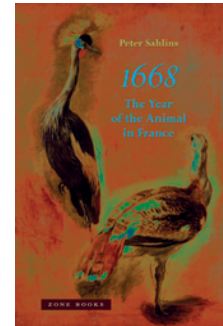
This is the exhibition catalogue for *We Look at Animals Because* (January 25–March 25, 2018), curated by Toleen Touq and Nahed Mansour (Toronto, Canada), produced and presented at Critical Distance Centre for Curators (CDCC), in partnership with the South Asian Visual Arts Centre (SAVAC), both located in Toronto. Featuring works by Quratulain Butt (Canada), Khaled Hourani (Palestine), Maha Maamoun (Egypte), Smriti Mehra (India), Huma Mulji (UK), Ed Panar (USA), Alex Sheriff (Canada), and Andrea Luka Zimmerman (UK), the exhibition “explores the shifting ways in which animals are regarded, represented, and accorded meaning in post-industrial landscapes.” For the catalogue, curators Toleen Touq and Nahed Mansour (re)observed the various animals depicted in the photographs, videos, works on paper and sculptures exhibited in the show and (re)imagined their artworks “in relation to selected passages from [John] Berger’s essay [Why Look at Animals].” Where Berger once saw an “unspeaking companionship” and animals as “messengers and promises”, we must admit—even if some artworks have certain playfulness—having uncompromisingly and dramatically shifted our relationship with animals in which they now have become simple consumer products. After information on the artists and the list of works presented, John Berger’s full essay “Why Look at Animals” (1977), from his collection of critical writings entitled *About Looking* (1980), is reprinted in the second portion of the publication. Catalogue design is by Shani K Parsons. (E. L.)



Du point de vue d'un.e cyborg. Marie-Ève Levasseur; Ein Interview; une entrevue

Leipzig, Trottoir Noir, 2018, 179 p.
Ill. noir et blanc et couleur. All./Fra.

Marie-Ève Levasseur, née à Trois-Rivières, est artiste et chercheuse vivant et travaillant à Leipzig (Allemagne). Après un baccalauréat en arts visuels et médiatiques de l’Université du Québec à Montréal, elle obtient une maîtrise (et post-maîtrise) de l’Académie des Arts visuels de Leipzig. Le petit livre (10,5 cm x 15 cm) est principalement constitué d’un long entretien avec Levasseur, réalisé par le journaliste Marcel Raabe, également fondateur de la structure d’édition Trottoir noir qui édite le livre. Mots et bouts de phrases sont surlignés selon un code de couleur qui renvoie à cinq grands ensembles de thèmes qui reviennent dans la pratique de Levasseur : corps/peau/prothèses, philosophie/influences/romans-films, physique/abstrait/émotionnel, internet/flux/communication et technologie/algorithmes/logiciel. Des notes renvoient aussi, en fin de volume, à un ensemble de croquis, d’images et de captures d’écrans prises à diverses étapes préparatoires du développement de son travail. Finalement, un ensemble de vues d’installations permet de voir concrètement les œuvres produites, alliant vidéo, sculpture, photographie et animation 3D, sous forme d’installations. Levasseur aborde ainsi certaines notions telles que l’intimité, la tactilité, les prothèses en questionnant la proximité des surfaces technologiques avec celles, médiatrices, du corps humain. « J’ai toujours observé mon travail comme ayant lentement évolué de cette étude de la communication interpersonnelle à travers les machines jusqu’à cette fascination pour l’écran. » Design graphique : Lysanne Bellemare, également artiste, scénographe et designer graphique basée à Leipzig. (E. L.)



Peter Sahlins, 1668: The Year of the Animal in France

New York, Zone Books, 2017, 492 p.
Black & white ill. Eng.

This is a fascinating book on events of 350 years ago, which saw a “generalized devalorization” and “civilizing process” of animals that resulted in an epistemological shift from “Renaissance humanimalism” to “Classical naturalism,” from Montaigne to Descartes. The cultural shift, not clear cut in time and having contradictory consequences, was nevertheless a radical change in early modern France of the 17th century. Peter Sahlins’ book, a model of cultural history, uses a wide range of cultural objects such as maps, engravings, drawings, paintings, sculptures, tapestries, gardens and buildings, and also trials, lectures, sermons, pamphlets, novels and poems... various *lieux de mémoire* from art, science and politics. Sahlins brilliantly analyses a chronology of events from 1661, when Louis XIV started to personally assume leadership of the government, to 1674 and the completion of the Royal Labyrinth in the gardens of Versailles, a long decade—with an *extraordinary convergence* of events in the 18-month period of 1667-1668—in which “animals made a dramatic entrance onto the stage of French history.” Looking at the new menagerie at Versailles, the novels of Madeleine de Scudéry, the fables of Jean de La Fontaine and the tapestries of Pieter Boel (giving just a few examples), Sahlins shows how a new kind of Royal governance took shape, which placed the human at the top and devaluated animals of their properties and symbolic forces. An essential reading for (re) thinking our current relationship to animals. A chronology from 1661 to 1669, colour plates, along with the essential notes, works cited and an index complete the publication. Expanding the series initially designed by Bruce Mau, the art direction and design is by Julie Fry. (E. L.)