

PRESS RELEASE

MURATCENTOVENTIDUE ARTECONTEMPORANEA

Animals

Lello Gelao Demelza Kooij Jonathan Monaghan Muriel Montini Ursula Palla

Galleria Muratcentoventidue Artecontemporanea is pleased to present *Animals*, a group exhibition featuring works by Lello Gelao, Demelza Kooij, Jonathan Monaghan, Muriel Montini, Ursula Palla.

The artists reflect through different languages on a theme often addressed in the history of art, the animals.

Animals, wild or meek, real or fantastic, are recurring subjects in the art of all times and cultures.

And animals have become the focus of the latest art, inspiring numerous works and projects featured in major exhibitions including dOCUMENTA (13) (2012), the 10th Shanghai Biennale (2014) and the 56th Venice Biennale (2015). Animal nature is at the center of debates on the Anthropocene era and on environmental issues and the pandemic emergency prompts us more than ever to reflect on the relationships between the living species that populate our fragile planet. Facing a man who has forgotten interdependence, we ask ourselves how we can go back to remember that we are part of the whole.

Those born today in a big city - or even in the countryside - do not have many opportunities to see animals, if not the ancient witnesses of domestic life: dogs and cats. But animals continue to visit us, at least in dreams. And they remind us of another life - now remote - in which men had been a species mixed with many others. The idea of the Anthropocene forces us to rethink our relationship with nature and animals, and to reflect critically on our role and place in the world.

The artists who deal with this theme are Lello Gelao, Demelza Kooij, Muriel Montini, Jonathan Monaghan, Ursula Palla.

Lello Gelao lives and works in Bari where he attended the Academy of Fine Arts. For some years, Lello Gelao's research has focused on the subject of portraiture through an essential figuration, thanks also to his attention to mass media and photography. In his paintings the artist usually inserts a single character, alone and physically and psychologically detached, managing to capture a particular moment, almost the precise second in which time stands still and everything appears immobile, silent. His works speak of solitude, melancholy and suspended time. In "**The Flower and The Elephant**", an oil painting on canvas, he portrays a boy and an elephant, managing to capture a dimension full of restlessness and mystery. The work reminds us that for centuries man has lived in harmony with animals and plants, creating a circular network of life that connected all living beings on the same level.

Demelza Kooij (Netherlands/UK) is a Liverpool based artist/filmmaker and university lecturer. Her work is presented worldwide at museums, film festivals, art exhibitions, and conferences. Her art

and research interests relate to depicting other worlds: un(der)explored territories nearby and far away; the human and non-human, blurring boundaries, sci-fi, Other animals, ecologies of the sea, land, sky and exchanges in-between.

“Wolves From Above” is a meditation on a pack of wolves filmed from the air. The elusive animals inhabit a tranquil space where sounds of playful growling, sniffing, and licking feel oddly nearby. Many interactions take place in the video – it is evident that the wolves are communicating, but we as human viewers are not sure what is happening. The film draws the spectator in and allows the viewer to discover a different wolf.

Jonathan Monaghan lives and works in Washington DC, US. Past exhibitions and screenings of his work include The Sundance Film Festival, The Walters Museum of Art, BFI Southbank, The Hirshhorn Museum and The Frist Center for the Visual Arts.

He works across a range of media, including prints, sculpture and computer animated video, to produce otherworldly objects and narratives. Drawing on wide-ranging sources, such as historical artworks and science fiction, his fantastical pieces uncover subconscious anxieties associated with technology and consumerism. Past exhibitions include The Sundance Film Festival, The Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, and The Palais de Tokyo in Paris.

“Escape Pod” is based on hunting mythologies of the Greek and Nordic traditions. It captures the journey of a golden stag that roams architectural environments of authoritarian confrontation and material excess. Lavish bedrooms, duty-free stores, airport checkpoints, and a luxury riot gear boutique are encountered, as the scenery unfolds from the perspective of a floating viewpoint that is framed as a continuous shot. Seamlessly looped in a twenty-minute cycle, “Escape Pod” suggests an apocalyptic decadent future – one that is militarized, totalitarian and permeated by extravagance. It is a representation of labored pursuits, particularly of the otherworldly or unobtainable.

Muriel Montini studied cinema. She lives and works in Paris. Since 2000, she has made several films screened in several important international institutions (Musée du Jeu de Paume, Anthology FilmArchives New York ...) and festivals.

Muriel Montini's work oscillates between fiction, documentary and experimental cinema. The artist considers all her films as fiction even if they do not fit into a narrative linearity. The story is what interests the artist the most. As a musician, she works on repetition, variations. In the fiction, she always leaves room for improvisation, she puts the viewer as much as possible in a state of sensory and reflective acumen: her videos, contrary to the perspective closure of the entertainment films, present a narrative structure open to the spectator's interpretation, it is up to him to make his cinema, projected in this imperfect recomposition of the world, he too, must work to reconstruct the universe that is proposed to him. The artist presents a video titled **Constellation** in which we see a bear in a zoo, a bear out of this world.

Ursula Palla lives and works in Zurich and has taken part in numerous exhibitions and video festivals in Switzerland and abroad.

Ursula Palla's work often circles around the relation between human and nature, time and space. Again and again she combines physically present objects (bars, small sculptures) with ephemeral

video images. She thus shows the contradiction between the world as it is in reality and our imagination of it, which also determines our gaze.

The inspiration for the video installation titled "**The Horse**" is the anecdote of Nietzsche's encounter with a horse in Turin.

In January 1889, *Nietzsche* wrapped his arms around the horse's neck in a rented carriage and did not want to let go of him. He had seen how the coachman had struck the animal, and felt such a tremendous pain that he had caused himself to testify to the animal's affection.

The video installation shows a horse stepping on a treadmill and having to adapt to the changing rhythm of the machine. The horse's futile effort, which does not move forward despite its movement, and the black-and-white projection - reminiscent of *Eadweard Muybridge's* study of motion - become a symbol. The horse, guided by technology, remains trapped within man-made boundaries. This confrontation expresses the ambivalent relationship between man and horse, whose existence is closely linked to human civilization.

Muratcentoventidue Artecontemporanea thanks bitform gallery (New York, USA) for the collaboration.

Venue

Muratcentoventidue-Artecontemporanea

Via G. Murat 122/b – Bari

Opening

Saturday, May 29, 2021 at 7.30 pm

Period

May 29 – July 31 2021

Opening hours

Monday ,Tuesday and Wednesday only by appointment

From Thursday to Saturday 5.30 - 8.30 pm

Info

3348714094– 392.5985840

[http://info@muratcentoventidue.com](mailto:info@muratcentoventidue.com)

<http://www.muratcentoventidue.com>

<http://www.facebook.com/MuratcentoventidueArtecontemporanea>

https://www.instagram.com/muratcentoventidue_bari

CV

Lello Gelao was born in Bari where he lives and works. He is graduated at the Academy of fine Arts Bari. He founded the cultural association Muratcentoventidue Artecontemporanea in 2007. His work has been shown in Germany, France, India and in Italy at Bologna, Bolzano, Genova, Malo (Vi) , Milano, Verona, Among his latest exhibition : solo exhibition Uomini, Galleria MuratcentoventidueArtecontemporanea, Bari 2010; solo exhibition Uomini, galleria Peter Tedden, Düsseldorf 2010, solo exhibition Invisible Present, Galleria Muratcentoventidue-Artecontemporanea, Bari 2013; among his latest group exhibition: Kunstart art fair Bolzano,2008, Quadriennale – Düsseldorf 2010,Verona ArtFair 2011,Contemporaneamente, Galleria Spaziosei, Monopoli (Bari) 2012; Sotto il segno dello Zodiaco, Galleria Spaziosei, Monopoli (Bari) 2015; What we once were, Galleria Muratcentoventidue Bari, 2018, EmschergoldSammlung Tedden, Galerie Münsterland, Emsdetten, Germany, 2018

<http://www.lellogelao.it>

Demelza Kooij lives in Liverpool, she is an artist, filmmaker, and senior lecturer for the BA (Hons) Film Studies, MA Film, and MA Art in Science at Liverpool John Moores University, UK.

In March 2020 she completed a PhD in Film Production with thesis title: Empathising with Animals: Non-Human Subjectivity in Documentary Film. Additionally, she obtained a BA (Hons) Archaeology (University of Amsterdam, 2008), MA Philosophy (University of Amsterdam, 2009), and an MA Documentary Filmmaking (Royal Holloway University of London, 2010).

Previously I was tutor at Edinburgh College of Art / University of Edinburgh and worked at Scottish Documentary Institute.

Her work is presented at film festivals, art exhibitions, conferences, and museums. Highlights are winner of the Jury Prize at the 57th Ann Arbor Film Festival 2019 for Wolves From Above, Wroclaw Media Art Biennale, and screenings at Festival Du Nouveau Cinéma Montréal, Hamptons IFF, Edinburgh IFF, Zinebi, Full Frame, Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp [M HKA], FACT Liverpool, and The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Seoul [MMCA].

<http://www.demelzakooij.com>

Jonathan Monaghan lives and works in Washington DC, US. Past exhibitions and screenings of his work include The Sundance Film Festival, The Walters Museum of Art, BFI Southbank, The Hirshhorn Museum and The Frist Center for the Visual Arts.

He is the recipient of a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant and was a U.S. Speaker and Specialist selected by the U.S. Department of State to speak on 3D printing abroad. He has given lectures and workshops at the University of Denver, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Bennington College. His work has been featured in several media outlets including The Washington Post, VICE, The Wall Street Journal and The Village Voice. Monaghan is represented by bitforms gallery in New York and Galerie 22,48m2 in Paris

<https://jonathanmonaghan.com/>

Muriel Montini lives in Paris where she currently works on different projects. She studied cinema in Paris VIII university. Her videos have been screened in different international institutions (Musée du Jeu de Paume Paris, Anthology Film Archives New York...) and festivals (Hamburg International Short Film Festival, FID de Marseille, Rencontres Paris–Berlin, European Media Art

Festival Osnabrueck...).In 2014, she won two prizes at Szczecin European film festival. Among her last exhibition: 2018-Dame of the Hour International Women's Day exhibition Bath (Angleterre);Paratissima Bologna Art Fair "Animali Notturni" Bologna (Italie);Bienal Internacional de Video y Cine Contemporáneo Mexicali (Mexique);One-Off Moving Image Festival Valencia (Espagne);Exposition "Le trouble-fête" MPAA Broussais Paris (France);Artist as a digital archivist University of Oslo (Norvège) – Kamloops Art gallery (Canada) – Ideas Block LT Vilnius (Lituanie);Digital Graffiti Alys Beach (USA); OGA Videoart Exhibition Rome (Italie);FILE Media Art Electronic Language International Festival Exhibition Sao Paulo (Brésil);FONLAD Water Museum, Art Web Center Coimbra (Portugal);2017-International Short Silent Film Celebration Haifa (Israël);11th International Cukurova Art Festival - Altin Oran Art Gallery Adana (Turquie);FUSE Ättiksfabriken Art Space Royal College of Music Stockholm (Suède);Contemporary Visions (curator Roberto Ronca) (Italie, Espagne, Bulgarie, Angleterre, République tchèque);Festival International de Creatividad, Innovación y Cultura Digital Espacio Center Canaries (Espagne).

<http://www.murielmontini.fr>

Ursula Palla ,born Chur /Switzerland ,lives and works in Zurich/Switzerland selected solo exhibitions 2019 Gemeente Museum Den Haag/NL 2018 Museum of history Aargau, Castle Hallwyl/CH 2017 Art Museum Bern/CH 2013 Art Museum Langmatt Baden/CH 2008 Art Museum Graubünden Chur/CH selected group shows 2019 Fondation Villa Datriis l'Isle de la Sorgue/F, Art Basel/CH, LAM Lisse/NL 2018 Art Paris/Grand Palais – Paris/F, Galéria 2B-Budapest/HUN 2016 Center of Contemporary ART Nairs/CH 2015 Art Gallery Hamburg/D, Fondazione Cini Venedig/I 2013 Art Museum Bern/CH 2011 Contemporary Art Festival tina b. Prag/CZ 2008 musée d'Art moderne St.Etienne/F, Künstlerhaus Wien/A 2007 ZKM Center of Art and Media Karlsruhe/D, October salon Belgrad/Serbien 2006 Biennale Shumen/BG, Pallazzo delle Arti Napoli/I 2005 Centre Pasquart Biel/CH, nuit blanche musée de Montmartre Paris/F 2004 swiss institute New York/USA, cynetArt Dresden/D grants and prices: 2014 city of Chur 2008 Kanton Graubünden 2007 Swiss Gouvernement of Culture sitempping (media) 2004 cynetART award Dresden/DE 2004

<https://www.ursulapalla.ch>