

Nonhuman Subjectivities *Under-Mine*

Alinta Krauth

26 February – 2 April, 2017

Fri – Sun, 2 – 6PM and by appointment

Artist Talk: Sunday, 26 February 2017, 3PM

Art Laboratory Berlin is pleased to present the series Nonhuman Subjectivities. Based on current philosophical theories of the object and a critique of anthropocentrism, our attention is focused on nonhuman actors. The exhibition project investigates the problematics and possibilities of communicating nonhuman perception through the interface of artistic practice and new technologies.

Australian artist Alinta Krauth's new project ***Under-Mine* (2017)** was specially developed for Art Laboratory Berlin. She has used video, generative art, data visualisation and an intensive study into the science of animal perception and cognition to propose narrative paths towards a meeting point of the human and nonhuman. Taking into account that each species' way of sensing the world is unique, and often beyond the ken of human experience, Krauth makes use of a diverse technological toolbox to navigate and translate nonhuman perceptions.

The **video installation *Under-Mine* (1)** on the right wall invites the viewers to reflect on four creatures and their attempt to survive a species die-off – the bat, the rock lizard, the woodlouse and the wild horse. This narrative is set out as a timeline: from acceptable climate levels to catastrophic. The viewer navigates the world as the creature undergoing sensory change. The higher the level goes, the more the world becomes confusing, faster or slower, more abstracted. The artist created these computer animations by means of data generated video and sound, hand drawn animation, and digital interactive elements, introducing abstract visual and aural perception as language, interaction with an immersive environment, and a sense-oriented, rather than linear narrative.

The four computer animations on the left wall aesthetically reflect the issues of climate change for each of the four chosen species and their particular types of perception: specifically chosen are ***echo-locating micro-bats* (2)** from temperate climates such as Germany, this piece refers to research into how climate change is affecting the physics of sound. Changes in temperature and humidity will see shifts in bat's abilities to echo-locate.

Rock lizards* (3)**, like many creatures, use ***chemoreception to identify territories and suitable mates. The male lizard leaves a secretion that gives the female useful information about his health, age, and status, which she picks up through tongue flicks when she is in range. However, rising temperatures and humidity due to climate change affect these secretions.

Woodlice* (4)** use their ability to sense humidity as a decision marker for movement and location. This ***hygroreception is not the only sense they use to control movement, thigmokinesis and phototaxis also play roles. Where on the body these receptors are located seems to be contested, and reactions to scientific experiments with humidity are different across woodlouse species. In some species, however, it is generally seen that a rise in humidity intensity causes a change to speed and intensity of movement and location decision making.

The screen on the ***Kaimanawa wild horse of New Zealand* (5)** takes into account research on bare hoof morphology and the senses through which horses use to feel their surroundings. It is understood that hooves provide horses with a great deal of ***proprioceptive*** information, as well as balance and blood pressure regulation, and severe hoof deformation thus leads to proprioceptive misinterpretations.

Please turn the page

Another **digital sketch (6)** reflects about further species. There are many other creatures whose senses will be, and are being, affected by the human-made changing climate. Some examples are sea turtles with their ability to return home using magnetoreception. Some species of fish are losing olfactory cues that allow them to forage and sense predators.

For the computer animations Alinta Krauth used a mixture of frame-by-frame animation, time-based code-generated animation, and digital drawing. Due to their computer-generated nature, the original interactive versions will never play the same way twice. They are a conversation between the artist who creates the imagery and sets the parameters, and the computer, which executes those parameters. Accompanying sound is also created by the artist, using a

mixture of field recordings, data-generated sound, and postmodern notation techniques for composition.

The project makes use of a tradition of interactive and game related electronic art, which connects the human body to storytelling, but proposes using this to explore the possibilities of inter-species empathy. Through interaction the audience wavers between being a character, a creator, and a viewer. While the artist is well aware that narrative is itself a very human construct, and that any attempt to experience animal perception is bound to be inherently anthropocentric, *Under-Mine* seeks to push at the boundaries between the human and animal, and dislodge us from our usual subject-object relation to the nonhuman.

Regine Rapp & Christian de Lutz (curators)

Have a look into the source book with further theoretical information of the topics!

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