



## Art and Animals (Art and Series)

*Giovanni Aloï*

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'Art is continually haunted by the animal,' wrote Deleuze and Guattari. Over the past two decades, animals have quite literally invaded the gallery space, from Joseph Beuy's co-habiting with a coyote, Janis Kounelli's instillation of live horses, Damien Hirst's shark in formaldehyde to Mark Dion's natural history displays and Marco Evaristti's 'goldfish in a blender'. No longer a passive object in art, animals, the environment they inhabit, and their encounters with humans are central to current artistic debate. This volume addresses the role of the animal in contemporary art, and the controversial artistic approaches that are reconceptualising ideas of primitivism and civilisation.

In radical contrast with the mythical and romantic depictions of animals throughout art history, the postmodern animal is problematic and provocative. This text uncovers themes of identity, otherness and humanity in emerging artistic approaches that place the animal at the centre of the scene. Often unnerving, dangerous, and disturbing, the animal of contemporary art poses a challenge to anthropocentrism and forces the viewer to reconsider their relationship to the planet. Giovanni Aloï argues that in light of the fatal challenge imposed by global warming and ecological disasters, there has never been a better time for art to focus on the representation of animals and the natural environment.

From the use of living animals in art to the return of taxidermy, Giovanni Aloï considers the moral and ethical implications of visual representations which frame and subjugate wilderness. And as the artificial gallery space houses representations of natural habitats, the relationship between art and the environment is interrogated. Art and Animals surveys the insistent presence of animals in contemporary art, discussing the leading concepts which inform these emerging practises through a range of thought-provoking, innovative, and, at times, dangerous art.

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