



PRESS RELEASE

New Exhibition At FACT - Opening 12 August 2020



Demelza Kooij, *Wolves from Above* (2018). Video still, courtesy of the artist.

And Say the Animal Responded?

What would animals say to us if we listened to them? What might we learn about the state of our shared planet? On 12 August, FACT opens major new art exhibition, *And Say the Animal Responded?* continuing its year long exploration of The Living Planet.

At a time when billions of animals are being lost because of human activity, we still place the interests of humans above those of animals. Studies show that animals feel emotions and have distinct personalities and ways of communicating, yet we rarely consider what the destruction of habitats and species extinction means beyond their loss to us. As we emerge from this period of isolation, and refocus our attention on a rapidly changing climate, *And Say the Animal Responded?* creates a space for the voice of the animal that we have gained greater awareness of during this time.

And Say the Animal Responded? brings together the work of six international artists, presenting visitors with face-to-face encounters with the sounds and behaviours of animals from around the planet. Works by **Ariel Guzik** (Mexico), **Amalia Pica** (Argentina/UK) with **Rafael Ortega** (Mexico), **Kuai Shen** (Ecuador), **Demelza Kooij** (Netherlands/UK) and **Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg** (UK)



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immerse visitors in animals' sonic lives: from an ocean choir of whales and dolphins recorded by hydrophone, to the quiet interactions between wolves captured by drone camera, to a living colony of leafcutter ants 'scratching' music in the gallery.

FACT's new Director/CEO **Nicola Triscott** curates *And Say the Animal Responded?*, featuring a series of artists' film and sound-centred installations that capture the animal voice through human technology, even (using machine learning and artificial intelligence) those of animals that have recently become extinct. The show takes its title from philosopher Jacques Derrida's essay of the same name, in which he challenges any clear boundary between human and animal. Triscott says: "At a time when we need to rethink our relationship with the planet, it is timely to consider the nature and rights of animals. The exhibition brings visitors into close encounters with 'non-human' animal intelligence and communication, prompting questions about whether humans are truly distinct from other animals and our responsibilities towards them."

One of four artists from Central and South America in the show, Mexican musician and artist **Ariel Guzik** presents a new installation, which incorporates sound, drawings and sculptural works from his long-term research project to communicate musically with whales and dolphins in the wild. Guzik designed his submersible musical instrument, **Nereida** to connect with ocean mammals – in the deep sea, its subtle sound vibrations invite a chorus of responsive sounds from whales and dolphins; in the gallery, the instrument's music and the recordings of this cetacean choir reverberate through the space. Alongside, Guzik premieres his new film, charting the expedition of his latest instrument **Holoturian** into the depths of the Pacific Ocean.

Other works in the exhibition include **Amalia Pica** and **Rafael Oretaga's Pan troglodytes ellioti and cousins**, in which a family of chimpanzees in a Nigerian Forest is startled when they trigger a camera and **Is it grunting, barking or panting?**, where the roars of primatologists imitating ape calls will resonate throughout the building. Alongside these installations will be **Catalogue of great ape gestures (in alphabetical order)**, where performances of gestures used by gorillas, orangutans, chimpanzees and bonobos form a sequence of movements. A new performance of these gestures, co-commissioned with MDI, will be shown at FACT during the exhibition.

Ecuadorian artist and ant scholar **Kuai Shen** presents his living artwork **Oh!m1gas**, a reactive sound installation within which a colony of leafcutter ants become DJs, controlling the movement of two turntables. The work draws analogies between 'scratching' as a form of human musical expression and the sounds that ants make with their body parts to communicate. In the installation, the growing activity within the nest creates music in response to the ants' various behaviours: from nest building to farming.

Wolves From Above, a film installation by Liverpool-based artist **Demelza Kooij**, captures the quiet interactions of a wolf pack filmed through a single drone shot. The elusive animals inhabit a tranquil wilderness where the sounds of growling, sniffing and licking feel oddly nearby, heightening the intimacies of communication through human-to-wolf spectatorship.

Responding to the sad reality of today's accelerating species extinctions, **The Substitute** by **Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg** is a digital artificial intelligence resurrection of the recently extinct northern white rhino. A life-size projection shows the artificial rhino roaming in a virtual world,



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becoming more 'real' as it comprehends the limits of the space. The rhino's form and sound toggle from pixelation to lifelike, glitching in and out of existence. Alongside, Ginsberg's sound installation ***Machine Augeries*** questions how our cities may sound as bird populations change and diminish. In the installation, a natural dawn chorus is taken over by artificial birds, their calls generated using machine learning.

Throughout their year of The Living Planet, FACT will collaborate with artists working on the cutting edge of film, art and creative technology to explore pressing environmental and ecological issues. They include artist collective **Keiken** (UK), artist **Jack Tan** (UK), artists-in-residence **Carolin Liebl** and **Nikolas Schmid-Pfähler** (Germany) supported by the European Media Art Platform (EMAP), FACT Together artists **Milda Baginskaite**, **nil00**, **Tammy Reynolds**, **Uma Breakdown**, **Elle Bulger**, **Shonagh Short**, **Gregory Herbert**, **Day Mattar**, **Jessica El Mal** and **MICHAELBRAILEY**, and Liverpool Biennial 2021: *The Stomach and the Port*.

And Say the Animal Responded? opens to the public on Wednesday 12 August 2020 and runs until Sunday 13 December 2020. FACT's year of The Living Planet continues as a free programme both online and in the galleries.

For more information about when FACT is reopening and what measures they are putting in place to keep visitors safe, please visit www.fact.co.uk/reopening.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

And Say the Animal Responded?

12 August - 13 December 2020

FACT, 88 Wood Street, Liverpool, L1 4DQ

Press preview: Tuesday 11 August 2020, 13:00 - 16:00

General opening: From Wednesday 12 August. Open 12:00 - 19:00, Wednesday to Saturday, 12:00 - 17:00 on Sunday. Galleries closed on Monday and Tuesday.

For further information, please contact:

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ABOUT FACT

FACT is the UK's leading film and media arts centre, bringing people, art and technology together. Based in Liverpool, FACT's award-winning building houses three galleries, the Picturehouse cinema, a bar and cafe. Now celebrating 17 years in its Liverpool home, FACT has welcomed over 5 million visitors and commissioned and presented over 350 new media and digital artworks from artists including Pipilotti Rist, Nam June Paik, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Wu Tsang, Ryoichi Kurokawa, Agnes Varda and Isaac Julien. fact.co.uk

ABOUT

Ariel Guzik (Mexico City) is a multidisciplinary artist who designs and engineers mechanisms and instruments which engage with and tap into the languages of nature, specifically cetaceans (whales and dolphins). His projects explore the phenomenon of natural resonance and its use in the natural world. Guzik's work is shown around the world. He represented Mexico at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013 and at the Edinburgh International Art Festival in 2015.

Amalia Pica (Argentina) is a London-based Argentinian artist who explores metaphor, communication and civic participation through sculpture, installation, photography, projections, live performances and drawings, each utilised to expose the nuances in communication. Pica is the winner of the 2020 Zurich Art Prize.

Rafael Ortega (Mexico) is a London-based Mexican filmmaker who works in cinematographic projects of fiction and documentary. In 2011, Ortega's collaboration with Melanie Smith was exhibited as part of the 54th Venice Biennale.

Kuai Shen (Guayaquil, Ecuador) is fascinated by ecosocial insect behaviour and works with ants to create audiovisual installations and performances, exploring the concept of invertebrate aesthetics. His transdisciplinary research amplifies the relationships between species using dynamic techno-ecologies.

Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg (UK) is an artist whose work focuses on the relationships between nature and technology. Daisy's diverse portfolio of artworks, writing, and curatorial projects explore subjects which include artificial intelligence, exobiology, synthetic biology, conservation, biodiversity and evolution, as she investigates the human impulse to 'better' the world.

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.



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