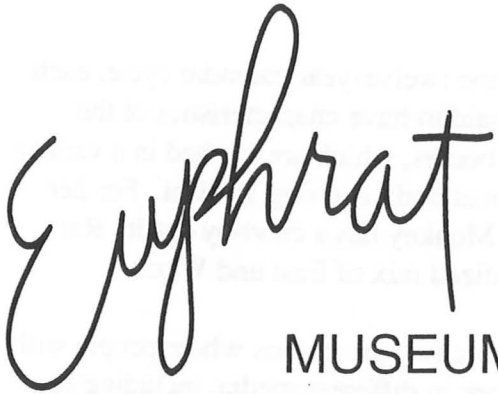


NEWS RELEASE

September 8, 2000

For Immediate Release



MUSEUM OF ART

Press release on art exhibition:

Animals

featuring

Artists Jerry Ross Barrish, Anders Barth, Jancy Chang, Artists from Creativity Explored of San Francisco, Carmen Leon, Roberta Loach, Hifumi Ogawa, Calixto Robles, Carol Selter, Ama Torrance

October 3 - November 22, 2000

Closed Veterans Day

Museum Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 11-4; Tuesday evening 6-8; Saturday 11-2.
Open to tour groups by appointment.

Reception: Tuesday, October 24, 6-8, reception with artist presentation

Animals presents aspects of the animal world and its interface with humans. With a variety of media — sculpture, painting, printmaking, photography — the works include three-dimensional animals, animal portraits, animals from Chinese astrology, animals in biology, and more abstract or poetic animals. *Animals* has fun elements to appeal to children. It includes different cultural perspectives, along with ideas and issues that puzzle or challenge societies.

Jerry Ross Barrish's "hairbrush dogs" are part of a menagerie of animals he assembles from discarded objects he collects on the beaches, bay shore and roadways in and around San Francisco. His favorite objects are plastic, "the lowest class in the hierarchy of debris." Using a hot glue gun like a welding torch, Barrish captures gesture, form, and movement. There are strange birds, *Maltese Falcomb* (with various old combs), and other winning personalities, such as *Roy's Dog*, *Mel's Cat*, and *Catitude*.

The paintings of **Anders Barth** probe the point at which animals and humans intersect. One series is based on newspaper filler articles. In each picture, what was reported in the paper is included. Barth is curious about what is left untold. Can coyotes learn not to bite? Why was Willie B. kept in isolation in a cage for 27 years? What did the alligator do to deserve being shot? A separate installation *Deer Crossing* contains clay story tablets and a painting of *Megaloceros Giganticus* (commonly known as the Irish Elk, but actually of the deer family), a magnificent creature of the Pleistocene. Barth is fascinated by the story of "MG" in and of itself, and even more so by how the story relates to the here and now. The paintings are really two-dimensional sculptures made from a labor intensive technique: laying down wax on a wood backing, then carving into the wax, creating

voids into which more wax is poured.

Jancy Chang creates large scrolls with animals of the Chinese zodiac. In the twelve-year calendar cycle, each year is named after a different animal. Children born during that year are said to have characteristics of the animal. In Chang's paintings, animal heads are attached to mostly human bodies, which are clothed in a variety of colorful dress. One that represents her birth year is the Rooster; the human body is doing Tai Chi. For her son's year she created a giant Dragon, in a different style, very patterned. Monkey has a cowboy outfit. Rat stoops in a most curious way. These works are an unusual, highly personalized mix of East and West.

Creativity Explored of San Francisco is a non-profit organization operating two art studios where people with disabilities come to create art. Artists from Creativity Explored exhibit work in different media, including ceramics and painting. **José Nuñez** paints watercolors of large-bodied birds loaded with feathers. **Norma Cattivio's** ceramic plates are beautifully integrated with the large birds which sit upon them. **Andrew Li** paints lively dogs and cats on wood. Other artists include **Richard Astella, Quach Cam, Pauline Phillips, Sara O'Sullivan, and Doris Yen.**

Carmen Leon draws inspiration from dreams, personal narratives, and mythological themes which reflect the influence of her Latino cultural heritage, Mexico and Perú. Her acrylic paintings are filled with animal spirits, through which she indicates an interconnection of all life forms. The images are related to indigenous cultures, guiding, empowering, sometimes with a bit of humor. In *Teatro de los Espiritus*, animals are in the audience and artist Frida Kahlo is on stage. Some were painted after experiences of great pain, the death of dear ones, yet for all the pain, she can bring encouragement in her art to stay on course in the difficult transitions we all must face.

Roberta Loach's images go from the serious to the sublime. "Like Alice, what would we do without animals in our lives?" There's a pencil drawing of her dog: *Oz — Recuperating After Surgery*. Many of the etchings are just plain fun, such as two enamored dogs in *Love at First Bite*. *Endangered Species* is acrylic on canvas, a group portrait, with the animals shoulder to shoulder. *Cat Lady* is a large endearing portrait with frisky felines. Loach is master of many media, known for her wide ranging satire, and full of surprises.

Hifumi Ogawa's large paintings with mixed media on canvas are layered, beautiful color fields with just a few objects, a dog, some birds, a soccer ball. *Bird Park in Winter* and *Maple and Balls* have a calmness and playfulness. A viewer is led into a story of his/her own making, drawing on past associations and enjoying the mood Ogawa creates.

Myth and magic are conveyed in the prints of **Calixto Robles**, with animal images of Mexico's indigenous cultures, such as jaguars. A strength is within them. Robles, who teaches at the Mission Cultural Center in San Francisco, counters the cultural ignorance which comes from Hollywood and mass media. "I hope to express the resistance of traditional Mexican forms and symbols in the face of increasing commercialization and the process of globalization."

Carol Selter explores how people interact with other species, drawing from her experience working in the biology labs at San Jose State University. Her photographs of severed bird heads and feet (specimens from a hallway display) epitomize the way traditional biologists reduce other beings to the status of dead specimens and isolated molecules. They show a scheme of classification by adaption: bills are for eating, feet for locomotion. "Other things birds do with their bills or feet are ignored. The rest of the organism is ignored... Parts seem to be virtually interchangeable..."

Ama Torrance earned her ABD (all but dissertation) in Organizational Behavior. Perhaps that is why her animal sculptures resonate with human feeling. A group of almost lifesize sheep are made from polyurethane foam with PVC legs covered with a thick aluminum foil. Squirts of foam on their backs seem both like extra wool and frosting on a cake. The epitome of a technological world gone besirk, these plastic foam creatures are lovable and noxious. Some come with their own plastic “shadows” on the floor, while others “don’t need shadows.”

The exhibition was curated by Jan Rindfleisch working with Enrique Andrade, Diana Argabrite, and Flo Oy Wong.

Exhibition in conjunction with *Animal Stories*, curated by the Euphrat Museum of Art, presented at the Sunnyvale Creative Arts Center Gallery, Sunnyvale, November 2 - December 22, 2000.

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