FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

I Am the Animal
Lenore Malen
January 19 – April 1, 2012

Still from The Dance Language of Bees, 2009, courtesy of the artist.

Medford, MA – Tufts University Art Gallery is pleased to present I Am the Animal, a new installation by artist Lenore Malen, on view in the Koppelman Gallery from January 19 to April 2, 2012. Working with photography, video installation, performance, and artist’s books, Malen creates scenarios that lie somewhere between history and fiction. Using the lens of history she examines belief systems and the technologies that inform them.

Lenore Malen’s featured work I Am the Animal (three-channel video installation; 13 min. 22 sec.) is an immersive environment that simulates the spatial and temporal flow of the beehive into the landscape and re-imagines the hive as human culture. Original footage is intercut with archival and found footage, beginning in a documentary fashion then moving to imagery alluding to genetics and robotics. The title is an homage to philosopher Jacques Derrida’s The Animal That I Am, and is both a philosophical inquiry into the way humans anthropomorphize non-human animals and a plea against the industrialized treatment of them.

We know that animals have a special intelligence, a sixth sense that humans do not have. Nearly every culture ascribes anthropomorphic and spiritual characteristics to animals. In comparison to animals, humans are disadvantaged in that we are encumbered by our “technics” – our bodily extensions, like clothing, glasses, smartphones – that shelter and protect us, but also create a highly self-conscious, embodied subjectivity that divides us from each other and separates us from animals.
In I Am The Animal, Lenore Malen guides us to imagine the opposite of anthropomorphism. How can we engage in a process of becoming animal? What can we learn from animals’ intelligences to make us less dependent upon the artificial intelligence props we surround ourselves with to interpret our world for us?

Malen visually poses these big, provocative questions in her immersive three-channel video installation, an ode to the emerging discipline of “post-humanities.” She weaves together the disciplines of biology, ecology, philosophy, dance/performance, and political science through her use of a plethora of source material. As she says, the value of such intra-disciplinary thinking is the generation of new knowledge and new ways of organizing and structuring what we think of as real.

Lenore Malen lives in New York City and Hudson, NY and teaches at Parsons/The New School for Social Research, NYC. An accompanying publication is available.

GALLERY HOURS:
Tuesdays through Sundays 11am-5pm
Thursdays 11am-8pm
March 17/18 & 24/25 Closed
March 19-23 Open by appointment only

RELATED EVENTS:
Opening Reception
Tuesday January 24
6:30 - 8:30 pm: Reception
7:00 - 8:00 pm: Book Signing

Between Human and Animal Panel discussion
Wednesday March 28, 4:00 - 6:00 PM (Alumnae Lounge, Aidekman Arts Center)
Since the 1970s, we have re-examined our relationship to all forms of life, human and animal, organic and inorganic, including the things we make, our machines, and our devices. The human-centered world that we’ve created and inhabit is not sustainable. Mindful of the ecological and political challenges we face, this panel discussion examines Lenore Malen’s I Am The Animal from three different disciplinary perspectives, with the artist as a respondent and a conversation to follow.

Check website for speakers, bios, and updates: http://artgallery.tufts.edu

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