



ANIMAL ANTICS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AVE PILDAS

Cover: Lakshmi's Eye, 2011
Pondicherry, India

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FOREWORD

An eye for an eye. The elephant Lakshmi locks gazes with the photographer Ave – the one gussied up as an avatar of Hindu spirituality, the other blocked or mediated by a third, technological eye. Through the damming up of experience that photography (or art, culture, even memory) makes possible, we can stand in Ave’s place and experience the same uncanny rush of *esse est percipi* – to be is to be perceived – through the time-binding dislocation of Art and the anthropocentricity-undermining freakiness of mutual regard with a highly intelligent non-human sentient being.

Lakshmi is the simplest and deepest of the “Animal Antics” images, but the series manages to capture an enormous range of complex relationships between our species and all the others – proprietary, devotional, exploitative, or often a comic mashup of all of the above, as when a cow walks into a leather goods store, or a museumgoer makes “eye”

contact with the glassy counterfeits of a taxidermied lioness. An infinitesimal Chihuahua perches on the sunlit grave of “Hudson”, like some funhouse mirror distortion of Hachiko the Akita waiting for his master’s resurrection.

Elsewhere, Pildas snags some serious Decisive Momentage – particularly in the phenomenal *Placa de Catalunya* – which may be rife with sociopolitical implications as regards the history of interspecies politics in Barcelona, but is also one of the most seamlessly comic and formally satisfying tourist photos I’ve ever seen. The multilayered aesthetic, philosophical, and political content of these images aren’t stage-managed by the artist – they’re inherent in the world for those who can step out and look for them. We’re lucky Ave has such a good eye.

Doug Harvey is co-owner of Winway Pleats Please AKA Chloe, the first whippet to successfully complete the advanced NW3 title in Canine Scent Work

Cow Bus, 2011
Los Angeles, California



Inter-species Communication, 2011
Kolkata, India



Chonino, 1st Police Dog, 2006
Bueno Aires, Argentina



ESQUELETO DEL CAN
CHONINO
MURICHO #108
MURICHO EN DEFENSA DE SU OJAL EL 2 DE JUNIO DE 1963
EN LAS LAGUNAS DE CHONAL, PASTA
MUSEO DE HISTORIA NATURAL Y ZOOLOGIA
CENTRO DE BIODIVERSIDAD Y ANIMALES EN PELIGRO DE EXTINCIÓN



Hudson, 2012
New Orleans, Louisiana



Holy Cow! , 2011
Madurai, India



Squirrelly, 2013
Bangkok, Thailand



Placa de Catalunya, 2011
Barcelona, Spain



Cat & Mouse Too, 2008
The Andes, Peru



Bruno the Buffalo, 2013
Rapid City, South Dakota



BUFFALO DON'T LIKE
TO BE TOUCHED...
PLEASE DON'T PET
BRUNO

Lakshmi's Eye, 2011
Pondicherry, India



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