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Image courtesy Emily Mast

Curious Poses

June 3 – July 1, 2017

Curated by Jennie Ottinger

Artists: Tommy Becker, Jose Joaquin Figueroa, Elisabeth Higgins O'Connor, Emily Mast, Rachel Mayeri, Sandra Ono, Jess Smith, Melissa Wyman

We polish an animal mirror to look for ourselves.
– Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions* (1989)

May 10, 2017, San Francisco, CA – Southern Exposure presents *Curious Poses*, a group exhibition curated by Jennie Ottinger that considers our complex relationships with animals. What is revealed about human dynamics when we use other species to define our humanness?

The participating artists playfully examine the uncanny territory created when animals stand in for humans through installations, videos, photographs, paintings, and participatory events.

Sandra Ono and **Melissa Wyman** have created new works for *Curious Poses* that address how animals strategically utilize and adorn their bodies, and how our human activities reflect these behaviors.

Rachel Mayeri's installation *The Jollies* is a biographical artwork about the late primate scientist and conservationist Alison Jolly, known for her pioneering theory on social intelligence evolution developed through studying ring-tailed lemurs. The four-channel video depicts animals animated with the voices of Jolly's family members, friends, colleagues, and Donna Haraway articulating the impact of her research.

Through the persona of Koko the gorilla, **Tommy Becker** sympathetically imagines a scenario in which the power dynamics between animal captive and human captor are reversed. Animal archetypes figure prominently in the work of **José Joaquín Figueroa**, often as representations of human qualities or emotions. Figueroa will show a newly completed series of drawings. **Jess Smith's** narrative about Paul, the psychic octopus, is a new project about humans attributing super powers to animals and exploiting them for monetary gain.

Elisabeth Higgins O'Connor's large-scale animal sculptures challenge our perceptions of harmlessness within domestication. O'Connor is influenced by Goya's *Los caprichos*, a set of 18th century etchings whose depictions of anthropomorphized animals reveal uncomfortable truths about human society.

Emily Mast's performance and corresponding stage set representing the artist's studio was originally commissioned by The Power Plant in Toronto and The University of Toronto's Blackwood Gallery. *The Stage Is A Cage (Swell)* scrutinizes some of the deep-seated compulsions of the human species, such as the need to control, tame, punish, play, and differentiate ourselves by constructing walls between ourselves and other animals.

EVENT LISTING INFORMATION

What: *Curious Poses*
A group exhibition curated by Jennie Ottinger that considers our complex relationships with animals.

When: June 3 – July 1, 2017

Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 12:00 – 6:00 PM

Location: Southern Exposure, 3030 20th Street, San Francisco

Cost: FREE

What: *Curious Poses* Opening Reception
The opening night reception will include ongoing performances by Melissa Wyman and Emily Mast. For Mast's *The Stage Is A Cage (Swell)*, Method actor Joe Seely enacts attempts to transgress human structures of control. In *Skunk Butt and Friends: Wildlife Negotiation*

Strategies, Wyman demonstrates various animal tactics involving appendages including (but not limited to) claws, teeth, plumage and scent glands as a means of communication and territorial mark-making. Participation is encouraged.

When: Saturday, June 3, 2017, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Location: Southern Exposure, 3030 20th Street, San Francisco
Cost: FREE

What: *Animal Empathy Experiments: Outdoor Movement Workshop*
Presented in partnership with Royal Nonesuch Gallery, *Animal Empathy Experiments* proposes a series of physical exercises for participants that will somatically work through questions regarding hierarchy, animality, empathy, categorization, confinement, restraint, and the potential for release. The workshop aims to forge physical and psychological connections between beings through sensory inquiry and plenty of play. This workshop is family-friendly and open to all ages (children must be accompanied by an adult). Participants should wear comfortable shoes and casual clothes they can easily move in, and bring drinking water and sunscreen.

When: Sunday, June 4, 2017, 2:00 – 3:30 PM
Location: A Mission district park, exact location TBD
Cost: FREE, RSVP at www.soex.org/animalworkshop

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ABOUT SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

Southern Exposure (SoEx) is an artist-centered non-profit organization committed to supporting visual artists. Through our extensive and innovative programming, SoEx strives to experiment, collaborate and further educate while providing an extraordinary resource center and forum for Bay Area and national artists in our Mission District space and off-site, in the public realm.

An active presence in the Bay Area since 1974, SoEx is continually evolving in response to the needs of artists and the community while engaging the public in artists' work. Central to our mission is to remain the most accessible space for visual artists to produce and present new work, learn, and connect. SoEx provides visual artists with the tools and resources they need to experiment in an open and supportive environment. We also work to advocate to new, diverse audiences and build an ever-growing community of enthusiasts and supporters of the visual arts.

For more information and images, contact Lisa Martin at (415) 863-2141 x102 or communications@soex.org. Southern Exposure is located at 3030 20th Street (at Alabama), San Francisco, CA 94110. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM and gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 12:00 – 6:00 PM. Website: www.soex.org.

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