

This project is my response to certain public art contests that have infiltrated cities and towns around the world. First there were cows in Zurich, then the "Cows on Parade" of Chicago, followed by hundreds more: bears in Berlin, moose in Toronto, hearts in San Francisco, cars in Detroit, etc, etc. The painted-fiberglass animal craze has gotten so popular, companies specializing in creating animals and other fiberglass objects for these city-specific art shows can be found nationwide. This irritates me. The painted animals bring tourism to a given town or city, bring business to local shops, and are often auctioned off for charity; However, I feel that they dumb down the idea of what public art could or should do. In most cases each animal or object is sponsored by a corporation or business group, who chooses the artist's designs - which basically leads to very safe, non-controversial, p.c., and often cute or decorative sculptures. I.e., a cow dressed as Elvis, a polar bear cowboy, or a tie-dyed frog. I guess it bothers me that a patron of these public art projects may get the idea that successful art lacks the power to make us think and change. Not to mention that the designs are selected and therefore censored by those who aren't interested in the current direction of art, but rather the money it can generate. Artists who may have progressive ideas are rejected, while artists who paint rainbows and flowers are rewarded anywhere from 1000 to 1500 dollars to paint their animal. I think that this points public art in a backwards direction. I am especially upset by the use of animals in such arbitrary, playful ways – so contrary to the actual state of said animals in today's world. I feel that this trend desensitizes the public to the plight of the *real* animals – again, further removing art from reality.

In carrying out this project, I tried to mirror this type of public art process: artists were chosen by me – the money man. But in my public art project, each animal was altered based on an actual circumstance or environment, true to that animal. Then, after being cut open and caught in traps, etc., they were painted or decorated exactly as if they were on the streets of your town. Each artist collaborator did their best to create a design that was completely arbitrary to the real animal and its true environment.

I have listed a brief explanation of each painted animal's situation, along with the name of each collaborator (except for animals which I painted myself) on the next pages. All research and information listed came from the infinite encyclopedia that is the world-wide-web.



Title	Collaborator
<p>"Blushing Piglet Slaughtered Bank" When slaughtering a pig, a farmer will hang it from its gambrel tendons (our Achilles tendons), for gutting, draining into a 'blood barrel,' skinning, and dressing.</p>	<p>Dylan Spasky</p>
<p>"Sea Turtle Choking on Plastic Bags" Over 30 years ago, it was estimated that ocean sources dumped 7 billion kilograms, or 700,000 kilograms per hour, of garbage into the sea annually. The amount of plastic flotsam in the current marine environment is not known. Plastic deterioration could last over 450 years. Because plastic is so slow to break down, especially at sea, the amount is continuously increasing. Sea turtles often mistake floating plastic bags for jellyfish, which they eat. The bags do not pass through the turtle but block the intestines, so killing them. Autopsies performed on a turtles have revealed thousands of plastic pieces in the stomach.</p>	<p>John Corbin</p>
<p>"Sponge Bob Testing Chimpanzee" Historically, chimpanzees have been used in all manner of invasive experiments, from head injury experiments to space research in which they were spun giant centrifuges and placed in decompression chambers to induce unconsciousness. Today, chimpanzees are used predominantly in infectious disease experiments, most commonly hepatitis and AIDS. Once infected, these chimpanzees often remain isolated from other chimpanzees and confined indoors for life.</p>	<p>Faina Lerman</p>
<p>"Finned WWII Shark Plane" Shark fins are regarded as a virility tonic in traditional Chinese medicine. The valuable fins are removed, while the remainder of the shark is then discarded, usually surviving this until it drowns in the heap of other finned sharks under the fishing boat, or is eaten by other predatory fish. Their would not be such a problem if the whole shark was used, as space on board a fishing vessel would limit the amount of shark caught. However, shark meat is inferior, and the profits are much lower; hence, it is economically advantageous to discard the shark bodies. 100 million sharks are killed each year by humans and there has been a global reduction of over 80% in the last 20 years.</p>	<p>none</p>
<p>"Sunset &amp; Sunsetter West Nile Crows" West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne infection that can cause encephalitis and/or meningitis. Native to parts of the Old World, WNV was first detected in North America in the summer of 1999, when a dead crow at the Bronx Zoo became a harbinger of what was to come. Within three months had left tens of thousands of dead birds in its wake. Crows are associated with the disease outbreak because they are the outstanding victims, dying in unusually large numbers. Exact connections between the birds and the human illnesses have been difficult to establish.</p>	<p>Nick Sousanis</p>
<p>"Wallpaper Buffalo with Arrows &amp; Bullet Holes" Between 1830 and 1880, hundreds of thousands of American buffalo (<i>Bison bison</i>) were killed for their hides by the westward spread of whites. Thousands were killed just for their tongues, which were considered a delicacy. The years between 1870 and 1880 saw the height of the bison trade when as many as 250,000 hides were auctioned off in one or two days. By the turn of the 20th century, less than 300 wild bison remained.</p>	<p>Clinton Snider</p>
<p>"Mr Armadillarina Roadkill" Armadillos are often hit by cars because they eat carrion, which is often roadkill – consequently becoming roadkill themselves. They are nocturnal, and will instinctually jump up in the air when they feel threatened. This often works to startle a predator, but against an automobile it doesn't work - they just end up jumping right into the front or underside of the car, with disastrous results.</p>	<p>Melanie Manos</p>

Title	Collaborator
<p>"Drowning Polar Bear Ursa Major &amp; Minor"            With global warming rapidly eroding the polar ice cap, polar bears are drowning in record numbers as they are forced to swim more often, and for longer distances, in search of floating ice sheets. Although polar bears are excellent swimmers, they rely on ice flows for rest. Scientists have warned that global warming could render the Arctic ice-free in summer by 2100, likely driving polar bears to extinction.</p>	John Corbin
<p>"Old Hamtramck Lady Chickens in Transport Cage"            Chickens are slammed into small crates and trucked to the slaughterhouse through all weather extremes. Hundreds of millions suffer from broken wings and legs from rough handling, and millions die from the stress of the journey. They are given no food or water and often freeze to death. People who spot chicken-transport trucks on the highway frequently report seeing the heads of dead and dying chickens protruding from the crates.</p>	Gina Reichert
<p>"Bound Live Iguana DJ"            Live iguanas are sold for food by street vendors and in marketplaces throughout Central and South America. Their legs are tied behind their back so that they cannot run away.</p>	Mr & Mrs Zeb Smith
<p>"When the World Became a Cow Mutilated by Aliens"            Cattle Mutilation refers to thousands of cows that are found dead, drained of blood, with cauterized wounds in similar locations, and their reproductive and rectal organs removed. Abnormally high radiation levels have been detected, and scavengers will not touch the carcasses. There is no consensus that the phenomenon actually exists, or if it does exist, what causes the phenomenon. Some attribute these mutilations to extraterrestrials; others argue that mutilations do indeed appear odd, but do not offer enough data to reach an informed conclusion. Yet this remains a world phenomenon.</p>	Graem Whyte
<p>"Oil Drenched Sea Otter Cave Painting"            The Exxon Valdez oil spill killed many animals, including sea otters. Two thousand eight hundred sea otters were killed during the oil spill (nearly a quarter of the Prince William Sound population), which made them the symbol of the oil spill's destruction. When a sea otter's fur is covered in oil, the fur can no longer hold the protective air layer - without which, the otters cannot stay warm, and eventually will die of hypothermia.</p>	Sioux Trujillo
<p>"Trapped Graffiti Grizzly Bear Gnaws Off Leg"            Steel traps have been used for hundreds of years to capture wild animals. Traps for the largest bears (grizzly, kodiak, polar) can snap right through a pine 2x4 when sprung. If an animal has become desperate enough, it is not uncommon that they will gnaw through the trapped limb in an attempt to survive.</p>	Anonymous
<p>"Lonesome Grape Ape Sheriff Bushmeat"            The illegal bushmeat killing and trading of great African apes is the greatest threat to the survival of the species – eclipsing habitat loss as a primary threat to ape populations. The bushmeat trade is now an unsustainable commercial business. Vast profits are being generated, and it is no longer simply a subsistence occupation for local people. Logging and mining roads create easier access for poachers. Bushmeat hunting at the present levels will lead to the extinction of most large animals in these areas within the next few decades; including gorillas, elephants, leopards, bonobos, chimpanzees, and others.</p>	none
<p>"Lamouflage Watches TV"            Okay, so this one is not exactly a comment on the actual animal, rather a comment on the television. Probably the most effective device ever invented to control and placate the masses, the TV has the ability to turn us all into sapient sheep.</p>	Ben Kiehl

Title	Collaborator
"Ming Dynasty Tiger Poached for Penis"	Kari Buzewski
Regardless of the tigers' classification as a "critically endangered" species, the demand for its parts has drastically increased at an alarming rate since the end of the 20th century. The tiger is primarily killed to supply underground black markets with its organs, pelts and bones. These items are highly regarded in eastern medicine, claiming to possess capabilities to heal all sorts of human illnesses and dysfunctions. This includes the tiger's eyes (an alleged remedy for convulsions) and penis (used as an aphrodisiac). Use of tiger penis as an aphrodisiac is a near ubiquitous aspect of local folk custom throughout Asia.	
"Poached Giraffe Tail"	Mitch Cope & Kids of NoHam
Giraffe tails were highly prized by the ancient Egyptians, and still are in many African cultures. The desire for good-luck bracelets, trinkets, fly whisks, and thread for sewing or stringing beads have led people to kill the giraffe. For centuries, the species has been killed for its tail alone. Giraffes are easily killed, often caught by snares, and poaching (now more often for their meat and hide) continues today.	
"Chained Dukes of Hazard Baby Elephant"	Jeff Hocking
In Thailand, baby elephants are coaxed into wooden pens where they are immobilized with chains, beaten mercilessly, and gouged with nail-studded clubs for days at a time. They are repeatedly wounded to teach them to fear their trainers, sit down, lift their legs, and lower their heads, all on command. These ritualized training sessions leave the elephants horribly injured, traumatized, or even dead. Thailand's elephants, both in the wild and in captivity, are victims of the country's tourist industry. Each baby 'broken' and sold to one of the 40-plus elephant camps brings between \$2,000 and \$4,650 dollars. Under the guise of ecotourism, elephants are forced to perform circus tricks, paint pictures with their trunks, play instruments and give rides to tourists.	
"Skinned Striped Roadkill"	none
A few years ago I first saw images of bushmeat, finned sharks, bound iguanas, and this roadkill squirrel with a freshly painted yellow lane dividing line across its carcass.	
All "Trapped and Skinned" animals, including:	
"Skinned Bear Cactus"	none
"Bobcat"	Jim Storm
"Surfing Fox"	Brad Taormina
"Fatally wounded Fawn"	Jeff Karolski
"Mexican Wrestling Mask Marten"	Elke Ullmer
"Jackacorn" wall mount	Sara Blakeman
"Fox (Hot)" & "Bobcat (Wild)" wall mounts	Matthew Blake
"Blue Fox" wall mount	none
"Flash Deer" wall mount	none
"Pop Goes the Weasel" & "Chocolate Bunny"	Denise Fanning
"Circus Circus Chipmunks"	Sara Blakeman
"Plaid Mink"	Ron Ribant
"Deer and Tie" wall mount	Clinton Snider
"Beaver Sundae"	Davin Brainard
"Unborn Fawn Pot O' Gold"	Sara Blakeman
"Fake Rock Wild Boar"	none
"Raccoon Disco Ball"	Joe Ferraro
"Floral Weasel"	Lakela Brown

All of the animals listed above have been trapped and hunted for their pelts, hides, and meat for thousands of years. Accordingly, they are displayed as 'skinned' and/or 'trapped' animals, often with their own pools of blood.

this is the original email sent out to all potential collaborators...

Scott Hocking <[scotthocking@gmail.com](mailto:scotthocking@gmail.com)>

Thu, Aug 17, 2006 at 6:18 PM

Hello to everyone,

This is your official invite to participate in my Animals exhibit. I've talked with some of you about this project already - but for the rest of you, this is your introduction. So, here's the story: I am working on about 30 fiberglass resin, painted, life size animals for an exhibit that opens on September 29th...yep, that's 6 weeks from now. The majority of my materials just arrived one week ago - approximately 11 weeks late. Needless to say, I am 11 weeks behind schedule - but I feel good, and I have no time to waste.

The concept in a nutshell: I have a problem with the worldwide trend of cities/towns hosting 'public art' projects using painted fiberglass animals; aka "Cows on Parade" of Chicago, etc. While these projects bring money through tourism, and are often auctioned off for charity, I feel they dumb down the idea of art, reward political correctness, promote corporate censorship, and desensitize the general public to the real plight of each animal used. This project is my response. I am altering each animal's physical position/form and/or altering their environment. For example: a black bear caught in a steel trap that has gnawed off it's leg; a finned & dumped shark; a poached gorilla; a drowned polar bear; a skinned mink, etc. After each animal's position/environment has been made more in sync with reality, *then* they will be painted in the most arbitrary pc way I can imagine; i.e., the bear with the bloody stump is dressed up like a cowboy; and the fin-less shark carcass is painted like a chocolate chip cookie.

This is what I am working on, and I have plenty of altered animals of all sizes that I invite you to pick and Paint - if you have an idea, and are interested in collaborating in the little window of time I have left. My time line: Animals would be picked up / delivered from Aug. 24th - Aug. 31st, and I would need them finished / returned between Sept. 18th and Sept. 23rd. If you live far away, I could send you (with return postage) a smaller animal asap. If you'd like to paint a larger animal, but need space, you could work at my studio. Also, if you want to recommend another artist, let me know. I have listed the animals in the works below, attached a few reference images, and shared a couple of links to related websites - for information & 'inspiration.' Contact me with any questions, at this email address or by phone - Thanks, Scott

This website has hundreds of shining examples of Chicago Cows:

[http://www.chicagotraveler.com/cows\\_on\\_parade.htm](http://www.chicagotraveler.com/cows_on_parade.htm)

This website takes you on a narrated tour, teaching you all about "public art":

<http://www.publicartprojectsofamerica.com/impatica16/Public-ArtPPa-imp.html>

