Workshop II - AMID-C580 (grads) AMID-C480 (undergrads)

Oct. 25th 5-7pm,
Oct. 26th 9-6pm,
October 27th 1-5pm
Nov. 1st 5-7pm

IUCA+D Columbus
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The American Bullfrog (Lithobates catesbeianus) is considered a “Superspecies” whose spread has been enabled by humans. (Image, KL)

Non-Human

A + D Workshops

This is the second of three workshops offered by IUCA+D /AMID. Each workshop is an independent, one credit course executed over four days. The workshops are mutually supportive in their content and approach; however, they are designed to enable students to take one, two or all three workshops.

Graduate students need to enroll in C580 and undergraduates in C480. The workshops are designed for students to work in an individualized manner and receive material on the level appropriate to their program.

IU Center for Art + Design (IUCA+D) is part of IU Bloomington the courses are listed under Apparel Merchandising and Interior Design (AMID).
A+D Workshop II  [Non-Human]

Workshop II

The course contributes to the “de-centering” of the human, which is part of what has come to be known as post-humanism. The work produced in Non Human will be co-creations and will resist claims of human authorship and traditional artistic notions of the relationship between artist and materials. In this course, students will seek participation in the context of the non-human on its own terms. The class also decenters the place of the art object from art practice in a specific and unique way; art becomes a facet of interdisciplinary investigation with the goal of producing a concrete and experiential understanding of the non-human. The emphasis of the work will be on contemplation, reflection, investigation, research and co-expression in artistic production.

All animals have some relationship with humans such as the active and directed relationship with domesticated livestock. However, even recently discovered animals that live far below the earth’s surface have provided insights into what is required for life and potential healthcare applications. We are always seeking knowledge, hoping for some application in our own lives, and creating potential changes in the lives of non-humans. These desires and our relationship with the non-human is defined most significantly by the challenge of communication. The creatures who lack a voice with which we can directly communicate force us to be creative, inventive, persistent, empathic and compassionate in order to learn from them. Inevitably, seeking insight into the lives of the non-human brings human existence and relationships into question. Where are the point/s of differentiation and are they fabricated to suit particular purposes or do they fundamentally have meaning?

Charles Darwin asserted that from his experience as a researcher studying a particular animal he would over time attribute its actions to reason rather than instinct. In fact, in recent years Darwin’s observation has been playing out in the larger scientific and academic community about what non-humans are capable of and creating a far richer sense of the animal being than previously thought. Old assumptions are being flushed and new possibilities emerging.

What is of paramount importance to the urgency of the animal question is that, now more than ever before, finding new perspectives from which to understand life may radically change who we are, where we are going and who we are going there with, for global warming, environmental decay and mass extinction are all clear indices of the wrongness of our approaches.

- Giovanni Aloi, 2012
A+D Workshop II  [Non-Human]

Course Expectations
Expectations in the course are a co-managed process that requires active student participation.

+/ The nature of art + design and in particular design education is to change students’ thinking, methods and expectations. You should be willing to work in the spirit of discovery and outside your own comfort zone.

+/ Design is not based on right or wrong answers but better or worse responses. Therefore, you should be seeking better options, insights and experiences not predetermined solutions or a specific final solution.

+/ We are ambitious for students and expect them to also be ambitious and respect their abilities and potential. Therefore, course expectations are based on life-long learning and not resolved at the end of the course. We expect that by the end of the semester you are capable of understanding the lessons so that you can continue to pursue them as you will be challenged to do in practice.

+/ Students need a notebook/sketchbook (can be paper, iPad or similar device) and a camera (can be cellphone or any kind of visual recording device.

Educational Outcomes

Unlearn prior normative expectations, associations, habits and definitions of art and design in an educational environment

Unlearn common ideas and expectations about the non-human

Re-frame aspects of the human and non-human relationship

Demonstrate aspects of the complexity and nuance of non-human existence through art and design

Develop creative and design thinking skills to investigate any issue

Expand the discourse of art and design in non-human contexts

Develop creative scenarios based on creative inquiry of the non-human

Synthesize from observation, questioning and creative associations a critical and creative visual/textual expression of the non-human

Course Policies

Evaluation: There will be a single submission for a grade evaluation at the end of the workshop. It will include a notebook/sketchbook and an assignment in digital form (e.g., .pdf). The submission is 50% of the grade and participation is 50%.

Participation: Active participation will include consistent participation in class and on OnCourse for all students. Since the course consists of only three meetings, students must participate in all three in order to pass.

Work Environment: The atmosphere for the course should be one of mutual respect and collaborative learning similar to a studio course. Students are expected to critique each other’s work, share information, and understand the course as a site for the exchange of ideas. Class discussions are forums for discussing issues as much as for evaluating the work of individual students. The feedback offered by professors and other professionals—whether positive or negative—will not necessarily have a direct affect on a student’s grade. During class discussions, it is important to separate criticism of the work from criticism of its author.
Many people feel passionately about what is fair, humane and ethical treatment of animals. Even among the most passionate and activist groups there are conflicts about what our relationship and what actions or inactions we should take regarding the lives of non-humans. This course requires willingness by each student to be respectful of other views and to question their own views. The course expectations and evaluations are not based on what your views are but how you are able to explore your views and other views through various methods and experiences.

Within the investigation of the non-human, we will use Mark Dion’s “Some Notes Towards a Manifesto for Artists Working With or About the Living World” as an initial framework to better our understanding. Students will have the option of producing a visual and/or written description of their application of ideas from Dion’s “Notes” or producing their own new set of “Notes” based on their investigation.

**Communication:** OnCourse and E-mail will be the primary means of distributing studio assignments and corresponding with students. Therefore, each student is required to maintain an active e-mail account, read e-mail daily, and respond to studio instructors in a timely manner. Failure to receive and read studio e-mail communications (over quota accounts for example) does not absolve that student from knowing and complying with the content of those communications.

**Student Work:** Students should be prepared to submit thoroughly documented work in both hard copy and digital form for instructor review by designated deadlines. Acceptable file formats for official submissions will include a comprehensive PDF with native files submitted in separate folders (Word documents can be converted to a .pdf) In compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, works in all media produced by students as part of their course participation at Indiana University may be used for educational purposes, provided that the course syllabus makes clear that such use may occur. It is understood that registration for and continued enrollment in this seminar course, C480 and C580 constitutes permission for such use.

De Chomon, Segundo (dir.) *La Grêncouille* 1908
The A+D Workshops are an interdisciplinary art and design education project. Students will engage in the overall project through their own deep engagement with the specificity of the non-human in order to rethink the role of art in producing new narratives for understanding the non-human. Students will document, through visual and material means, an investigation incorporating natural history, environmental science, cultural history and the visual arts. The outcome of this investigation will be determined by the students in the context of their explorations during the workshop. They will use art + design methods of creative inquiry to produce a final digital file that will contain process (eg. notations, images, and diagrams) from class and field work and documentation of their final work that reflects on their investigations of the Non-Human. The work will be presented in a final review on the last day of class (Friday).

The workshop is intended to be interdisciplinary and bring in very different perspectives. We hope it will be unpredictable and challenging. The term “creative abrasion” refers to the sometimes rough interactions that are needed to spark change and innovation. No sparks, no fire. This is the second of three “A + D Workshops.” We will be using creative inquiry to explore issues of the Non-Human.

It is easier to humanize animals than it is to humanize humans.
- Chuck Jones, 1974
Assignments
The assignments for the course are based heavily on the value of learning by focusing on one’s process rather than merely evaluating the outcome/product. In fact, in this course “the process” is much of “the product.”. Students need to turn in a process notebook/sketchbook of questions, observations, ideas, and explorations made during the course. This means spending more time and putting in more effort in the documentation than in other courses. The final assignment will be closely based on the notebook and be presented at the end of the workshop on the last day of class. A digital copy of the final assignment (e.g., pdf) will be handed in; the notebook does not have to be in digital format but a digital version is preferred. Short readings will be selected from the reading resources list.

From the oyster to the eagle, from the pig to the tiger, all animals exist in man, and each one of them is in a man. Sometimes even several of them at a time.
- Victor Hugo, 1862

Reading Resources:
Hamilton, Garry. Superspecies: The Creatures that will Dominate the Planet, Firefly Books, Buffalo, NY, 2010

Filmography:
I Do Not Know What It Is I Am Like, dir. Bill Viloa, 1986
La Grenouille, De Chomon, Segundo (dir.) 1908
### Schedule

The course schedule will be an adaptive process as the course evolves. The syllabus schedule serves as a general guide; however, changes may be needed to accommodate the development of the class. Saturday may or may not be a site visit, TBD.

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<th>Friday</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>10am - <strong>Arrive in site</strong>, Kent Farms</th>
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<td><strong>In Bloomington</strong></td>
<td>Preparation</td>
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<td>“Why Animals Now?”</td>
<td>Project Session</td>
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<td>Art + Animals (Notes towards a Manifesto)</td>
<td>Invasion</td>
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<td>“How Human?”</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>Superspecies - <strong>The Bullfrog</strong></td>
<td>Application</td>
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<td>Summary (Saturday assignment)</td>
<td>Habits</td>
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<td>Impact and Transformations</td>
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<td>5pm - <strong>Depart</strong></td>
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<td>Sunday</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>Conclusion - <strong>In Bloomington</strong></td>
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<td>“The Meaning of Energy and How We are Attuned”</td>
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