

HOUNDED

Johanna Arco



HOUNDED

„*Man is the animal that must recognize itself as human to be human.*“
[Carolus Linnaeus]

The exhibition *HOUNDED* by Johanna Arco consists of the works of *Ferine*, *18.11* and *Bankett*, and explores the connection of mankind within their environment – wild as well as tamed. In search of a deeper understanding of cultural structures, the artist focuses her magnifying glass on complex networks of relationships such as between human and animal, materiality and immateriality, or between concrete matter and identity or memory.

Dates:

Exhibition Opening:

Fri, 6.12.2019, 6 pm

Guided tour with Johanna Arco:

Fri, 6.12.2019, 6.30 pm and 8.30 pm

Midissage with Johanna Arco:

Fri, 13.12.2019, 6 pm

Opening times:

6.12. – 20.12.2019, Tue – Fri, 2 pm – 7 pm and by appointment, free entry

Hibernation phase: the exhibition is reconfigured for the outside during the closing days and viewable from 21.12.2019 – 13.01.2020.

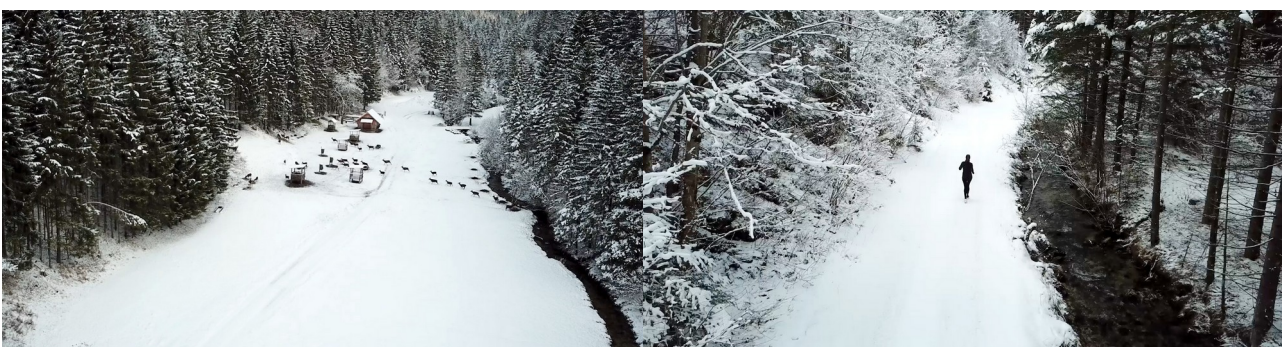
Ferine



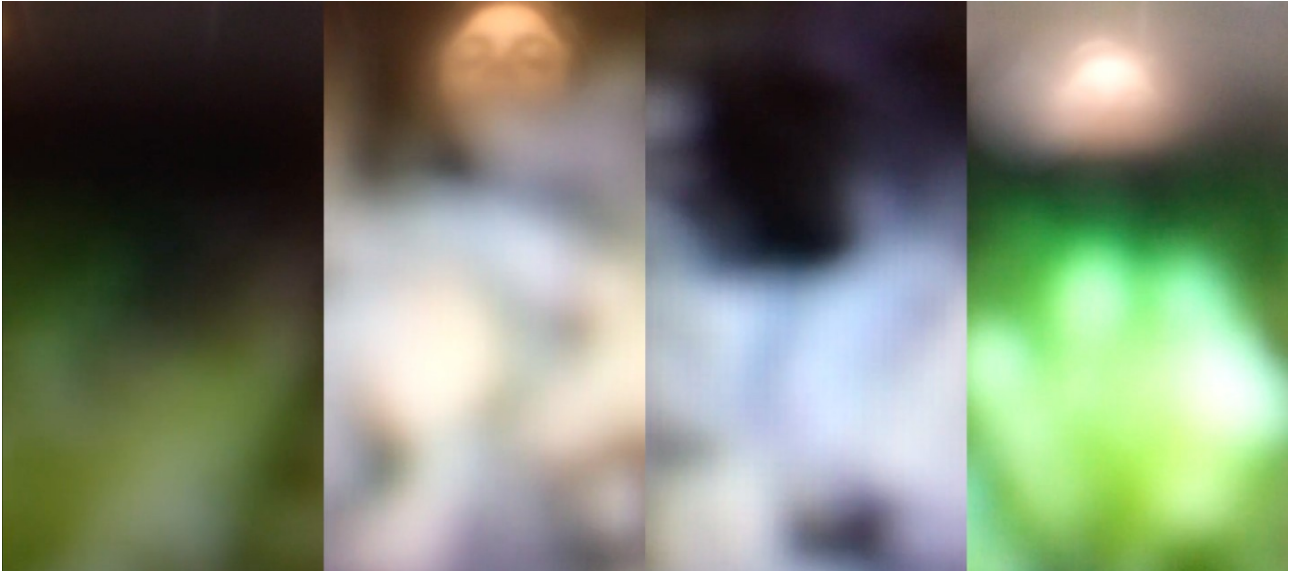
As flora and fauna of Austrian forests are deeply shaped and influenced by mankind, animal and human kingdom have to coexist next to each other, each following certain sets of rules in how to behave.

In a performative manner, *Ferine* tries to stretch and challenge these rules and distinct behaviours that so strictly separate human from animal. Followed by the gaze of a drone, a woman runs through the forest while breaking these principles of conduct. Is she trying to join the group of wild deers, does she follow the herd or is she the persecuted? The questions are emphasised by the sound of the local radio, highlighting human expectations in the search for wilderness.

[Ferine: wild, untamed, derives from Latin „ferinus“ – belonging to wild animals]

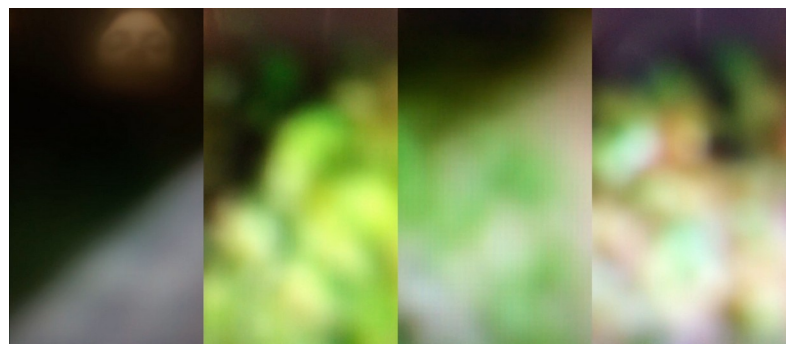


18.11



Throughout human history, myths and stories established the norm and “reality” of a society. The stories we tell each other form the context through which we experience life, they define the way we see our selves and how we relate to others. In other words, myths form the foundation of mankind’s “cultural hallucination”, they form the way we experience the world and our place within it. These hallucinations give the individual the impression to live in a parallel reality, to feel separate from all other beings.

18.11 deals with the subjective feeling of isolation caused by seemingly uncontrollable thought processes. The video visualises mental projections that capture the consciousness and carry its host into a “reality”, in which the actual physical environment plays an abstracted and subordinate role. The movement and speed of the woman moving within the four screens disregards any obstacles given by the artificial landscapes she is navigating through.



Bankett



Bankett is inspired by a passage from Giorgio Angamben's book "The Open", which describes a miniature Hebrew Bible from the 13th century. The scene represents the messianic banquet of the righteous on the last day. The miniaturist depicts the crowned creatures seated on the banquet, not with human faces, but with animal heads. The philosopher raises the question of why the representatives of concluded humanity are depicted with animal heads. He does not exclude the possibility that on the last day, the relationships between animals and humans will take on new forms and mankind will be reconciled with its animal nature.

In order to avoid meeting the animals as strangers at the banquet on the last day, Johanna Arco offers the beasts a meal, as a first steps to gain intimacy. The offering is placed in a feeding crib – a place that is accepted by animals and humans as a meeting point. The response of the initially suspicious animals is captured by cameras that are attached to the feeding crib, in order to follow the advances.



Within her research, Johanna Arco aims to connect and compare mankind with other non-human beings, while focusing on both symbolical similarities and differences. In order to investigate the borders of the human self, dealing with animals has become a key element in her research. Mankind's connection with the wild, the tamed and the domesticated beast displays how humanity has placed itself in the ontological centre of beings. In our relation to animals countless entry points into the fantasy of human exceptionalism are to be found.

Carolus Linnaeus, the founder of modern taxonomy believed that the most outstanding characteristics of mankind is that human beings are human beings, simply because they choose to call themselves that way. "Man is the animal that must recognise itself as human to be human." He must be raised above the animal to become himself. The simple wish of wanting to define ourselves against the rest of the world is the biggest difference to all other beings. Through performative gestures and experiments, distance and closeness to animals is revisited and shifted, positioning mankind sometimes closer and sometimes further apart from their neighbouring species.

Next to living beings, Johanna Arco addresses mankind's attitude towards inorganic matter such as objects. The separation of the world into dead and living things reveals once again how mankind is celebrating its own uniqueness, while being bound up with the fantasy to be in charge of all those "its". Deeply integrated in human culture, objects are approached as vessels for individual experiences, desires and moods.

Through artistic experiments, Johanna Arco uses objects in order to get a deeper understanding of the cultural structures they inhabit, while focussing on so-called "dead" matter as an active being with tendencies on its own and the ability of entering into a dialogue. From a human perspective, objects are things we surround ourselves with, a way of expressing one's inside world. Objects strengthen and represent our being as human individuals. They function as a secret protest against nature; holding form against the extinction of all form, through death. The creation and collection of objects is a confirmation of life, an instrument for vitality and animation. We gather forms around us because of their functionality or to distract ourselves but ultimately, objects function as a gateway into life.

Biography



Johanna Arco (AUT) media artist; studied Fine Arts at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and received her master's degree at the Sandberg Institute in the Netherlands. Within her practice she researches the metaphysical differences between objects, animals and people. Her practice has developed around the question; how the boundaries of the embodied Self can be located, stretched or even exceeded? This physical and material research often culminates into sculpture/video installations, embedding personal experiments into a cultural context.

Selection of exhibitions:

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| June 2018 | Graduation Show Sandberg Instituut, Amsterdam
Exhibited artwork: <i>Forest and Pillars</i> |
| November 2017 | Every word left unspoken during the exhibition is the Title, De Punt, Amsterdam
Exhibited artwork: <i>Apple Stalk</i>

Sorry, we are late, RADION Exhibition, Amsterdam
Exhibited artwork: <i>18.11</i> |
| March 2017 | KEEP IN TOUCH in Amsterdam, De Kit, Amsterdam
Exhibited artwork: <i>Heimatstand</i> |
| February 2017 | KEEP IN TOUCH, Transfer International 2016/17, Gelsenkirchen
Exhibited artwork: <i>37.4 °C</i> |
| December 2016 | Bin ich heute gut angekommen?, Losdok, Amsterdam
Exhibited artwork: <i>Bin ich heute gut angekommen?</i> |
| November 2016 | If it like, like, like then it probably is, De Punt, Amsterdam
Exhibited artwork: <i>Swanlake</i> |
| July 2016 | Graduationshow Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam
Exhibited artwork: <i>Ansicht/Einsicht</i> |
| June 2016 | The Synacopated Dialectics of Words and Things, Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Exhibited artwork: <i>Leims II</i> |
| October 2015 | Artist in Residence, Gelsenkirchen
Exhibited artwork: <i>Hopscotch</i> |
| June 2015 | Don't Bring Flowers, Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam
Exhibited artwork: <i>Untitled</i> |
| May 2014 | Artist in Residence, Gelsenkirchen
Exhibited artwork: <i>Let the Wall speak</i> |