



“Art education can become an important site for challenging the issues of animal subjection, abuse, and discrimination.”

## Art Education Beyond Anthropocentrism: The Question of Nonhuman Animals in Contemporary Art and Its Education

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In this article, I explore human relationships to nonhuman animals through posthumanism, contemporary art, and critical animal studies (CAS), offering perspectives for contemporary art education beyond anthropocentrism. I investigate the question of human–nonhuman animal relationships by discussing the ideas of posthumanism and speciesism as forms of discrimination, similar to other forms of oppression. Challenging the grounds of discrimination leads to a better understanding of human relationships with nonhuman lives. Given the environmental, ecological, ethical, and social justice concerns of our current times, I argue that posthumanism and CAS offer a specific entry point for contemporary art education theory and practice. Humanist understanding and superiority over nonhuman animals are problematized through discussing artwork by four artists. The discussion concentrates on how art education might become an important site through which to challenge the issues of animal subjection and human relationships with the other inhabitants of this planet.

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**H**uman ethicality toward other species is expressed as a critical question in many fields (e.g., Derrida, 2008; Ryder, 1975; Wolfe, 2003). Philosophically, the human–nonhuman animal relationship is a constantly developing ethical question that includes issues of companionship, respect, curiosity, dependence, ignorance, exploitation, and abuse (Haraway, 2008). Posthumanism and critical animal studies (CAS) offer a possibility to scrutinize the human relationship to nonhuman lives and shift the human-centered view toward a more complex understanding of human–nonhuman animal relationships.

The contemporary concerns of our planet, including ethical questions and injustice between people, nonhuman animals, and other beings, are topical for many people, and for many fields, including art education. Examples of these are the global concerns brought to light by the recent Australian wildfires and their horrifying impact on wildlife, the powerful statements of the world-renowned teenage environmentalist Greta Thunberg, and the rise of veganism and other less-resource-consuming life choices. As many art educators know, in art and educational practices, fears and hopes about current issues and the future are given space to be not only expressed, but also discussed, unfolded, and troubled (Blandy, 2011; Illeris, 2015). Consequently, and particularly when living through the times of COVID-19, supportive research and theorization in art education on these topics is currently needed.

In this article, I concentrate on the following ethical questions on posthumanism and CAS in

art educational theory. I contend that the following questions need to be asked and addressed while scholars in the field of art education continue developing sustainable, responsible, and just relationships with nonhuman animals (Derby, 2015; Kallio-Tavin, 2019; Suominen & Kallio-Tavin, 2017): What kinds of values, beliefs, and behaviors are included on the spectrum from eating an animal, loving an animal, and using an animal as an artistic material? How could we develop and deepen understanding on human–nonhuman animal relationships in the field of art education through contemporary artists' practices?

These questions, I argue, are important for contemporary art education, when appraising responsibility, ethical values, and environmental issues to respond to the fears and hopes of both students and educators. In doing so, I turn toward engaging with a deeper ethical and societal question: How might art educators guide students to become responsible toward other species in a world where subjection of other species is an everyday norm?

This article contemplates the possible limitations of humanistic ethics from the posthumanistic perspective and its relationship to art education. The focus is on the human understanding of humanity, which includes a specific and axiomatic idea of supremacy, a special kind of human subjectivity, as a product of humanism from the Enlightenment. It seems that Western humanist philosophy has not been so eager to include species other than humans in the center of ethical existence (Teittinen, 2014). Thus, this superiority over other species, which is sometimes unnoticed, might be an obstacle in valuing nonhuman animals as valuable beings (Derrida, 2008). Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (2005) called the human separation from animal the Great Divide.

The Great Divide is an important anthropocentric argument in philosophical and historical contexts after Darwin, who placed *Homo sapiens* in the same category with other animals. While it has been philosophically important to argue and maintain the divide between human and nonhuman animals, there is a long history of discussion in the West, started by Jeremy Bentham in 1789 (Burns & Hart, 1996), on animal rights and animal liberation, which aimed to diminish the Great Divide.

Decentering human agency is the central focus of both posthumanism and CAS. The latter is firmly grounded in intersectionality and work against speciesism, suggesting philosophically ambitious and ethically challenging perspectives and social movements, and adding to and partially aligning with disability studies, the civil rights movement, feminism, environmentalism, and LGBTQ+ activism (Wolfe, 2010). The idea of animal liberation discussed in this article can be understood as aligning with democratic endeavors of human liberation (Wadiwel, 2015). CAS offers an important complement to critical social issues in art education, which has been an important area of research and practice over the past few decades (Lanier, 1969; McFee, 1966; Stuhr, 1995). Numerous art educators have been particularly interested in developing artistic and educational entanglements with nonhuman agency regarding ecology and ecojustice, environmental sustainability, climate change, and loss of biodiversity (Anderson & Suominen Guyas, 2012; Erzen, 2005; Hicks & King, 2007; jagodzinski, 2013; Jokela, 2013).

I approach the question on human–nonhuman animal relationships by introducing the ideas of posthumanism and then continuing to discuss speciesism as a form of discrimination, similar to other forms of oppression, by deliberating the grounds for discrimination and how they might affect our understanding of the human relationship to nonhuman lives. I then problematize the humanist understanding and superiority over nonhuman animals through discussing artwork by four artists:

Jordan Baseman, Joseph Beuys, John Isaac, and Perttu Saksu. They all address a different borderline between human and nonhuman animals. Last, although the scope of this article lies within the principles of posthumanism and CAS and their impact on the field of art education, I also share my view on how art education might become an important site through which to challenge the issues of animal subjection and human relationships to the other inhabitants of this planet.

### **(Post)Humanist Relationships With Nonhuman Animals**

Although posthumanism has gained wider interest in the humanities and social sciences only during the past 2 decades, its roots are deep and varied. While humanism has been built largely on the idea of human separation from nonhuman animals, posthumanism questions human-centered thinking philosophically, biologically, socially, culturally, and educationally (Agamben, 2004; Badmington, 2000; Barad, 2003; Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 2016; Hayles, 1999; Herbrechter, 2013; Lewis & Kahn, 2010; Wolfe, 2010). Posthumanism echoes thoughts, for example, from natural sciences, psychoanalytical theories, and economic–political thinking from the end of the 19th century to the Continental philosophy of the 20th century, and to cyberethics from the 1940s. The environmental awakening in the 1970s turned a new page for posthumanism. Posthumanist theory argues that humankind should not be a measurement for the world anymore (Braidotti, 2013; Lummaa & Rojola, 2014).

In my graduate-level art education classroom, posthumanism is often discussed with students alongside antihumanism. Antihumanism scrutinized traditional human-centered thinking through structuralism and poststructuralism by seeing humankind as “an invention of recent date, and one perhaps nearing its ends” (Foucault, 1970, p. 387). The antihumanists’ proposition that the human being is a historical and linguistically discursive construction has been

important ground on which posthumanism has grown. However, the connection between anti-humanism and posthumanism is neither logically required nor historically inevitable. Antihumanism includes many sublime principles from humanism that are not typically interesting for posthumanism, such as responsibility, self-determination, solidarity, communality, social justice, and equality (Lummaa & Rojola, 2014). Although some posthumanists emphasize that posthumanism is essentially not an area for ethical questions (Teittinen, 2014), others seem to include strong ethical implications and theoretical questions, especially in relation to material practices (Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 2008). Hence, posthumanism is a critique on essentialism, intentional agency, and discursive subjectivity. This makes posthumanism a strong ethical and political project that offers critical and topical perspectives for educational development, especially when renewing humanistic thinking through a posthumanist pedagogy (Lewis & Kahn, 2010).

Rosi Braidotti (2013) wrote: "We need to devise new social, ethical and discursive schemes of subject formation to match the profound transformations we are undergoing" (p. 12) through posthumanism. Art educators have entered into the conversation through examining the social, ethical, political, and aesthetic impact of technology, through the critique of capitalism (Jagodzinski, 2013), and through how it forms the posthuman body and its identity (Garoian & Gaudelius, 2001). This identity had been read through the perspective of biological art and education (Jagodzinski, 2014; Sederholm, 2014), through new media and configurative agency (Keifer-Boyd, Knochel, Patton, & Sweeny, 2018), and through children's drawing as more-than-human (Schulte, 2019).

### Separation of Species

Posthumanist-oriented CAS detaches itself from liberal humanism and becomes aware of those institutional structures that sustain speciesism. In speciesism, the individual human value is

tied to the human species. More extensively, it is a matter of a prejudiced or biased attitude in favor of one's own species against the interests of other species (Ryder, 1975; Singer, 1990). The discourse of speciesism is always against some other species while favoring another one, and speciesism often is used as a means of justification for the use of violence and abuse. Work against speciesism is therefore an important ethical and political movement, just like work against other forms of oppression that is based on favoring the interest of one's own kind. Cary Wolfe (2003) summarized: "Speciesism, which like its cognates racism, sexism, and classism—discriminates against an other based only on a generic description and not on what we actually know about its needs, interests, and capabilities" (p. 34).

There is no doubt that most human beings practice speciesism as a form of oppression that seems so "natural" for humankind that it is not so easy to recognize, as Mitchell (2003) wrote: "'Speciesism' is ritually invoked in the denigration of others as animals while evoking a prejudice that is so deep and 'natural' that we can scarcely imagine human life without it" (p. xiv).

Art education has a long tradition of taking a standpoint in critical social justice issues and working actively against sexism, ableism, classism, racism, and other types of oppression toward people considered less than human (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001; Daniel, 1996; Derby, 2011; Garber, 1990; Hicks, 1991; Keifer-Boyd, 2003; Sandell, 1991).

Wolfe (2003) wrote about the *institution* of speciesism, and although he described how speciesism applies to everything and everybody, he also emphasized how "the violent effects of the discourse of speciesism fall overwhelmingly, in institutional terms, on nonhuman animals" (p. 6). Similarly, as the discourse of sexism may be applied to any gender, it has eventually affected disproportionately those who identify as women. This discourse includes the ethical acceptability of the systematic actions of "noncriminal putting to death" (as cited in Wolfe, 2003, p. 7) based on species. Derrida (2008) addressed how the

human species has had no problem finding multiple ways to benefit “naturally” from other species:

All that is all too well known; we have no need to take it further. However one interprets it, whatever practical, technical, scientific, juridical, ethical, or political consequence one draws from it, no one can today deny this event—that is, the *unprecedented* proportions of this subjection of the animal. (p. 25)

Humanist philosophers have spent a considerable amount of time and effort clarifying how and why humankind is different from other animals to sustain the human-centered approach to speciesism. As Derrida stated, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, Heidegger, Levinas, Lacan, and many others have explored human separation from the animal species based on power, capability, and attributes. This separation includes the ability to give, to respect the rights of others, to possess a sense of justice, to bury one’s dead, to work, and to invent a technique in addition to intelligence and subjectivity, which are linked to language. The separation has been described through different nervous systems and different experiences of pain, memory (or lack of), different emotions, or the ability to share experiences on those matters, meaning the sociocultural part of human life (Kallio-Tavin, 2019; Singer, 1990; Wolfe, 2010). The level of detail describing this separation is extensive and, as such, prompts me to question why it has been so important to establish. Agamben (2004) suggested the human–nonhuman animal separation has been possible only because of the separation itself, as created by humanity, and “because [the human] distance and proximity to the animal have been measured and recognized first of all in the closest and most intimate place” (p. 16).

Jeremy Bentham’s 1789 well-known statement on the principles of morals and legislation on animals has been the leading ideology for animal rights: “The question is not, Can they reason? Nor Can they talk? But, Can they

suffer?” (Singer, 1990, p. 7). The question of animal suffering and minimizing pain, including psychological pain and stress, has become a measure of ethical human actions toward animals. The idea is that beings who can demonstrate an interest in avoiding suffering should have the rights to be protected, regardless of their species (Wolfe, 2003). Despite this or any ethical rule, nonhuman animals are slaughtered daily in a painful manner (Wadiwel, 2015), a fact that demonstrates the most important distinction between humans and nonhuman animals: Following the Judeo-Christian tradition of belief, unlike killing a human being, killing an animal is not considered murder (Derrida & Nancy, 1991).

### **Nonhuman Animals in Humanism and Contemporary Art**

Art as a site of learning offers a central recourse for art education. Similarly to how O’Donoghue (2009) has argued that “arts-based researchers cannot ignore the processes and practices of artists” (p. 352), I argue that art educators should develop their curriculum to include approaches to the complex issues around human and nonhuman animal relationships through studying artists’ processes and practices. Close and critical analysis and discussion of the work of artists enhance understanding and learning (O’Donoghue, 2009).

The complex relationship between humans and nonhuman animals has developed relevant inquiry and produced essential work from many artists. Artists have been interested in exploring the scope of exchange across the boundaries of the human and the nonhuman animal by complicating “the roles of various parts of the performing body in any taking on of animality” (Baker, 2003, p. 149).

Artist Perttu Saksa’s practice addresses the nonhuman other by deepening the conversation on human relationships to nonhuman animals and exploring the exchange across the boundaries. Through his practice, he might include questions such as: Should animals be

treated as humans? How should we respond to the ethical responsibility that taking care of the animal other seems to require from people? His art project, *Presence* (Figure 1), from 2015, includes large color photographs of dead horses and cows. The intense, dark colors of the photographs depict the animals' bloody flesh, silky skin, fluffy fur, and glazed gaze. Lustedt (2020) described *Presence* on Perttu Saksa's web pages:

The presence of an animal other is seen at a decisive moment before it loses its form and becomes flesh and matter. The animal being viewed is not just an animal, rather a unique, specific and valuable being for us, a horse.... Presence is an invitation for us to look at death eye to eye. (para. 2)

Although *Presence* appears as an ethical artwork that entails a posthumanist perspective in terms of its nonhuman animals theme, it is worth noticing that the artist might be asking humanist questions through his art: "There is a terrible beauty present. But it reveals the grotesque hidden in our (carnivore) everyday. What are we looking at? Is it too late to return the gaze? Does the flesh still look at us?" (Lustedt, 2020, para. 2). These ethical questions are crucial, but they may not concern the nonhuman animal as

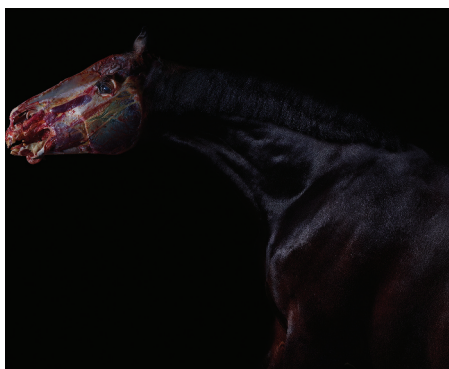


Figure 1. Perttu Saksa, *Presence*, 2015.

much as they concern the human. I will elaborate my statement through Emmanuel Levinas's work on ethics because it profoundly discusses the ethical relationship that is in the core of Western humanist philosophy.

For Levinas (1969/2008), whose work I have found to be the most meaningful ethical approach for art education, ethics toward the other means to be opened to the other's infinity, the radical alterity of the other's otherness, which is always beyond one's own comprehension (Levinas, 1969/2008). This is particularly present in a face-to-face encountering with the other (Levinas, 1985/2009; Tavin & Kallio-Tavin, 2014). In contrast to other philosophers, who have often viewed ethics as a practical matter (and therefore secondary) rather than a question of existence (and therefore secondary), Levinas placed ethics "prior" to epistemology and ontology. For Levinas, it was impossible to think of reality without first thinking of the other. He believed that the ego does not choose to answer the other's demand. Instead, to be human, the ego must respond to the other. Levinas's ethics, as well as most other forms of Western ethics and philosophy, is written with a strong humanistic ethos. Hence, and as it becomes interesting from the perspective of this article, Levinas's ethics only include the human other, not the nonhuman animal other. Wolfe (2003) remarked:

While such [ethical relationships] might seem to be good news for thinking about the ethical question of the animal other, it only reinforces the very humanism it seems to subvert.... It does so not only by assuming that the subjects of the ethical relationship are always already human, but also by placing the ethical relationship beyond all epistemological questioning—"prior" to it, to use Lévinasian language. (p. 16)

The face-to-face encountering with the dead horse's gaze in *Presence* might, and perhaps should, be analyzed through human-centered ethics, rather than through posthuman ethics. Even though the artwork presents animals, the gaze is addressed to a human eye and

humanistic mind to review. The images might be representing horses, but humankind is still in the centrum of the image. From the perspective of Saksas artwork, it is not relevant if ethics, via a Levinasian or any other humanist approach, includes only people, because the entire process of representation is eventually meant for people.

In his earlier art project, *A Kind of You* (Figure 2) from 2013, Saksas explored the exchange across the boundaries between human and nonhuman animals. The tradition of Indonesian street performance used to include teaching pet monkeys tricks and dressing them in masks and clothes, with “monkey masters” forcing them to perform. Saksas stated that, when photographing the monkeys, they were in a bad condition, stressed and sick. He felt particularly sorry for the monkeys, knowing that they are “our closest relatives” (Saksas, 2020, para. 10). Saksas photographed the monkeys with dramatic lighting and a black background. The pictures are portraits of chained, badly treated, and systematically abused animals. The images are violent and sad, showing “a primal human fear: the terror of being enslaved, wholly controlled, at the mercy of forces greater than ourselves” (Wallace, 2020, para. 2).



Figure 2. Perttu Saksas, *A Kind of You, Untitled*, 2013.

Saksas has pictured a reflection of humanity in his pictures, “even if it is done using subordination and with the aid of a macabre game” (Saksas, 2020, para. 10). The uncanny anthropomorphic spirit is being created by confusing human and nonhuman animal interfaces. The animal other has been altered to resemble a human being, and the separation of species becomes blurry. Clothing and masks steer toward a light and humorous atmosphere, while the cruelty in the images enters unexpectedly. The viewer might want to reject the trueness of the documentary photographs.

Saksas’s artwork might speak to the viewers’ empathy. Human emotions are evoked because we are looking at images of monkeys, a species so close to our own. Perhaps through that closeness, they bring the Levinasian face-to-face encountering between human and nonhuman animals (Tavin & Kallio-Tavin, 2014). The images reflect human fear, sadness, and terror. These are easily empathized with and create a fruitful basis for teaching and learning empathy toward other species. *A Kind of You, Untitled* is a good example of an ethical and posthumanist artwork that evokes strong ideas and feelings to be discussed in art education contexts, which I will discuss further in the section titled Nonhuman Animals in Contemporary Art Education.

### Exploring the Nonhuman Animals’ Proximity

Donna Haraway (2008) has written at length about the connection between different species through the human relationship to dogs. By exploring the diversified bonds between dogs and humans, she develops her posthumanistic thesis on becoming-with, when human exceptionalism over a nonhuman animal seems to disappear. Haraway (2008) wrote about her companion animal with respect:

Canid, hominid; pet, professor; bitch, woman; animal, human; athlete, handler. One of us has a microchip injected under

her neck skin for identification; the other has a photo ID California driver's license. One of us has a written record of her ancestors for twenty generations; one of us does not know her great grandparents' names. One of us, product of a vast genetic mixture, is called "purebred." One of us, equally a product of a vast mixture, is called "white." (p. 15)

Haraway's comparison demonstrates human respect over a bred domestic animal and their symbiotic relationship. This kind of "contact zone" (Wadiwel, 2015, p. 204) between human and nonhuman animals offers a different kind of perspective to the human–nonhuman animal relationship in Saksá's artwork. It might be a complex relationship with care and love that often includes control and manipulation.

According to Derrida (2008), the complex human–nonhuman animal relationship is not free of control and manipulation and is a result of the Biblical Genesis. This was where the first human being named the animals, and then mastered the animals, but only after coming into the world *after* the animals. Humankind is, hence, *after* animals, following, hunting, perhaps with respect, but always keeping up "the limit between Man with a capital *M* and Animal with a capital *A*" (p. 29). Some artists' work speaks to this paradoxical relationship with animals, which includes mastering animals as much as following them, perhaps problematizing and questioning the human separation from the animal.

Joseph Beuys explored the human separation from other species and made a point on human-centeredness in his 1974 performance, *I Like America and America Likes Me*, in which he spent 3 days in the René Block Gallery in New York with a wild coyote. In the performance, the coyote was also to reflect America's history with the native nation and the relationship between the United States and Europe (Garoian, 1999). He named the coyote "Little John," following Derrida's idea on human eagerness in naming nonhuman

animals. The performance was about the confrontation of a human and nonhuman animal, their shifting roles, control, and freedom (Baker, 2003).

During the performance, Beuys was holding a pair of painted gloves in his hands, not wearing them. For Beuys, the painted gloves represented human hands. He repeatedly threw the gloves toward Little John. This was to give the nonhuman animal what he could not have: A human pair of hands, which symbolized the freedom that nonhuman animals do not have (Baker, 2003). This was a strong symbolic gesture of pointing out the separation of species. It is also a moment of searching the borderline between human and nonhuman animal; perhaps the artist learns from the coyote and perhaps the artist thinks of becoming an animal. Beuys's performances are complex and multilayered. Art educator Charles Garoian (1999) stated that they have a pedagogical dimension: Beuys's autographical, interdisciplinary, and shamanist art practice "illustrates the counterhegemonic conditions of his pedagogical rituals" (p. 34).

### Animals as Artistic Material

Ethical questions in artwork challenge human–nonhuman animal division through the disturbing and radical use of animals as artistic material when working with dead animal bodies and body parts. An animal body as an artistic medium and material invites approaches to the study of matter and meaning, attempting to offer a different perspective to signification, materiality, and methodologies of crafting knowledge similar to other forms of new materialism (Barad, 2003; Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012), which have become an important field of study for art educators (e.g., Garber, 2019; Schulte, 2019). Ethical questions are crucial from an art education perspective: Is it ethical to use nonhuman animals as an artistic medium? What, for example, happens to an animal when it becomes either an object of taxidermy or an artistic object?



Jordan Baseman's artwork, *Be your dog*, from 1997, consists of a dog's ears, scalp, and hair, sculptured to form a headdress. His artworks could be described as "occupy[ing] an uneasy middle ground somewhere between sculpture and conventional taxidermy" (Baker, 2003, p. 147). *Be your dog* was never intended to be worn. However, when exhibited in an Austrian gallery, the exhibition visitors "eagerly aligned themselves photographed appearing to 'wear' the ears and to think themselves into this new state of being, just as the title suggests" (p. 148). While "wearing" the headdress might be sickening to some extent, the idea of becoming a dog was too compelling for the gallery visitors to bypass.

Perhaps an animal becomes more valuable as art, moreso than when it was alive. Mitchell (2003) offered a critical, even sarcastic point of view with a posthumanist lens. He noted how things often have better established rights than nonhuman animals. Works of art, religious icons, valuable commodities, private fetish objects, and public totems have special status and value. This is very different than the value of animals. Perhaps, when something is human-made, it becomes more valuable for people. Animals, whose bodies end up as taxidermy or presented in natural history museums, or those whose fur and bodies have been made into other human-made objects, are indeed more valuable as commodities than they ever were as living animals, at least for their owners. Ethically, this situation might become complex from a child's perspective, who compares the same nonhuman animal species in natural history museums (taxidermized) to those living in zoos. The lesson learned might be that there is not such a big difference between the two: living and nonliving (Figures 3 and 4).

Another example of an animal body as an artistic material is the *Untitled (Monkey)*, by John Isaac (1995). The hands and feet of the chimpanzee are replaced by the cast hands of a 5-year-old child. The assembly of human and



Figure 3. Children in the Al Ain Zoo, United Arab Emirates.



Figure 4. A child in the Natural History Museum in Helsinki, Finland.

monkey body mixes up the idea of who is to become whom and suggests a liquid division between human and nonhuman animal. Is the monkey, with a cigarette in his hand, becoming a human or is the human becoming animal? Baker (2003) noted: "The realism of this piece, which is more like a waxwork or mannequin than a sculpture, makes this aberrant creation (whose body is both ravaged and delicate) particularly disturbing" (p. 154). The artwork seems to take a "step aside from a human, to indicate an other, to signal the animal, and thus to enter that privileged 'experimental' state of identity-suspension

that has so concisely and contentiously been named becoming-animal, *devenir-animal*" (p. 147). Through using an animal body as the artistic material and through the liquid division between human and nonhuman animal, Isaac's work questions the borderline, the Latourian (Latour & Weibel, 2005) Great Divide, between the human and nonhuman animal in an uncanny and disturbing way. While there might not be any final ethical solutions to the question of using nonhuman animal bodies as artistic media, the topic offers a meaningful area of ethical inquiry for art education and art teaching.

### Nonhuman Animals in Contemporary Art Education

In this section, I turn toward the question: How might we study human–nonhuman animal relationships and guide students to become respectful toward other species in a world where subjection of other species is an everyday norm? What types of approach can be used when discussing artwork that suggests posthumanist and nonhuman ethical questions? I believe these questions are particularly relevant for students in higher education and for preservice art teachers. Drawing from the art examples and the theory discussed, my suggestion includes a threefold approach: empathetic education in, critical engagement with, and philosophical discussions about contemporary art. I believe that through exploring art examples, questions on human separation from other species, the borderline and its liquidity between human and nonhuman animals, as well as the exchange across these boundaries, CAS can become a meaningful area of study in art education. In these suggestions, even though they welcome issues on nonhuman animals and posthumanist perspectives, students' interests and hence humanistic ethos are inevitably important, reminding interrogators that post-humanism is always a part of humanism.

First, art educators might include teaching empathy skills in their curriculum. While teaching and learning empathy is crucial from the

human–nonhuman animal relationship perspective, it is important to distinguish two different forms of empathy: *simulation* and *projection* (Aaltola & Keto, 2017). The typical approach is to direct students to become empathetic to other animals through projection. Through simulation, the interest is truly in the other, while in projection the question is, "How would I feel if I was in their/its position [?]" (p. 32), and the focus is rather in the self than in the other. However, teaching and learning empathy is more powerful if it does not build on projecting one's own feelings, but instead values the otherness and strangeness of the nonhuman animal, even when they do not evoke human emotions by being closely related to the human species (Aaltola & Keto, 2017). Respect for otherness in simulation rejects treating the other, be it a nonhuman animal or less-than-human species based on other characteristics, as a fungible and expendable resource for "free" human beings. Empathy skills might be taught through art practice and discussion.

Second, art education can become an important site for challenging the issues of animal subjection, abuse, and discrimination. CAS focus on nonhuman agency and learning about nonhuman animal conditions. Learning can take place through a number of practices, such as engaging visually, performatively, and artistically with local sites, such as the food industry and farming. Learning can be acquired through critically observing, documenting, and exploring how animal products are being produced, and in what conditions. It is important to recognize that families and individuals as well as students and teachers often share different opinions about ethical food production and whether ethicality is even relevant within this area. While these differences are important to discuss, there should be space for learning about animal issues artistically, not simply moralizing individual values. For example, students can learn how veganism, however popular and helpful

for animal rights, is not a sole solution to speciesism. Animal subjection and the institution of speciesism (Wolfe, 2003) is a societal and cultural condition similar to other forms of oppression, not an individualized habit.

Third, the posthumanist animal studies perspective can be included in contemporary art education by emphasizing the work against speciesism through philosophical and social discussions. I agree with Gert Biesta (2017) that the purpose of real art educational work is bringing learners *"into dialogue with the world"* (p. 37) rather than *"facilitating expression"* (p. 37). Through building on learners' desire to engage with the world and its difficult questions, without placing self, or even humankind, in the center of the world, art educators can engage their students with this dialogue. This is a pedagogical project that does not include a tool kit or short answers. Discussing complex and engaging artworks, such as Perttu Saksa's, might be helpful in leading students to focus on real-world issues, in which they are often already very interested, as mentioned at the beginning of this article. On a more practical level, the following questions might be included in art classes when reviewing contemporary art examples with students: Is using animals in artworks different from using animal fur or skin for clothing material or using animal flesh for nutritional purposes? Is there a higher moral standard when it comes to the art's material use? If so, is this because the arts are not considered a compulsory part of human life when compared to the other uses of nonhuman animals? Or, is it because there might be more options for artists to choose artistic materials than, for example, for customers' choices in nourishment options? Human–nonhuman animal relationships can be discussed through art examples by discussing how the depiction of nonhuman animals in the arts has changed over time, both in historical and contemporary works. Ultimately, the focus on

discussing these questions should not be so much about "What does this mean?" as it should be about "What is this asking from me?" (Biesta, 2017, p. 39). Instead of trying to exhaustively understand complex human–nonhuman animal relationships, the focus in art education should be on reconciling students' ethical and empathetic thinking with the needs of the contemporary world.

### **Concluding Thoughts: Nonhuman Animals Along With Humans**

The human relationship with the other nonhuman beings of our planet can be taken as the central starting point for exploring art education beyond anthropocentrism. Ethics and empathy education play a crucial role, as does a critical consideration of human actions toward nonhuman animals when considering questions on posthumanism and CAS in art educational theory and practice.

Speciesism, a concept drawn from CAS, is helpful when exploring institutional discrimination toward other species. Animal exploitation as an everyday practice in human lives is such a common behavior that reviewing or reconsidering the practice might not even seem relevant for many. Western humanist philosophy has not included species other than humans in its core interest, either. While discussing the inequality of humankind is beyond this article, it is important to note that humanism does not equally include all humans. In this article, I have concentrated in the distinction between human and nonhuman animals.

I discuss the limitations of humanism and the possibilities of posthumanism for art education by exploring four artists' practices as sites of learning and possibilities for developing ethical engagement with nonhuman animals. While the human relationship with nonhuman animals is complex and historically multidimensional, the purpose of education is not to evoke guilt about the subjection of

other species as much as it is to develop ethical and critical consideration through bringing the students into dialogue with the world and

build on their desire to engage with the world and its difficult questions about human–non-human animal relationships.

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