CALL FOR WORK

The Measure of All Things: Rethinking Humanism through Art
Department of Art Gallery, University at Buffalo
October 13 – December 11, 2016
Reception: Thursday, October 13, 2016

In May 2016, a four-year-old boy fell into an exhibit at the Cincinnati Zoo, resulting in the death of Harambe, a rare Western Lowland Gorilla, sparking a heated national debate about the significance of human and nonhuman life. All arguments presented Harambe’s life as a loss, but the type of loss varied – a financial loss for the zoo? An entertainment loss for future onlookers? A loss for science and nature? Or was this the loss of a fellow being of significance and, if so, what does that mean?

The ancient philosopher Protagoras is most famous for his claim: “Of all things the measure is Man” and today, Western societies continue to promote anthropocentrism, an approach to the world that assumes humans are the principal species of the planet. We naturalize a scale of worth, in which beings that most resemble our own forms or benefit us are valued over those that do not.

The philosophy of humanism has been trumpeted as the hallmark of a civilized society, founded on the unquestioned value of humankind defining not only our economic, political, religious, and social systems, but also our ethical code. However, artists recently have questioned whether humanism has actually lived up to its promises and made the world a better place for humankind. Are we better off privileging humans above all else or could there be other, preferable, ways to value life? With the continued prevalence of violent crimes, even genocide, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, we see the ways in which the discourse of humanism falters, as groups are targeted through rhetoric reducing them to the subhuman, and therefore disposable. But what if the subhuman, nonhuman, and even the non-animal and material, were reconsidered as objects of worth even if far removed from us?

The Measure of All Things calls for works of art that rethink humanism and anthropocentrism from various viewpoints. Works may be connected to the theme broadly and all media of work will be considered.

Potential areas of interest include (but are not limited to):

- Communication/interaction with/between nonhuman entities, including animals, plants, materials, technology
- Reactions to/against dehumanization in its many forms
- Rethinking anthropocentric measures of value, such as agency, verbalization, movement, family, bodily integrity, intelligence, emotion
- Rethinking animal rights, human rights, environmental rights from non-anthropocentric platforms
- Work in the areas of new materialism, post-humanism, anti-humanism
- Non-Humanist/ Non-Western value systems
- Personifications of the nonhuman, non-animal
- Conceptions of the monstrous

**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

- Submissions must be received electronically by 11:59 pm EST on Friday, August 19, 2016, to be considered.
- Only one application per artist will be accepted; however, artists may submit up to three works for consideration, and up to five images of the work or one video clip per each work on the application. File formats accepted are JPEG, TIFF, PDF, and MOV.
- Image files should be no larger than 5 MB; video clips may exceed this size requirement but should be no longer than 5 minutes in duration.
- Artists will be asked to submit a brief artist statement, a description of each submitted work, a CV, and a link to artist website.

**DATES**

- Submissions due Friday, August 19, 2016.
- Artists will be notified by e-mail of decisions by Friday, August 26, 2016.
- Confirmation by accepted artists and commitment to show work will be required by Friday, September 2, 2016.
- Work must be received by the gallery by October 1, 2016, by 3:00 pm.
- Work will be returned, or needed to be picked up, by December 16, 2016.

For additional information or to address any questions, please contact Natalie Fleming, nmflemin@buffalo.edu.