

The Parc de La Villette  
presents



# Bêtes et Hommes

(Beasts and Men)

An exhibition event in Paris at the Grande Halle de la Villette  
from September 12, 2007 to January 20, 2008

**Scientific Consultant:** Vinciane Despret, psychologist and philosopher, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Université de Liège

**Art and Project Direction:** Yolande Bacot, director of exhibition programming, Parc de la Villette, and Catherine Mariette, museologist

**Exhibition Artist:** Patrick Bouchain, assisted by Isabelle Allégret

## Practical Information

Opening hours: Tues-Fri 10am-6pm, Sat and Sun 11am-7pm (closed Mon.)

Entry: 10 € – Reduced: 8 € – Under 16: 5 € – Carte Villette: free – Online ticketing: 8 €

September 12-23: special rate 7 €

Location: Grande Halle de la Villette, 211 avenue Jean Jaurès, 75019 Paris – Metro Porte de Pantin

Info: 0 892 684 694 (0.34 € inc. VAT – fnac network) – [www.villette.com](http://www.villette.com) – [www.betesethommes.fr](http://www.betesethommes.fr)

## Press contacts

General press: Bertrand Nogent 00 33 1 40 03 75 74 – [b.nogent@villette.com](mailto:b.nogent@villette.com)

Carole Polonsky 00 33 1 40 03 75 23 – [c.polonsky@villette.com](mailto:c.polonsky@villette.com)

Specialised press: Laurence Paoli / Urban Nomad – 00 33 1 43 72 08 00 – 00 33 6 83 84 05 93

[lpaoi@urbannomad.net](mailto:lpaoi@urbannomad.net)

Download photos from [www.villette.com](http://www.villette.com): click professionals then press.

Username: usrvil03str, password: gf42\* nbg

Paris, June 11th, 2007

**Press release**

From September 12th, 2007 to January 20th, 2008

To celebrate the reopening of the Grande Halle de la Villette in Paris

## **"Bêtes et Hommes" (Beasts and Men) at la Villette, An exhibition event looking at human-animal relationships**

The Grande Halle is reopening after two years of renovations, and its putting on "**Bêtes et Hommes**" to celebrate. The show is reminiscent of such other large-scale exhibitions as "Cités Cinés" and "Jardin Planétaire," which helped make La Villette the beloved destination it is today.

**The astonishing "Bêtes et Hommes" extends over 3500m<sup>2</sup>, exploring the relationship between humans and animals in today's world.**

**The exhibition takes the unusual approach** of considering animals as beings independent of the human race, rather than as the representative symbols man has made them. **The exhibition shows how "beasts and men" have mutually affected each other.** Animals, like humans, have history: they interpret the world in which they live, and modify their behaviour accordingly.

**Ethology's most recent discovery** reveal animal abilities that were previously attributed only to humans, while the **extra-scientific knowledge** of people who "live" with animals, such as breeders, shepherds, caregivers, and pet owners, shows further unexpected skills in the animal kingdom. "**Bêtes et Hommes**" takes individual situations involving a human being and an animal as its starting point, and suggests **an alternative way to think about living creatures**, questioning their place in today's society and proffering ideas about **cohabitation that could very well describe the world of the future.**

## **The work of over one hundred plastic artists, photographers and filmmakers**

Many contemporary artists testify to their relationship with animals through their art. Plastic works (by **Carole Benzaken, Pascal Bernier, Jean-François Fourtou, Gloria Friedmann, Panamarenko, and Alain Séchas...**), film (**Chris Marker, Georges Rey, Muriel Toulemonde**) and photography collections (**Antonio Biasiucci, Nick Brandt, Pia Elizondo, Jill Freedman, Chris Herzfeld, Henry Horenstein, Philippe Lopparelli...**) are all marked by this trend. Two feature reports were specially commissioned for the exhibition: **Jane Evelyn Atwood** discusses the collusion between a young, blind female comedian and her guide while **Alex Majoli** has caught some very special moments between a 300 kg Grizzly bear and his trainer.

"Bêtes et Hommes" brings together **two and a half hours of audiovisual footage (documentaries, films) and productions made especially for the exhibition**, including a fictional dialogue between Darwin and Kropotkin, an animated film on the world of animals, and documentaries on bustards, cohabiting with bears in the Pyrenees, Guyanese national park, and the American Indians...

## **Live animals in the house**

**Two mynah birds, some iguanas, buzzards, and crows, a pair of European otters and five vultures are the mouthpieces for the history of human conflict and cooperation with animals.** These animals were hurt by or healed by humans, seized at customs or at private homes, the stock of breeders; they have been entrusted to us as honorary permanent guests of the exhibition, and here they are held in high esteem. Their habitat has been designed to provide all the necessary conditions for their comfort, without simply copying a natural world in which these animals, imprinted upon by man, could never live.

## **Spectacular Exhibition Design**

The architect and designer Patrick Bouchain has designed this exhibition based on everything that brings man and animal together: the shelter, the refuge, and the den. He has created **a series of transparent or opaque tents made of jute and rope** that complement the Grande Halle's architecture while providing an excellent backdrop for the art, audiovisual installations and live animals alike.

## **A four-part journey**

### **Animals affect humankind**

Human beings have tried to learn from animals and to acquire certain of their characteristics, even trying to alter their own bodies in the process.

### **Animals are strangers to men**

Animals live in a world apart from our own. For us to gain access to it, we have to understand what interests them, what affects them, what motivates them. An attempt at this very understanding has led to some of the most astonishing discoveries about them.

### **Animals have a job to do**

One of the best-known forms of connection between man and beast involves working together. Many situations give us the opportunity to form a team with an animal – the blind and their guide dogs or circus trainers and their animals are just some examples. But what function do today's pets and livestock have?

### **Animals force us to choose**

Who do we want to live with? That's the question at hand. The current debate is unique in that it concerns so many different characters: ecologists, scientists, breeders, animal lovers, tourists, inhabitants, and animals.

**The visiting public will be able to prolong and enrich their exhibition experience thanks to round tables, lectures, films, colloquia, children's workshops, and guided tours, as well as a catalogue and a book for children.**

## Biographies

### Vinciane Despret

Vinciane Despret was born in Belgium in 1959. She decided to study psychology after building a base in philosophy, and it was then that she became interested in ethology. It began because the stories she was hearing were so good: these animals were like real characters in novels. Then she realised that most researchers talk passionately about "their" animals, relating the countless surprises that occur during fieldwork. She heard people say "they can even..." every day. She needed to find a way to bring the fields of philosophy and ethology together. Bruno Latour had the answer: the philosophy of science, a kind of anthropology of scientists and their subject matter. Her initial test subjects put the theory to the test. Following the Israeli zoologist Zahavi's findings on far from ordinary birds that dance and work together and bluff one another at will, she came to realise that what makes animals interesting is inventive research, and what makes inventive research is interesting animals. The human and the non-human constantly recreate their relationship, becoming ever more interesting, posing ever more questions, and creating ever more hypotheses and behaviours.

This became the subject of *Quand le loup habitera avec l'agneau*, a recent history of ethology that show how researchers and animals have changed one another.

### Vinciane Despret Bibliography

*Hans, le cheval qui savait compter*

Éd. Les Empêcheurs de Penser en Rond, 2004

*Quand le loup habitera avec l'agneau*

Éd. Les Empêcheurs de Penser en Rond, 2002

*Ces émotions qui nous fabriquent. Ethnopsychologie de l'authenticité*

Éd. Les Empêcheurs de Penser en Rond, 1999 (2ème éd. 2001)

*Naissance d'une théorie éthologique. La danse du cratérope écaillé*

Éd. Les Empêcheurs de Penser en Rond, 1996

En collaboration :

*Les grands singes : l'humanité au fond des yeux*

avec Pascal Picq, Dominique Lestel ... [et al.]

Éd. Odile Jacob, 2005

*Clinique de la reconstruction. Une expérience avec des réfugiés en ex-Yougoslavie*

avec A. Chauvenet et J.M. Lemaire

L'Harmattan, 1996

*L'Homme en société*

avec P.P. Gossiaux, C. Pugeault et V. Yzerbyt

PUF, 1995

<sup>1</sup> This research is published in *Naissance d'une théorie éthologique. La danse du cratérope écaillé* (Les Empêcheurs de Penser en Rond, 1996)

## **Yolande Bacot**

An “accidental” lawyer, Yolande Bacot joined the La Villette team when the Grande Halle had just been inaugurated in 1985.

She cut her teeth on “Cités-Cinés,” a now-legendary exhibition on cinema in the city, helped bring about the Cinéma en Plein Air de La Villette, and organised an homage to Fellini the year of his death in collaboration with Cirque Plume – an event which, along with 1997’s “Ouaga-Carthage – Africa in Music and Film,” was to be one of the highlights of her career. But exhibition design became her number one priority in 1996, when she was named Director of the Exhibitions Department after the park and Grande Halle were opened.

Under her watch, anthropological exhibitions have been regularly programmed both at the Pavillon Paul Delouvrier and at the Maison de la Villette. These included “Indiens du Mexique – Chiapas › Mexico › Californie,” and “Musulmanes, musulmans,” and came after her art direction of the Halle’s last two great exhibitions, 1986’s “Il était une fois la fête foraine” and “Le Jardin Planétaire” in 1999-2000.

### **Exhibitions at the Parc de la Villette**

From the legendary inaugural “Cités-Cinés” to the most recent “Jardin Planétaire,” each and every exhibition here has been a step, a point of conversation as much for their message as for their design. And if that’s still the idea today, that’s because one of the first criteria of these exhibitions is that the content must drive the container, that there is no formal a priori. This approach is a very free one, because it allows the Parc de la Villette to be free of the typical constraints that affect museums and cultural institutions, but it also requires an extremely rigorous scientific approach, which is why Parc de la Villette employs a researcher or a team of researchers for 2, 3 or even more years to take part in an adventure that is never pre-ordained.

But another equally important goal of exhibitions at Parc de la Villette, from the large-scale ones at the Grande Halle to the smaller ones at the Pavillon Paul Delouvrier or the Maison de la Villette, is revealing, in the photographic sense of the term, what makes our society work. So even though the concept of sustainable design had yet to penetrate the inner circle of ecologists, “Le Jardin Planétaire” gave the public the most useful and poetic idea of it possible.

The parc’s most recent exhibition-inquiry, “L’Amour, comment ça va ?”, dealt with question of intimacy in the social and political spheres, “Bêtes et Hommes” simply uses the same approach to the big questions that plague today’s society.

## **Catherine Mariette**

A museologist-bridge connecting several different areas... That's how Catherine Mariette talks about her profession, and a way of working with people who all have a vision, no matter what their domain – press, publishing, theatre, documentary, or exhibition.

Each time it's a question of intercrossings and associations until ideas and emotions take shape and become intelligible, ready to share. It also involves seeing a project through to fruition, and learning from the ways it has changed. Mariette was part of the team for "Jardin planétaire" and "Mali Kow," and now comes back to the Grande Halle to work on "Bêtes et Hommes".

## **Patrick Bouchain**

Patrick Bouchain was born on May 31, 1945 in Paris. He taught at the capitals' École Camondo from 1972 to 1974, at the École des Beaux-Arts in Bourges from 1974 to 1981, and at the École nationale de Création industrielle, which he founded in Paris, from 1981-1983. He was also an advisor to Jack Lang when he was Minister of Culture and advisor to the President of the state-owned Grand Louvre from 1992 to 1994. Between 1990 and 1993, he directed the Atelier public d'architecture et d'urbanisme at Blois.

Under his belt are exhibitions such as Magasin, at the centre national d'art contemporain in Grenoble (1985), Zingaro equestrian theatre at Aubervilliers (1988), the Volière Dromesko in Lausanne (1991), the Théâtre du Radeau in Mans (1993), the Grange at the lac d'Évian (1993), the corporate headquarters of Thomson Multimédia at Boulogne-Billancourt (1997), the transformation of several former LU factories into cultural spaces in Nantes, the restructuring of the Condition Publique at Roubaix (2003), and the French pavilion at the Venice architectural Biennale in 2006..

Patrick Bouchain has collaborated with contemporary artists and philosophers including Daniel Buren, Claes Oldenburg, Bartabas, and Michel Onfray.

## **Isabelle Allégret**

Isabelle Allégret is an architect and set designer and splits her time between interior and urban spaces. Currently, this means the offices of the Grand-Palais in Paris, street furniture for the town of Parthenay, and exhibition design.

She often works with Patrick Bouchain, and has most recently collaborated with him on the transformation of a farm into a guesthouse and country gîtes for the Troisgros restaurant owners, as well as on ephemeral displays such as "Aux portes de l'An 2000," a piece showing the passage of the new millennium on the Champs-Élysées, "Regards premiers", a series of temporary exhibitions of artworks in schools, and "Indiens du Mexique – Chiapas › Mexico › Californie" and "L'Amour, comment ça va ?" at Parc de la Villette.

## Exhibition artists

### Plastic artists

Art Orienté Objet (Benoît Mangin, Marion Laval-Jantet)

*Ersatz de maman-singe* (1991) ; *La poule heureuse* (1993) ; *Rabbits were used to prove...* (1999) ; *Le leurre-girafe* (2006-2007) ; *Le leurre-casque de cerf* (2006-2007) ; *Le leurre-chaussures de chat* (2006-2007) ; *Le leurre-queue de chat* (2006-2007) ; *Felinanthropie*, (2007) ; *Jeter sa tête* (2007) ; *Necking* (2007)

Iain Baxter&, *Réserves d'animaux n°2* (1999)

Carole Benzaken, *Travelling I à VI* (2004)

Pascal Bernier, *Farm Set agneaux* (1998) ; *Accident de chasse éléphantéau* (2001) ; *Farm Set poussins* (2001) ; *Perversion bipolaire* (2001)

Willie Bester, *Dogs of War III* (2001)

Aline Bordereau, *Céphalopode* (1998)

Jean-Yves Brélivet, *Leurres en exercice* (1998) ; *Le chaud et l'effroi* (2006) ; *Gardez l'essentiel* (2006)

Catherine Chalmers, série *Prédation* (1994-96) ; *Floating corpses* (2000) ; *Hanging* (2000) ; *Gas chamber* (2003) ; *Hanging* (2003) ; série *Souris transgéniques* (2000)

James Chedburn, *Cigognes* (2007)

Geoffrey Cottenceau, série *Animaux* (2001)

Nicolas Darrot, *Dronecast – Migration* (2007)

Erik Dietman, *Au sommet après en avoir tant chié* (1991)

Bitá Fayyazi, *Cafards* (1998) ; *Corbeaux* (1998)

Anne Ferrer, *Carcasses* (1992)

Jean-François Fourtou, *Sans titre (girafe)* (2003) ; *Sans titre (orang-outang)* (2004) ; *Sans titre (trompe d'éléphant)* (2004)

Gloria Friedmann, *You and me* (1999) ; *Karaoké* (2002) ; *Envoyé spécial* (1995)

Bertrand Gadenne, *Le hibou* (2005)

Carsten Höller, *Orang-outang* (2000/01)

Rebecca Horn, *La Petite sirène* (1990)

Olivier Leroi, *Les animaux sortent du bois* (1987) ; *Expérience du territoire* (1999) ; *La géométrie enseignée aux mésanges* (2003)

David Mach, *Polar Bear* (2003/06) ; *Grizzly little fucker* (2002/03)

John Martini, *Lady day* (1998) ; *Le cheval à roulettes* (1998) ; *Le pigeon* (1998) ; *L'oiseau à tête d'homme et roulettes* (1998) ; *L'oiseau sur la tête* (2003) ; *Nicas's dream* (2005) ; *Hep Cat* (2006)

Tony Matelli, *Very, very first man: necessary alterations* (1998/99) ; *Fuck'd* (2004)

Margaret Michel, *Le Corbeau qui count / Les marches aveugles* (2000)

Nicole Morello, *Les pingouins* (1985)

Aïmawale Opoya, *Ciel de case wayana* (2006)

Panamarenko, *Umbilly 1* (1976)

Présence Panchounette, *Dans chien il y a niche, dans homme il y a HLM* (1989)

Bill Scanga, *Eighteen frogs with pants categorized by color* (1994)

Alain Séchas, *La pieuvre* (1990) ; *El Pacificador* (1996)

Yang Zhenzhong, série *Lucky family* (1995)

## Illustrators

Edmond Baudouin, *La Loutre et le pisciculteur* (2006)

Les chevreux suprématises (Matthieu Lemarié, Pénélope de Bozzi, Lucie Chaumont)

## Designers

Riccardo Dalisi, *Mariposa* (1989)

Hilton McConnico, *Canapé Teckel* (2005); *Lampe Fishy story* (2005) ; *Les Mutants* (2006)

Wieki Somers, *High tea pot* (2003)

Philippe Starck, *Presse citron* (1990)

Tsé & Tsé associées, *HLM pour mouches* (2003)

## Video artists

Alessandro Arrigoni et Claudia Candido, *Flashes of flesh* (2003)

Chris Marker, *Slon tango* (1990)

Bill Owens, *Kim Bittner's little bear* (2006)

Jean Painlevé, *Les amours de la pieuvre* (1965)

Georges Rey, *La vache qui rumine* 1969)

Muriel Toulemonde, *Fabellier* (2000)

## Photographers

Jane Evelyn Atwood, *Ouiza, comédienne et son chien, New Look* (2006 – commande du Parc de la Villette)

Antonio Biasiucci, *Magma* (1998) ; *Vacche* (2000)

Nick Brandt, *Mère éléphant et deux petits, Serengeti, 2002* ; *Eléphant dans une explosion de poussière, Amboseli, 2004* ; *Exode des éléphants, Amboseli, 2004*

Antoine d'Agata, *Insomnia* (2003)

Pia Elizondo, série *Jungle d'asphalte* (1996-1998)

Jill Freedman, série *Jours de cirque* (1975)

Masahisa Fukase, série *The Solitude of Ravens* (1975 – 1985)

Hans Gissing, *Salami* (2001)

Chris Herzfeld, *Wattana* (2003)

Candida Höfer, série *Zoos* (1992)

Henry Horenstein, série *Aquatique* (1999) ; série *Créature* (1999) ; série *Canine* (2000)

Philippe Lopparelli, série *Garde à Vue* (1989/92) ; *Zoopsie* (2003)

Alex Majoli, *Frédéric Chesneau, montreur d'ours et Julia* (2006 – commande du Parc de la Villette)

Tina Mérandon, *Le Tigre blanc* (1999)

Martin Parr, *Gorille regardant un dessin animé depuis sa cage* (1998)

## The Documentaries

Two 52-minute documentaries made especially for "Bêtes et Hommes" were a coproduction of Parc de la Villette and GEDEON Programmes: *Va-nu-pieds des Pyrénées* by Jacques Kébadian, Yolande Bacot and Catherine Mariette ; *Allons enfants de Camopi, l'horizon amérindien* by Yves de Peretti.

They all ask questions about how animals and humans can share the earth. Interviews with people concerned, such as Pyreneean farmers and American Indians living in Guyana reveal the ways in which we could – or couldn't – bring about the necessary conditions for a peaceful coexistence that would respect the interests of both.

These films will be shown in part in the exhibition and in their entirety at the Boris Vian cinema (see "Autour de l'exposition").

A DVD includes these two 52-minute films as well as three others, *De quelques questions imprévues autour de la biodiversité*, an interview with Isabelle Mauz, an ecologist at Cemagref; *Quels zoos pour les animaux?*, an interview with Pierre Gay, Doué-la-Fontaine zoo director; and *Les vautours, désirés ici, indésirables là*, a film showing the discrepancy between the lot of vultures in Larzac and the Pyrenees.