

DeWitt Cheng
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ART
Animalia House

Humans, who share 97% of our genes with our cousin chimpanzees, are animals—albeit, to use Hamlet’s term, the paragon of animals. As de-facto apex predator, we’re also stewards of the planet, a status that we nest-foulers should take more seriously. A new show by sculptor Gordon Glasgow and assemblagist-painter Iris Polos, appropriately entitled *Us*, explores our malfeasance as our brother animals’ keeper. However, while these artists are ahead of the curve on the animal-rights issue, their art is decidedly user-friendly, and as fascinating as their animal subjects, but with some brain food for *Homo sapiens*.

Glasgow’s varied background in design, fashion, model-making, restoration and sculpture gives him the skills to explore his ideas, which marry witty surrealism with masterly carving. “3D Organic Printer” is a quadrupedal white cube sitting atop lathe-turned table legs (and possibly its inverted unfinished-wood reflection); from a nozzle or trunk on one side dangle the rear legs of a hoofed animal, a nice joke about perfect duplication and imperfect reproduction. “Cowbull” presents a tabletop sculpture of a bull; directly beneath, under the table, hangs a semicircular udder from which four distended nipples stretch to the ground, finding their legs. “Down the Butchers” refers undoubtedly to the slaughterhouse practice of ‘downing’ sick or injured animals; here we see a cutting board bearing four pig trotters—one bearing human bite marks—and a hacksaw spattered with white paint.

Polos’s laboriously constructed glued, painted paper sculptures present animals as sentient beings of intelligence and even culture, which we have historically chosen to regard as a human-only preserve. “Game Riggid” and “When the Flame Goes Out” feature trophy heads of a rhino and tiger, respectively, but mounted on three- and four-legged stands, and looking very dead and endangered rather than wild and proud. Her “Man in the Forest” and “Man in the Cave” paintings present an orangutan and a pair of chimpanzees as dignified and intelligent, considering the cave-paintings images of ghostly, scampering hunters. “The Scream” and “La Pieta” are animal versions of famous works by human culture heroes. US runs through July 12; Vessel Gallery, 471 25th Street, Oakland, 510-893-8800; vessel-gallery.com. —DeWitt Cheng



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Vessel Gal Lery THANK YOU DeWitt DeWitt Cheng! "Brain food for homo sapiens" love love love this description. [Vessel Gallery](#) artists Iris Polos and Gordon Glasgow thank you for your astute perception and art pen. :)))))))))

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