

**Animalia**

**June 16 – July 29, 2006**



FAILE

Irvine Contemporary is pleased to present *Animalia*, a group exhibition of artists who employ animal imagery and visual metaphors to explore contemporary issues of identity, sexuality, religion, hybridity and culture. Opening Reception, Friday, June 16th 6-8:30 pm. The exhibition runs through Saturday, July 29, 2006.

*Animalia* features work by Sandra Bermudez, Tricia Cline, Orly Cogan, Dalek (James Marshall), Edward del Rosario, FAILE, Carlee Fernandez, Sean Foley, Kent Henricksen, Peregrine Honig, Susan Jamison, Heidi Johansen, Jeff Koons, Josh Levine, Akemi Maegwa, Jiha Moon, Beverly Ress, Ben Snead, Adam Stennett, Andy Warhol, and Dirk Westphal, with new work created specially for this exhibition.



Dirk Westphal

Artists attending the opening reception include Sandra Bermudez, Edward del Rosario, Kent Henricksen, Josh Levine, Susan Jamison, Heidi Johansen, Jiha Moon, Beverly Ress, Adam Stennett and Dirk Westphal.



Orly Cogan

This exhibition presents a diverse body of work, including paintings, works on paper, embroideries, sculpture, photography, and video. The internationally and critically acclaimed artists in *Animalia*, many of whom are exhibiting in Washington, DC for the first time, present us with overtly familiar animal imagery--both wild and domestic--but show them in new contexts with a joyous range of humor, irony, wit, and satire as well as with deeper critical reflections on social and gender values associated with animal imagery.

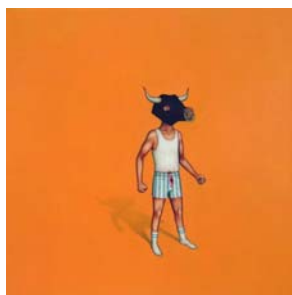
One of the main themes in *Animalia* is the human projection of simplicity onto animals, which in our culture vacillates between sentimentality and raw nature. Putting these associations into play, many of the artists in *Animalia* show that animal "simplicity" can be used to reflect back on the human viewer, revealing the brute force of nature, the harsh cycle of life, and the basic sexual impulses that drive the entire animal-human world.



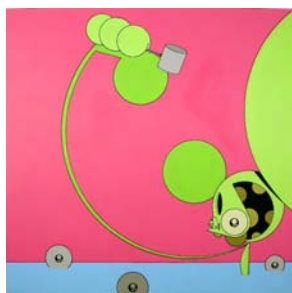
Carlee Fernandez

*Animalia* also speaks to a visual culture schooled on *Animal Planet* and *National Geographic*, which offer up spectacles of bestiality, Darwinian violence, and all that's dark and forbidden to civilized "human nature." The animal dramas on TV and film (for example, the feature film, *Grizzly Man*) as well as in recent animations embody fantasies and fears now almost hardwired into our culture. The artists in *Animalia* show that animal images and representations have become proxies for confronting some of our deepest emotions and identities--our own mortality, domesticity,

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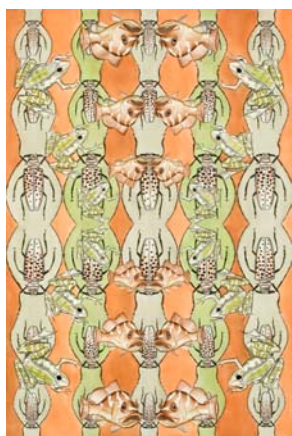
**Edward Del Rosario**



**Dalek (James Marshall)**



**Tricia Cline**



**Ben Snead**

sexuality, religion, race, and cultural relations. The supreme achievement of each artist is accomplishing this conceptual reflection with a great sense of playfulness and generosity of spirit that rewards viewers for their participation in the meaning of the work.

Irvine Contemporary wishes to thank 31 Grand (NY), Acuna-Hansen (Los Angeles), John Connelly Presents (NY), Feature, Inc. (NY), Ricco/Maresca Gallery (NY), Richard Heller Gallery (Santa Monica), Kasia Kay Art Projects (Chicago), Mixed Greens (NY), and Curator's Office (Washington, DC), and the participating artists.