



BESTIAL FIELD RECORDINGS: 2015-2018

LAURA BERNSTEIN

May 19 - June 23, 2018

On view:

Tuesday through Friday: 10 - 4
and anytime by appointment

Lighthouse Works is pleased to present a 3 channel video, *Bestial Field Recordings: 2015-2018* by Laura Bernstein.

The framework for these moving images "is the vivid surrealism of the medieval mine. Pageantry and masks are employed to create hybrid species capable of adapting to severe ecological change. These beasts are reminiscent of the fevered creations found on the edge of illuminated manuscripts and early maps." —Ava Lassinger from *Aparatus* a video and performance exhibition at Nao on gallery, 2017, Philadelphia, PA

These video recordings capture creatures posing, preening, courting and marking their territory within various natural environments. Half human, half creature, these forms recall the fantastical beasts recorded by Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History*, 77—79 AD, and later produced in the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, written by Hartmann Schedel and published in 1493. Pliny's *Natural History* records the traits and functions of a number of creatures through text and illustration.

The shape of these bodies captured on film speculate how the landscape might change and how the anatomy and physiology of our bodies may need to adapt and change to withstand environmental elements. These forms draw from the past while projecting onto the future, reflecting our own emotional state of unknowing while asking: "What makes something human?"

Laura Bernstein (b. 1987, New York, NY) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Brooklyn using video, performance, sculpture and installation to reflect on human behavior, alternative histories and the grotesque. Bernstein's current project draws from mythology and medieval bestiaries to examine the relationship between art and science, imagination and reality, nature and ecology. Residencies, awards and exhibitions include: *The Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program* (2017–18), *The Bronx Museum of the Arts AIM program* (2016–17) and its *Fourth AM Biennial*, *The Lighthouse Works Fellowship* (2016) and *Vermont Studio Center* (2013). She has shown her work in Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, Austria, and Rome, and her art is part of the permanent collection of the *National Dance Institute* in New York, NY. *Becoming Beast* is her first solo exhibition. She received her BFA in sculpture from the RISD and her MFA from the University of Pennsylvania.

This exhibition is being presented as part of the Legacy Program at Lighthouse Works, which seeks to create opportunities for our past fellows and our community to re-engage through an exhibition and reading series.

As a 501(c)3, The Lighthouse Works depends on the generosity of individuals and foundations to provide critical support to artists every year. A gift to The Lighthouse Works promotes the central role of the arts in our society and also helps to enrich the cultural vitality of Fishers Island, New York. We remain grateful to every person who has contributed in one way or another to make this work possible!

Featured Creatures:

The Sciapode: Mono-pod, Umbrella foot. The one-foot extends from the center of its body acting as a shield protecting it from the sun. It is known that the Sciapode has a weakness for tomatoes. The smell alone can bring it to a state of arousal.

Panotti: The enlarged surface area of Panotti's ears helps regulate body temperature. Flapping their ears keeps them cooler for longer or, conversely, in extremely cold weather their ears have the capacity to act as blankets to shield their bodies against the chills of the night.

Prehistoric Bird: has wings but cannot fly—stands 10 feet tall.

Arthropod Mare: (referred to here as AM) Feeds by filtering particles from the water using its modified scaly leg. AM has no internal organs and at night, it glows with light. Its body is capable of squeezing through the width of its central face hole. AM filters the infected seaweed that lines the seashores and is used as a binding agent in most processed foods.

Supernumerary Nipples: SN has been documented since Roman times as Artemis of Ephesus and was featured in legends prior to that time. Faithful to no one but self. The evolution of SN is attributed to increased femininity and fertility. Their breasts not only distract predators from their uteruses, but also prevent fertilization by trapping unwelcome sperm in their mammary glands.

Shakespeare Horny: SH experiences perpetual itch—to find relief SH thrusts against thick grasses. In Shakespeare's work, men whose wives were unfaithful grew horns due to sexual frustration. Made a fool from infidelity.

Gluteus Maximus Invertus: GM invertus, a giant swollen bum with carbuncle, usually seen on all fours. GM prefers to live in rocky areas, as a protective measure, so bum might be mistaken for rock. GM's character most resembles goat, with Bacchus-like behavior. Perpetually dehydrated.

Mono-Handler: is ambidextrous. Its giant hand extends from elbows, which are fused and function as one unit. The hand is heavy and takes great discipline to raise. It uses its fingers as net. Has charge over GM invertus.

Tomato: a shape shifting nightshade fruit consumed as vegetable. The smell alone lures. Though In the Middle Ages, The tomato was thought poisonous because the acidity levels were so high they burned through the pewter plates on which Tomatoes were most commonly served.